

Empowering Saudi Women with Disabilities According to Saudi Vision 2030: An Analytical Study

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Abstract: The study aims to identify the efforts exerted to empower Saudi women with disabilities in the economic, social, educational, and healthcare sectors within the framework of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology, presenting a comprehensive review and analysis of studies, reports, and goals of the general and specific vision of the KSA that are related to the empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities. One of the most important findings of the study is that there is a significant interest in the target population in the economic sector. Available data indicate an increase in the representation of persons with disabilities in the labour market from 7.70% in 2017 to 12% at the end of 2020. Moreover, the study found that the Saudi Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development plays a significant role in the social empowerment of women with disabilities. However, this does not negate the fact that there are many obstacles to the empowerment of Saudi women. The study recommends that more efforts should be exerted to increase the opportunities available to Saudi women with disabilities to expand their participation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and healthcare fields.

Keywords: Social policy; empowerment of women; women with disabilities; Saudi society; Vision 2030.

1 Introduction

Saudi Arabia is considered the centre of the Muslim world as it houses the Kaaba, the focal direction of prayer and place of pilgrimage for Muslims worldwide. It is one of the largest countries in the Middle East and is in the southwestern part of Asia, constituting the majority of the Arabian Peninsula. It shares borders with Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait to the north, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to the east, Yemen and Oman to the south, and the Red Sea to the west with a total area of around 2,000,000 square kilometers [1]. According to Saudi Census (2022), the population of Saudi Arabia is estimated to be 32,175,224 [2].

Currently, Saudi Arabia is witnessing significant transformations in the economic, social, cultural, and political fields, especially after the launch of its Vision 2030. This project aims to build a strong economy that rivals global advanced economies and fulfil the aspirations of the Saudi society by providing all individuals, regardless of gender, with the basic requirements to have a comfortable lifestyle and wellbeing. It also aims to provide all Saudis with opportunities to participate in the development plans. Consequently, the participation of Saudi women in various sectors becomes an urgent necessity to achieve the desired progress.

Vision 2030 is based on the kingdom's commitment to securing the well-being of its citizens by providing them with the means to lead a dignified life, taking into consideration the needs of individuals with disabilities. It strives to achieve progress through the participation of all members of society in its sustainable development [3]. This is in line with the UN Women's Strategy: Empowering Women and Girls with Disabilities - Towards Full and Effective Participation and Gender Equality was developed to ensure a more systematic approach to strengthening the inclusion of the rights of women with disabilities in UN Women's efforts to achieve gender equality, empower all women and girls, and realize their rights [4].

The focus on women in Saudi institutions has increased over the decades, which is evident in the efforts to grant women their rights in education, economy, healthcare, and law. The empowerment of women has further intensified

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across all sectors following the announcement of Vision 2030 in 2016. The vision included women in its development plans to give them a tangible role in contributing to development and achieving justice and equality between women and men, in accordance with the tolerant teachings of Islamic law [5].

Despite the efforts that have been exerted to empower Saudi women with disabilities, more needs to be done to achieve the goals set by the kingdom in its Vision 2030. In addition, there is a scarcity of local studies that focus on the empowerment of the target population. This prompted the researcher to conduct this study, aiming to fill the knowledge gap and to highlight the efforts made by the Saudi government in this area. The study seeks to answer the following main question: What are the areas of economic, social, educational, and healthcare empowerment for Saudi women considering Saudi Arabia's vision for 2030? This will be accomplished through conducting a thorough literature review of the studies, research, and reports that have addressed the status of empowering Saudi women with disabilities in light of Vision 2030.

