

Quantitative analysis of determinants of the participation of disabled persons in economic development

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Abstract

This study is meant to address the determinants of the participation of persons with disability in the national agenda process with regard to economic development. It is also to examine the issue as to whether entrepreneurship is a viable career option for persons with disability in Ghana. The researcher made use of the mixed method, that is, both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In terms of qualitative data, they were obtained through focus group discussions while in the case of the quantitative data, the researcher made use of self-administered questionnaire which comprised close-ended and open-ended questions.

The major findings of the study, among others, were non-development of hidden talents of persons with disability, a situation amounting to neglect of skill training in different areas, including entrepreneurship; non-recognition of persons with disability as stakeholders in society and also inadequate knowledge about disability due to lack of adequate data on disability issues.

Introduction

Many a time, relevant or appropriate systems and processes are not put in place for the less privileged such as the disabled to boost their capacities for socio-economic development. Even where some systems are put in place, they may not be very relevant to the special problematic issues at stake. To say the least, this group of people is considered neglected or marginalised because of their vulnerable nature and perceived inability to fight back for their rights and dignity. They are not involved in the process of participation in national development because they are perceived as unproductive or incapable of any meaningful contribution (Genesson, 2000).

One challenge is the way to effectively and satisfactorily address the needs of persons with disability whose interests as members of society ought to be met (Barton, 1996). Overlooking the development needs of people with disabilities or disinvesting from programmes that directly benefit them can be one of the most dramatic forms of exclusion people with disabilities can face (Branson and Miller, 1989). People with disabilities remain largely invisible in their communities. They can be made economically productive through empowerment. Clark (2008) showed that whilst there was a degree of autonomy provided by empowerment, it also made way for extended surveillance and control, hence the contradiction perspective (Fardini, 2001).

The group of disabled or physically challenged persons in Ghana, like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, has a wide range of interests and concerns, including the determinants of their participation in national development as well as training in relevant and talent-specific entrepreneurial skills, which must be carefully segregated and systems put in place to address them.

Against this background, the need to research into issues that will encourage full participation in national development and also explore the entrepreneurial needs of the disabled has become more pressing than ever before in view of the rising rate of unemployment in the world. This work, therefore, seeks to research into conditions that contribute to non-participation in national development programmes of the disabled together with meeting their entrepreneurial needs and also find out how best these needs can be addressed. Practical, workable solutions to the problem will make persons with disability self-employable and make them economically independent on society.

For any nation to achieve meaningful and sustainable socio-economic development there is the need to pay attention to all its human resources. It is, therefore, crucial for every nation to fully explore, cultivate, harness and utilise all the human resources at its disposal in an extensive and intensive manner. This calls for conscious, result-oriented and purposeful efforts towards identifying and addressing the needs of all the various sections of society so as to bring everyone on board the national development agenda.

What this means is that every effort must be made to ensure that the full participation of every citizen in national development programmes is guaranteed. If this is done, the number of dependant individuals and groups in society will be drastically reduced, if not completely eliminated. In spite of the possibility of exploring and

finding a solution to the problem, the needs of certain sections of society have not been met or addressed appreciably and appropriately. This potentially surmountable, yet unaddressed social problem has become an obstacle facing many countries the world over. It is a challenging social obstacle that hangs like an albatross over many societies across the world.

Society is made up of individuals and groups whose interests and concerns may be partially met, fully met or not met at all depending on their existing circumstances, capacities and potentials. Since people's interests and concerns may not be the same it is important that society identifies such interests so as to be able to address the needs of each member of society. While some people may have their concerns addressed others may find themselves neglected or excluded from the mainstream of national development. This neglected group of people may see themselves as endangered species since society does not seek to bring them on board the national development agenda. One group of people, as has been pointed out already, who have been neglected or marginalised in society comprises persons with disability. This is very unfortunate because dignity and justice for all persons are established universal principles.

What is disability?

The World Health Organisation defines disability as ***“any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in a manner or within a range considered normal for a human being”*** (WHO, 1996). Disabilities are of various types and degrees. They may be visible or hidden; temporary, permanent or unpredictable; cognitive developmental or many others. Another definition has been provided by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The ICF define disability as the outcome of interaction between a person with impairment and the environmental and attitudinal barriers one may face. Again, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) explains that a person with disability is an ***“individual whose prospects of securing, returning, retaining and advancing in suitable employment are substantially reduced as a result of a duly recognised physical, sensory, intellectual or mental impairment.”***

On its part, Voluntary Services Organisation (VSO) explains disability as the disadvantage and exclusion which arise as an outcome of the interactions between people who have impairments, on one hand, and the social and environmental barriers they face, on the other, due to the failure of society to take account of their rights and needs. This explanation emphasises disability as a disadvantage and exclusion to people with disability.

In Ghana, the Persons With Disability Act (Act 715) states that a person with disability is an ***“individual with a physical, mental or sensory impairment including a visual, hearing or speech functional disability which gives rise to physical, cultural or social barriers that substantially limit one or more of the major life activities of that individual.”*** This definition is congruent with that of Disabled People International (DPI). According to DPI, people are disabled when, as a result of a physical, intellectual or sensory impairment they are denied the opportunities generally available in the community that are necessary for the fundamental of living, including education, employment, housing, financial and personal security family life, participation in political and social groups, religious activities, intimate sexual relations, access to public facilities, freedom of movement and a general style of daily living.

From the definitions given it is clear that a disabled person is restricted in certain respects. Characteristically, such a person is faced with the following obstacles:

- Impairments of varied forms
- Disadvantaged interactions with society
- Faces barriers which may be attitudinal, institutional and environmental

All these have culminated in non-acceptance of disabled persons in some circles due to age-old prejudice which arises from cultural and traditional beliefs, fear, ignorance and stigmatisation. The consequences and effect of this non-acceptance in the exclusion or seclusion suffered by disabled persons as a result of which there is denial of opportunities to employment, development and inclusiveness in social life.

There are persons with disabilities in all parts of the world and at all levels in every society. The number of persons with disabilities in the world is large and is growing. Both the causes and the consequences of disability vary throughout the world. Those variations are the result of different socio-economic circumstances and of the different provisions that States make for the well-being of their citizens. Present disability policy is the result of developments over the past 200 years. In many ways it reflects the general living conditions and social and economic policies of different times. In the disability field, however, there are also many specific circumstances

that have influenced the living conditions of persons with disabilities. Ignorance, neglect, superstition and fear are social factors that throughout the history of disability have isolated persons with disabilities and delayed their development.

Over the years, disability policy developed from elementary care at institutions to education for children with disabilities and rehabilitation for persons who became disabled during adult life. Through education and rehabilitation, persons with disabilities became more active and a driving force in the further development of disability policy. Organisations of persons with disabilities, their families and advocates were formed, which advocated better conditions for persons with disabilities. After the Second World War the concepts of integration and normalisation were introduced, which reflected a growing awareness of the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Towards the end of the 1960s organisations of persons with disabilities in some countries started to formulate a new concept of disability. That new concept indicated the close connection between the limitation experienced by individuals with disabilities, the design and structure of their environments and the attitude of the general population. At the same time the problems of disability in developing countries were more and more highlighted. In some of those countries the percentage of the population with disabilities was estimated to be very high and, for the most part, persons with disabilities were extremely poor.

Literature Review

The issue of Marginalisation and the concept of “*Ladder of Participation*” in “*Children’s Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship*” by Hart (1992) were used to support the study. Hart used “Ladder of Participation” to achieve two things: First, he sought to illustrate the concept of inclusiveness in relation to vulnerable individuals. By this, he looked at the issue of inclusiveness in its entirety, pointing out that it is not everyone or group that may be included in certain processes, particularly when the individuals or groups are vulnerable. Second, he used the concept to demonstrate a process that any vulnerable adult might experience. Here also, he showed how vulnerable groups or individuals might be involved in various degrees of inclusiveness, an indication that some people may be more involved or included than others which goes to show that the perceived inclusiveness of some sections of society in a particular process may not be real or, even if real, may be largely cosmetic.

