

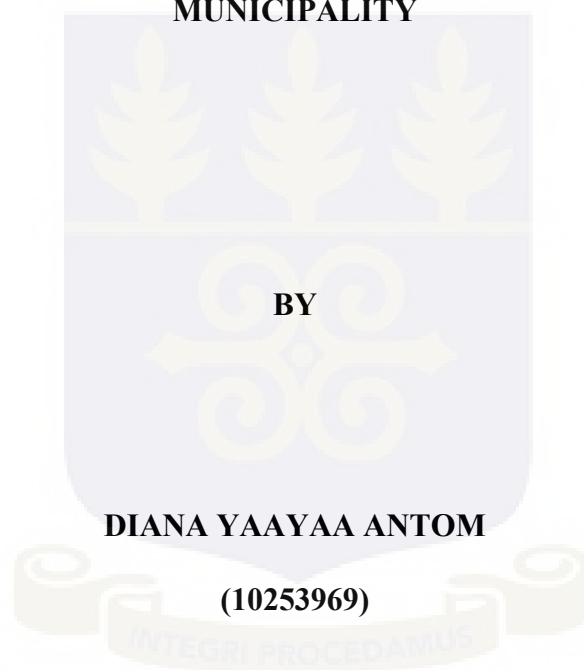
**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**CENTRE FOR SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES**

**IMPACT OF THE DISABILITY ACT 2006 (ACT 715) ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION  
OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN LA NKWANTANANG-MADINA**

**MUNICIPALITY**



**BY**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD  
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES DEGREE.**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that, except for references to other peoples' work, which are duly acknowledged, this dissertation is the result of my own research work carried out in the Centre for Social Policy Studies (CSPS) under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Afranie,

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God for his guidance and support throughout my coursework and also my little princess, Jezreel Oppong Nkrumah as well as my husband Isaac Oppong Kyekyeku, for the joy and hope they give me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The successful completion of this academic work and commitment of just me, but through the combined efforts of several dedicated individuals.

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## ABSTRACT

This research sought to examine the impact of the Disability Act 2006, (Act 715) and the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy on the educational outcomes of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in the Madina La-Nkwatanang Municipality of the Greater Accra Region. It focused on the experiences of PWDs in the basic and senior high schools to determine if the policies have been adequately enforced to encourage school enrolment and retention among children with special needs.

The study was located in the Madina La-Nkwatanang municipality. It employed the purposive sampling method to recruit 14 participants to participate in this research. This includes five PWDs, five teachers and four headmasters. The qualitative research design was used to analyse data and the Social Model of Disability theory used as a framework for the research.

Key findings include the fact that PWDs continue to be discriminated against in schools by other children, teachers and the educational system. It was also identified that most of the teachers and school authorities do not have any idea about the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education Policy, and hence use the old fashioned way to handle PWDs in their respective schools. School structures are not disability friendly, and the supervision of educational institutions against the abuse of PWDs was very marginal.

The researcher recommended a training programme for teachers on disability issues and the Disability Act. A more intensive community sensitization is also recommended. Finally, a monitoring and supervision mechanism that would ensure that school authorities build structures that are disability friendly is also recommended.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The notion of inclusive education as a fundamental human right for persons with disabilities has been pronounced in a number of treaties and international legal frameworks. For instance, the UNESCO convention against discrimination in education enacted in 1960 was the first legally binding international instruments that categorically laid down core elements that forbade any form of discrimination in education service delivery and exposed the principle of equality of educational opportunities (UNESCO, 2015). In addition, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) specifies in article 23 that, “state parties shall encourage and ensure extended assistance that shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education and training.”

Moreover, Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disability (2006) demands countries to ensure an inclusive education system without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity and that children who have disabilities are not left out of the Free, Compulsory and Universal primary or secondary education. They are to have access on an equal basis with others in the community they live. In order to rectify such international conventions, efforts have been put in place to integrate students with special needs into the regular school system by many countries, such as Bahrain, France, Georgia, Estonia, Germany, Iraq, Nauru, Morocco, New Zealand, Serbia, Poland and Sri Lanka (UNESCO, 2015).

Access to quality education by persons with disabilities has been known as both fundamental human right and very essential in terms of poverty reduction, resolving inequality and achieving other goals of development (Banks & Zuurmond, 2015). An inclusive education

offers a lot of advantages to its beneficiaries. While being the key means to putting persons with disabilities on equal footing with persons without disabilities, it also promotes diversity within educational institutions as well as creates social bonds between the disabled and non-disabled (Ebersold, Schmitt, & Priestley, 2011). As specified in the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (2006), and various national legislative instruments in Ghana, like the Education Act 778, (2008) and the Disability Act 2006 (Act 715), access to education that is inclusive improves the employment and working opportunities of persons with disabilities in mainstream society. Since the lack of education often thwarts young people with disabilities' effort at entering the job market thereby becoming a burden to the society at large, it is in the economic interest of society to ensure that persons with disabilities have quality education in order that they can become active and effective members of the labour force as they grow up (UNICEF, 2012).

In 2006, the Parliament of Ghana enacted the Persons with Disability Act (Act 715). This provided a legal framework for addressing issues related to persons with disability in Ghana. The Act sought to fulfil a constitutional obligation requiring the enactment of laws for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. It was also to fulfil Ghana's obligations to the international community. The mandate of the Act as stated in the preamble is "to provide for persons with disabilities, establish a National Council on Persons with Disabilities and to provide for other related matters" (Act 715; Kassah, Kassah & Agbota, 2012). Some of the areas covered by the Act include the "right to family life and the right to participate in social, creative or recreational activities; the prohibition of differential treatment for residential purposes, the right to the same living conditions as persons without disabilities when persons with disabilities are placed in special institutions; no exploitation, abuse, discrimination or disrespect for persons with disabilities, appropriate facilities when involved in court proceedings; and access to public places" (Act 715, p. 1).

As a constitutional mandate, the Act provided some considerable legal backing to Ghana's Inclusive Education (IE) initiative. The Disability Act made provisions to enhance the educational attainment of persons with disabilities in an environment that is enabling and dignifying (Republic of Ghana, 2006; Agbenyega, 2006). Specifically, the Act seeks to do the following: Section 16 (1) of the Disability Act (2006) imposes the obligation on parents, guardians or custodians of a child with disability of school going age to ensure that their children are enrolled in a school. A legal penalty is imposed on the default of the above Section. The Act states in Subsection 2 of Section 16 that "any parent, guardian or custodian who contravenes this subsection (1) and commits an offence, and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten penalty units, or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen days" (Act 715, p. 6). This provision is directed at ensuring that every child, especially those with disabilities is granted the same educational right, irrespective of their health status.

When discriminatory attitudes are put up by teachers when handling students with disabilities, such as the use of derogatory statements like "mumu" translated "deaf child," the Act empowers the heads of institutions to apply disciplinary measures; this is also applicable in situations where employees of the school maltreat a person with disability (Kassah, Kassah, & Agbota, 2012). As a preventive mechanism however, the Ghana Education Service over the years have trained teachers in sign languages and management of disability issues in the classroom. Section 21 of the Disability Act charges the Minister of Education to ensure that a public technical, vocational and teacher training institutions are designated in each region and shall have in their curricula special education, for Braille writing and reading, and Sign language. The Ministry of Education is equally making strides in reducing the number of students per class, especially in the event that a PWD is in the class. This initiative is intended to reduce the burden of work on the teacher so as to give teachers enough freedom to attend to the special needs of the person with disabilities, and to further the course of the IE policy in Ghana (Tuakli-Wosornu, & Haig, 2014).

In Ghana, every citizen has the right to education. Every child, disabled and non-disabled alike have legal right to enjoy education as far as practicable. The Inclusive Education Policy describes the strategic policies of the government of Ghana towards the provision of education for all children that have special educational needs. It is a reflection of provisions in the 1992 Constitution, the Education Strategic Plan, National Development Agenda. Again, it reflects Ghana's Commitment to the international community as well as national targets for creating an environment that creates and assures equal educational opportunities for all Ghanaians. Other educational policies that facilitated the provision of free basic education to PWDs include the Free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE), the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), the School Feeding Program, and the maiden Free Senior High School.

As part of the goals of the inclusive education policy, education is considered to have the potential to contribute towards the breaking of the relationship that exists between disability and poverty (Croft, 2012), because it restores the impaired capacity of persons with disabilities to contribute effectively for their lives. It is against the backdrop that this study sought to explore how the implementation of the Disability Act has contributed in ensuring inclusive education of persons with disabilities in La Nkwantanang-Madina.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) was enacted to guarantee, promote and protect persons with disabilities' rights in Ghana. Among the areas of concern, the Act endorsed educational policies that protect children with disabilities from abuse and discrimination in schools. In line with the principles of inclusive education, it obligates parents with children with disabilities of school going age to enroll them in school. Additionally, it instructs the training of teachers to be better manage disability issues; and provision of needed materials towards the achievement of the goals of Inclusive Education. The Integrated Education policy and the Disability Act are based

on the proposition that every child in Ghana has the right to education. Consequently, the policy is expected to moderate the delivery of quality and equitable education to all in a way that meets the educational needs of PWDs and other minority groups in Ghana.

According to the Ghana Federation of Disability organizations (2016), there are more than three million people living with disabilities in Ghana. The Ghana Statistical Service also estimates that about 100,000 children of school going age have some form of disability in Ghana (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2010). More than half of such children are out of school due to various factors that exclude them (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2010). Friends of the Handicapped International in 2012 observed that there exist negative attitudes and social taboos towards persons with disabilities in Ghana, which has led to the neglect of these vulnerable groups hampering the development of their potentials.

Persons with disabilities as well as others who have difficulties in learning are often discriminated against and sometimes excluded from the educational system (UNICEF, 1998). In most developing countries, children that have disabilities face peculiar hurdles in their attempt to attend and complete school (Filmer, 2005). It is estimated by the World Bank that persons with disabilities may constitute as many as one out of every five of the poorest people in the world. It also established that there is a strong linkage between disability and poverty, as children who have disabilities have a lower probability of completing school and acquiring the human capital and skills that will allow them to find jobs with higher earning potentials (Department for International Development (DFID), 2000).

Ghana has taken various measures to break the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the educational system. Through the enactment of the Persons with Disability Act 715 (2006), it is mandated for parents or guardians to enrol their children with disabilities in schools. Facilities and equipment are equally to be provided in educational institutions by Government to enable

the participation of Persons with Disabilities in education. To ensure the implementation of the Act, the government has designated funds through the District Assembly Common Fund and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) to assist persons with disabilities to be able to access education. Despite these efforts, person with disabilities still face challenges in accessing education in Ghana due to reasons like, poor implementation of the legal framework protecting the right of persons with disabilities, inadequate funding, poor services and facilities (Human Right Advocacy Centre, 2017).

