

Assessment of Facilities and Accessibility for Physically Disabled Customers: The case of Selected Star Rated Hotels in Addis Ababa
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Hotels are generally the largest of all accommodation types which provide rooms in which people can stay, especially to travelers and sometimes to longer term residents. They provide lodging, food and drink, room service and various types of service for paying guests, including the general public (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2014).

The history of hospitality industry in Ethiopia goes back to more than 100 years with the opening of the first hotel in Addis Ababa, Taitu Hotel, in 1895 by Emperor Minilik and Empress Taitu. located around piassa. The Hotel still bears the same name. More than 100 years later, over 80 hotels in and around the city have been built (Elias Kebede, Addis Standard Journal, 2014).

A hotel is said to have a good quality only when it provides almost full facility and services and it should create great image among its customers. Moreover, it should provide full accessibility for customers including physically disabled customers. .Even through, hotels have been around for so long, the provision of services for physically disabled people seems to be a new concept for Ethiopian hotels. According to Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development, “disability” means an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more his/her major life activity.

Ethiopia is a fast growing nation with population figure estimated at more than 95 million. Based on the World Report on Disability jointly issued by the World Bank and World Health Organization, there are an estimated 15 million children, adults and elderly persons with disabilities in Ethiopia which constitutes 17.6 percent of the population (WHO, 2014).

Physical disability could be caused by nature, injury, disease or medical condition and other developmental factors. People with physical disability include those confined to wheelchair, people with limited walking abilities only able to move with the aid of sticks and crutches, people with intellectual disability, people with visual impairment, etc. Generally, people with disabilities

require more accommodative environment to access different services. In hotels, physical access includes ramps, parking, passenger lodging zone, elevators, entrance, restaurant, accommodation, rest rooms, meeting rooms and bed room (American Disabled Act Accessibility Guideline, 1992).

Accessibility is about giving equal access to everyone. Without being able to access the facilities and services found in the community, persons with disabilities will never be fully included. In most societies, however, there are innumerable obstacles and barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing services available in their community. These include such things as stairs, lack of information, inaccessible formats such as Braille and Sign Language, and community services provided in a form which persons with disabilities are not able to understand. Although some of the more costly accessibility provisions can be implemented progressively, there are a number of low-cost, low-tech accessibility solutions that would have immediate benefits (Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development, 2010).

Furthermore, accessibility is best defined as the provision of flexibility to accommodate user's need and preferences, when used with reference to person with disability, item or service whether physical or virtual, that is easily approached, reached, entered, exited, interacted with understood or otherwise used by persons of varying be accessible (UN,2015).

This study concerned the assessment of facility and accessibility for physically disabled customers to assess facility and accessibility issues for physically disabled customers in the case of selected star hotels in Addis Ababa.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the past few years, the hotel Industry in Addis Ababa has grown massively. The services provided by these Hotels should encompass all range of guests including children, DISABLED people, and elderly people. Even though the number of hotels have increased in Addis Ababa, some of them do not give due consideration to accessibility for disabled people.

Although they strive to provide better access, there are still observable gaps. It is often observed people with physical disability complain about hotels accessibility issues, including accessibility at the hotel parking, entry, reception area, restaurant, bed rooms, bath rooms, and other facilities. What should these hotels do to provide full accessibility?

Hotels should be accessible and barrier free to both non-disabled and disabled people. They should also be adapted to fulfill the needs of all people equally. Many documents have been produced on the access and facilities for physically disabled people particularly in UK and America (Smith and Billington, 1991).

The documents set guidelines for accessibility to places of public accommodation and commercial facilities for people with disabilities. When hotels are designed in developed countries, every individual is taken into account from the very beginning but this is not the case in Addis Ababa.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess the facilities and accessibility for physically disabled customers in the case of selected star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research were:

1. To identify the facilities those are important for physically disabled customers.
2. To evaluate the accessibility of the facilities for physically disabled customers.
3. To understand the experiences, values and perspectives of disabled people on hotel accessibility issues.