Some studies such as Barnes, 1991, have revealed that certain people with disabilities run small and medium scale businesses. This means that self-employment, in form of entrepreneurship for some disabled people, is already in operation, yet still in a very limited scale.

Among others, the study examined various works on attitudes towards disability in countries such as Ireland, Australia, England and Scotland and also in other parts of the world (Rosenthal et al, 2006). Issues reviewed include stereotyping and lack of visibility of disabled people in society, health indicators for people with intellectual disability, employment rate of disabled people and their education, the social construction of disability, that is, how society perceives disability as well as interventions to improve attitudes to disability, among others. In England, Deal (2006) examined attitudes of people with and without disabilities towards other people with disabilities and to different impairment groups. The results were similar and attitudes of both groups fell within the positive threshold of the scale indicating positive attitudes to disability. However, when measured by a subtle prejudice sub-scale of the instrument used, people with and without disabilities produced more negative attitudes. This suggests that people may often hold subtle forms of prejudice towards disability that may not be detected when using more direct methods that allow respondents to respond in ways they consider more socially appropriate. Deal (2006) also cites studies that demonstrate that attitudes towards people with disabilities are predominantly negative

The literature makes it clear that the attitudes of disabled people towards people with disability are more favourable compared to those of non-disabled people (Grewal et al, 2002). It, therefore, follows that if persons with disability are selected to represent their own interest, things would work out better for them. As has been pointed out by Massie (2006), persons with disability “*are under-represented where decisions about policy and service provision are taken.*”

Methodology

Under this section, the population used for the study and, among others, how the respondents were, selected has been explained. The issues covered in the section were: target population, study population, sampling frame, sampling design/scheme and sample size.

Target Population

The target population in the study covered persons with disability in four regions in Ghana. The regions were Greater Accra, Ashanti, Western and Volta.

Study Population

The study population comprised persons with disability who were registered members of their respective regional association of disabled persons.

Sampling Frame

Within each regional association of disabled persons, the categories of the population covered were: (a) people with hearing and speech impairment, (b) persons with movement difficulties (c) the visually impaired, and (d) the mentally challenged.

Sampling Design

Simple random sampling was used to select four of the ten regions in Ghana. Each region was numbered and the numbers separately written on pieces of paper. The pieces of paper were put in a container and shuffled. Without looking at the container, a research assistant was asked to pick the numbers from the container until four regions were selected. The regions selected were Greater Accra, Ashanti, Western and Volta. Each regional association of persons with disability was stratified into:

- (a) persons with hearing and speech impairment,
- (b) persons with movement difficulties,
- (c) the visually impaired, and
- (d) the mentally challenged.

Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select a third of the total number of persons. The figures obtained from each stratum in respect of the selected regions were as follows:

Greater Accra Region

(a) Persons with hearing and speech impairment.....	53
(b) Persons with movement difficulties.....	210
(c) The visually impaired.....	101
(d) The mentally challenged.....	53
Total.....	423

Ashanti Region

(a) Persons with hearing and speech impairment.....	40
(b) Persons with movement difficulties.....	170
(c) The visually impaired.....	72
(d) The mentally challenged.....	60
Total.....	342

Western Region

(a) Persons with hearing and speech impairment.....	36
(b) Persons with movement difficulties.....	48
(c) The visually impaired.....	39
(d) The mentally challenged.....	40
Total.....	163

Volta Region

(a) Persons with hearing and speech impairment.....	39
(b) Persons with movement difficulties.....	52
(c) The visually impaired.....	33
(d) The mentally challenged.....	16
Total.....	140

The chairman and secretary of each regional association were purposely selected. These executive members were supposed to have in-depth knowledge about the association and the membership.

Sample size

The total number of people covered in the study with respect to the four regions in Ghana was 1,068. The breakdown was as follows:

Greater Accra Region	425
Ashanti Region.....	344
Western Region.....	165
Volta Region.....	142

The study was carried out in the same four regions, namely, Ashanti, Greater Accra, Volta and Western. One-third of the registered members of the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD) in each region were used in the study. Registered members in each of the regions were very small compared to the actual numbers of persons with disability in those regions. It is, therefore, clear from the registered members of GFD in the various regions used in the study, as will soon be seen in Table 1, that special effort needs to be mounted to influence many persons with disability to officially register with the organisation for disability matters i.e. GFD. Many of them do not see the need to register with GFD because of the easy way to make a living through begging on the streets. This must be discouraged in view of the dangers associated with begging on the streets. What is more, the regional offices of the GFD need to be properly organised and activated to perform their functions as appendages of the Head Office in Accra. This also calls for proper registers and documentation of membership. Authorities in Ghana must come up to recognise the right of the organisations of persons with disabilities to represent persons with disabilities at national, regional and local levels. Also, we need to recognise the advisory role of organisations of persons with disabilities in decision-making on disability matters. For this reason, the state of Ghana must encourage and support economically and in other ways the formation and strengthening of organisations of persons with disabilities, family members and/or advocates. This is important because such organisations have a role to play in the development of disability policy.

What is more, Ministries, Departments and Agencies need to establish ongoing communication with organisations of persons with disabilities and ensure their participation in the development of government policies. This means that continuous dialoguing with the Ghana Federation of the Disabled is very essential. The role of GFD and other organisations of persons with disabilities could help to identify needs and priorities; to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measures concerning the lives of persons with disabilities; and to contribute to public awareness and also to advocate change.

Apart from this as an instrument of self-help, organisations like the GFD provides and promotes opportunities for the development of skills in various fields, mutual support among members and information sharing. Thus, the GFD could perform its advisory role in many different ways such as having permanent representation on boards of government-funded agencies, serving on public commissions and providing expert knowledge on different projects. This advisory role of the GFD should be ongoing in order to develop and deepen the exchange of views and information between itself and the state. When properly organised with active nation-wide branches, the GFD could be permanently represented on national disability-related committees or similar bodies. Through this the GFD could be developed and strengthened to ensure that it influences matters at the district, regional and national levels.

Again, if the GFD is to become vibrant in the country and operate with the kind of dynamism expected from them, PWDs themselves must exhibit great interest and commitment towards the revival of the GFD. Anything short of this will not help matters. The Government of Ghana, Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare as well as other relevant institutions in the country all have a role to play in this matter. And this is where the National Council on Persons With Disability (NCPWD) can be of help. By its mandate, the NCPWD is expected to compile a register of all persons with disabilities as well as institutions caring for such people throughout the country. The compilation of such data is very vital because it helps in better planning strategies for PWDs. We need to work towards ensuring that the GFD does not merely exist on paper but in reality. Persons with disability in the country must, therefore, learn to come together as a group of people whose interests are closely tied to their own fate and survival.

Regional Breakdown of Registered members of GFD

There were registered members of GFD in the regions used in the study. The regional breakdown of the registered members of GFD in the four selected regions as well as the one-third of each population used in the study is as follows:

Table 1: Regional breakdown of registered members of GFD in the four selected regions for the study as at September, 2012

Region	Registered Members of GFD	Respondents (One-third)
Ashanti	1,130	342
Greater Accra	1,397	423
Volta	467	140
Western	539	163
Total	3,530	1,068

From Table 1 above, it can be seen that Greater Accra had the highest number of registered members of 1,397 followed by Ashanti with 1,130, Western with 539 and Volta with 467. The figure from Volta is considered too low because according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Volta Region “*has the highest proportion of population with disability.*” The report states that Volta had 4.3% of the disability population given of 737,743 which amounted to 31,723.

What this shows is that most of the persons with disability in the region have not registered as members of GFD to promote their interests. A figure of 467 persons with disability officially registered with the Volta Regional branch of GFD, out of a total of 31,723 members captured by the 2010 Population and Housing Census for that region, amounts to only 1.47%. Like other persons with disability in other parts of the world, they prefer to be on the streets and beg for alms.