2 Collaborative Efforts to Empower Women with Disabilities

Saudi Arabia has increased its focus on individuals with disabilities since ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. This convention ensures equality in rights and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities in all aspects. People with disabilities in the Kingdom are estimated to 7.1% from the total population. The percentage of women with disabilities is 47.8% from total number of people with disabilities in the KSA.. According to the General Authority for Statistics, the number of individuals with hearing disabilities is 289,355, while those with visual disabilities amount to 811,610. Furthermore, the number of individuals with mobility and attention disorders is estimated to be 30,155 of those with physical disabilities is approximately 833,136 of individuals with autism spectrum disorder is around 53,282, and of those with Down syndrome is about 19,428, see table 1 [1].

Table 1: Number of Saudi People with disabilities according to the Type of Disability [6].

Type of Disability	Number of Disability	Rank
Mobility and Physical Disability	833,136	1
Vision Disability	811,610	2
Hearing Disability	289,355	3
Autism Spectrum Disorder	53,282	4
Cognitive and Learning Disability	30,155	5
Down Syndrome	19,428	6

The role played by Saudi women, including those with disabilities, has accelerated the development of laws and regulations that promote their empowerment with the aim of enhancing their education, economic status, and health. These laws and regulations have created a safe environment and invaluable services that facilitate women's fulfillment of their national duties, while ensuring that they enjoy their full rights in all areas. At the same time, these laws contribute to driving development and achieving Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 for sustainable development [6].

This increasing interest in promoting women's empowerment has had a positive effect on the affairs of Saudi women with disabilities. For example, several initiatives, programs, and services have been established to provide them with better access to education and employment thus ensuring their independence and full participation in society [3]. This would agree with several studies conducted on the empowerment of women and social participation. For example, Dutta et al (2008) assert that empowering women with disabilities helps reduce the impact of the disability and enables these individuals to better participate in their societies [7]. Furthermore, according to Mohamed (2021), empowerment enables women with disabilities to acquire knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that enable them to actively participate in various activities and fields. It also contributes to changing the social attitudes towards women with disabilities, shifting from a culture of marginalization to a culture of empowerment [8].

As part of its focus on the rights of women, the Saudi government has launched several initiatives that ensure women's full participation in the economic, social, educational, health, and legal fields thus increasing their contribution to the development of their society. This reflects the country's commitment to comprehensive empowerment. Hardina et al (2007) refer to comprehensive empowerment as the process through which individuals are enabled and assisted to develop themselves, and acquire information, and skills, to become self-reliant and fulfil their potentials [9]. Meanwhile, the empowerment of individuals with disabilities focuses on caring for individuals with special needs, enabling them to improve their conditions by achieving specific goals and being capable of self-help and assisting others, thus becoming more able to determine the quality of their lives [10].

For the purposes of this study, I define empowerment as the process through which women with disabilities are enabled to take control of their circumstances and develop themselves by providing them with information, skills, self-reliance, and the capacity to make decisions that enable them to improve their conditions and achieve their economic, social, cultural, educational, and healthcare goals. This view of empowering women with disabilities aligns with the comprehensive vision of Saudi Arabia 2030. This vision, focusing on the development of the Saudi Arabian economy, was announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on April 25, 2016. Some of its goals and directions include empowering Saudi women with disabilities in different fields to enhance their developmental role in Saudi society.

3 Literature Review

A thorough research of local and international digital libraries revealed a significant lack of studies that focus on the empowerment of women with disabilities especially in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, I have included relevant local, Arab, and international studies that explored the empowerment of Saudi women in general and those that referred to the empowerment of women with disabilities.

A descriptive study conducted by Alqahtani (2022) determined that the Saudi society held positive views of the work of women with disabilities [11]. The study aimed to shed light on the key aspects of empowering women with disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as outlined in Vision 2030. It identified important aspects of empowering women with disabilities in the Kingdom, particularly in the field of education, including the inclusion of female students in schools and adapting curricula to cater to different types of disabilities. In the field of employment, efforts were made to launch the Tawafuq programme, which aims to employ individuals with disabilities [12]. Financial assistance was also provided to families caring for women with disabilities. Additionally, there was an expansion in the establishment and support of institutions and centres that provide care and rehabilitation programmes. Health empowerment of women with disabilities was addressed through the provision of healthcare services and preventive measures.