1.4 Research Question

- What are the facilities that are important for physically disabled customers?
- How accessible are the facilities of star rated hotels for physically disabled customers?
- What experiences and perspectives do physically disabled people have on hotel accessibilities?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The finding of this study is very important for other researchers as a reference to do an intensive similar research on this area. The study is also important for

hotels as it can be used as a mirror to reflect their strengths and weakness on physical accessibility issues.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted to assess the facilities and accessibility for physically disabled customers in the case of the selected star rated hotels in Addis Ababa. Even though there are a number of Hotels in Addis Ababa, the research focused on five hotels depending on their star rate, more specifically Semien Hotel, Kenenisa Hotel, Ambassador Hotel, Intercontinental Hotel and Capital Hotel.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

To conduct this study, the researcher faced a lot of limitation. These limitations were lack of secondary data sources in Addis Ababa including written documents and literatures, unwillingness of hotel employees to fill out questionnaires and participate on interview.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Facility: something designed, built, installed, etc. a specific function affording a convenience service: transportation, education, and hotel facility

Accessibility: refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environment for people who experience disability (ECDD).

Disability: is an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, intellectual, and mental sensory, developmental, or some combination of these that result in restriction on an individual's ability to participate in what is considered "normal" in their every society.

Customer: is an individual a company or other entry which purchase goods and services produced by Hotels, Resorts, or other lodging establishment on regular base.

Hotel: establishment providing accommodation, meals, lodging and other guest services.

Star rated: Rate indicated by star (usually 1-5). The highest numbers of stares indicates the best quality of hotel.

1.9 Research Design and Methodology

The study tried to assess the facilities and accessibilities for physically disabled customers in the selected star hotels. To achieve this, the researcher used descriptive type of research method for this method had a vital role to gather reliable data and describe in detail. In addition to this, the researcher

described the significance of hotel facility and accessibility for physically disabled customers.

1.9.1 Sampling Design and Technique

The researcher used non probability purposive sampling techniques. The reason why these types of method were used was due to the difficulty in knowing the total number of disabled customers and hotel employees. It also saved time, money and most importantly, it allowed getting good evidence from those selected respondents. Furthermore, the respondents were selected for their skill, knowledge and experience.

The populations of the study were hotel employees and physically disabled customers. The study was conducted on the basis of sampling technique. Samples were taken and analyzed to describe the overall assessment of facilities for physically disabled customers in the selected stated hotels. Therefore, the researcher conducted the research on selected five hotels, took a sample of 50 hotels employees and 10 physically disabled customers by non-probability purposive sampling techniques. Totally 60 respondent participated in this research.

1.9.2 Data Type and Source

The research used both primary and secondary data. The primary data included information from questionnaire, interview and observation. The secondary data incorporated all type of documents, books, journals, and related paper.

1.9.3 Methods of Data Collection

Data collection instruments of the study were questionnaire, interview and personal observation. Both open and close ended questionnaires were developed for the hotel employees. Interviews were also conducted with physically disabled hotel customers. In addition to this, the researcher supplemented the data obtained from interview and questionnaire by observing the real situation in selected stated hotels using check list. The second data source included related literature, books, journals, and articles.

1.9.4 Data Analysis Methods

The collected data was summarized, analyzed and interpreted using mixed method approach---qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data

was used to describe in words, pictures and statements, and the quantitative data was used to describe and analyse the data statistically. Thus, data collected through open ended questioner, interview and observation check list were analyzed using qualitative method. The data obtained from close ended questions were analyzed using quantitative data analysis and the results were shown using tables, numbers and picture.

1.10. Organization of the Study

The study is organized into four chapters. Accordingly, the first chapter deals with the introduction part of the study, the second chapter, review of related literature, tries to set the framework of the research. The third chapter, methodology, presents and justifies the use of the major research techniques implemented throughout the research work. Finally the fourth chapter ends by summarizing the major findings and forwarding some recommendations.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from the respondents through open-ended and close-ended questionnaires, interviews, and observation checklists.

Thus, the study analyzed and interpreted facilities and accessibilities for physically disabled customers in the selected star rated hotels in Addis Ababa. Accordingly, various questions were administered to sample employee respondents on issues that focused on hotel facilities and accessibilities for physically disabled customers in the case of selected star rated hotels in Addis Ababa. To make the data as representative as possible, 50 questionnaires were prepared and distributed to the respondents. Out these, 44 (88%) respondents returned the questionnaire and the rest 6 respondent did not respond. The analysis was, therefore, based on data gathered from the 44 respondents.

In addition, similar interviews were held with a number of physically disabled customers. Generally, different interview questions were prepared and held with 10 respondents. Thus, this helped the researcher to get in depth knowledge about the issue. This was also augmented by personal observation of the real situation in the selected star hotels.

Characteristics of the Study Population

For this research, 50 questionnaires were prepared for hotel employees consisting 16 questions, and interview was conducted with 10 employees consisting 7 questions. The sample technique used for this research was purposive non probability sampling.