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

The general objective of the study is to ascertain the extent to which the implementation of the Disability Act has impacted on school enrolment and retention of persons with disabilities in La Nkeantan-Madina.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

- To compare the levels of inclusion of persons with disabilities in education before and after the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act in Madina.
- To investigate how the Persons with Disability Act 715 (2006) is being implemented.
- To examine the challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities in accessing education in Madina after the implementation of the Disability Act.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following questions were what the study sought to answer.

- What are the measures put in place by educational institutions in ensuring inclusive education of persons with disabilities in Madina after the enactment of the Disability Act?
- What challenges are faced by persons with disabilities in accessing education in Madina after the enforcement of the Disability Act?
- What challenges do institutions face in implementing the Disability Act in terms of inclusive education of persons with disabilities in Madina?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The current study has as its significance, contribution to policy, knowledge and practice on inclusive education for persons with disabilities. Its findings would provide information to policy makers regarding the Disability Act and access to formal education by persons with disabilities. The findings of the study would also reveal to policy makers the institutional challenges faced in implementing the Disability Act. Such information would aid policy makers to review and strengthen existing policies where necessary, and formulate and implement new ones so as to ensure inclusive education of persons with disabilities as specified in the Disability Act.

In addition, the findings would provide information on measures put in place by institutions of education in ensuring inclusive education for persons that have disabilities. Such information would enlighten policy makers on the extent to which inclusive education as enshrined in the Disability Act is being implemented by educational institutions and how the lives of children with disabilities are being impacted. The findings would also provide information to future researchers who want to delve into inclusive education of persons with disabilities. It would

serve as a source of reference for future researchers in inclusive education of persons with disabilities. Moreover, the findings would provide information for policy advocates to push for requisite policies to strengthen the implantation of the Disability Act in order to ensure inclusive education of persons with disabilities.

## **1.6 Study Area**

The study was conducted in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality, which is located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The population of the Municipality according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) is 111,926, representing 2.8% of the region's total population. The majority of the population are migrants from other regions in Ghana and other towns in the Greater Accra Region mostly engaged in trading as their main economic activities. About 2.7 % of the municipality's total population has one form of disability or the other. Hearing disability, speech disability, visual disability, physical disability, intellectual disability and emotional disability are the types of disabilities reported by the Ghana Statistical Service in the 2010 PHC in the Municipality. According to the 2010 PHC, there are more persons with sight disability followed by physical disability. This is the more reason why the researcher intends to carry out the study in the municipality. The Municipal Assembly has several Senior High Schools (SHS), namely, the Presbyterian Boys' Secondary School, Legon and the West Africa Secondary School at Adenta West, with about 13 more private Senior High Schools. For Public Junior High Schools, there are seventy-one (71) and Sixty-eight (68) Public Primary Schools. The Municipality also have about 40 Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDC). The number of teachers in the municipality is 1426. While 1387 (97.26%) are professionally trained teachers, 39 (2.73%) are untrained (pupils' teacher). Out of 85,947 persons 12 years and older who are resident in the municipality, 8.8% are not in school, 47.3% are enrolled in

basic schools, 20.3 enrolled in the Senior High School, 4.5% in vocational institutes, 8.9% pursuing Diploma certificates, and 10.1% in the tertiary institutions.

### **1.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the background of the study, the problem statement and the objectives of the study was discussed. The chapter also looked at the questions that the study sought to answer and discussed the overall significance of the study. In looking at the study area, vital information such as its population dynamics, disability status and educational facilities as were discussed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 2.1 Introduction

This section of the study reviews both empirical and theoretical literature. Literature review according to Boot and Beile (2005) describes, summarizes, evaluates and clarifies studies done that are related to one's selected area. In light of this, literature was reviewed based on research done on the phenomenon under study. In addition, the theory that underpins the study is discussed in this section.

#### 2.2 Defining Disability

The concept of disability does not lend itself to one straight definition. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), disability as an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. It explains impairment as a problem in the body's functioning or structure, an activity limitation as a difficulty encountered by a person in executing a task or action, and participation restriction as a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations (WHO, 2011). The WHO definition thus see disability not just as a health problem, but a complex phenomenon, that reflects the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. This way of seeing disability is consistent with the approach adopted by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). In the same light, Bostan *et al* (2015) defined disability to encompass a person's performance within a functional domain. His saw it to be the result of the interaction between a personal factors and his environment. Similarly, the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities asserts "that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between

a person's impairments, and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". In Ghana, the Persons with Disabilities Act 2006 (Act 715), in Section 59 however defines a person with disability to mean "any individual who has a physical, mental or any sensory impairment including or speech functional disability which results in physical, cultural and social barriers that limits any major life activities of that individual" (p. 17).

### **2.3 Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Accessing to Education**

The right to education is a fundamental human right, guaranteed under Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 25 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution. Again, the Children's Act 1998, Act 560 under Sections 6 and 8 emphasises among other rights that children are entitled to the right to education. The right to education must be enjoyed by all regardless of their disability status. The Persons with Disabilities Act reiterates this right by enjoining parents and guardians of children with disabilities to enrol them in school. It goes on further to prescribe punitive sanctions against parents/guardians who default on the educational right of children with disabilities under Section 16 (2). It states that a parent, guardian or who violates the educational rights of children with disabilities "commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten penalty units, or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen days" (p. 6).

Despite these legal provisions, children with disabilities/special needs access to education has never been without challenge. The World Report on Disability observed that the educational outcomes of Persons with Disabilities are far lower compared to Persons without disabilities. It also observed that when disability is strongly correlated with low access to and low completion rates of education than other variables such as gender, rural residence, and low economic status (WHO, 2011). Thus, children with special needs encounter various impediments in their bid to access education, hence, their low access and completion rates.

Although these challenges cut across all countries around the world, it is most endemic in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa.

In a study conducted by Moyi (2012) to examine how children with disabilities in Uganda access education, with data from the Uganda demographic and health survey conducted in 2006, it was revealed that children with disabilities were faced with significant obstacles in accessing education. Children with disabilities in Uganda had a lower probability of being enrolled in school, attend school, and complete grade five compared to their non-disabled. It was found that these were as a result of obstacles such as social stigma, lack of resources and prejudices that discouraged parents from sending their children with disabilities to school. The study concluded that children with disabilities in Uganda faced more challenges in accessing education which led to their low enrolment, attendance and completion.

In a similar study in Malawi, Banks and Zuurmond (2015) assessed the obstacles and enablers to inclusive education for children that have disabilities. The study relied on data from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine's key informant child disability project. In all, responds from 2,788 participants were analysed. The findings of the study indicated that poverty served as the main reason why children with disabilities were not attending school, missed classes and had difficulties with learning. In addition, it was found that children with disabilities had lingering health issues which resulted in a reduction in their parents' limited resources and had negative consequences for their education, highlighting the linkage between health, education and poverty. Thus, because children with disabilities fell sick most often, their parents spent most of the resource they had on healthcare, leaving little or no room for education related expenditure. Furthermore, schools were ill-equipped to accommodate students that have disabilities in the sense that classrooms and toilets facilities were often inaccessible to them. Again, it was also reported in the study that children that have disabilities suffered many forms of discrimination, abuse and social exclusion both within and outside

school environment. The culminating effect of these trilogy of factors; economic, physical environment/barrier and behavioural factors is that children with disabilities are unable to access and participate in education fully as their non-disabled counterparts.

It can be deduced from the conditions of PWDs in Malawi and Uganda that, the plight of children who have special needs involve not only their inability to fully participate in educational activities, nor the support of parents and guardians in their bid to acquire formal education, but also the added inability of the African governments to provide the requisite educational facilities and infrastructure to make the school environment comfortable and supportive for PWDs. The culture and social stigma that characterises African societies cause other children to tease PWDs, and some teachers also treating PWDs with disdain. Support systems that are instituted in developed countries like the United States and Sweden (Engstrand Zakirova, & Roll-Pettersson, 2012) to assist PWDs through class exercises, eating, access to the classroom and other educational structures, and the use of toilet and the urinal facilities are generally unavailable to PWDs in African. This makes the school environment a struggle for PWDs, and consequently their inability to remain in school (Addo, 2014; Moyi, 2012).

In another study conducted by Addo (2014) in Ghana, that used a descriptive exploratory research design to investigate accessibility to the educational facilities in the basic schools in Accra. The researcher surveyed 33 pupils in 22 schools and found out that, most basic school pupils with mobility impairment encounter barriers such as negative attitudes/discrimination, staircases, lack of seats for wheelchair users, narrow doorways and desk space, open gutters and slippery floors. It concluded that these factor had negative impact on children with disabilities' participation in education. The study recommended that at least one entrance of every facility should be made accessible to persons with disabilities by school authorities and government should increase significantly expenditure and budget allocation on inclusive education in Accra.

### **2.1.2 Institutional Challenges in Inclusive Education of Persons with Disabilities**

In a study that sought to examine the barriers to inclusive education of children with disabilities in Zimbabwe, Deluca et al. (2014) observed that lack of assistive devices was a major barrier in implementing inclusive education for persons with disabilities. Head teachers and teachers indicated that resources were not available for the purchase of assistive devices. The findings revealed that parents of persons with disabilities prevented their children from going to school because they feared that their children would be abused by teachers, and also as a result of their (parents') inability to support them financially. In addition, head teachers lamented lack of expertise on the part of teachers was a major impediment to the education of children with disabilities. In concluding, the study recommended that training of teachers was essential for effective inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, hence the need for adequate resource to be channelled towards the training of special education teachers.

In assessing the challenges that teachers face in implementing inclusive education of persons with disabilities, Chaula (2014) adopted a qualitative design, which involved the use of observations and interviews. Findings showed that even though some teachers tried their best in implementing inclusive education, they encountered some challenges which affected their work. The challenges identified by the study included teaching and learning materials that are not sufficient, policies on inclusive education that are not clear, lack of governmental support, poor collaboration between teachers and parents of children with disabilities, and unskilled teachers to work with pupils with disabilities in schools. The study recommended that periodic seminars should be conducted for teachers on how to implement inclusive education for children that have disabilities. It was also recommended that the government should put in measures to monitor and evaluate how inclusive education of persons with disabilities is being implemented. This the study observed will be very essential in determining whether there are any deficiencies with the policy and what changes need to be made.