The same applies to the rest of the other regions used in the study, seeing that registered members of GFD in Greater Accra, Ashanti and Western regions are also far lower compared to the total disability population in those areas. This is also not surprising because persons with disability in the three regions appear unenthusiastic about the need to register with their regional GFD to fight for the cause and interests of PWDs. However, the figures for the disability population in Greater Accra and Ashanti were comparatively high because of the commercial nature of their capitals. The capitals – Accra and Kumasi – are commercial centres that are, needless to say, characterised by numerous business activities, making it possible for them to mingle with relatively high income earners and depending on them for alms.

With regard to the four regions used for the study, information was sought on respondents’ sex, age, educational background and occupation. All these are discussed, one after the other, on the subsequent pages.

Sex of Respondents

Both male and female respondents were interviewed. In all, 1,068 respondents were interviewed by means of questionnaire as can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	670	62.7
Female	398	37.3
Total	1,068	100%

The male respondents (62.7%) were more than their female counterparts (37.3%). This can be explained by the fact that the male population appears to be more daring and ready to join GFD to promote their interest compared to their female counterparts. Also, in terms of sex, the female suffer more humiliation than the male. The male, for example, tend to enjoy stability in marriage compared to the female. A female person who is disabled may find it more difficult to marry compared to her male counterpart.

All these are possible reasons that help to explain why female members of the GFD are far lower even though according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, in terms of disability population, “*there are more females (52.5%) than males (47.5%) with some form of disability.*” The female deserve to be encouraged, like the males, to be at the forefront of the fight for recognition and awareness creation in society as well as participation in national development. Staying at the forefront of the fight for recognition will help to change the negative perception certain people have about disability. This way, many women faced with such challenges will be encouraged to register as official members of GFD.

Age of Respondents

The respondents fell into various age categories. The age categories were 15-19, 25-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49 and, finally, 50 and above.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

Age	Number	Percentage
15-19	30	2.8
20-24	27	2.5
25-29	82	7.7
30-34	342	32.0
35-39	350	32.8
40-44	146	13.7
45-49	44	4.1
50 and above	47	4.4
Total	1,068	100%

In terms of age, the respondents were mostly middle-aged, that is, from 30 to 44 years, with less than a quarter being either less than 29 years or 50 years and above. As Table 3 shows, a substantial number of the respondents fell within age ranges: 30-34 (32.0%), 35-39 (32.8%) and 40-44 (13.7%). Together, the three age groups constituted 78.5%. The rest (21.5%) were in the age brackets of 15-19 (2.8%), 20-24 (2.5%), 25-29 (7.7%), 40-49 (4.1%) and 50 years and above (4.4%). Those who were less than 29 years were few possibly because many of them were now learning some trade or vocation and, therefore, did not see the need to be members of GFD. Those who fell into the category of 50 years and above were also few possibly because at 50 and above they considered themselves too old and, probably, weak to play any meaningful role within GFD.

Highest Level of Education Attained by Respondents

Various levels of education had been attained by the respondents. These were Primary, Junior High and Senior High. Others were O and A Levels, Diploma/Degree and Vocational/Technical.

Table 4: Highest level of education attained by respondents

Education	Number	Percentage
Primary school	468	43.8
Junior High	111	10.4
Senior High	69	6.5
O & A level	80	7.5
Diploma/Degree	32	3.0
Vocational/Technical	288	27.0
Others	20	1.9
Total	1,068	100%

A large number of respondents (43.8) have had only primary education, 10.4% Junior High School, 6.5% Senior High School, 7.5% O & A level, 3.0% Diploma/Degree and 27.0% Vocational/Technical Education. Only 1.9% of respondents have had higher qualifications like Master's Degree. What is clear from Table 4.4 is that the educational background of respondents is generally poor, especially beyond primary school. This, in turn, could also affect the quality of skills acquired by the 27% who have received vocational/technical education. In spite of the generally poor education of respondents, a few of them, though insignificant, have managed to brace the storm and gone through the formal education system to attain higher levels of qualification and distinguished themselves in their career.

With regard to education, we need to recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings. This, as has been pointed out already, will ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the educational system. General educational authorities are responsible for the education of persons with disabilities in integrated settings. Thus, education for persons with disabilities should form an integral part of national educational planning, curriculum development and school organisation. Education in mainstream schools presupposes the provision of interpreter and other appropriate support services. Also, adequate accessibility and support services, designed to meet the needs of persons with different disabilities, should be provided while parent groups and organisations of persons with disabilities should be involved in the education process at all levels. Again, special attention should be given in the following areas: (a) very young children with disabilities; (b) pre-school children with disabilities; (c) adults with disabilities, particularly women.

Moreover, to accommodate educational provisions for persons with disabilities in the mainstream, we should have a clearly stated policy, understood and accepted at the school level and by the wider community; allow for curriculum flexibility, addition and adaptation; and provide for quality materials, ongoing teacher training and support teachers. Integrated education and community-based programmes ought to be seen as complementary approaches in providing cost-effective education and training for persons with disabilities. National community-based programmes should encourage the development of resources to provide local education to persons with disabilities.

With regard to Table 5 below, of the total number of respondents, 22.6% are involved in teaching as their main occupation, 12.0% in advocacy, 15.5% in basket weaving, 15.3% in sewing, 10.3% in tie-and-dye making, 9.2% in animal rearing and 8.5% in doormat weaving. Those engaged in soap making are 5.1% with 1.5% also involved in the task of operating elevators. Being members of the GFD, it is not surprising that, together, more than 30% of the respondents are engage in teaching and advocacy as their main occupation. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the Ghana Federation of the Disabled was setup to pursue the interest of persons with

disability. In pursuing this interest, the GFD inculcate in its members the need to stand firm on their own and be prepared to meet the challenges confronting them in society so as to be able to play productive roles in their communities rather than standing on the streets and begging for alms. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that a substantial number of the respondents are engaged in teaching and advocacy as their main occupation.

Main Occupation of Respondents

The respondents were in different main occupations. These were Teaching, Advocacy, Operating of elevators, Basket weaving, Sewing, Doormat weaving, Soap making and Tie-and-dye making.

Table 5: Main Occupation of Respondents

Main Occupation	Number	Percentage
Teaching	241	22.6
Advocacy	128	12.0
Operators of elevators	16	1.5
Basket weaving	166	15.5
Animal rearing	98	9.2
Sewing	163	15.3
Doormat weaving	91	8.5
Tie-and-dye making	110	10.3
Soap making	55	5.1
Total	1068	100%

Many persons with disabilities could be encouraged to take up teaching and advocacy as their professions to impart their knowledge to students and, through advocacy, shape up the thinking of society with regard to disability issues.

Secondary Occupation of Respondents

The secondary occupation included change of coins, sale of old papers for wrapping things, sale of phone cards and newspaper vending. Others were making of brooms, artwork and sale of stationery.

Table 6: Secondary Occupation of Respondents

Secondary Occupation	Number	Percentage
Change of coins	301	28.2
Sale of old papers for wrapping things	305	28.6
Sale of phone cards	92	8.6
Newspaper vending	90	8.4
Making of brooms	76	7.1
Artwork	92	8.6
Sale of stationery	88	8.2
Total	1068	100%

Looking at the secondary occupation of respondents, it can be said that they are not dependable in terms of reliability as sources of income. The respondents were variously engaged in activities like change of coins (28.2%), sale of old papers for wrapping things (28.6%), sale of phone cards (8.6%), newspaper vending (8.4%), making of brooms (7.1%), artwork (8.6%) and sale of stationery (8.2%). Even if persons with disability are employed in one way or the other, whether in the main or secondary occupation, the question that arises is the level and quality of employment as well as the difficulties and frustrations associated with such employment.

