

Effects of COVID-19 on the Livelihoods of Women with Disabilities in Zimbabwe: A Study of Three Low-Income Areas in Harare Metropolitan Province

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Abstract

This study documents how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the livelihoods of women with disabilities in three low-income urban areas of Zimbabwe's Harare Metropolitan Province. A mixed-method approach was used to gather data through structured interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with 104 women with disabilities and service providers working with women with disabilities in Caledonia, Hatcliffe, and Epworth. The study utilises the sustainable livelihood approach to analyse the dynamics ensuing during the pandemic and how they impinged on women with disabilities' livelihoods. Findings reveal that the pandemic, particularly the lockdowns, greatly and negatively impacted the livelihoods of women with disabilities, who mainly depend on the informal sector through vending, begging, and handouts. The study recommends the provision of targeted sustainable social safety nets for women with disabilities in times of shocks and stresses such as pandemics to cushion them from the devastating effects brought about by such eventualities.

Keywords: COVID-19, Food shortages, Livelihoods, Women with disabilities, Zimbabwe