Another study that focused on the efforts of Saudi Arabia to support women with disabilities as part of its Vision 2030 concluded that the country is among the leading countries in upholding human rights, especially of those individuals with special needs. It also stated that Vision 2030 includes numerous ambitious programmes and goals, and that individuals with special needs have a prominent place in all aspects of social, educational, and political life [13].

Another study conducted by Mohamed (2021) focused on understanding the role of non-governmental organizations for individuals with special needs in the vocational empowerment of women in Saudi society in line with Vision 2030 [8]. The study employed a descriptive methodology and found that the role of these organizations in the vocational empowerment of women in Saudi society, considering Vision 2030, was significant. In 2021, the National Centre for Social Studies and Research conducted a mixed-methodology study that aimed at identifying the financial impact that the state of Saudi Arabia would achieve over the next ten years as a result of employing individuals with disabilities after providing them with the required training and qualifications by the job market [14]. The study also aimed to identify the legislative, social, and economic obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of rehabilitation, training, and employment programmes that are offered to people with disabilities. The study found the existence of legislative, social, and economic barriers that limit the opportunities for qualification, training, and employment of the target population. One of the key obstacles is the lack of accurate data on people with disabilities, especially those qualified for employment, and the failure of rehabilitation and training programmes to adopt international practices.

In a recent study, Al-Suwailem (2020) proposed a conceptual framework for activating the role of individuals with disabilities as part of the Saudi Vision 2030 based on the Australian National Disability Strategy. The study found that there are concerted efforts in KSA to improve services for individuals with disabilities in general, despite the absence of several aspects related to this group in the Quality-of-Life programme, such as education and health [3].

A descriptive-analytical study conducted by Omar (2020) aimed to explore the scope of economic empowerment of Saudi women and the obstacles they face [5]. The study found that the economic empowerment of Saudi women is based on the principles of personal development, achieving legal justice and equality, and assisting and dealing with women based on their available resources. Furthermore, a study by Otaibah (2020) sought to clarify the concept of the economic empowerment of women and its developmental impact on the Saudi society. The study determined that the economic empowerment of Saudi women has multiple positive implications for society, as it contributes to accelerating the achievement of sustainable development plans [17].

Additionally, an important aspect of empowerment is social inclusion. In fact, several studies discussed the negative effects of social isolation on individuals with disabilities, regardless of their gender. Some of the effects identified were troubled family relationships, domestic violence, and other behaviours that have unintentional negative effects on the mental health of women with disabilities. Therefore, inclusion is considered an important means of empowerment [18].

Maghrabi (2019) conducted a descriptive study that aimed to highlight the importance of empowering individuals with intellectual and functional disabilities in Saudi society and its relationship to the public's awareness of the significance of inclusion of intellectually disabled individuals in accordance with the Saudi Vision 2030 [19]. The study found a high level

of awareness of the role of inclusion in achieving the 2030 Vision among teachers. The subjects' responses concerning the vocational empowerment of individuals with disabilities were highly positive. Furthermore, a study by Saqr (2021) aimed to uncover the nature of the relationship between the level of Saudi women's awareness of social security and their social and economic empowerment in the context of sustainable development [20]. Some of its findings indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables. Additionally, a study by Knabe, Alem, and Peter (2018) reviewed the experiences of women with disabilities in Saudi Arabia who have obtained employment opportunities in various fields. The study conducted interviews with a diverse sample of women with disabilities, including those with hearing, visual, and motor disabilities. The study identified a need to implement and activate the policies established by the Kingdom to support individuals with disabilities in obtaining job opportunities [21].