### **2.1.3 Inclusive Education Policy/Legal Instruments**

The Principle of Inclusive Education was adapted at the UNESCO in 1994, during the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca. It was reiterated at the World Education Forum in the year 2000 in Dakar, giving further credence to how relevant inclusive education is for the holistic development of children that have disabilities. It indicates that schools must accommodate all children irrespective of their disability status. Thus, whether one has any physical, emotional, linguistic, intellectual, social and other conditions, schools must be conditioned to accommodate them. According to Ainscow (2005), “this include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups” (p. 7).

To encourage governments all over the world to appreciate the importance of Inclusive Education, and encourage their participation in the initiative, the Education for All (EFA) campaign was kick started at the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in Thailand in 1990. The goal was to provide all children, both young and adults alike the right to education (Haggis, 1991). In 1994, the World Conference on Special Needs Education was organized at Salamanca, which adopted the inclusion principle as an imperative approach for achieving Education-for-All as agreed on in Jomtien. In the year 2000, the visions and mission of the Jomtien declaration was endorsed at the World Education Forum meeting, which was held in Dakar. It highlighted the overbearing challenges minority groups face in the educational sector, and the need to stamp these problems out (Skibeck, 2000). Several states, including Ghana accepted the program, and began making policy changes in their various countries to pave way for increased enrollment of PWDs and other minority groups in schools. Although most of these countries are still struggling to meet the standards set by the World Education Forum that was to be achieved by 2002, recent studies have confirmed significant improvements in the

enrolment and completion rates of vulnerable groups in school, including PWDs (Salend, 2015).

Inclusion is therefore a design that intervenes for minority groups that have hitherto been excluded from educational opportunities. These minority groups include children from remote areas, those living in poverty, those from ethnic and tribal minorities, girls, persons with disabilities, etc. Key international treaties and policies influencing inclusive education theory and practice globally include the following:

- i. 1948 United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration on Human Rights,
- ii. 1989 UN Convention on the rights of the child,
- iii. 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Statement and framework on Special Needs Education,
- iv. 2000 World Forum on Special Needs Education in Dakar, Senegal.

#### **2.1.3.1 Policy Goals**

The ultimate goal of the Inclusive Education (IE) policy is to restructure the design and implementation of education programmes and services in ways that incorporate the diverse needs of every learner within its scope. Specifically, however, the policy seeks to achieve the following objectives:

##### **Inclusion**

As defined, inclusion is the process of ensuring easy and equitable access to education for all children, especially those disadvantaged: like children that have special needs including those with disabilities, and other minority groups. The IE policy aims to create learning conditions that are humane and responsive to all learners' needs. Thus, providing conducive environments towards the successful achievement of educational outcomes. Ultimately, the inclusivity of the policy presupposes that the policy seeks to create a more equitable society for all. One that goes beyond the education system to include individual communities, and settlements that are

remote from city capitals, to create the needed supportive environment for people to realize their full educational and career goals (Ainscow, 2005).

### **Special Educational Needs**

The policy targets all children having special needs. The term ‘learners with special educational needs’ is defined in this policy to encompass learners who may be regarded as having a disability and those category of children who are not performing well in school because they experience barriers/ challenges that inhibit them from achieving optimal progression in their learning and development.

The inclusive education policy is geared towards ensuring that all teachers are properly equipped to handle different students in their classrooms. In terms of educational structures, the policy was drafted to serve as the standard for providing relevant equipment and assistive technological devices to schoolchildren to enable them access quality education. To direct the policy implementation towards success with relatively low or no obstacles. It purports to create a learning environment free from discrimination, friendly and safe for all children within the school. An environment that sanctions persons who transgress this requirement, and/or violate the rights of students with special needs (Skibeck, 2000; Salend, 2015).

### **Learner Diversity**

The policy recognizes different categories of learners with varying educational needs who are the targets of IE. These persons include but are not limited to: Persons with Intellectual Disability, Street Children, Persons with Specific Learning Disability, Gifted or Talented Persons. Others include Nomadic children (shepherd boys), children of fisher-folks and domestic child workers, Children that have Physically Disabled, Children that are exploited for financial gains, Autistic Children, Children living with HIV/AIDS, Children that have Attention Deficit, Persons with Hearing Impairment, Children that are Visually Impaired, Hyperactivity Disorder and Persons with Blindness. Persons that have Speech and other

Communication Disorders, Persons that have other health impairments and chronic illnesses such as Rheumatism, Asthma, Epilepsy, Spinal Bifida and Sickle Cell Anaemia, Children displaced by Natural Disasters and Social Conflicts, and Persons with Emotional and Behaviour Disorder, and Persons with Multiple Disabilities (Salend, 2015).

#### **2.1.4 Educational Reforms in Ghana**

Through its national and international commitments, Ghana fully endorsed and supported the Education for All Initiative and committed herself through the adoption and subsequent ratification of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Salamanca Accord among others. The Inclusive Education Policy outlines the strategic paths taken by the Ghana's government for the education of every child in the country devoid of socio-cultural, economic, political and/or geological barriers. The policy is anchored on various provisions in the 1992 Constitution, the Education Strategic Plan, the National Development Agenda and the International Commitments to accomplish both national and international objectives of creating supportive environments that will meet the various educational needs of children that are of school going-age in Ghana. As many countries all over the world moved towards providing an education that is inclusive, Ghana's educational system also made some attempts in same regard. The national and international commitments or that provide direction to Ghana's inclusive education that is geared towards ensuring that all children, whether disabled not have access to and participates in education that guarantees productive live in adulthood are discussed below.

##### **2.1.4.1 National Commitments to Inclusive Education**

Ghana informally began implementing provisions of Inclusive Education since 1951 with the enactment of the Accelerated Education Plan and the Education Act in 1961. The Ministry of Education however formally adopted the policy in 2003 when it incorporated the convention

in its Educational Strategic Plans of 2003-2015 (Gadagbui, 2008). Since then, a number of reforms had been embarked upon by the government and other non-state institutions to ensure that every minority group in the country, especially persons with special needs are granted equal access to quality education. Some of the salient Legislative instruments and policies enacted by the government of Ghana towards the extension of education to all include pronouncements in the 1992 constitution which grants education rights to all children, the Education Strategic Plan, which was to be implemented from the year 2010 - 2020, the Disability Act 2006 (Act 715), the Education Act 2008, (Act 778) and the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education program (FCUBE) and the Inclusive Education Policy.

### **The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992)**

Article 25(1) of the constitution states that, every person shall have equal rights to educational opportunities and facilities in Ghana. To achieve fully the realization of this right, basic education shall be free, compulsory and universally available to all. According to Article 27 (3), women shall be assured equal right to education and training without any discrimination or hindrance from any person. Other minority groups, including PWDs have also been protected in the 1992 constitution against possible discriminations and/or stigmatization (Republic of Ghana, 1992).

### **The Education Strategic Plan (2010-2020)**

In the Education Strategic Plan, the Ministry responsible for Education is mandated to provide education for persons with physical, intellectual, mental and other forms of impairments, orphans, and slow or fast learners, by ensuring that they are all included wherever possible, in the mainstream system of formal education or, only when deemed necessary, within special units, institutions or schools (Republic of Ghana, 2010).

### **The Education Act 778, (2008)**

In 2008, Act 778 was passed with the objective of providing for the establishment of an educational system intended to produce well-balanced individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes and attitudes (Republic of Ghana, 2008). It also provides for the inclusion of all in the education service delivery to ensure that all citizens (including Persons with Disabilities) have access to it. The Act in Section 29 sub-section (P) requires that “the Minister may, by legislative instrument, in consultation with the appropriate body, make Regulations in respect of the provision of adequate facilities for persons with disability or special needs”. Again, it requires Educational Institutions’ heads and anyone responsible for granting admission to students into schools have equally been captured in the Act. Heads of educational institutions are legally stopped from denying PWDs admission on the grounds of their disabilities. Section 20 (1) puts it in the following way: “a person responsible for admission into a school or other institution of learning shall not refuse to give admission to a person with disability on account of the disability unless the person with disability has been assessed by the Ministry responsible for Education in collaboration with the Ministries responsible for Health and Social Welfare to be a person who clearly requires to be in a special school for children or persons with disability” (p. 7). It further prescribes a penalty for the contravention of this provision. “A person who contravenes this provision commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to both” (Act, 715).

### **Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)**

The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), which was launched by the Government of Ghana in 1996 was in fulfillment of a constitutional requirement was meant to grant equal access to quality education for all children of school going age in Ghana. Among other considerations, the policy seeks to ensure that the necessary inputs of quality education (class rooms, teaching and learning material, provision of teachers) are made available for the

implementation of the FCUBE programme. It also aimed at ensuring that children with disabilities had access to basic education in Ghana.

### **The Disability Act 715, (2006)**

The Act was enacted to provide protections for PWDs in all areas of their socioeconomic and political lives. The Disability Act requires Government to “provide free education for a person with disabilities, and establish special schools for persons with disabilities who by reason of their disability cannot be enrolled in formal schools” (Act 715, p. 6). The Act also discourages cultures who constrain children with disabilities to the confines of the home, to grant them as a matter of rights the privilege to go out, socialise with other children and be educated. The government, in its bid to realise this objective, made basic education free for all children (Section 18). Also of great relevance is the provision for structural change in Ghanaian schools to ensure easy access by all persons with disabilities (Section 17). As the head of the government sector mandated to manage Ghana’s educational system, the Minister of Education is given the power to designate any school or educational institutions in each region to provide the necessary facilities and equipment that will make it possible for persons with disabilities to benefit fully from the schools or institutions. This, the Minister is to do through a Legislative Instrument. This includes the construction of pavements, disability-friendly public libraries, road signs, and the provision of appropriate reading material to facilitate easy teaching and learning in schools (Section 22). Section 16 (1-2) opines that all parents and guardians must ensure that children that have disabilities under their care are enrolled in school. Section 17 entreats the Ghana Education Service to ensure that educational facilities are disability friendly and education is made free for persons with disabilities (Section 18-22) (Republic of Ghana, 2006). The implication of this provisions is that as far as practicable, all school infrastructure must be made accessible to persons with disabilities by ensuring that accessibility ramps, sufficient lighting among others are made for students with disabilities to be able to access them. Further, the Act under Section 19, the Disability Act

further makes provisions for the state to provide appropriate training for those PWDs that are unable to further their education in the formal sector after completing basic education (Act 715; Munyi, 2012). This is to help them acquire skills necessary for effective social and occupational life.