3.1.1 Demographic Data

Table 1: Respondents Background

NO.		Personal information	Frequency	Percentage
1	Sex	Male	18	38%
		Female	27	62%
		Total	44	100%
2	Age	18-30	22	50%
		31-50	22	50%
		>50	0	0%
		Total	44	100%
3	Educational background	Certificate	10	23%
		Diploma	30	68%
		Degree	4	9%
		Master and above	0	0%
		Total	44	100%
4	Respondent Job title	Hotel manager	2	5%
		Restaurant manager	1	2%
		Housekeeping manager	5	11%
		Receptionist	6	14%
		Reservation	5	11%
		waiter	5	11%
		Meeting organizer	4	9%
		Bellboy	5	11%
		Sales and marking	5	11%
		Security	6	14%
		Total	44	100%

As Table 1 depicts, 38 % of the respondents were male and the remaining 62% of them were female. Thus, most of the female respondent’s age distributions were ranging from 18 to 50 ages. Regarding their educational levels, 23 % of them were certificate and 68 % of them were Diploma holders whereas the remaining 9% of them were BA degree holders. Therefore, it can be

concluded that most of the respondent are diploma holders. As it is seen in Table 1 the respondent's job title are: Manager, Housekeeping,, Receptionist, Waiter, and Meeting organizer, Reservationist, Bellboy, Sales, Marketing and Security. Thus, it implies that there was equal participation of respondents from each department.

3.1.2 Subject Matter

Table 2: Installation of Facilities for Physical Disabled Customers the Hotels

In which area do you think installation of facilities for physically disabled customer is Needed?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Parking area	0	0%
Entrance area	0	0%
Reception area	0	0%
Lobby area	12	27%
In and around lift area	0	0%
Restaurant area	0	0%
All	34	73%
Total	44	100%

Source survey, 2017

As Table 2 shows, 27 % of the respondents replied that the lobby area was installed for physically disabled customers while the remaining 73% of them replied that parking area, entrance area, reception area, in and around lift area and the restaurant area were installed. But, as I observed in Ambassador Hotel and Semien Hotel, there are stairs at the entrance equipped with handrails at both sides and there is no ramp to address accessibility issue for physically disabled customers.

The fact that the large majority of respondents identified all areas of the hotels needing accessibility and facilities shows that there is significant problem for physically disabled customers to use star rated hotels.

3.1.3 Hotels Accessibility and Comfort for Physically Disabled

Table 3: The Accessibility and the Comfort of the Hotel for Physically Disabled Customers.

Do you think your hotel is accessible and comfortable for Physically disabled customers?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	0	0%
No	44	100%
Total	44	100%

Source; survey, 2017

As depicted in Table 3, all of the respondents (100%) replied that there are no accessibility and comfort for physically disabled customers in the hotels and I have also observed that the facilities were not accessible for physically disabled people.

3.1.4 Accessibility for Mobility Limitation

Table 4: Facility Accessible to People with Mobility Limitations

What is the facility accessible to people with mobility impairment?	Frequency	Percentage %
Wheelchair Aid of sticks	15	
Crutches	0	0%
All	29	66%
Total	44	100%

Source; survey, 2017

As it is shown in Table 4, out of the total respondents 34 percent replied that the facility accessible to people with mobility impairment was only ‘Aid of sticks’ while the remaining 66 percent of them replied that wheelchair, Aid of sticks, and crutches were the only facilities accessible to people with mobility limitations. During my observation, I have seen that from their reactions that their accommodations to people with mobility impairments were not in well manner. Thus, we can infer that there were no facilities for people with mobility impairments.

4.1.5 Accessibility Areas in the Hotels Areas

Table 5: Accessibility on Lobby Area, Reception, Restaurant and Bar

Are there accessible lobby area, reception, restaurant, bar and other facility?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	11	25%
No	33	75%
Total	44	100%

Source; survey, 2017

As shown in Table 5, among the total respondents 25 percent of the respondents responded that there was accessibility to lobby, reception, restaurant and bar areas while the remaining 75 percent of them replied that there were no accessibilities to the lobby, reception, restaurant, bar area and other facilities. And I have also proved what the majority of respondents responded was true. So, it is possible to conclude that almost there was no accessibility to Lobby Reception, Restaurant, and Bar area within the hotels.

