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## Discrimination of women in a situation of disabled person with respect to their socio-professional integration in the 7th borough of the city of Cotonou

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### Abstract

Today many people are deprived of any possibility of real participation in the economic, social, political, cultural, health life of their community. This is a problem faced by most communities around the world, which under such conditions are neither effective nor safe. This article aims to study the factors associated with the discrimination of women with disabilities in the seventh district of the city of Cotonou in relation to their socio-professional integration. The study concerned 65 subjects namely: 60 women with disabilities, two (02) leaders of the CPS of the seventh district and three (03) heads of Non-Governmental Organization. These subjects were submitted to the questionnaire and a maintenance guide. At the end of the research carried out, it should be noted that disability undoubtedly influences the socio-professional integration of women with disabilities. The latter feel overwhelmingly rejected by their relative. This creates within them feelings of inferiority and frustration that sometimes plunge them into isolation and mental depression. In the face of this deplorable situation, state structures and non-governmental organizations are striving to provide them with assistance. However efforts are still needed to perfect the quality of these benefits to alleviate the suffering of these women.

**Keywords:** discrimination of women-disability - socio-professional life–district

### 1. Introduction

Today, many people are deprived of all possibilities of genuine participation in the economic, social, political, cultural and health life of their community (Ndione, 2007) [5]. This is a problem faced by most communities around the world, which under such conditions are neither effective nor safe (Ndione, 2007) [5]. However, for the development of a community, the involvement of all members is necessary. Development strategies are developed with all those members who feel fulfilled. It is noted that people with disabilities are victims of discrimination. WHO in its global report on disability in 2010 estimates that more than one billion people live with some form of disability, or about 15% of the world's population. The 2011 Disability Report reveals that this figure is higher than the organization's earlier estimate from the 1970s (WHO 2011). In a report published in 2014, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights revealed, among other things, that 34% of women with disabilities had suffered physical or sexual violence from their partners against 19% of valid women. Benin, like other countries in the world, does not miss this blistering reality. Indeed, the discrimination against people with disabilities is current in Benin. No statistics exist to measure the different types of support provided to this category of people by public authorities and non-governmental organizations. Already recognized as excluded from decision-making positions at local and state level, Beninese people with disabilities find themselves trapped by a double discrimination related to their gender

and their physical disability. It is found that people with disabilities, women are much more victims of discrimination. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) states clearly and unreservedly that "persons with disabilities have the right to full access and equal enjoyment of all human rights". But since November 8, 2011, when Benin ratified the said convention, there has not been a real change. According to Otchoumaré (2011), people with disabilities should have access to medical and surgical care, education, vocational training, employment and sometimes subsistence goods, etc. The attitudes, the mentalities and the behaviors of the one and the other do not lead them to participate actively in the process of development of the countries.

State structures and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are making efforts to put an end to this phenomenon in order to guarantee their full development and stabilize their living conditions. However, some of these people with disabilities cannot express themselves and have no recourse to live in better conditions. Despite all these efforts, there is still more to do; to the extent that most of these people with disabilities are silent under social pressure. This study aims to provide a diagnosis of the factors associated with the discrimination of women with disabilities in relation to their integration into socio-professional life in the city of Cotonou, in particular in the 7th arrondissement, and for this, it is necessary to reach certain objectives.

**2. Methodological approach**

It is important to specify in the framework of a research, the adopted methodology. Thus, this part successively describes the nature of the study, the survey population, the sampling and the data collection techniques and tools.

**2.1 Nature of the study**

It is a quantitative and qualitative descriptive cross-sectional study that will collect data on the socio-professional integration of women with disabilities.

**2.2 Target population**

The target population is made up of:

- women with disabilities in the seventh arrondissement;
- in charge of the CPS of the seventh district dealing with the care of these women;
- And leaders of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

**2.3 Method and sampling technique**

The sampling method was selected according to the non-random method with different techniques for each of the targets. For the first target of women with disabilities, the voluntary choice technique was used. The reasoned choice technique used for the second and third targets because they are important actors that can provide reliable information for this study.

**2.4 Sample size**

Referring to the voluntary choice technique and the inclusion criteria, the number of (60) women with disabilities was obtained from the CPS

**Table 1:** Distribution of the survey population

	Target	Workforce
1	Women with disabilities	60
2	SAC Officer, Seventh District	02
3	Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Leaders	03
	Total	65

**2.5 Techniques and tools for data collection**

To collect the essential data for this study, the questionnaire and the interview guide were chosen as data collection tools. The techniques used are respectively the interview survey and the questionnaire. The questionnaire collected data on the perception of women with motor disabilities in the seventh district with regard to their socio-professional integration.