### **Inclusive Education Policy**

After passing a series of legislations and policies that Ghana adopted to pave way for the smooth integration of students with special needs into the mainstream educational system, Ghana developed an Inclusive Education Policy in 2015. The policy defines the strategic path of government for the education of all children with special educational needs in the country. The policy has as its objectives improving and adapting education and its related systems and structures to ensure the inclusion of all learners particularly learners with special educational needs, promote a universal design for learning/learner friendly school environments for enhancing the quality of education for all learners, promoting the development of a well-informed and trained human resource for the quality delivery of Integrated Education throughout the country, and ensure sustainability of Inclusive Education Implementation (Republic of Ghana, 2015). Though the scope of learners with special needs in the Inclusive Education Policy transcends Persons with Disabilities to include Nomadic children, children with HIV/AIDS among others, this study focused on the children with disabilities as defined in Section 59 of the Persons with Disability Act 2006, Act 715.

#### **2.1.4.2 International Commitments to Inclusive Education**

The following international conventions have been ascribed to by Ghana:

##### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted and ratified by Ghana in February, 1990. This was a pledge of her commitment to ensuring that every child is

given the chance to exercise his/her right. The Act among other things provide for the protection of the protection of the rights of the child, the survival of child, the best interest of the child, and parental guidance (UNCRC, 1990).

#### **The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)**

Having ratified this convention, Ghana is required to guarantee equal access to basic and secondary education, technical and vocational training, adult education and opportunities for lifelong learning for all, especially persons with disabilities. The act entreats all member states to eradicate barriers that inhibit PWDs from taking advantage of educational opportunities (UNCRC, 1990; Assembly, 2006).

#### **The Dakar Framework for Action**

In response to the fundamental principle of EFA, which required that every child, youth and adults should be given opportunity to learn, the Dakar framework for Action was enacted to provide workable strategies that can aid member countries to effectively fight the discrimination and marginalization that characterizes the educational system, mostly to the detriment of persons with special needs (UNESCO, 2000).

#### **World Declaration on Education for All - Jomtien (1990)**

The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtein, Thailand, set out an overall vision to ensure universal access to education and promote equity by ensuring girls, women, PWDs, and other under -served groups gain access to education (WCEFA, 1990; UNESCO, 2000).

#### **Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1993)**

Through the adoption of this rules, Ghana is obligated to guarantee the elimination of barriers to full and equal participation in society by Person with disabilities. Specifically, the Standard Rules entreats member countries to work towards full participation and equal opportunities,

identification and removal of remaining barriers, and make the government apparatus responsible for all necessary measures.

### **Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994)**

The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) provides a framework and guidance on developing educational institutions that are inclusive. It directs the government of Ghana to design and implement educational programs that takes into account the wide and divers characteristics and needs of all genre of people living in the country. Additionally, the principle enjoins Ghana to ensure that all persons that need special educational have access to regular schools which have the capacity to accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting their needs.

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

The erstwhile Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had targets which included access to and completion of Universal Primary Education by 2015 and the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also under Goal 4 sets far reaching targets for equitable and inclusive quality education. However, if groups of learners that are marginalized, such as those having disabilities, continue to suffer exclusion from basic education, it will be extremely difficulty for countries to achieve the SDGs on education. Ghana is a signatory to this policy.

## **2.2 Theoretical Perspective (Social Model of Disability)**

The social model of disability was the guiding perspective for this study. This model of disability was developed by activists in the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation and was used by persons with disabilities to lobby for policies and laws in their favour in Britain, in the 1970s (Shakespear & Watson, 2002). The social model distinguishes between the impairment that a person has and the oppressions that they experience in society.

It sees disability as social oppression and not from the perspective of the individual's impairment (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). It maintains that disability results from the situation whereby the social and cultural environment limit a person with specific physical, intellectual, sensory and/or mental health impairments from enjoying their human rights, and hence limits their participation in society as full and equal members (UNICEF, 2013). These limiting factors includes harmful attitudes, discriminatory behaviours, environmental, physical, transportation and communication obstacles, weaknesses in policies or their implementation (UNICEF, 2013). According to the model, disability is therefore seen as “a socio-political construct, whereby the attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers that inherently exist within society systematically exclude and discriminate against people with disabilities” (UNICEF, 2014).

The social model of disability proposes an inclusive, barrier-free education system from pre-school through higher education as the approach to encourage children with disabilities to access and receive quality education, and have greater opportunities to participate on equal basis with their peers without disabilities (UNICEF, 2014). Thus, the social model of disability is applicable to the study in that policies such as the Persons with Disability Act (715) and the implementation of inclusive education by societal institutions constitutes one of the best ways to remove barriers of exclusiveness for persons that have disabilities to have access to quality education.

The social model of disability however acknowledges the tendency of social reforms and policies used as criteria for improving enrolment rates among vulnerable groups in order to meet the Inclusive Education goals, to neglect the specific needs of persons that have disabilities; thus, conscious actions are required to meet the peculiar needs of PWDs. For instance, the need for special teaching assistants in educational setups to help PWDs, and structural reforms to make navigation easy for PWDs can be neglected on the pretext that the

educational system is striving towards the general good of the entire vulnerable population in Ghana. The model therefore suggests that, as the educational system is implementing wider reforms to assist every minority group in society to meet their fundamental human rights to education, special attention needed to be directed at the specific needs of persons with disabilities. With this, the biological, psychological and emotional needs of students with special needs are to be adequately catered for: Teaching materials will be structured to suit PWDs cognitive and biological capacities, their participation during lessons will be encouraged through a tailored approach that adequately trains classroom teachers to employ professional strategies to enlist their involvement in programmes and activities, and by making navigation on campuses more convenient for persons with disabilities. In addition, the use of modern technologies, including hearing aids, visual aids, projectors, braille, etc. will help to give credence to the specific quest of Ghana's educational system to mainstream the educational system and encourage better achievements among PWDs. In a nut shell, the Social Model of Disability focuses on all environmental and personal reforms needed to be effected to achieve the educational goals of the Disability Act and safeguard the fundamental human rights of PWDs in school. In addition to structural reforms, the model recommends that specific attention must be paid to the behavioural and competency issues among teacher and other supervisors who have been employed to protect and facilitate educational achievements of PWDs in school.

This model of disability contrasts with the medical model of disability that sees disability as inherent in the individual. The medical model focusses on the bodily impairments of the person to the exclusion of barriers and structures created by society that impede the individual's participation in society. The medical model of disability sees disability as resulting from diseases, trauma and other health conditions that require medical treatment to make the disabled person functional in society (Edmonds, 2005). Riding on advances made in the

medical sciences, the medical model of disability focusses its attention of “fixing” the disability in the individual. Thus it aims at making the disabled person fit for society.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed and discussed scholarly works that are germane to the study and relevant legislations and policies, both international and local that are meant to give strategic direction to Integrated Education and its implementation. Documents such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Convention on the rights of the child, the Salamanca Statement and framework on Special Needs Education, the Persons with Disabilities Act, the Education Act and the 2015 Integrated Education Policy were discussed. Again, the social model of disability, which is the theoretical perspective of the study was also discussed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the method used in conducting the research. This comprises the systematic way through which the study was undertaken. The chapter includes the research design, target population, study population, technique used for sampling, size of the sample, data sources, methods used for collecting data, data handling and analyses, and ethical considerations. Finally, challenges encountered by the researcher during the conduct of this research were also listed and measures employed to address the challenges extensively explained.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The researcher employed the qualitative research design to conduct this research. Mason (2002) defined qualitative research as a way of exploring the various aspects of the social world, including the weave of everyday life, the understanding, practises and imaginations of people, how those social processes and institutions work, and the importance of the meanings that they generate to the people. The idea is to understand how the disability act has been understood, interpreted and implemented in achieving inclusive education of person with disabilities.

The reason for employing qualitative research design for this study is to help get a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study. It also provided the researcher an opportunity for systematic and in-depth evaluation of participants' response. Using the qualitative method afforded the researcher the opportunity to observe participants' nonverbal clues and explore their lived experiences through interviews. Finally, the use of this research

design enabled the establishment of relationship of trust with the participants. Trust guaranteed the provision of responses that are factual and true.

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population include the following: All persons with disabilities who are enrolled in the Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools located in the Madina La-Nkwatanang Municipality of the Greater Accra Region. Using this category of participants ensured that only participants who were intellectually matured enough to provide authentic responses were sampled to participate in this research.

The researcher also sampled and interviewed teachers and head-teachers of selected schools in the Madina La-Nkwatanang Municipality. This population was chosen because of the experiences they have had with implementing education policies over the years. Additionally, as professionals, it was expected that teachers possessed in-depth literary knowledge on education and disability issues. Their observations and analysis of education policies, especially those pertinent to persons with disabilities is therefore imperative.

### **3.4 Eligibility Criteria for Inclusion**

1. Persons with Disabilities above the age of 14 years who are currently enrolled in junior high schools and senior high schools at the Madina La-Nkwatanang Municipality.
2. Teachers and head teachers of junior high schools and senior high schools in the Madina La-Nkwatanang Municipality who have had at least one of their students to be a person with disability

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

Sampling refers to the selection of a segment of a population under study to represent the entire population. Sampling is very important in every research because the entire population is usually difficult to study and therefore part of the population is used to represent the whole population.

The purposive sampling design was employed for this study. Persons with disabilities were purposively selected, because in addition to making it easy to locate respondents who fit the study description, the design also provided the researcher with much information related to inclusive education. Teachers and head teachers were also selected purposively since they can provide much information on how they are implementing the Disability Act in terms of including persons with disabilities in schools.

Based on the number of PWDs in a school, the researcher conveniently selected any PWD available to participate in the study. This was however done after a prior authorization was sought from the management of the selected schools. Potential participants who were below 18 years were sampled after their parents' consent has duly been sought. Only teachers who have had a PWD as a student during their career were sampled to participate in this study. The import of this is to ensure that information provided during the interview is not merely a speculation and/or an assumption.

### **3.6 Sample Size**

The study recruited 14 participants to take part in this research. Persons with disabilities who were in school (5), teachers who have at a point in their career taught a person with disability (5), and head masters of selected schools (5). In addition to the in-depth information this number of participants provided due to the qualitative nature of the study, the selection of respondents from these categories also enabled the researcher to collect different versions of

information on the phenomenon for better analysis. This made the data rich and the analysis complete.

### **3.7 Sources of Data**

The study used both primary data as well as secondary information. The primary data comprised information from persons with disabilities, teachers, and head teachers, using interview guides. Such information was analysed and presented. The secondary information encompassed all information retrieved from journal articles, newsletters, presentations, official reports, and the internet, among others. The secondary data was used to support arguments made in this research.