Focusing on the situation in United Arab Emirates, Al-Gharaibeh & Al-Remaih (2022) invited fifteen Emirati women with disabilities selected from a snowball sample to share their experiences and successes [4]. The study revealed several important factors that facilitated the full participation of these Emirati women in domestic and professional life starting from the official and nonofficial will to support the target population to other significant factors such as the social awareness, the availability of support services, legislative support, and practical strategies. Looking at the Jordanian context, Alrimawi (2014) aimed to identify the problems faced by women with disabilities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and their relationship to various variables. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach and found that several problems hindering the empowerment of women with disabilities, including social, vocational, and educational challenges, and several issues related to their rehabilitation and vocational training [22].

4 Aims and Methodology of the Study

The study aims to address the following main question: What are the areas of economic, social, educational, and healthcare empowerment for Saudi women considering Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030? This will be achieved through conducting an analysis and review of the relevant literature that has addressed the empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities under the vision of the Kingdom for 2030, focusing on the actual status of the economic, social, educational, and health empowerment of the target population. The findings of the study will shed light on the current state of empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities in the economic, social, cultural, and educational fields, especially after the announcement of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 in the year 2016. It will enable decision-makers make informed decisions to enhance the participation of Saudi women with disabilities in various aspects of national development. Additionally, the current study will provide researchers and social specialists with valuable insights that would contribute to the design of appropriate intervention programmes that promote the empowerment and inclusion of the target population.

5 Results

5.1 Economic Empowerment

The economic empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities is one of the main priorities of Saudi Arabia's vision. This is represented by efforts to enable the target population to participate in and undertake investment projects that enhance their role in the development of the Saudi society. This is because opportunities for economic empowerment for Saudi women, including women with disabilities, are a result of the Kingdom's developmental vision for 2030, which enables them to join the labour market and access employment opportunities in various sectors [23].

As Davis et al (2013) argue, empowering women with disabilities is of great importance, as human capital is the fundamental component for achieving economic and social development [24]. Consequently, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 encompasses programmes, projects, and economic objectives for Saudi women with disabilities that aim to provide them with a prominent role in the economic workforce. It is worth noting that the participation rate of Saudi women in the economy increased from 19% in 2016 to 33.2% by the end of 2020. Studies by the National Centre for Studies and Research indicate that the rate of economic activity of Saudi women with disabilities increased to 10% during 2016 through their participation in the labour market [14].

The economic empowerment of women with disabilities through employment and job stability will enable them to utilize their capabilities, achieve economic self-sufficiency, enhance their self-esteem, acquire self-confidence, and exercise their social and economic rights [25]. The initiatives conducted under the National Transformation Programme to empower both males and females with disabilities to participate in the labour market have resulted in an increase in the percentage of employed individuals with disabilities from 7.70% in 2017 to 12% by the end of 2020 [14].

Mohammed (2021) argues that the vocational empowerment of individuals with disabilities is one of the key factors for their economic stability, as it satisfies their needs and ambitions, and encourages their engagement with society, especially

when the job suits their physical and intellectual needs and capabilities [26]. Additionally, the participation of women with disabilities in the workforce contributes to improving the economic status of their families, enhances their social standing, and promotes self-reliance. However, this is not always the situation in different parts of the world. Exploring the situation in Zimbabwe, Barbra & Mutswanga (2014) indicate that individuals with disabilities there generally face restrictions in accessing employment opportunities and are often considered second-class citizens, which makes them feel marginalized [27]. To counter such realities, and in its efforts to economically empower people with disabilities, the Saudi government has issued directives to the private sector to employ individuals with disabilities by allocating 4% of job positions for them [13]. A study by the National Center for Studies and Research (2021) highlights that the process of economic empowerment of individuals with disabilities through employment and job stability brings several personal benefits, such as utilizing their capabilities and achieving economic self-sufficiency [14]. Moreover, it helps the state drive development and progress, harness idle potential for productivity, provide a workforce, achieve social well-being and sustainable development, and generate positive financial impacts by contributing to the state budget.