3.1.6 Lift Areas

Table 6: The Lift

Does the lift start at the basement /Ground floor and reach all floors?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	0	0%
No	44	100%
Total	44	100%

Source; survey, 2017

As Table 6 reveals, all respondents replied that the lift does not start at the basement or ground floor and does not reach all floors. And during my observation, I have also noted that the lifts do not start at the basement and reach the top floor. During the interview, most the interviewee said those problems were being corrected. So, we can infer that there is no service of elevator at the sampled hotels.

3.1.7 Accessible Public Restroom for Wheelchair Users

Table 7: Public Rest Room

Is there at least one public rest room accessible to Wheelchair users in your hotel?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	0	0%
No	44	100%
Total	44	100%

Source, survey, 2017

The above table 7, regarding to public rest room, reveals, and all respondents (100%) responded that there is no at least one public rest room accessible to wheelchair users in the hotels. But when I observed the five stars hotels I have seen only one rest room for wheelchair users.

3.1.8 Reservation rooms for physically disabled customers

Table 8: Reservation of Guest Rooms

Are your guest rooms reserved to people with physically disabled customers?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	10	23%
No	34	73%
Total	44	100%

Source; survey, 2017

The above Table 8, concerning the reservation of guest rooms for physically disabled people, shows that out of the total respondents 23 % of them replied that the guest rooms are reserved for physically disabled people while the remaining 73 % replied that the guest rooms are not reserved for physically disabled customers. I also observed that no attention was given to physically disabled people concerning reservation room. Thus, this implies that there is no accessibility and facility for physically disabled people in the sample hotels.

Table 9: The Tops of Accessible Tables

Are the tops of the tables or counters accessible for wheelchair users?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	12	27%
No	32	73%
Total	44	100%

Source; survey, 2017

As shown in Table 9, 27% of the total respondents replied that the tops of the tables or the counters are accessible or suitable to wheelchair users while the remaining 73% of them replied that the tops of the tables or counters were not the same height of wheelchair users.

Table 10: Accessibility of Bathrooms and Guest Rooms

Are the bathrooms near the guest rooms accessible?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	44	100%
No	0	0%
Total	44	100%

Source, survey 2017

As depicted in Table 10, all respondents replied that the bathrooms near the guest rooms are accessible to disabled people.. Among the selected respondents, during interview, most of them responded that bathrooms are being facilitated near to the guest rooms. From this we can conclude that people with disabled have got enough due consideration in the sampled hotels.

Table 11: Accessibility of Meeting Rooms

Are there chairs, doors and other facilities in the meeting rooms?	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	44	100%
No	0	0%
Total	44	100%

Source, survey 2017

Concerning the accessibility and the comfortability of the meeting rooms, Table 11 shows that all respondent responded that there are chairs doors and other facilities in the rooms. However, during my observation I have realized that the qualities of meeting rooms were very poor and they were not properly arranged, particularly in star I, II and III hotels. Thus, it can be said that there was accessibility to meeting rooms but they were not properly cleaned compared to the majority of hotels which the respondents' rated as good. It is important to note that physically disabled customers require very special attention.

3.2 Complain and Feedbacks about Hotel Facilities for Physically Disabled Customers during the Interviewee

Majority of the responds responded that:-

- There is no ramp at the entrance and even if there is, it is not properly constructed,
- The lift doesn't start from the basement,
- Stairs don't have handrails at both sides.

- There is not enough space for turning a wheelchair around and in front of the lift entrance area.
- There are no international signs that indicate the presence of free space for disabled people.
- Almost all of the respondents complain about the rest rooms of the sampled hotels. These include: there are no signs that indicate where the rest rooms are found, there is no sufficient space in the rest rooms, and it is very difficult to move the wheelchairs around, the wall mirrors are not positioned at the height suitable for wheelchair users.
- There is no seating space for wheelchair users around tables in the restaurant, there are no accessible tables with a suitable height in restaurant.
- There are no rooms reserved for disabled people.
- The hotels floors are sloppy; they are not comfortable for walking.
- When the respondents were asked about their previous and existing experience of hotel services they responded that, throughout their life they have no participation in hotels because of the fear of lack of proper accessibility and facility.

When asked what type of hotel facilities they think are important for physically disabled people, they mentioned all types of hotels services but they specifically mentioned the facility around the entrance, elevator, rest rooms, and meeting hall.

At the last, I asked them whether they could share their experience of star rated hotels.