### **3.8 Method of Data Collection and Research Instruments**

Individual face to face interview was used for collection of data from participants. An interview guide was developed in line with the objectives of the study and was used as a guide to aid the researcher in conducting the interviews. Consent was sought from the guardians or caregivers of persons with disabilities below 18years before the interviews were conducted. The interviews were also conducted in places convenient for the participants. Using the interview guide allowed the researcher to gather in-depth data from the respondents. More importantly, the use of interviews made it possible for the researcher to not only acquire the verbal information related to the experiences of the participants involved, but also take particular notice of their non-verbal clues and relate these expressions to what the participants said. In addition, the approach helped the researcher to establish a relationship of trust with the respondents. As qualitative study, trust is imperative towards the relay of truthful and authentic information to the researcher. This is important because, the research design involves the collections of information on the experiences and personal profile of respondents, some of

which can either be embarrassing, or unlawful. Relationship of trust is hence paramount in insuring that clients' anxieties concerning their private information are eradicated.

Finally, the data collection method permitted the researcher to use audio tape recorder and field note books to collect information from the field. The tape recorder was necessary because it aided the researcher to store all details mentioned during the interview. In other words, tape recorders ensure that every piece of information passed on to the researcher by the participant is taken and recorded. These audio files were later played and transcribed using the Microsoft Word Office for analysis. Observed nonverbal cues from the participants were also recorded using the field note book and pencil.

### **3.9 Data Handling and Analysis**

The principle of confidentiality is inextricably linked with the conduct of social science research. The importance of confidentiality is made even more important with qualitative studies since to deals with the collection and analysis of information which are personal to participants. Having said this, the researcher in her bid to guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of data gathered from the participants downloaded the audio files and kept them on a password protected laptop to ensure safe keeping. Files that were transcribed and printed out were also kept safely away from third parties.

Data were analysed using the six step thematic analyses suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

They include the following:

***Familiarisation with the data:*** First, in order to fully understand the information provided by the participants, the researcher immersed herself into the data provided, and tried to become intimately familiar with it. To be effective in this quest, reading and re-reading the data, and

listening to audio-recorded data at least once, to note any initial analytic observations were adequately done by the researcher.

**Coding:** This is another common but vital element of approaches to qualitative analysis. Here, the researcher identified and generated labels for important features of the data of relevance using the research questions as guidelines.

**Searching for themes:** A theme represents a coherent and meaningful pattern identifiable in the data based on the research questions. Themes were constructed by the researcher based on the research objectives and the emerging issues from the data. The researcher then collated all the coded data that are relevant to each theme.

**Reviewing themes:** This involves checking that the themes are relevant in relation to both the coded extracts and the complete data-set. The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and began to delineate the nature of each individual theme, and the connection between the themes. Where essential, two or more themes were collapsed into a single one, or one theme split into two or more themes, or discarded altogether.

**Defining and naming themes:** Here, detailed analysis was conducted and written by the researchers on every theme to identify the story each is trying to tell and the essence of every theme. A concise, punchy and informative name for each theme was then constructed.

**Writing up:** Writing is the final but most important part of the analytic process in Thematic Analysis. It entails putting together the analytic description and extracts of data in order to tell the reader a comprehensive and persuasive story about the data, and contextualising it in relation to other studies.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Consent of teachers and head teachers was sought before their participation in the study and that of school children was sought from their parents and guardians. In addition, the purpose of the study was explained to participants before their inclusion into the study. Also, information from participants were kept confidential. All books, journals and other sources of information used are duly acknowledged.

To ensure that participants were fully aware of the purpose of this study, and to ensure that only relevant information in line with the study purpose were provided, the researcher educated all potential participants about the research and its long-term and short term use before recruitments were made. In addition, the researcher explained all possible risks attached to participants' engagement in the study to potential participants before they were selected. Every participant in this research gave their formal consent through the signing of a consent form drafted by the researcher before the interviews were conducted.

Also of equal importance is the need to safeguard respondents' privacy. Every information relayed to the researcher was kept absolutely confidential, and the interviews held in an environment that ensured the participants' privacy. To ensure that the identities of all participants are protected, the researcher used pseudonyms to replace the actual names of people who took part in this study. Every interviewee was at liberty to discontinue from participation at any time they deemed necessary without any penalty.

### **3.11 Limitation of the Study**

The following are some limitation of the study. Children with hearing impairment were not included in the sample because the researcher did not have the competence to communicate using sign language. Hence, findings from the study cannot be generalised across all types of

PWDs. The finding also limited to only the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality and not applicable to other districts.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

The chapter on methodology looked at issues like the design of the study and the process that was used in collecting data from the participants. It also looked at the sample size of the study and how it was selected, ethical considerations that were made in the study and how the data collected was analysed to draw conclusions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings from the field. Only primary data collected from the field have been recorded in this section. The results are presented under major themes in line with the research objectives. These include the socio-demographic characteristics of participants, impacts of the Disability Act on Inclusive Education, Challenges in the enforcement of the Disability Act, and measure for functional and institutional restructuring in schools. Essentially, the findings will be presented using voice notes recorded from the field and transcribed using the Microsoft Office (2013). The actual names of participants who were featured in this section are withheld, and replaced with pseudonyms.

#### 4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

A total of 14 people participated in this study. Out of these, 5 are students with different forms of disabilities, 5 are teachers, and 4, head teachers. Out of the 5 children with disabilities, 2 had a disability of impaired mobility hence using wheel chairs, 2 were partially impaired in the eye and 1 had a learning disability (Autism).

In terms of specific differences, the data shows that all the 5 PWDs who participated in the study fell between the ages of 14 years to 18 years. Three of them are males, and the rest females. The PWDs sampled were either in the basic school or the Senior High School at the time the interviews were conducted.

In terms of the teachers who participated in the research, 2 are males and 3 are females. All the 5 teachers sampled are Christians. Majority of the teachers who partook in this research were between 40-49 years of age. Four head teachers also participated in this study. Out of this, 3

are males and 1 is a female. The gender disaggregated data on the respondents of the study is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Gender disaggregation of respondents**

Description	Total	Male	Female
Head Teacher	4	3	1
Teachers	5	2	3
Students	5	3	2
All	14	8	6

Source: Filed Data (2017)

### **4.3 Impact of the Disability Act on Inclusive Education**

The responses provided by the interviewees show that children that have disabilities in Ghana are not likely to be enrolled in school, attend school, and complete their educational careers. This idea was shared by majority of the students, teachers and head teachers who participated in this research. Compared with other children, children that have disabilities face more difficulties in accessing education which led to low enrolment, attendance and completion. Social and institutional cultures and poverty served as the leading reason why children that have disabilities did not attend school, missed classes and had difficulties with learning. In addition, the respondents indicated that children had on-going health problems that had negative implications for their education and which as a result had reduced their parents limited resources. In light of these challenges, the Inclusive education policy and the Disability Act were enacted to grant PWDs with equal access to education in Ghana. Its Purpose is to increase the enrolment of PWDs in schools, ensure the elimination of all forms of cultural and

institutional prejudice and stigmatizations against PWDs, and guarantee that every child of school going age, especially those with disabilities are offered the opportunity to realise their full educational and career potentials in life. When the PWDs who have been recruited for this study were asked about their knowledge of the Disability Act, and condition of life in their various schools after the implementation of the PWD Act and the Inclusive Education Policy, some of them had these to say:

*“No I don’t know anything about it. But I think it’s that we have to go to school every day and be good students in school. Learn our books well and pass exams” (Ama - PWD, 15).*

*“No, I have not heard of it before” (Kojo – PWD, 14)*

Ama and Kojo further pointed out when asked if they like going to school; if they are treated well by teachers; and able to play with her colleagues, that:

*“Yes, I like school, because I want to learn very hard and become something in future and also help others” (Ama - PWD, 15).*

*“No, I don’t play with them (other children) every time. I can only throw balls so I just watch them. Sometimes I stay in the classroom during break. Or I will stay in front of the block looking at them. But the teachers treat me okay” (Ama - PWD, 15).*

*“I quit school to make paper craft - I didn’t quit myself. It’s my mom that made me quit and she brought me here” (Kojo – PWD, 14).*

*“...I partook in the basketball team – but I wasn’t treated well by the teachers. Sometimes they made me angry” (Kojo – PWD, 14).*

In terms of the level of knowledge teachers have regarding the Disability Act and Inclusive Policy, the participants had this to say:

*“Well, since they are all learning the same thing, I expect their (special needs students) parents to help them to do their homework and answer questions. I don’t cane them, but they must compete with the rest the same way.” (Akua, 40).*

*“As I said, the approach to teaching has changed. So I know they are different from other students. But if I give them (PWDs) all the attention, what about the rest of the students. It’s not my fault. The children are too many” (Kofi, 34).*

On the impact of the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education Policy, three teachers had these to say:

*“Initially they were discriminated against – I strongly believe the public has been sensitized about it – so there has been improvement with enrolment of PWDs. In my school we have some of them admitted this year. I have one in my class.” (Akua, 40).*

*They (PWDs) were shy because of stigmatisation. Some were attributed to some spiritual beliefs. But with a little bit of education now people (teachers and supervisors) are getting to know that people with disabilities are normal people” (Afia, 45).*

*“Yes, the policies have changed my school because formerly PWDs will not have been accepted into the mainstream but now they are in the mainstream and can socialize with the others.” (Kofi, 34).*

*“The policies, yes. The approach to teaching has changed. The books too have changed. What we have now are more interesting to read. The syllabus has also changed.” (Kofi, 34).*

One of the headmasters also expressed his opinions about the Person with Disability Act in the following way:

*“No I’m not aware of it...As I said earlier on, I don’t know anything about the Act. I don’t know what it says but what I know is they (PWDs) should have access to the facilities everybody is enjoying...I have not had so much encounter with PWDs, but there was once a special case in this school...For now I see that some educational institutions make provision for them – but not here... For here we have not had a PWD after the one we had completed school” (Kwame, 44)*

*“Generally I don’t think much change has taken place after the passage of the Disability Act. For me and my school I don’t see any major changes. For enrolment and retention, I think after that one child who was physically challenged, we have not had a physically challenged person except one girl who had seizure” (Abra, 49).*

#### **4.4 Challenges in the enforcement of the Disability Act**

When asked about some of the obstacles confronting the full implementation and enforcement of the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education policy, it was found that challenges exist as a consequence of the culturally engendered social stigma, lack of resources and the prejudices that discourage parents from enrolling their children with disabilities to school, and/or impels school authorities to prioritise other educational programs above the basic needs of persons with disabilities. In other words, due to the cultural context within which PWDs are born in Ghana, parents tend to prevent their children from going to school because they feared that their children would be abused by teachers and also as a result of their inability to support them financially. In addition, head teachers lamented over the lack of expertise in terms of trained

teachers as an obstacle to the educational advancements children that have disabilities in their respective schools. The inclusive education policy is geared towards ensuring that all teachers are sufficiently prepared to handle diverse learners in their class. It purports to create an educational environment devoid of any form of discriminations against persons with disabilities. Essentially, the policy is intended to ensure that educational institutions in Ghana are equipped with the required trained human resources who understand the condition of PWDs and are capable of meeting the individual needs of a PWD in their classroom.