If Employed, Length of Time in Occupation

If employed, respondents' length of time in occupation was found to be less than ten years, 11-20 years, 21-30 years and 31-40 years. Others were 41-50 years and also 51 years and above.

On the question of if employed, length of time in occupation, various responses were given as depicted in Table 7 below:

Table 7: If employed, respondents' length of time in occupation

Length of time	Number	Percentage
Less than ten years	309	28.9
11-20 years	228	21.3
21-30 years	201	18.8
31-40 years	260	24.3
41-50 years	35	3.3
51 years and above	15	1.4
No response	20	1.9
Total	1068	100%

Here, 28.9% of the respondents said they had worked for less than ten years, 21.3% for 11-20 years, 18.8% for 21-30 years, 24.3% for 31-40 years, 3.3% for 41-50 years and 1.4% for 51 years or more. The respondents were generally not good looking and so could not be said to be happy with their means of livelihood. It is simply a pathetic situation of near-unemployment or, better still, an effort for meagre incomes even for those fortunate to have worked continuously for two or three decades. Again, for those who have been engaged in employment for two or three decades, many of them earn abysmally low incomes that they cannot be said to be satisfied with what they were engaged in even though, admittedly, a few of them, even if insignificant, have made it to the above-average level. It is equally important to note that employment opportunities are restrictive, seeing that the availability of such opportunities depends on the quality and effectiveness of vocational and skills-based training. If persons with disability are to become productive in society and work meaningfully for many years for satisfactory and attractive incomes, then they need to be made more competent in terms of skills training.

In line with this, we need to recognise the principle that persons with disabilities must be empowered to exercise their human rights, particularly in the field of employment. In both rural and urban areas they must have equal opportunities for productive and gainful employment in the labour market. Laws and regulations in the employment field must not discriminate against persons with disabilities and must not raise obstacles to their employment. Also, we need to actively support the integration of persons with disabilities into open employment. Such support, if it is to be active, must be made to occur through a variety of measures. The measures include vocational training, incentive-oriented quota schemes, reserved or designated employment, loans or grants for small business and exclusive contracts or priority production rights. Others are tax concessions, contract compliance or other technical or financial assistance to enterprises employing workers with disabilities.

Furthermore, we need to encourage employers to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate persons with disabilities. Action programmes in this direction should include: (i) measures to design and adapt workplaces and work premises in such a way that they become accessible to persons with different disabilities; (ii) support for the use of new technologies and the development and production of assistive devices, tools and equipment and measures to facilitate access to such devices and equipment for persons with disabilities to enable them to gain and maintain employment; and, (iii) provision of appropriate training and placement as well as ongoing support such as personal assistance and interpreter services.

In addition, we must initiate and support public awareness-raising campaigns designed to overcome negative attitudes and prejudices concerning workers with disabilities. In their capacity as employers, the State of Ghana and business organisations should create favourable conditions for the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector. In this connection, workers' organisations and employers should cooperate to ensure equitable recruitment and promotion policies, employment conditions, rate of pay, measures to improve the work environment in order to prevent injuries and impairments and measures for the rehabilitation of employees who have sustained employment-related injuries. The aim should always be for persons with disabilities to obtain employment in the open labour market. For PWDs whose needs cannot be met in open employment, small units of sheltered or supported employment may be an alternative. It is important that the quality of such programmes be assessed not only in terms of their relevance but also sufficiency in providing opportunities for persons with disabilities to gain employment in the labour market.

Again, measures should be taken to include persons with disabilities in training and employment programmes in the private and informal sectors. Equally important is the need for workers' organisations and employers to cooperate with organisations of persons with disabilities concerning all measures to create training and

employment opportunities, including flexible hours, part-time work, job-sharing, self-employment and attendant care for PWDs.

Means of Livelihood for Unemployed Respondents

The means of livelihood were different from respondent to respondent. These were support from individuals, support from family and also support from organisations.

Table 8: Means of livelihood for unemployed respondents

Means of livelihood	Number	Percentage
Support from individuals	210	82.0
Support from family	30	11.7
Support from organisations	16	6.3
No response	185	17.3
Total	256	100%

Those who stated that they were unemployed totalled 256. This means that even though they had stated that they were involved in main and secondary occupation they did not see themselves as fully employed, hence 256 of them declaring that they were unemployed. As can be seen in Table 8 above, the unemployed respondents depend largely on support from individuals, family and organisations. Majority of the respondents (82.0%) receive support from individuals, 11.7% from family and a tiny number (6.3%) from organisations. Those who did not give any response were 17.3%. Here, state support was absent. This is very miserable and amounts to failure on the part of the state.

Reasons for being unemployed

The reasons for being unemployed were few. These were negative public attitude and unwillingness to employ persons with disability.

Table 9: Reasons for being unemployed

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Negative public attitude	100	39.1
Unwillingness to employ persons with disability	156	60.9
Total	256	100%

Two main reasons given by the respondents for being unemployed are negative public attitudes (39.1%) and unwillingness to employ persons with disability (60.1%). Negative public perception has come about because of prejudice, superstition and general ignorance about the potentials of persons with disability. In some communities, as has been indicated earlier, disabled babies or children are either destroyed at birth or kept away from public view and knowledge. Many disabled persons, by their behaviour, are also not helping their own cause. Some of them want to be always pitied by the public, not ready to help themselves.

With regard to unwillingness to employ persons with disability as a reason for being unemployed, there is the need to carefully examine the issue and address it. Section 10 of Persons With Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) announces annual tax rebate of taxable income for business organisations that employ disabled persons and also for the disabled persons themselves engaged in business. This is meant to encourage or promote the employment of such people. What needs to be done now is to publicise this provision and educate employers and also disabled persons on it. Such a move can help promote the employment of persons with disability.

Nature of Disability

The nature of disability differs from person to person. They include physically challenged, visually impaired and hearing impaired.

Table 10: Nature of Disability

Disability	Number	Percentage
Physically challenged	502	47.0
Visually impaired	314	29.4
Hearing impaired	148	13.9
Others	104	9.7
Total	1068	100%

Respondents' nature of disability were indicated as being physically challenged (47.0%), visually impaired (29.4%) hearing impaired (13.9%) as well as others like albinism and emotional/behavioural problems (9.7%). The nature of disability ought to be related to what a person can do. Obviously, all of them, with different forms of disability and talents, cannot be asked to learn the same trade or vocation. Thus, the nature of disability must be related to suitability for certain jobs and professions.

Disability and Personal Development

There is a relationship between disability and personal development. Disability can influence a person's development in life depending on the affected person's attitude towards challenges.

On the issue of what respondents think about their plight as persons with disability, 562 (52.6%) described it as challenging while 506 (47.3%) stated that it causes discrimination. Also, on the question as to whether their plight as persons with disability was a hindrance to their personal development, almost all of them (95%) said "Yes" with only a small number (5%) saying "No". A possible reason for responding "No" is that in spite of their physical challenge, they still believe that they can make it in life. This position is positive, but favourable conditions ought to be created to make it a reality.

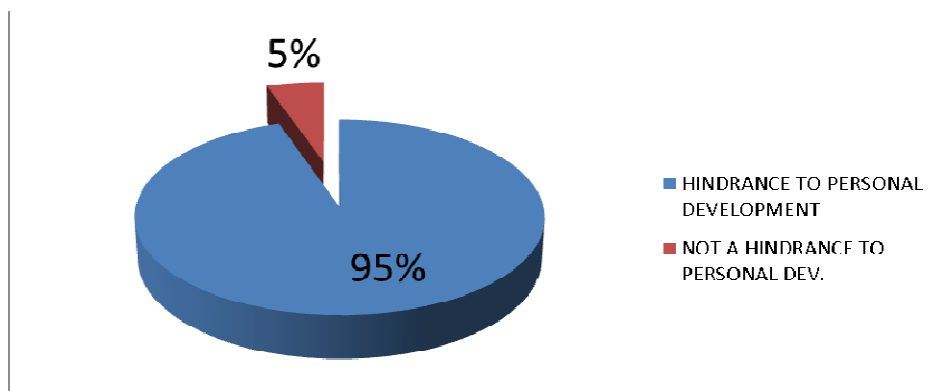


Figure 1: Disability and personal development

Of those who answered "Yes", three reasons were given, namely, that their plight prevents them from working (30.7%), that their plight causes discrimination when seeking employment (47.1%) and also that their plight leads to absence of conducive environment for development (19.5%).