Accordingly, the relevant authorities in Saudi Arabia, including the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, have sought to make increasing the participation of women in general, and women with disabilities, in the labour market through various programmes and initiatives one of the vision's objectives. One of the main projects that focus on the economic empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities under the Vision 2030 initiative is the Tawafuq Programme.

Tawafuq aims to employ individuals with disabilities in the private and non-profit sectors [12]. It enables them to access suitable employment opportunities based on their abilities and qualifications. It also focuses on developing an inclusive work environment that accommodates their needs, with the aim of encouraging the employment of capable individuals with disabilities in the private sector and facilitating their access to employment opportunities that match their abilities and qualifications. Additionally, the programme encompasses various projects that enable women with disabilities to participate in the workforce, including:

1. Projects

- a. The Entrepreneurs and People with Disabilities Network.
- b. Licensing workplaces as environments suitable for the work of people with disabilities.
- c. The official definition of disability and employment.
- d. The job seeking journey for people with disability.
- e. Ability to work measurement scale.

2. Initiatives

- a. Inclusion and Diversity in the Work Market which seeks to create a suitable, supportive, and inclusive environment that help women with disabilities join the job market.
- b. Promotion of Working Remotely which is an initiative that aims to increase the number of job seekers from amongst women with disabilities from all regions of the Kingdom.
- c. Promotion of Flexible Workdays which seeks to increasing the number of job opportunities available to Saudi women with limited education.
- d. Wosul Programme aims to support and facilitate the employment of women in the private sector by facilitating their commute to their workplaces.

One of the economic support and assistance programmes for individuals with disabilities under Vision 2030 has provided financial aid to over 400,000 individuals. A budget of five billion SAR was dedicated to the target population, enabling people with disabilities to live under the promising vision of the Kingdom 2030.

One of the most important aspects of economic empowerment of Saudi women, especially after the announcement of Vision 2030, is the introduction of the Disability and Employment Card by the government in 2016. A system was established to issue certificates for workplaces characterized by trust and pride in individuals with disabilities. In addition, 10% of individuals with disabilities were employed in the KSA in 2016, and a quarter of employees received benefits under the "Tawafuq" programme. Furthermore, 17 Saudi companies joined the "Qaderoon" network for employers and people with disabilities, with some companies increasing the number of employees with disabilities [28].

To sum up, the economic empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities is underway through the following:

- Higher rates of participation by Saudi women with disabilities in the labour market in accordance with their abilities and qualifications.
- An increase in the number of women with disabilities employed by the public and private sectors.
- The implementation of several programmes, projects, and initiatives to support the employment of Saudi women with disabilities .
- An increase in the number of employees with disabilities in many Saudi companies in 2016.

5.2 Social Empowerment

Recognizing the momentous role Saudi women play in society, women with disabilities have received significant attention in Vision 2030. As males accounts for 50.64%, while females account for 49.06% of the Saudi population, the lack of presence and empowerment of women in various fields can impact the development and progress of the whole society. Consequently, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development has sought to empower all individuals with disabilities by providing them with training and employment opportunities that facilitate their smooth integration as active members of society. According to a research project conducted by the National Centre for Social Research and Studies, one aspect of the social empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities under Vision 2030 is the availability of programmes and collective activities aimed at developing their capabilities and integrating them in society, while reducing the stigma associated with them [29].

The programmes and strategies established as part of the Saudi Vision 2030, such as the Quality-of-Life Programme, aim at providing people with disabilities with the means to lead fulfilling and dignified lives by providing them with suitable infrastructure and facilities and the necessary means of transportation to access these facilities throughout the Kingdom. This would most certainly enable them to gain more independence and facilitate their smooth integration into society [14]. In particular, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development is actively involved in various social-care programmes and initiatives that target women with disabilities. These programmes provide preventive and social services to the target population in their family environment that enhance their personal capabilities, help them achieve independence, and provide them with monthly financial aid and necessary medical devices. Among the important services provided to Saudi women with disabilities are the following:

- The Disability Assessment Service: This is an electronic service that allows women with disabilities to register and update their information with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development to receive the services provided by the Ministry for all individuals with disabilities.
- Monthly Aid Request Service: An electronic service launched by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development that enables Saudi women with disabilities to apply for monthly financial aid.
- Requesting Financial Aid for Medical Devices Service: An electronic service launched by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development that enables Saudi women with disabilities to apply for financial aid to acquire the necessary medical devices.