The response quoted below are provided to measure the extent to which the Persons with Disabilities Act and the Inclusive Education policy have failed to address educational difficulties and challenges of special needs students in school. Some of the PWDs had the following to say:

*“I am always late to school. I don’t have money to buy a wheel chair, and I cannot climb the school bus” (Kojo PWD, 14).*

*“There were sometimes I wasn’t able to do everything...When I don’t understand something, I can’t ask the teacher because I am shy. I was treated different from them. The teacher did not know that I have special needs. He thought that I was lazy” (Yaw PWD, 14).*

*“... the only thing is sometimes learning is difficult...I told the teacher once...he said I should listen more attentively, so I don’t complain anymore” (Kwabena PWD, 18).*

*“It’s not all of them (Teachers) that understood that I’m a child with a special need” (Adwoa PWD, 15).*

*“Sometimes I feel bored and I feel like going home. My Classmates Are Sometimes Noisy” (Ama-PWD, 15).*

When asked if PWDs still encountered discrimination and stigma in school, one of the students stated the following:

*“...If it is time for learning no one came to help me. They will leave me on my own. They sometimes didn’t care. If my teacher does something against me, I just leave it...I wasn’t always feeling like mixing with the others because they won’t mind you and they would not pay attention to you” (Yaw-PWD, 14).*

In terms of some challenges encountered by teachers in their quest to effect the provisions of the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education policy, some of them had these to say:

*“Even the stairs that we have is not disability friendly...the teachers are not trained to handle PWDs” (Akua, 40).*

*“I think the stakeholders are not taking the pain to follow up with the implementation. It is just the new schools that are being built by the government that have considered it” (Afia, 45).*

*“... If you look at the buildings here, they are not disability friendly (Kwame, 44)*

Some of the headmasters had this to say:

*“...I will not say the class teacher should wait for the disabled child to catch up before going to the next level” (Yaw, 34).*

*“I think it is just like now. They were not really catered for. For example, I had a boy who was disabled in the school at the JHS level. He was unable to climb the stairs to class and also didn’t have a wheelchair. So what the kids were doing was they lifted him up in the mornings and brought him down in the afternoon” (Abra, 49).*

*“Structure wise there has been very little change, in that PWDs are still not being considered before some structures are put up...the stairs and the rails and access to classrooms if the person has to use a wheel chair...Classrooms are set up in a way that if you are not performing you will be left behind unlike special schools that have attention for each child. Compared to sometime back there is no difference...there is a defect in the implementation, in that it is not monitored in a way that you will think the act is being enforced...the state of enrolment now is a little bit of a challenge” (John, 46)*

#### **4.5 Recommendations for institutional restructuring in schools**

In terms of institutional structures, the policies were drafted to serve as the standard for providing appropriate tools and assistive devices/technologies to school children with disability to enable them access quality education. The study explored the participants’ perceptions about the readiness of their educational institutions to educate children with disabilities. They were also asked to make a comparison between current infrastructural status of their schools vis-à-vis the period when the policy of Inclusive Education and the Disability Acts were not passed. Specifically, the students with disabilities were asked to describe the ease with which they access their classrooms and other school structures. They also described the conditions of their classrooms and the degree of discomfort they experience when lessons are in progress.

Teachers and headmasters also provided their opinions regarding the urgency with which the Ministry of Education and the municipal education directorate responds to their requests for special facilities to support persons with disabilities in their schools. To get a clear picture of the situation in schools located in the research area, the teachers were asked to point out some infrastructural challenges they encounter in their bid to fully educate persons with disabilities in their schools. The respondents were also asked to list some improvements observed over the

period in response to the provisions of the Person with Disability Act and the Inclusive Education policy.

Schools are expected to be well equipped to accommodate students with disabilities. Classrooms and toilets facilities, pavements, school buses, desks, visual aids, etc. must demonstrate the readiness of educational institutions to enrol persons with disabilities. They are also required to provide conducive environments geared towards the successful achievement of the educational outcomes of persons with disability.

However, the report provided by the participants of this study indicated that children with disabilities faced many forms of discrimination attributable to the lag in infrastructural development in their respective schools. Whereas the students complain of the difficulties they face when going school with the school bus, access to their classrooms, ability to concentrate and imbibe what has been taught, etc., the school authorities likewise confirmed the slow pace with which disability centred development projects are carried out in their schools. The school authorities also admitted to the existence of these challenges, but attributed the anomalies to inadequate funds, the lack of commitment from community members, and the lack of adequate assistance from the Ghana Education Service (GES) and other key stakeholders. In lieu of these challenges, the participants were asked to suggest workable institutional restructuring strategies can be implemented to ameliorate the problem.

Some of the participants who participated in the study recommended the following:

**Students:**

*“I want the school to help us with textbooks, so that we can study at home...And they (headmasters and teachers) should make it easy for me so that I can access the classrooms and other school structures easily with my wheel chair” (Ama-PWD, 15).*

*I want them to also understand my situation and that I have a problem so that they will be able to help me...I wanted them to know that I had autism but they thought I was lazy” (Adwoa-PWD, 15).*

*“I struggle to go to class...the government should construct pavements and rails for me to easily go to class without being carried” (Kwabena-PWD, 18).*

### **Teachers:**

*I think for now we are doing our best...we need electronic materialsto make teaching easy...we need projectors, wheel chairs for the students, and those things...” (Afia, 45)*

*“I think it should come from GES. They should make it one of their policies before they grant schools the permission to operate...special needs students can’t be taught like any other student and also we don’t have to burden them...they (PWDs) should be provided with special teachers to teach them. It is difficult for me to meet their special needs together with the rest of the other students by myself” (Mensah, 34).*

### **Headmasters:**

*“I think they have to be considered and buildings should be put up in a way they can access it. I expect them to be considered when they are drawing the school’s academic calendar” (Kwesi, 44).*

*“It is obvious teachers must be educated with regards to disability...The district education office can organize workshops for teachers on disability issues...School authorities must put up structures that are disability friendly. In every school we should have disability friendly tutors that will help students to socialise and mix up. We must pay attention to disabled students” (Selasie, 34).*

*“I think the government itself should come into this. The institutions which are responsible for supervising the inclusive education should visit schools to assist and supervise...I rather expect something from the ministry of education rather than the head teachers and authorities. This is because the resources are limited for the head teachers but the ministry can solicit for resources to help” (John, 46).*

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter on data presentation and analysis provides information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and presents findings that was made from the data collected by the researcher from the field. Findings on the impact of the Disability Act on Inclusive Education from the perspectives of PWD students, teacher and head teachers. It also presents findings on what needs to be done to make the Disability Act and Integrated Education Policy effective as prescribed by the respondents.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. Information collected from participants using one-on-one interviews were dissected and synthesized with the aid of relevant scholarly literature in order to make sense out of them, and draw meaningful conclusions. To ensure an intelligible presentation of argument raised from the data, the findings are organized under themes consistent with the research objectives. Additionally, a thematic framework that directs the researcher's approach towards the discourse of this section has also been provided to guide the reader. All demographic information from the data occurred randomly without manipulations from the researcher.

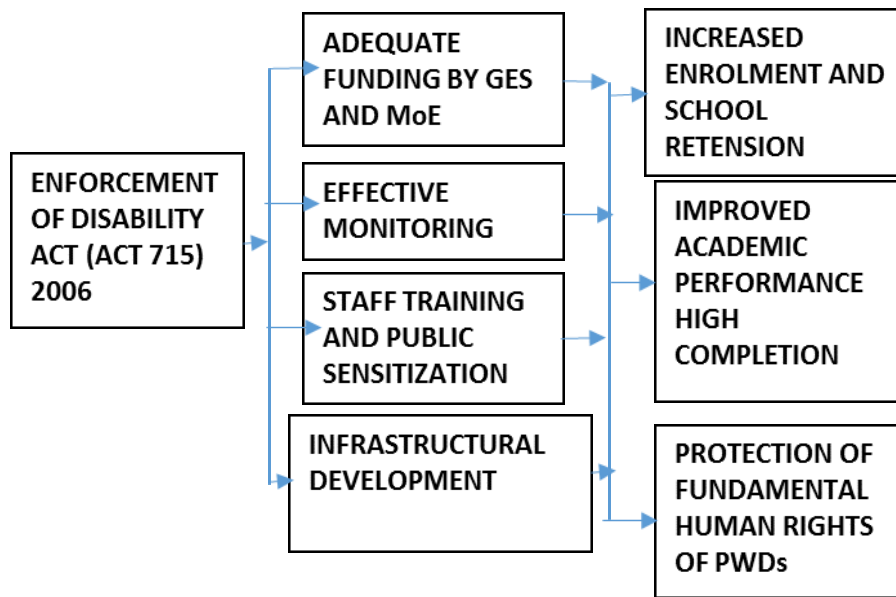
#### 5.2 Thematic Framework

Figure 5.1 represents the researcher's thematic framework for this study. It gives a vivid and organized conceptual analysis of the condition of PWDs schooling in Ghana's educational system. The figure indicates the current difficulties of persons with disabilities in Ghana's educational system to both institutional and cultural factors. In other words, as indicated by Shakespear & Watson, (2002) the table indicates the relationship between the people's disabilities and the oppression which they experience within the social milieu. It postulates that disability occurs when the social and cultural environments impede individuals with specific physical, intellectual, sensory or mental health barriers that bar them from enjoying their human rights (UNICEF, 2013). Institutionally, the inadequate planning and meagre resource allocation to schools towards the education and training of students with disabilities has been identified to be a major concern. In addition, although the Ghana Education Service in collaborations

with the Ministry of Education has implemented the Inclusive Education policy and the Disability Act, they are unable to adequately enforce their specific provisions. No strict and reliable monitoring mechanism exists to ensure that school authorities and teachers do not encroach on the fundamental human rights of students with disabilities. The table therefore suggests that with adequate budgetary allocation towards the implementation and enforcement of the Disability Act, PWDs will be better attended to in a professional manner, if their basic rights are assured.