Some of the respondents said they never went to hotels because of lack of proper accessibility and the rest said they have experience of going to hotels but when they went there, they usually fell down because of the slip nature of the hotels floor.. Others said that the rest rooms are not well furnished with appropriate seating. And still others mentioned that the ramps height is not comfortable to push the wheelchair upwards. They also explained that the chairs and tables in the meeting room are not same height to the wheelchair users.

4. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendation

This chapter deals with the summary and conclusion of the findings. Moreover, the recommendations made on the basis of the findings are also given here.

4.1 Summary

The study attempted to address the major research questions posted in Chapter One. As a result, the major findings of the study are summarized as follows: The general objective of the research was to assess the facilities and accessibility of star rated hotels for physically disabled customers. There were 16 questionnaires and 7 interviews prepared for the hotel employees and physically disabled customers. The data analysis was done based on the 44 returned questionnaire and 10 interviews.

A hotel is said to have a good quality only when it provides almost full facility and services and when it creates great image among its customers. Moreover, it should provide full accessibility for customers including physically disabled customers. Even though hotels have been around for so long, the provision of services for physically disabled people seems to be a new concept for Ethiopian hotels.

Physical disability could be caused by nature, injury, disease or medical condition and other developmental factors. People with physical disability include those confined to wheelchair, people with limited walking abilities and only able to move with the aid of sticks and crutches, people with intellectual disability, people with visual impairment.

Generally, facilitating and making things accessible for physically disabled people is not the responsibility of few individuals or hotel owners or service providers rather it needs the cooperation of all responsible citizens.

4.2. Conclusion

Accessibility is about giving equal access to everyone. Without being able to access the facilities and services found in institutions and organizations, physically disabled people will never be fully supported. In our city-Addis Ababa, however, there are innumerable obstacles and barriers that hinder physically disabled people from accessing services available in different organizations and institutions.

This study examined the issue of accessibility to physically disabled people in some selected star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa. It applied both primary and secondary sources of data to assess if facilities and accessibilities in these hotels were inclusive to physically disabled customers. Thus, it identified the following findings:

- There were significant lack of installation of facilities and accessibility for physically disabled customers in all areas of the hotels;
- Lack of accessibility and comfortable facilities in the hotels for physically disabled customers;
- Relatively facilities were accessible to people with mobility impairment in some star rated hotels;
- Almost there was no accessibility and comfort around lobby, reception, restaurant, and bar area of the hotels;
- In one of the hotels lift/elevator doesn't start from the basement and it doesn't reach all the floors,;
- There was no, at least one, public rest room accessible to wheelchair users in one of the star rated hotels,
- Sufficient attention wasn't given to physically disabled people and no rooms were reserved for physically disabled people,
- The following facilities and accesses were not given due attention and constructed to physically disabled people: no access for ramp, no comfortable entrance and lift service, no access for bathrooms and quality guest rooms, the tops of tables were not accessible to physically displace people,

2 Recommendations

Based on the above major findings the student researcher forwards the following recommendations:-

1. If the environment is designed for full range of human functioning and incorporates appropriate accommodation and support, then people with functional limitation would not be 'disabled.
2. A hotel is said to have a good quality only when it provides almost full facility and services that should create great image among its

customers. Moreover, it should provide full accessibility for all customers including physically disabled people.

3. Buildings, parks, reception areas, restrooms, bed rooms and other structures and spaces should be designed in a way that meets the needs of physically disabled people. To do that all the concerned bodies such as: Ministry of Culture and Tourism and all communities should consider the issue of accessibility and facility wherever necessary.
4. Creating an accessible environment for physically disabled people is everyone's responsibility. Thus, we have to do all our part to help these people, specifically, the following measures need to be taken to create facilities at star rated hotels so that they can be accessible to persons with physically disabled people:
 - Ramps should provide direct access to the main floor, lobby, or elevator and they should be built in gentle slope measuring 10 cm grade for every 1 meter of length and moreover, they should be free from any obstructions.
 - Doors should have a minimum width of 85cm and the lift door width should be a minimum of 90 cm.
 - There should be turning space for a wheelchair at all doorways if there is a turn immediately after the door.
 - There should be turning space for a wheelchair.
 - The tops of tables and counters should be at a height suitable for wheelchair users
 - The door width to the toilet should be 90 cm to allow wheelchair users to get in and out easily and the height of the toilet seat should be equal to the height of a wheelchair users
 - There should be handrails at both sides of the toilet seat with a minimum height of 57-60 cm from the floor.
 - The toilet should have a 150cm x 150cm free space for turning a wheelchair.
 - There should be periodical supervision to check whether all these facilities are performed regularly or not.

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