Reasons why Disability is a Hindrance to Personal Development

Persons with disability are variously challenged in life and may, therefore, not have the same opportunities in all things or circumstances compared to non-disabled people. For this reason, disability may be a hindrance to personal development.

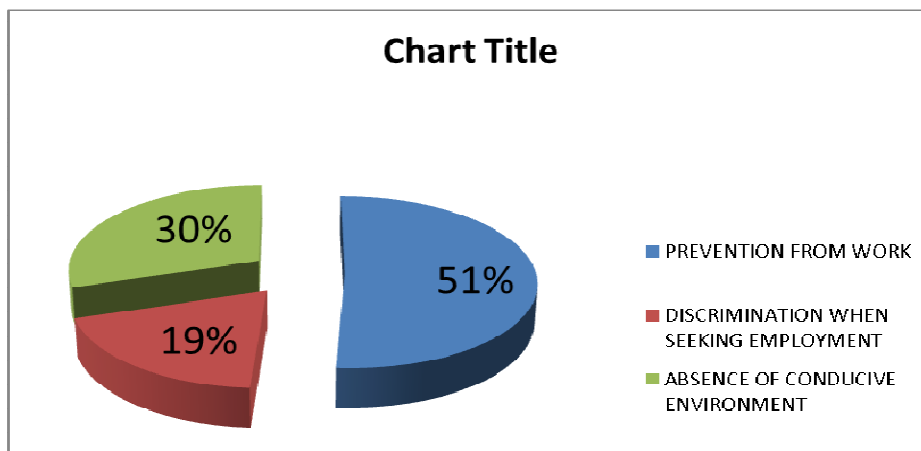


Figure 2: Reasons why disability is a hindrance to personal development

Society will have to pay attention towards intensively and extensively educating members to learn to accept persons with disability as constituting important part of society and granting them the respect and encouragement

they need. Again, conditions in society must be made favourable when it comes to provision of transportation and architecture, among others, to enable them play meaningful part in the national development process.

Skills Training for Persons with Disability

Persons with disability are people with special needs. Thus, they need skills training to make them productive.

On the question as to what they think about skills training for persons with disability, various responses were given as depicted in Table 11 below:

Table 11: What Respondents think about skills training for persons with disability

Thoughts about skills training	Number	Percentage
It is good but should be based on modern technology	480	44.9
It will make them skilful	390	36.5
It will reduce dependency on others	190	17.8
No response	8	0.8
Total	1068	100%

With reference to Table 11 above, a significant number of respondents (31.9%) think that skills training will make them skilful while others think that such training will reduce their dependency on others (31.9%). Again, 26.2% think that it is good but should be based on modern technology. A little less than ten percent (9.9%) gave no response. The quality of training given to the disabled is an important determinant of their productive capacity as members of society. Training should make them meaningfully skilful so as to be able to earn enough for themselves and their family. This is what would reduce their dependency on others. For all this to come true, the training must be based on modern technology but not on antiquated, non-productive, old ways of equipping the disabled with skills. The responses given – (a) *training based on modern technology*, (b) *making them independent of others in society* and (c) *equipping them with skills* – are, therefore, necessary to make them more productive.

Type of Disability and Appropriate Skills Required

Disability comes in various forms and degrees. As such, different skills are needed to suit different forms of disability. This is illustrated in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Type of disability and appropriate skills required

Type of disability	Appropriate training skills required	Number	Percentage
Visually impaired	Vocational and technical	467	43.7
Hearing impaired	Vocational	280	26.2
Physically challenged	Vocational, academic and Technical	201	18.8
Others e.g. Albinism	Vocational, academic and Technical	120	11.2
Total		1068	100%

The visually impaired (43.7%) recommended vocational and technical training, while the hearing impaired (16.9%) opted for vocational training. The physically challenged (18.8%) prefer vocational, academic and technical training. The same type of training that is vocational, academic and technical is preferred by others e.g. albinos (7.7%). The nature of disability, as pointed out already, must be linked to the skills and talents most appropriate for the trainees. The responses given must, therefore, be given attention, in terms of the peculiarities of their situation, to ensure that square pegs are not put in round holes, but that each and every one, based on the form of disability, is given the kind of training needed to enable him/her maximise personal productive capacity. This is how society must address the special needs of persons with disabilities.

On the issue as to whether there should be any criteria for selecting people for skills training, almost all the respondents (99.5%) answered in the affirmative. The near one hundred percent response is very significant. It shows that skills training is considered important and is also so crucial to their heart that selection for such a training programme should not be automatic. The reason for this is not far-fetched. It is to ensure that only those who are genuinely committed to skills training are given the opportunity to do so.

Two reasons were given for the need to have some criteria for selecting people for skills training, namely, to eliminate unnecessary competition (50.1%) and to ensure that people are selected for appropriate training (49.9%). It is important to ensure that selection for training is based on some criteria. This is because if no criteria is used it would look as if the training is being made compulsory without cause to the interest of those involved. Criteria-based selection will ensure that only interested persons are given the chance to train in particular fields or areas.

It is a well-known fact that training for the disabled is not based on deliberate and conscious effort to involve only those whose interests are directly linked with areas earmarked for study or training. The time has, therefore, come to make a deliberate and conscious effort geared towards people whose interests and talents are inextricably linked to the training to be carried out for them. The respondents themselves have indicated that the use of some criteria ought to be used before people are selected for training. This view must be respected.

Criteria for Selecting People for Skills Training

Selection for training should be based on some criteria. For skills training to be effective, some criteria will be needed to for the selection of persons with disability for such training.

Table 13: Criteria to be used in selecting people for skills training

Criteria for selection	Number	Percentage
Type and level of education	102	9.6
Type of disability	499	46.7
Expressed interest in a particular area	200	18.7
Willingness to train	267	25.0
Total	1068	100%

In a descending order, 46.7% said type of disability should be used as criteria, 18.9% stated that there should be willingness to train, 18.7% indicated that there should be expressed interest in a particular area, 9.6% said it should be based on the type and level of education, while 6.1% gave no response. All the respondents said they were interested in being given skills training. Three reasons were given for this as can be seen in Table 6.14 on the next page.

Reasons for Interest Skills Training

There are different reasons for interest in skills training. The reason(s) for interest may differ from person to person.

Table 14: Reasons for interest in being given skills training

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Will make them productive	269	25.2
Will make them economically independent	599	56.1
Will make them self-employed	200	18.7
Total	1068	100%

Majority (56.1%) said it will make them economically independent, while 25.2% said it will ensure that they become productive, with 18.7% indicating that it will them make self-employed. The interests of persons with disability include being given the chance to participate meaningfully in national development. If, through training, they can be made productive, economically independent and self-employed, then the issue of integrating them into national development becomes real.

The issue of making PWD's employable is a matter that cannot be taken lightly. The reality is that if they are not given any relevant training together with the appropriate orientation but left on their own most of them will end up on the streets begging for alms. To make them productive and relevant to the development of society they fore they is the need to vigorous pursue their interest through appropriate training. This means that society must act quickly in this direction.

Area of interest regarding skills training

There are different areas of interest regarding skills training. This differs from person to person because interests cannot be the same.