The framework also identified culture and ignorance to be a major reason for the problems PWDs encounter in school. Majority of the students, their teachers, parents and the PWDs do not know what the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education says. Parents, teachers and other students maltreat PWDs because of their ignorance about the laws protecting them. It is important therefore to place emphasis on educating all stakeholders about the condition of PWDs, their rights and legal penalties for violating any of these rights. Teachers and headmasters especially must be taken through special training program to equip them with the knowledge and fortitude necessary for handling students with disabilities both in the classrooms and outside the classroom. Such educational initiatives will aid the management of educational institutions to consider the restructuring of educational facilities, including classroom blocks, pavements, desks, projectors, sign language instructors, among others to facilitate easy learning experiences for PWDs in school.

The framework presumes that when these measures are adequately effected, the access of PWDs to education will increase significantly. A comfortable educational environment devoid of stigma and discrimination; one where teachers are genuinely concerned about the peculiar needs of special need students, will assuredly result in high academic performance of students, guarantee the protection of students' fundamental human rights, and ultimately the achievement of the goals of the Disability Act.

**Figure 5.1 Thematic Framework**

Source: Field Data, 2017

### 5.3 Impact of the Disability Acts on Inclusive Education

Years prior to the enactment and implementation of the Persons with Disability Act has been a challenging period for PWDs in their quest to attend school, get educated and development their innate potentials. Several scholars revealed the oppressive condition of persons with disabilities before the implementations of international and national programs to assist and prevent the arbitrary abuse of their fundamental human rights (Moyi, 2012; Addo, 2014). Their reports on the education of persons with disabilities show that PWDs prefer not going to school due to sociocultural and institutional reasons. This assertion was confirmed by the findings of this study when respondents were asked to cite reasons for dropping out of school. The response provided revealed that some parents do not give their children the needed educational push because of the innate disbelief in their capability to compete favourably with other children, or become successful academically. As a result, some of the PWDs were withdrawn

from school to engage in trades and/or craftwork. This problem is further exacerbated when parents are illiterates and do not recognize the importance of education to their wards.

When PWDs start facing challenges in their educational pursuits, by way of scoring low marks in school, going through unfair treatment from colleagues and teachers, or lack the basic materials like school uniforms, sandals/shoes, exercise books etc., their parents can be impelled by the prevailing situation to withdraw their wards from school with the intent of using the meagre resource available to give them skills in crafts or trade that can sustain them financially in the future.

The finding also revealed ignorance on the part of the teachers and head teachers as precipitants to low enrolment rates among PWDs. Although teachers and headmasters are expected to have the requisite training and education regarding the welfare and legal rights of PWDs in order to protect them from abuse, the study revealed that almost all the teachers and headmasters who participated in this study neither know anything about the Disability Act nor the Inclusive Education program. This can be attributed to the inadequate importance placed on training teachers on disability issues in Ghana before getting posted to their various stations. When asked to describe the goals and special provisions of these policies, most of them were not able to answer; few however gave speculative responses. This lack of education on students with special needs can also result in the limited knowledge teachers have on the Disability Act. In the event that teachers lack the required training and education on policies and programs that focuses on the welfare and educational needs of PWDs, it is expected that the type of attention given to special needs students during class and other educational activities will be shoddy. This presupposes that teachers are inept to protect PWDs in school.

Students with impairments are equally ignorant about their basic rights; including the rights against discrimination, stigma and verbal or physical abuse. Consequently, they tend to fall

victims to different forms of maltreatments from both teachers and colleagues alike. It is not surprising therefore that, some of the parents withdrew their wards from school with the intent of providing them with the best protection they know how, and shield them from embarrassments. Retention in school is bound to be very low when school environments fail to provide comfortable conditions for PWDs to learn and develop their full potentials.

Recognizing the socio-cultural and institutional indicators for low education and retention of PWDs in school, the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education policies were enacted, and implemented by the Ministry responsible for Education and the Ghana Education Service to defend the educational rights of every child born with disabilities. To determine the extent to which these policies impacted on teaching methods and infrastructural facilities of schools in this Ghana, the finding of the study acknowledged that there has been some marginal improvement in both infrastructure and educational programs to make education for PWDs more flexible and comfortable.

Some of the respondents mentioned that unlike the condition existing before the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act, students with impairments are now treated more equally in most schools. The curriculum is structured to attend to the special needs of persons with disabilities; and most importantly, schools are now willing to enrol persons with disabilities in their institutions. This finding also corroborates the work of Moyi (2012) who mentioned that with the absence of prejudice, stigmatization and infrastructural obstacles, PWDs are more likely to go to school, stay in school for longer hours, and perform creditably well during examinations.

#### **5.4 Challenges in the enforcement of the Disability Act**

The ultimate purpose of the inclusive education policy is to ensure that the diverse need of every one in school is met. This includes the educational and material needs of persons that

have disabilities in schools. Specifically, the provision of learning materials that are disability friendly, and the restructuring of the educational system to make it conducive for all genres of people, especially persons with disabilities is a key preoccupation of the Act. However, the study outcomes show that, structural barriers still exist in the educational system, especially at the school level that impedes PWDs from realising their educational goals, and by extension, the goals of the Inclusive Education policy and the Disability Act (Act 715) of 2006.

In most schools, there is a lack of trained teachers in the field of special education. The shortage of teachers competent on special- educational needs, as well as the lack of teaching facilities, can negatively affected the delivery of quality education to children with special needs. In many schools, the class sizes are too big for teachers to facilitate quality learning, taking the peculiar need of the PWD into consideration. Thus, the lack of expertise such as teachers, represent a major barrier to children with disabilities' ability to go to school. It is obvious that training of teachers would be crucial in order to effectively include children with disabilities in schools (Deluca, Tramontano & Kett, 2014).

Other difficulties with the implementation of the policy encompass insufficient teaching and learning materials, inclusive education policies that are not clear, lack of commitment/support from the government, lack of cooperation between teachers and parents of persons with disabilities, and unskilled teachers to work with students with disabilities in schools, among others, which impede the successful enforcement of the provisions of the Persons with Disability Act and the Inclusive Education program (Chaula, 2014). Some of the teachers revealed that children with low vision lacked large print books; hence, they often strained their eyes as they struggled to read ordinary print. Some teachers also revealed that assistance from specialist teachers come in once in a long while, mostly at a time when harm has already been caused. There is no braille in most schools, and for those that are fortunate to use braille, it is normally delayed and its usefulness at the time it is made available, unnecessary.

There exist negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities in Ghanaian schools due to the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance from teachers and school administrators. This has potentially led to the neglect of these vulnerable groups, hampering their development and wellbeing (Friends of the Handicapped International, 2012). Children that have developmental disabilities require extra care and attention in terms of teaching methodology, the teaching and learning materials used in the classroom, adaptation of curriculum, assistive technology, method of assessment as well as more funds and resources to help them adapt to the school environment. It is incumbent on educational institutions and other key stakeholders to ensure that strategies are enforced to give children with special needs much more attention and help.

### **5.5 Institutional Restructuring**

In line with the Passage of the Disability Act (Act 715) 2006, the research investigated the government of Ghana's measures to ensure the realisation of the goals of inclusive education in Ghana, with a special focus on persons with disabilities. Mainstreaming education to accommodate PWDs had hence become one of the focal concerns of the Ghanaian educational system, compelling the design and enforcement of programs and structural reforms in tandem with these goals. Taking this initiative will not only enhance the enrolment rates of PWDs in Ghanaian schools, and by extension their ability to reach their full career and personal potentials, but also build the grounds for equal opportunities for all learners with disabilities in education and training, support their complete integration into society, and recognize the important role that teachers training and education in disability issues play in supporting and integrating PWDs in Ghana.

These strategies were analysed by this research in line other international conventions; including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN: CRPD 2015), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The CRPD, article 24, on the right to education, for instance reiterated the right to inclusive education and bans disability-based discrimination and stigmatisation in education for all children with disabilities. The CRPD Article 32 also recognises the importance of international cooperation and support of national governments. To be effective, radical reforms and substantial resources will be needed to ensure that educational systems, infrastructure and school environments are designed to benefit all children. It is imperative for all children to benefit from well-trained teachers, schools benefit from professional management and the education systems benefit from visionary leadership. After family characteristics, teacher quality and textbooks can be influential determining factor of the quality of education (OECD, 2005).

Structural reform must target teachers' negativity in their attitudes towards students with disabilities. Pre-service training needs to be practical and newly qualified teachers require coaching and mentoring. There is also a need for a well-organised professional development strategy and in-service training for teachers, which is comprehensive, contextually relevant and provides teachers with the motivation to learn and reflect on their practices. Teachers can benefit from national standards and curricula for initial teacher training and continuous professional development programmes that reflect research findings on what works in inclusion, taking into consideration national and local contexts.

In addition to the need for teachers to be trained, access to high quality, suitable teaching and learning materials is also very essential. Electronic textbook provision may be a sound investment that embrace video versions in sign language, simplified language, audio, visual and other formats accessible to all categories of PWDs. The costs of producing electronic

textbooks and the price of mobile readers and tablets have reduced significantly over the past several years making digital materials potentially available to, and obtainable by significantly more school age children. Students may normally struggle to understand lessons when the required learning materials are not available.

Currently, only few of children in low income countries have access to the assistive technologies they require, thereby hindering their access to school, reducing their ability to participate in educational activities, affecting their learning accomplishments and retarding their independence and social inclusion (Disability Act, (Act 715, 2006) Article 21).

Assistive technology and devices include any product, instrument, equipment or technology adapted or specially designed for improving the functioning of a person with a disability (UNICEF, 2013). Assistive technology can support children with special needs to become mobile, communicate more effectively, see and hear better, and participate more fully in learning activities. It will provide the means of access to partake in educational, social and recreational opportunities; empowers greater physical and mental function and enhanced self-confidence; and decreases costs for educational services and individual support (UNICEF, 2013). A lot of mainstream computing devices can be produced with accessible features which decrease the cost factor. Again, there can be investments by the government of Ghana in e-learning and digital learning for general classrooms that has enormous potential to benefit children with disabilities. By improving access to education and increasing achievement in school, assistive technology can have positive socioeconomic effects on the lives of children with disabilities. New technology and innovation can provide learning and professional knowledge platforms for teachers and offer teacher training on large scale, via courses in digital/electronic formats that could be distributed through mobile phones, etc.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the findings that were made from the data was juxtaposed with research finds on same subject matter. The findings from the study were corroborated by other studies. A thematic framework that explains how the enforcement of the Disability Act is mediated by factors like funding, monitoring and evaluation, staff training and public sensitization, and infrastructure development that affects the achievement of the objectives of Integrated Education Policy.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the entire paper; including the major themes discussed, the findings of the research, and lessons learnt. The researcher will draw conclusions from the findings and deduce from the findings and discussions in the previous chapters to recommend workable solutions to address the problems of inclusive Education for PWDs in Ghana.

