

# 3<sup>RD</sup> GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY & SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

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## Food security status of people with disabilities in Selassie Kebele, Hawassa Town, Southern Ethiopia

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The paper is about the food security of people with disabilities in Hawassa town. The situations of people with physical, vision and speech and/or hearing type of disabilities were studied on the basis of key informant interviews, focus group discussion and conducting exploratory household questionnaire survey. Food security indicators such as income, food self-sufficiency and frequency of meals per days were assessed. Coping Strategy Index (CSI) was the technique employed to assess food security status at household level. It was found that people with disabilities mostly depend upon family members' compassion and charity to sustain their livelihoods. Likewise, a lack of awareness, self-interest, family and community members' lack of knowledge and misperceived attitudes have prevented people with disabilities from being independent in their sources of livelihood and attaining food security. Disabilities made them somehow powerless in decision making. Majority of the sample respondents were chronically food insecure. Individuals with physical type of disabilities accounted for the largest proportion of those who are illiterate as well as unemployed. The same group was more vulnerable to food insecurity than their counterparts with other types of disabilities. PWDs cope with food shortage by limiting portion of size at meal, eating less preferred and cheap foods and begging on the streets. Improving the food security of PWDs should receive the attention of all concerned actors. It is important to create jobs that fit to the situation of PWDs, access them to training, credit, marketing facilities and treatment and increasing public awareness about the situations of the PWDs.

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