To effectively promote the social empowerment of individuals with disabilities, it is crucial to follow a well-devised gradual process that begins with securing the material well-being of society, including individuals with disabilities [26]. The next step should aim at changing the prevailing perceptions of people with disabilities and recognizing them as active contributors to society, as well as enhancing their positive participation in the community. Based on the above, the impact of social empowerment for Saudi women with disabilities within the framework of the Vision becomes evident through the following opportunities:

- Increased social services and financial aid, including monthly allowances and medical support.
- Expansion of care and social rehabilitation centres.
- Implementation of various programmes and initiatives to support and assist women with disabilities.
- Strengthening the role of Saudi women with disabilities through social integration.
- Enhancement of social services provided to Saudi women with disabilities to promote their well-being, and ensure that they lead dignified and fulfilling lives.

5.3 Educational Empowerment

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is recognized as a country committed to human rights, particularly the rights of persons with disabilities, through the enactment of laws that guarantee equal rights for all individuals. The country firmly believes in the importance of equal educational opportunities for all its citizens. For example, and in line with Vision 2030, the Kingdom has provided numerous incentives to encourage families to support Saudi women in their pursuit of education at all stages. Since the announcement of Vision 2030, Saudi women, including those with disabilities, have witnessed a remarkable shift in securing their social, economic, and educational rights, comparable to advancements seen in most countries worldwide [30].

The education system in the Kingdom plays a fundamental role in empowering Saudi women with disabilities. Furthermore, Saudi laws that concern education emphasize gender equality in all aspects, including admission and enrolment procedures, curriculum development, examinations, teacher qualifications, and the quality of educational facilities and equipment. Women have received significant attention in the field of education, with the establishment of the world's largest female-only university, Princess Norah bint Abdulrahman University [31]. In addition, the Saudi

Ministry of Education has implemented appropriate measures to empower all Saudi women. For instance, it has directed all its sectors not to require women to obtain guardian consent when accessing services [29]. Tangible progress has been achieved in integrating female students with disabilities into public schools, adapting the curriculum to suit different types and severities of disabilities, and providing educational programmes [8]. It is, therefore, evident that the opportunities for empowering Saudi women with disabilities in the field of education have expanded, particularly after the announcement of Vision 2030.

Furthermore, the Kingdom has adopted the principle of inclusive education, which was first implemented in general education at the beginning of the academic year 2015/2016. This approach serves students with disabilities in line with the endorsement of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the country's approach to enhancing and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, Cabinet Decision No. (534) of 2015 includes students with physical disabilities and health impairments in the allowances provided for special education students and to double the special education allowance to cover 14 types of physical and health impairments [11]. Moreover, a strategy for special education has been developed including the launch of the National Comprehensive Education Project in regular schools, the provision of support services, higher education opportunities, and technical and vocational training initiatives for individuals with disabilities, and the activation of electronic educational services. Among the most important services provided to women with disabilities are:

- Madrasati platform for distance learning and e-learning for individuals with disabilities.
- Noor programme for enrolling female students with disabilities in kindergarten and special education.
- Mu'in programme for enrolling young girls with disabilities in kindergarten and special education.
- Sanid programme for providing support educational services for those in need.

Furthermore, in terms of opportunities for empowering Saudi women in the field of education, both King Saud and Princess Norah bint Abdulrahman universities have given access to deaf students, and individuals with disabilities, to their postgraduate programmes, by setting specific admissions conditions and regulations [29].