#### 6.2 Summary

The research was conducted to determine persons with disabilities' accessibility to quality education in the Madina La-Nkwatanang municipality. The focus was to determine the extent to which Ghana's educational system is making strides with the education of persons with special needs. Specifically, the research explored the provisions of the Disability Acts (Act 715) 2006, to ascertain progress made towards the protection of the fundamental human rights of persons with special needs. The challenges encountered by PWDs before and after the law was passed were evaluated to determine how successful the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education has been in this quest.

The study was carried out in the Madina La-Nkwatanang municipality using the qualitative research design. A sample size of 14 participants comprising of 5 students with special needs, 5 teachers who had tutored persons with disability during their career as teachers, and four head teachers, were recruited using the purposive sampling design to take part in this research. Using the Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, the data collected were organized under relevant

themes, code generated, themes developed and labelled, and a comprehensive report generated from the themes.

The findings of the study revealed that almost all the respondents, including the teachers and head teachers who partook in the study are ignorant about the purpose and general provisions of the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education policy. The researcher deduced from this finding to presume that PWDs are in their current educational malaise as a result of the failure of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) to organize effective workshops and training sections for teachers and managers of educational institutions across the country. The study found that, the lack of awareness about the basic rights of children with special needs among teachers and parents has led to their continuous abuse both at home, and in school.

To encourage the enrolment and retention of PWDs in schools, the researcher recommended the institution of a broader and comprehensive awareness programs on the Disability Act and the Inclusive Education policy, with a special focus on parents, teachers and head teachers of educational institutions across the country. Especial attention should be directed at schools located in remote rural areas.

The study further identified the need for improved technological improvements in educational institutions as bedrock for making schooling enjoyable and less stressful for PWDs. Schools must be equipped with visual aids, hearing aids, text magnifiers, projectors, etc. to assist PWDs in school. Finally, a strong monitoring mechanism is needed from the GES and MoE to ensure compliance from teachers and headmasters.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The research revealed that although the country had registered some improvements in the enrolment and educational outcomes of persons with disabilities after the passage of the Disability Act, the problem still persists with a lot of PWDs subjected to abuse and discriminations from parents, relatives, teachers, educational supervisors, and classmates.

The research concludes from the data collected that, the aforementioned anomalies can be significantly dealt with if MoE and GES assume their full responsibilities as director and controller of schools in Ghana. A comprehensive educational programs that ensure adequate supervision of teachers and school authorities to ensure that they fall within set standards that benefits PWDs is considered very imperative towards meeting the goals of Inclusive Education policy. The program should be centred on strict supervisory systems that target teaching methods used by teachers, and supervise structures and facilities of schools to ensure that the needs of PWDs are enforced.

The study however acknowledged the absence of funds and expertise as a major setback to the GES and the MoE's ability to reach these goals. Consequently, it is incumbent on all civil society organizations and the community at large to assist these ministries to meet the educational needs of PWDs in Ghana.

### **6.4 Recommendation**

Being a study geared towards the enactment of new policies and the amendment existing ones to meet the peculiar needs of PWDs, the researcher made the following recommendations to enhance the wellbeing and educational outcomes of children with special needs.

The study has identified improvements in the social interventions implemented by the MoE and the GES, however, a lot more needed to be done to ensure a broader reaching effects of these interventions. Though international laws have greatly influenced disability legislations in Ghana which came into force in 2006, the Act is still not effectively enforced because it does not have a Legislative Instrument (L.I). It is therefore the strong suggestion of this research for the government of Ghana as a matter of urgency to make sure this vacuum is filled in order to make the provisions in the Act enforceable, and promote the well-being of persons with disability in Ghana.

The researcher recommends for other complementary social protection programs like the Ghana School Feeding Programme and the Free School Uniform, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty, and Exercise Book Policy to be expanded to cover more schools in the Ghana to meet the needs of all children in Ghana, especially PWDs attending school in rural areas.

The study further recommends for a special training program at district levels for all teachers. The program must be directed at helping teachers to gain adequate knowledge on disability issues, the Disability Act, and the use of current technology to make education more comfortable for persons with disabilities. Against the complaints by some of the students with special needs which suggests that teachers in Ghana often treat persons with disabilities with the same expectations as other children, or consider their inability to easily imbibe what is being taught as laziness, this study suggests that the current teachers training program (curricula) should include a module that trains them on disability issues and the conditions PWDs.

The Municipal Assembly in collaboration with the District Directorate of Education, the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), the Department of Social Welfare and

Community Development (DSWCD) and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) should intensify their community sensitization programs on the need to protect and promote the right and well-being of disabled children. Parents should be sensitized on the causes of child disability and the rights of the disabled child. The children themselves should be educated on daily living skills as well as their basic rights and how to safeguard it against encroachments. A strong monitoring system by these outfits will help to keep parents, school authorities and teachers in check against the violation of the fundamental human rights of PWDs.

The Government of Ghana and the Municipal Assembly should ensure that all school infrastructures conform to the laid down standards to promote inclusion education; and the Municipal Directorate of Education should take disciplinary actions against teachers who discriminate against a child with disabilities in class. The municipal assembly should solicit for funds from both state and non-state actors to help them meet these goals. Other children in school should be educated on disability issues and be encouraged to take good care of their peers who are disabled, and assist them to meet their life goals.

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**APPENDIX**

**CONSENT FORM**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**Access to Education by Persons with Disabilities in the La-Nkwantanang Municipality**

Date \_\_ / \_\_ / 2017

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**Consent Form**

**Background**

My name is **Diana Yaayaa Antom**, I am a student from the faculty of Humanities, University of Ghana; conducting a study on the **Access to Education by Persons with Disabilities in The La-Nkwantanang District**. The research forms part of my academic work, for the award of Master's Degree.

**Participant's Information**

**Research Title: Access to Education by Persons with Disabilities in the La-Nkwantanang District**

**Purpose of the Research**

To find out the inclusion of PWDs in education before and after the Act in Madina, to find out the challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities in accessing education in Madina and to

identify measures put in place by educational institutions in ensuring the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Madina.

### **Participation**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and as such you have the right to withdraw anytime you feel any discomfort during the data collection process. If you decide to withdraw from the study the data provided by you will be destroyed.

### **Risks and Benefits**

You may feel exposed about revealing sensitive information during the study. Confidentiality is highly guaranteed for you to feel free to talk to the researchers.

The study will be beneficial in that it will inform policy makers strengthen existing policies of persons with disabilities and effectively implement them in order to ensure inclusive education of persons with disabilities as specified in the Disability Act.

### **Confidentiality**

All personal identifying information about yourself will remain confidential and will not be included in the final write up. Any quotations to be used in reporting the findings will not include names or any identifying data to ensure anonymity. All recordings and transcripts will only be accessible to the researcher.

### **Contact**

If you have any questions about the study or the procedures involved, you may contact me on 0242805449

**Consent**

I have read or I understand what has been read to me. I have received a copy of this form and have agreed to participate in this study

Participant's Signature.....

Date.....

Researcher's Signature.....

Date.....

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**Access to Education by Persons With Disabilities in the La-Nkwantanang Municipality**

**TEACHERS AND EDUCATION OFFICERS**

**A) SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

- Age
- Level of Education
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Occupation

**B) IMPACTS OF THE DISABILITY ACT ON IE**

- General discussion on PWDs and their access to education
- Are you aware of the Person with Disability Act 2006 (Act 715)? **Probe (Goal, benefits, Administrative Structure, Compliance)**
- Describe how PWDs were catered for in schools before the PWDs Act?
- What has changed after the implementation of the Act and why?
- How would you describe the state of enrolment and retention of PWDs in the Primary and High Schools before the Act? What is the state now after the implementation of the Act?
- Were there any arrangements for inclusive education for PWDs in schools in Madina?

- Did the trend change after the introduction of the Act? (**Explain**)
- To what extent were PWDs stigmatized in your school before the Act? What is the situation now, and what has caused that?

### **C) CHALLENGES OF THE ACT**

- What does the Persons with Disabilities Act say about Inclusive Education?
- What had been the effects of the PWDs Act on stigmatization of PWDs? **Probe (Intensity)**
- Does your school lack any facility conferred to you as a basic right? (Pavements, arranged buses for PWDs, sign language instructor, hearing aids, braille, etc.)
- In your estimation, are teachers well trained to implement the provisions of the Inclusive Education Act? (**Explain**)

### **D) INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING**

- Has the introduction of the Act influenced the construction of educational facilities in your school? **Probe (Classroom, canteen, hostels, etc.)**
- How has the school authorities responded to PWDs Act? **Probe (Enforcement, supervision, response to complaints, etc.)**
- How effective has its implementation been?
- What do you think should be done to make education accessible to PWDs?
- Is there anything you would expect from teachers and school authorities as far as the education of PWDs are concerned?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

## CHILDREN

### A) SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

- Age
- Level of Education
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Occupation

### B) IMPACTS OF THE DISABILITY ACT ON IE

- Can you share with me some of your general experiences with accessing education?
- Are you aware of the Person with Disability Act 2006 (Act 715)? **Probe (Goal, benefits, administrative structure, compliance)**
- Do you like being in school? **Probe - (Before the Act if applicable, and after the Act)**
- In your estimation, do you think your teachers understand your unique needs? **Probe - (Before the Act if applicable, and after the Act)**
- If you don't understand what is being taught, are you able to ask for further clarification when the class is still in session/after class? **(Explain)**
- Are you able to play freely with your colleagues and engage in program activities in school? **Probe (Sports, Debates, prefectural roles, class presentations, etc.)**
- How are you treated by your teachers and friends compared to other children without disabilities? (If child is in school) **Probe - (Before the Act if applicable, and after the Act)**
- Do you sometimes feel being discriminated against by friends both at school and at home? **(Explain)**

**C) CHALLENGES OF THE ACT**

- What are some of your difficulties in school?
- Do you know your educational rights as a PWD (**list as many as you can**)
- If your teacher or colleague is violating your rights, can you protest against it (either to the teacher/colleague in question, or other appropriate authorities) **Probe**

**D) INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING**

- What do you think should be done about your colleagues' interactions with you to enable you to access and enjoy education?
- What can be done about your teachers to make going to school more pleasurable?
- What should be done about your school structures to make going to school more exciting

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**