Table 15: Respondents' area of interest regarding skills training

Area of interest	Number	Percentage
Information, Communication and Technology (I.C.T)	206	19.3
Vocational	722	67.6
Advocacy	140	13.1
Total	1,068	100%

Majority of them (67.6%) expressed interest in vocational training, 19.3% in I.C.T and 9.4% in advocacy, with 3.7% giving no response. The interest expressed in I.C.T by 19.3% of the respondents makes an interesting revelation. It shows that the respondents are no longer interested in old-fashioned or antiquated way of training, but are now yearning for modern based form of training like I.C.T.

Also, all the respondents are of the view that the educational system can be made responsive to the needs of persons with disability. Some of them explained that this can be done by making schools disability friendly (30.1%). Others (35.1%) said that schools should be made free for persons with disability while another group (27.2%) said there is the need to train more teachers for special education, with 7.6% giving no response.

Reasons for Training in Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disability

Various positions were taken for the need for training in entrepreneurship. Different reasons were also given for why entrepreneurial training was necessary. On the issue as to whether respondents think it is necessary for training in entrepreneurship to be organised for persons with disability, 52% (555 respondents) said “Yes” while 40% (427 respondents) said “No” with 8% (86 respondents) giving no response. Of those who said “Yes”, various reasons were given. Some of them (36.2%) said there was the need to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Others (35.9%) said it would make them self-employed while 27.9% also stated the entrepreneurial training would make them economically independent. For those who said “No” the main reason given was that they prefer training in vocational skills. These reasons can be seen in Table 16 below:

Table 16: Reasons for training in entrepreneurship for persons with disability

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Need to develop entrepreneurial skills	201	36.2
To make them self-employed	199	35.9
To make them economically independent	155	27.9
Total	555	100%

On the question as to whether, looking at their type of disability, training in entrepreneurship will be helpful to respondents, 56.3% (601) said “Yes” while 43.7% (467) said “No”. Of the 601 respondents who replied in the affirmative, the reasons given were that training in entrepreneurship will help develop hidden entrepreneurial skills (34.3%), will make them more productive (40.1%), will make them self-employable (20.2%) and, finally, will help them to participate in national development (5.4%). Training in entrepreneurship has become necessary in these modern times because it is one area of training that can make trainees innovative, creative and market-oriented. Entrepreneurship has, therefore, become necessary to make trainees business-oriented, income earners and also possible sources of employment to other people considered able-bodied.

In the light of the foregoing, the time has come to guarantee some regular, dependable incomes for PWDs. Here, Ghana as a country is responsible for the provision of social security and income maintenance for persons with disabilities. The country should, therefore, ensure the provision of adequate income support to persons with disabilities who, owing to disability or disability-related factors, have temporarily lost or received a reduction in their income or have been denied employment opportunities. It is also the responsibility of the state to ensure that the provision of support takes into account the costs frequently incurred by persons with disabilities and their families as a result of the disability.

Apart from what has been said, since in Ghana social security, social insurance or other social welfare schemes exist for the general population, the country has to ensure that such systems do not exclude or discriminate against persons with disabilities. Secondly, we need to ensure the provision of income support and social security protection to individuals who undertake the care of a person with a disability. It will be good if social security systems are made to include incentives to restore the income-earning capacity of persons with disabilities.

What is more, social security programmes should provide incentives for persons with disabilities to seek employment in order to establish or re-establish their income-earning capacity while income support should be maintained as long as the disabling conditions remain in a manner that does not discourage persons with disabilities from seeking employment. It should only be reduced or terminated when persons with disabilities achieve adequate and secure income. We also need to encourage local communities, welfare organisations and families to develop self-help measures and incentives for employment or employment-related activities for persons with disabilities. If encouraged, the respective productive capacities of PWDs will be greatly enhanced as indicated in some of their responses during the period of this research.

When asked about their areas of interest regarding entrepreneurial training, the following were mentioned: I.C.T (19.2%), dressmaking, including tie-and-dye, (28%), soap making (18%), retailing (14%), shoe repair (6%) and others, including ice cream making (14.8%). Interest in I.C.T keeps coming up. It is one of the areas off training that must be given priority to those who are interested in that area of training.

With regard to the question as to whether there should be criteria for selecting people with disability for training in entrepreneurship, 90.1% (962 respondents) said “Yes” while 9.9% (106 respondents) said “No”. The following reasons were given by those who replied “Yes”: Only interested people must be selected (38%); they should be willing to undergo training (32%); they should be business-minded (22.2%); and they should be willing to learn basic skills in accounting and record keeping (7.8%). Nearly ten percent (i.e. 9.2%) of those who said “No” (106 respondents) gave no reasons for their answer. In modern times, areas of interest in making a person competitive in both local and international markets include being business-minded and good training in areas such as accounting and record-keeping. For this reason, there is the need to push the general agenda in the direction of skilful diplomacy in terms of business growth and development.

Against this background, every effort must be made to bring on board PWDs to enable them participate in the mainstream of national development. In spite of the challenges they face, persons with disability can contribute to national development. Ghana must, therefore, ensure that persons with disabilities are integrated into and can participate in national activities on an equal basis. Appropriate institutions in the country, spearheaded by central government must ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of their communities, be they in urban or rural areas. Examples of the activities they must be encouraged to participate in are dance, music, literature, theatre, plastic arts, painting and sculpture. Emphasis should also be placed on traditional and contemporary art forms such as puppetry or making use of puppets, recitation and story-telling. PWDs have various degrees of limitations but when given the necessary directions, support and guidance they will be able to perform as satisfactorily as or, sometimes, even better than other categories of people operating within the mainstream of national development.

Bringing Persons with Disability into the Mainstream of National Development through Entrepreneurship

On the issue as to whether people with disability can be brought into the mainstream of national development through entrepreneurship training, 92.2% (985 respondents) said “Yes” and gave some reasons as depicted in Table 17 below. The remaining 7.8% (83 respondents) said “No” without any reason.

Table 17: Reasons why people with disability can be brought into the mainstream of national development through entrepreneurial training

Reasons	Number	Percentage
They can earn incomes and pay taxes	88	13.5
They can employ others in their business	125	19.1
They can participate in decision making	124	19.0
They can be made to occupy certain positions	179	27.4
Their view can be sought on issues affecting them	137	21.0
Total	653	100%

Reasons given are that they can earn incomes and pay taxes (13.5%); they can employ others in their business (19.1%); they can participate in decision making (19.0%); they can be made to occupy certain positions (27.4%); and their views can be sought on issues affecting them (21.0%). National development depends on the contribution of various sections of society including the disabled. Contributions in form of payment of taxes, participation in decision-making, occupying key positions in running the affairs of the country, among others, are what bring about rapidity in the process of national development.

On the question as to whether enough attention has been given towards addressing the entrepreneurial needs of persons with disability, all the respondents replied in the negative. Unfavourable conditions in society and non-implementation of the policy on disability and the apparent neglect of the disabled in society appear to have convinced a number of them that society is not doing enough to pursue their interests. Lack of access to many public buildings and the absence of funds to promote programmes aimed at enhancing the interests of the disabled as well as restrictive employment opportunities and also negative traditional practices that discourage the utilisation of the intellectual and creative potential of persons with disabilities have conclusively signalled the disabled that their neglect by society is possibly based on uncaring, non-commitment attitude.

In order to erase this misconception the state has a lot to do in terms of realistic policies aimed at integrating and mainstreaming them into the national development agenda. The long-term goal of the state should be to fully

mainstream all persons with disability into the national development process with the aim of not only stimulating and activating their participation in national programming but also improving their quality of life through equalisation of opportunities.

Reasons why respondents think enough attention has not been given towards addressing the entrepreneurial needs of persons with disability

The respondents were of the view that attention given towards addressing the entrepreneurial needs of persons with disability was inadequate. Various reasons were adduced for this position.