5.4 Health Empowerment

The healthcare sector in the Kingdom has recently undergone a qualitative shift and substantial progress. Saudi women have played a significant role in this development and made valuable contributions to the services the healthcare provides. This development has had a positive impact on the wellbeing of women in general, and those with disabilities in particular. It has been observed that the Ministry of Health is working on providing healthcare services for people with disabilities with the aim of developing their capabilities, reducing the effects of disabilities, and enhancing their integration into society. Furthermore, it has expanded free healthcare programmes and services provided to them. The focus has been on developing disease prevention and early detection programmes, and healthcare rehabilitation services for women with disabilities, such as physical therapy and assistive devices. Efforts have also been made to facilitate their access to their healthcare rights through the Special Needs Card, which enables them to receive necessary healthcare services [32]. In addition, some of the goals of Vision 2030 emphasize empowering women in various fields, especially in the healthcare sector, by providing opportunities for education, training, medical professional qualification, and vocational training, in addition to providing prevention, care, and rehabilitation services. To add, support offices have been established by the Ministry to provide logistical services for persons with disabilities in healthcare facilities, and there has been an expansion of preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitation healthcare services.

These measures fall in line with the recommendations of the World Human Rights Report (2022) which indicates that empowering women in the field of health requires the removal of all barriers that hinder their access to healthcare services [33]. It also requires preventive, incentivizing, and therapeutic measures to protect women from the effects of harmful practices and cultural norms that deprive them of their reproductive rights, reduce the health risks they face, and particularly decrease maternal mortality rates and protect women from domestic violence.

The health empowerment of all Saudi women is further enhanced through awareness campaigns and school lessons about women's rights in the medical facilities. In March 2017, the Saudi Ministry of Health launched an awareness campaign (It's Your Right) which affirmed that women have the right to consent to important medical interventions, including undergoing caesarean section, without the need for parental consent, which is now obsolete and no longer required in hospitals across the country [34].

There has also been a significant expansion in the healthcare services available to Saudi women with disabilities. These include "Mawid" appointment service, Sehha application, and the "937" application, which provide phone medical consultations. Additionally, several initiatives have been introduced, such as the Home Healthcare Initiative, which allows people with disabilities to access healthcare services through electronic applications on the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development website, the Mandatory Health Insurance Initiative, the "We Are with You" Initiative for serving the deaf community in all regions of the Kingdom, and the Priority Initiative. Moreover, the Ministry of Health has

activated numerous electronic healthcare services, including the Electronic Mental Health Guide, appointment services, and psychological and mental consultations (Qareeboun). Some Saudi universities also provide specialized services for people with disabilities through hospitals affiliated with their medical colleges. Universities also establish research chairs for disability research and social studies.

From the above, it becomes evident that the empowering Saudi women with disabilities in the context of Vision 2030 is reflected in the following:

- The expansion of healthcare services (preventive, therapeutic, rehabilitative, and logistical) for persons with disabilities especially women.
- The provision of various electronic healthcare services by the Ministry of Health including home healthcare services, electronic mental health guide, appointment services, and online psychological and mental consultations ("Qareeboun").
- The implementation of multiple healthcare programmes and initiatives that align with the general and specific goals of Vision 2030 to empower women with disabilities.