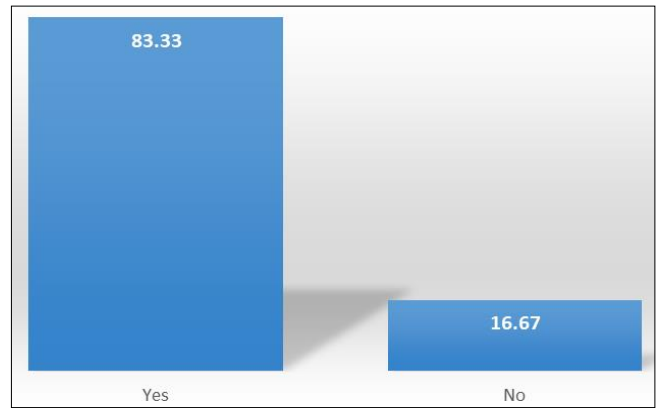
The interview collected the various information from the officials of the Social Advancement Center (SAC) and NGOs on the quality of care for women with disabilities in the seventh arrondissement.

**2.6 Methods of data analysis**

The information collected from the questionnaires was processed manually (tabulation, numbering and coding) and tabulated using Excel (2016).

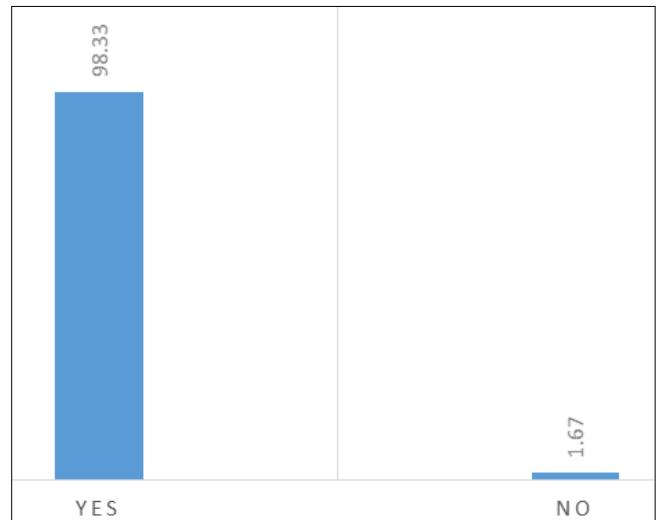
Regarding the interviews, the data processing consisted in analyzing the collected information which represents the points of view of the various interviewees, to proceed with their categorization, their transcription and their analysis. Thus, the opinions of all the subjects on each of the sequences were put together and analyzed.

**3. Results**



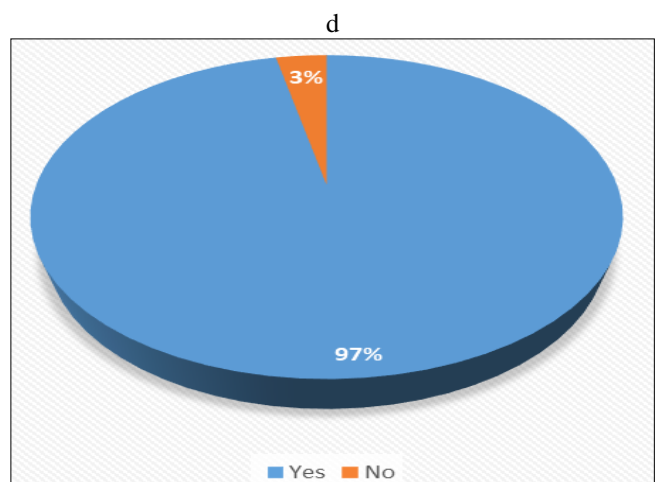
**Fig 1:** Distribution of the print rate of the disabled

Figure 2 shows that the majority (83.33%) of women with disabilities are ashamed of their disability. Only a minority (16.67%) do not feel the same way.