Reasons given by respondents indicating their perception of total neglect by society can be found in Table 18 below:

Table 18: Reasons why respondents think enough attention has not been given towards addressing the entrepreneurial needs of persons with disability

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Non-implementation of Act 651	385	36.0
Neglect of people with disability	222	20.8
Unfavourable conditions to people with disability	292	27.3
Non-implementation of policy on disability	101	9.5
No conscious effort to address the needs of people with disability	68	6.4
Total	1068	100%

A number of respondents (36.0%) referred to non-implementation of Act 715, 20.8% mentioned neglect of people with disability, 27.3% cited unfavourable conditions to people with disability, 9.5% also referred to the non-implementation of policy on disability, with 6.4% stating that no conscious effort is made to address the need of persons with disability. All the reasons stated above summarise the perception that they have been neglected in society, they have been left to their own fate due to unfavourable conditions and that not much is being done to address their concerns.

When it came to the issue as to whether entrepreneurship is a viable career option for persons with disability, majority (92%) said it was so, but eight percent disagreed. Of those who said “Yes” (i.e. 983 respondents), 52% (511 respondents) stated that entrepreneurship would make persons with disability self-employed while 48% (472 respondents) said it would make them economically independent. Economic independence on the part of persons with disability is what is needed to let them stay away from little doses of handouts given by individuals to sustain them in the economy. Continuous reliance on such handouts is what perpetually makes them dependent on society. The realisation by the respondents that economic independence is necessary must therefore be encouraged.

In the case of those who think that entrepreneurship is not a viable career option (i.e. 79 respondents) the reason given was that if conditions in society were made favourable and, besides, it was easy to get employment there would be no need to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career option. This position can be reasonably tolerated. Easy access to employment as well as to all public buildings and transportation systems in all parts of society are significant actions that can make them realise their dreams of becoming independent. Today, the issue of training in entrepreneurship has become convincing probably because of inaccessibility to employment. It, therefore, stands to reason that making it easy for them to get employment and also making all parts of society easily accessible will provide the needed solution to the plight of the disabled even though training in entrepreneurship cannot be completely ruled out.

Majority of the respondents (88%) also think that society has not been able to meet their expectations in relation to training in entrepreneurship, with 12% giving no response. This response comes as no surprise, seeing that no special effort is made by relevant agencies or authorities in society to unearth or harness and train or sharpen the entrepreneurial skills, both latent and manifest, of persons with disability. When it comes to entrepreneurship training, there must be clear-cut guidelines on how people are selected for the training, duration of training as well as the inputs of training to ensure the output of post-training competent and skilful entrepreneurship graduates. No specially designed entrepreneurship-based skills training is purposefully designed to empower them to undertake their own business operations aimed at making them self-employed and economically independent people in society.

If this approach had been adopted years back, majority of people with disability would have been able to operate independently without support from anyone. In the absence of such positive oriented approach towards capacity building for persons with disability in terms of sound and effective entrepreneurial outlook, many of them feel abandoned, neglected as well as dejected. It is such an unfriendly and unwelcome environment in which they

have themselves which has unfortunately rendered them helpless in society. This is what makes them come to the conclusion that society has not been able to meet their expectations in relation to training in entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, some persons with disability, even with support from society, have also proved to be unwilling to take their destiny into their own hands and transform their situation from one of apparent hopelessness and helplessness to that of hopefulness, high expectations, reliability in terms of meaningful living, optimism and a strong desire for achievement. Without doubt, such people need appropriate orientation to enable them become relevant to the process of all-inclusive development in society.

Of those who think that society has not been able to meet their expectations, two main reasons were given. First, no start-up capital has been given to anyone (53%) and, second, no special training in entrepreneurship has been given (47%). The absence of start-up capital may be a problem but already District Assemblies are expected to give up two percent of their Common Fund to persons with disability in their areas to help them promote their business plans. This must be taken serious and executed to its logical conclusion.

One misconception here is that many of the intended beneficiaries of the two-percent Common Fund think that the amount is meant to be given them for their upkeep without any reference to their prior-approved business plans. In this respect, some education on the issue is needed to put it the right perspective for the common good of intended beneficiaries. Such understanding is necessary to create the rightful atmosphere for the success of the programme.

How society can meet the expectations of persons with disability in entrepreneurial training.

Society can meet the expectations of PWDs in entrepreneurial training in a number of ways. Meeting their expectations in this way can help address their concerns.

The respondents explained how society can meet the expectations of persons with disability in relation to training in entrepreneurship. This is portrayed in Table 19 as follows:

Table 19: How society can meet the expectations of persons with disability in relation to training in entrepreneurship

Meeting expectations	Number	Percentage
Special training in entrepreneurship	300	28.1
Start-up capital needed for those interested	301	28.2
Encouragement and support for those interested in entrepreneurship	280	26.2
Making learning materials on entrepreneurship available	187	17.5
Total	1060	100%

One group of respondents (28.2%) stated that there should be start-up capital for those interested in entrepreneurship. This is followed by those who think that training in entrepreneurship is needed as well as others (26.2%) who think that encouragement and support should be given to those interested in entrepreneurship. Seventeen and half percent stated that making learning materials on entrepreneurship available to persons with disability can meet their expectations in relation to training in entrepreneurship.

The issue of availability of start-up capital has been discussed and the suggestion is that it should be linked to the District Assemblies' Common Fund to support the business plans of the disabled. In the case of the suggestion that learning materials on entrepreneurship should be made available, it is a point well made. The learning materials should not just be made available, but should also be simple and reader friendly in order to attract the interest of many people or potential trainees. On the question as to whether there is a relationship between training in entrepreneurial skills and national development, all the respondents answered in the affirmative. The fact that all the respondents answered in the affirmative is an indication that entrepreneurship is considered as a priority when it comes to liberating the respondents from the shackles of poverty. It is abundantly clear that entrepreneurship is important for economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment. As globalisation reshapes the international economic landscape and technological change creates greater uncertainty in the world economy, entrepreneurship is believed to offer ways to help to meet new economic, social and environmental challenges.

Relationship between training in entrepreneurial skills and national development

People can be brought out of poverty if only they are given the needed support to be self dependent, having been made productive and earned respectable incomes. Such a situation can come about through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship will help trainees to be creative and anticipative of opportunities emerging from business as well as local and international markets. The various reasons that were given by respondents to support this position have been clearly stated in Table 20 below and subsequently analysed.

Table 20: Reasons given to explain why there is a relationship between training in entrepreneurial skills and national development.

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Every entrepreneur contributes to economic growth	136	12.7
Entrepreneurs offer employment to people	304	28.5
Entrepreneurs are taxed for development	185	17.3
The output of entrepreneurs contribute to national welfare	201	18.8
Entrepreneurial skills makes a person independent of government	242	22.7
Total	1068	100%

The reasons given are all supportive of the reasons why entrepreneurship should be seen as a contributor to economic development. Some of the respondents (28.5%) stated that entrepreneurship offers employment to people. Other reasons given were that entrepreneurial skills make a person independent of government (22.7%), output of entrepreneurs contribute to national welfare (18.8%), entrepreneurs are taxed for development and, finally, that every entrepreneur contributes to economic growth. Entrepreneurship has gained special attention because it is widely viewed as a key aspect of economic dynamism.

Not surprisingly, more than half the number of respondents (53%) thought that entrepreneurial training is a viable career option that can address the physical, social and mental needs of persons with disability. The reasons given were, first, it would give the trainees hope and confidence in life and, second, guarantee their social and economic independence. The reasons given are sound, reasonable and acceptable.

However, less than fifty percent of the respondents (47%) stated that entrepreneurial training will not be a viable career option that can address the physical, social and mental needs of people with disability provided the environment is made conducive for everyone. This view was stated possibly because apart from entrepreneurship the physical, social and mental needs can be addressed in other ways, an example being making conditions in society favourable to all in terms of accessibility.

Empowerment of persons with disability

Persons with disability need to be empowered in various ways. The empowerment, if appropriately carried out, will make PWDs more productive and help them to play more effective and meaningful roles in society.