6 Discussion and Implications

After a careful review and analysis of the previous studies, reports, and the goals of Vision 2030 related to empowering women with disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the study has reached several conclusions. The most important of these is that the empowerment of Saudi women with disabilities has clearly manifested in all areas outlined by Vision 2030. However, and despite the efforts made to support the participation of women with disabilities in economic, social, health, educational fields, which have led to the integration of many disabled women into life, work, and society, further efforts are needed to overcome the economic, social, and cultural barriers that negatively impact their lives. These efforts will ensure the effective participation of women in various sectors. For example, Alqahtani's study (2022) confirmed the existence of some obstacles hindering the improvement of empowering disabled women in the workforce, including negative social attitudes [11]. Similarly, Al-khamshi (2021) and Ben-Muqeil (2021) identified economic and social challenges facing women's empowerment [35,36]. Albashr's (2021) study revealed organizational, human, and technical challenges that limit the empowerment of Saudi women [37]. Additionally, Omar (2020) identified various obstacles to women's economic empowerment, such as the social norms and attitudes, lack of training opportunities, and low economic awareness [5]. Moreover, certain social practices have presented significant challenges to Saudi women and their empowerment in society [38].

Despite the many obstacles mentioned above, this study demonstrates that significant progress has been made towards the full integration of Saudi women with disabilities in society. This is evident in the following:

- There is a growing interest in the participation of Saudi women with disabilities in the economic field, particularly in the labour market, in line with their abilities and qualifications. Statistics indicate an increase in the percentage of employed individuals with disabilities from 7.70% in 2017 to 12% at the end of 2020.
- There is a noticeable expansion in the participation of Saudi women with disabilities in the public and private sectors in terms of employment and job opportunities.
- The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development in the Kingdom plays a crucial role in socially empowering Saudi women with disabilities by enhancing social services that target them, providing them with monthly financial and medical assistance, expanding the establishment of care and social rehabilitation centres, and implementing various programmes and initiatives to support and assist women with disabilities.
- The Saudi Ministry of Health continuously seeks to empower women with disabilities by expanding healthcare services (preventive, therapeutic, rehabilitative, and logistical) available to them.
- Various methods are employed to deliver healthcare services to individuals with disabilities, in line with Vision 2030 including home healthcare, an electronic guide for mental health, appointment services, and psychological and mental consultations (Qareeboun).
- There is a strong desire among Saudi women with disabilities to participate in economic and social development, aiming to improve their financial status and achieve integration into Saudi society.

Based on the findings of this study, the following could positively impact the empowerment of women with disabilities in Saudi Arabia:

1. At the broader system level, social workers can work closely with community leaders to establish culturally responsive services (For example see [39,40]).
2. All stakeholders should be encouraged to utilize the available resources and establish more programmes, initiatives, and necessary service projects to expand the women with disabilities' opportunities to participate in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and healthcare fields in line with the goals and vision of Saudi Arabia 2030.

3. Saudi universities can host more academic conferences that can provide insights and necessary directions for the development of strategies that promote the ability of women with disabilities to fully participate in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and healthcare domains.
4. Existing plans, programmes, and projects that aim at developing the economic, educational, and healthcare services for women with disabilities can be integrated with the relevant strategies of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030.
5. Relevant government entities should be encouraged to increase the target population's participation in the labour market to improve their economic status and well-being.
6. The private sector should prioritize the employment of Saudi women with disabilities to increase their participation in the labour market and fulfil their economic role in line with the ambitions of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 in the economic sector.
7. Concentrated efforts should be made to counter the prevailing perceptions of women with disabilities in the Saudi society in both the media and schools.
8. Those concerned should organize awareness campaigns that educate business owners and the private sector about the importance of, and the financial and human value that can be gained by the participation of women with disabilities in the labour market
9. The concerned entities should hold seminars, conferences, and lectures to raise the local communities' awareness of the important role women with disabilities play in society as befits their capabilities.

7 Conclusion

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has achieved remarkable accomplishments in caring for people with disabilities in general, and women with disabilities in particular. This includes legislation that guarantees the rights of disabled women, as well as the establishment of service institutions that aim to empower them in all forms. Additionally, efforts have been made to identify the number of disabled individuals according to their type of disability in all cities of the Kingdom. All this undoubtedly reflects Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Finally, working to benefit from best global will contribute to increasing empowerment in all its forms for Saudi women with disabilities, and it will help promote the desired social integration across all sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict regarding the publication of this paper.

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