The respondents stated that this can be executed in a number of ways as illustrated in Table 21 below:

Table 21: Empowerment of persons with disability

Empowerment of persons with disability	Number	Percentage
Special education	120	11.2
Vocational training	310	29.0
Special training in entrepreneurship	206	19.3
Guidance and Counseling	128	12.0
Creation of conducive environment	304	28.5
Total	1068	100%

The highest number of respondents (29.0%) mentioned vocational training. This was followed by suggestions like the creation of conducive environment (27.0%), call for special training in entrepreneurship (14.7%), I.C.T training (11.3%), special education (11.2%) as well as guidance and counselling (4.7%). Almost two percent of respondents (1.9%) gave no response. The mentioning of vocational training, I.C.T training, creation of favourable environment for all, special education, training in entrepreneurship as well guidance and counselling are all relevant and useful. This is because education serves as the foundation for the development of talents and skills within individuals. Having been equipped with education, it becomes necessary to develop other skills in I.C.T, guidance and counselling as well as the other vocations.

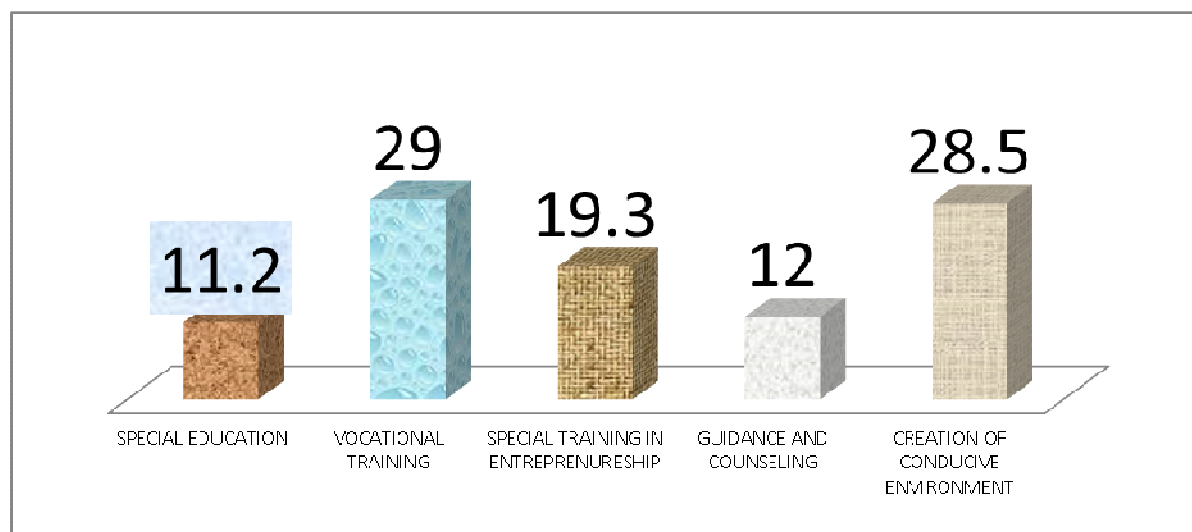


Figure 3: Empowerment of persons with disability

Empowerment of persons with disability can come through various ways. As can be seen in Figure 3 above, special education, special training, special training in entrepreneurship, guidance and counseling as well as creation of favourable or conducive environment in society. All these forms of empowerment are equally important. None of them can be implemented exclusive of the other. To ensure real change in society to make PWD's realistically participate in national development, all the suggested forms of empowerment ought to be seriously taken into consideration and implemented to the full. Education is important for all PWD's, but this should be specially designed to meet their special needs. This, in turn, calls for special equipment and facilities to make the training real. If things are left as they are at the moment where needed training materials are either absent or inadequate, while teachers for the programme are also not motivated or left frustrated. The same can be said of entrepreneurship training, and special training for PWD's.

Barriers preventing participation in national development

There are barriers that prevent participation in national development. These barriers are noted and discussed later after Table 22. If the barriers are not removed, they will continue to prevent participation in national development.

With regard to the barriers, 93% of the respondents (993) answered in the affirmative. Those who responded in the negative gave no reasons, but those who answered "Yes" mentioned barriers to participation in national development in a number of ways as can be seen in Table 22 below:

Table 22: Explanation of barriers to participation in national development

Barriers to participation	Number	Percentage
Absence of relevant policy implementation	476	47.9
Non-inclusiveness in decision that affect them	84	8.5
Lack of facilities to create conducive environment for all	333	33.5
Negative attitude by society	100	10.1
Total	993	100%

Nearly half the number of respondents (47.9%) cited the absence of relevant policy implementation as a barrier to participation in national development. This was followed by those who referred to lack of facilities to create conducive environment for all (33.5%) as a barrier. Another barrier quoted is the negative attitude by society (10.1%). A few others (8.5%) stated that their non-inclusiveness in decisions that affect them was also a barrier to national development.

There are very serious barriers to participation in national development. For example, even though there is a National Disability Policy Document, launched over two decades ago in the year 2000, it is not being implemented in the way expected. As far as disability issues are concerned, nothing is being done as far as policy implementation is concerned. The issue of negative attitude by society has been discussed in several places already. It arises out of ignorance about the potentials of persons with disability, making society overlook them when it comes to discussing national issues.

Finally, and more importantly, the absence of facilities to create conducive environment for all is a major obstacle that cannot be overlooked anymore. One school of thought embodied by the Social Model of Disability has expressed the view, as discussed under Literature Review in chapter two of this thesis, that disability exists because of conditions in society and that if a favourable atmosphere is created for all in terms of accessibility to buildings and absence of prejudice as well as negative attitudes against PWDs and CWDs, what is perceived to be disability will be on-existent.

The time has come, therefore, to address this challenge without delay. If this is done, society will be seen as having created favourable conditions to serve the interest of all including PWDs. This issue needs immediate attention because time and again PWDs have expressed concerns about addressing the issue of accessibility to many things in society and hereby making PWDs inclusive of the national development process. These are the practical, workable ways leading to the equalisation of opportunities for PWDs.

Suggestions for enhancing empowerment of persons with disability in national development

Various suggestions were given towards the enhancement of participation of persons with disability in the process of national development. The suggestions were based on the conviction that, when adhered to, they will go a long way not only to empower persons with disability in national development, but encourage them to view or consider themselves as equal partners as far as national development is concerned.

Various suggestions that could enhance empowerment of persons with disability in national development were given. In all, four main suggestions came up. These are presented in Table 23 as follows:

Table 23: Suggestions for enhancing empowerment of persons with disability in national development

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
Relevant education	441	41.3
Recognition by society	334	31.3
Consulting them on affecting them	104	9.7
Creating conditions to make the financially independent	189	17.7
Total	1068	100%

Over 70% of the respondents gave two suggestions that could enhance empowerment of persons with disability in national development. These were relevant education (41.3% of respondents) and recognition by society of the rights of people with disability. Other suggestions given were creating conditions to make people with disability financially independent (9.7%) and consulting people with disability on matters that affect them (8.4%). Those who did not give any response were 9.3%.

The issues of relevant education and recognition by society keep coming up in many of the responses. They, therefore, go to emphasise the fact that relevant education is foundational to the development of society. In the same way, the PWDs have talents that can be harnessed for national development, but this can only be possible if they are given the needed recognition. What is more, recognising them also means allowing them to discuss and comment on issues affecting their welfare. Allowing them to participate in healthy discussions will go a long way to come out with the creation of conditions that will be seen as favourable.

In terms of *directions for future work*, a further study on the Contact Hypothesis (Hewstone, 2003) in the Ghanaian situation is hereby recommended. This means that a study should be carried out in situations, even if rare, where two “groups” of people, the non-disabled, on one hand, and persons with disability, on the other, have been brought together to operate under conditions of equal respect or familiarity with each other. Such a study will help to confirm the Contact Hypothesis in the Ghanaian situation. Similarly, such a study will also help to deal with the issue of inclusiveness in all aspects of national development programmes that require the participation of all, whether able-bodied or not.

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