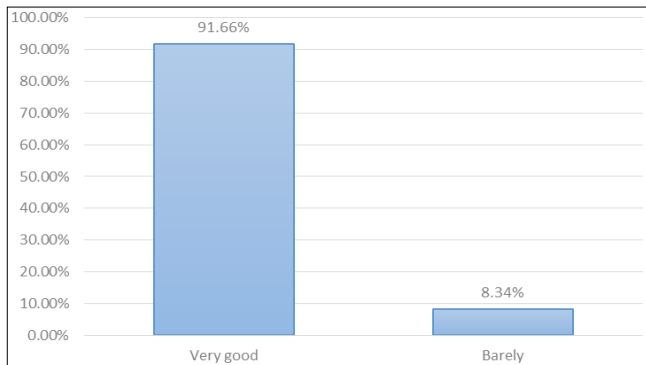
**Fig 2:** Influence of disability on integration into professional life

At the end of the figure below, it appears that 98.33% of respondents felt that their disability situation significantly influences their integration into professional life compared to 1.67% who think the opposite.



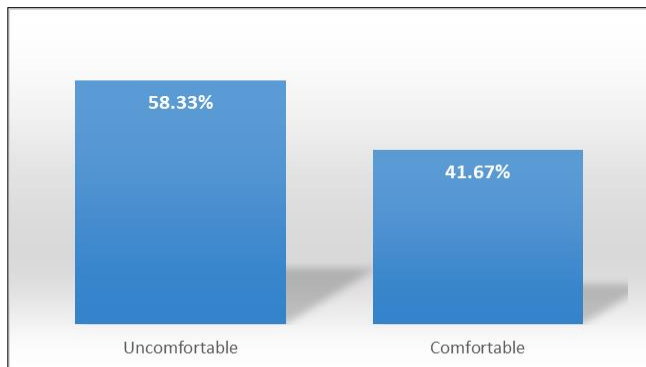
**Fig 3:** Impact of disability on the lives of victims

To the question of whether disability is a problem for the lives of women in the situation, 97% of them recognized that the disability situation that they are living is a problem for their lives while the rest (3%) do not share this opinion.



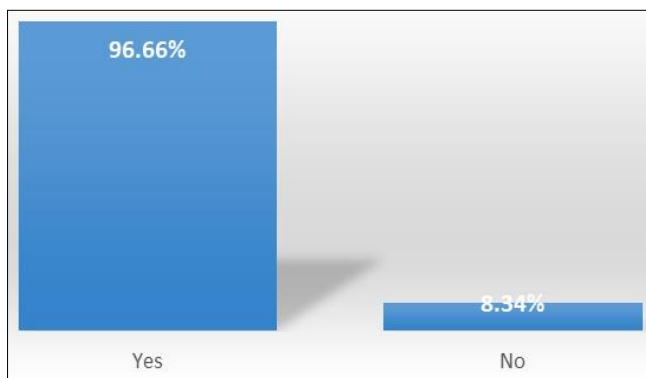
**Fig 4:** Distribution of consideration by relatives

This figure reveals that 91.66% of respondents are very well regarded by their relatives while 8.34% think they are barely considered.



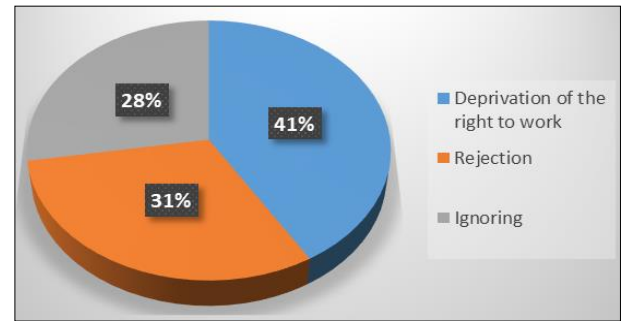
**Fig 5:** Distribution of the feeling of the disabled with their relatives

This figure shows that 58.33% of women with disabilities feel uncomfortable with their loved ones at the expense of 41.67% who feel comfortable.



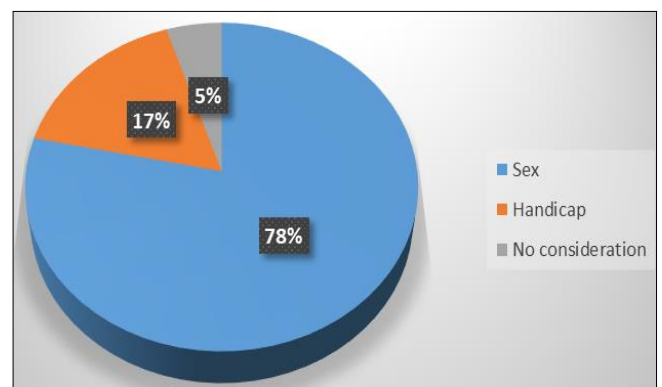
**Fig 6:** Discrimination distribution for women with disabilities

Of those surveyed, 96.66% said they were discriminated against in society, compared to 8.34%.



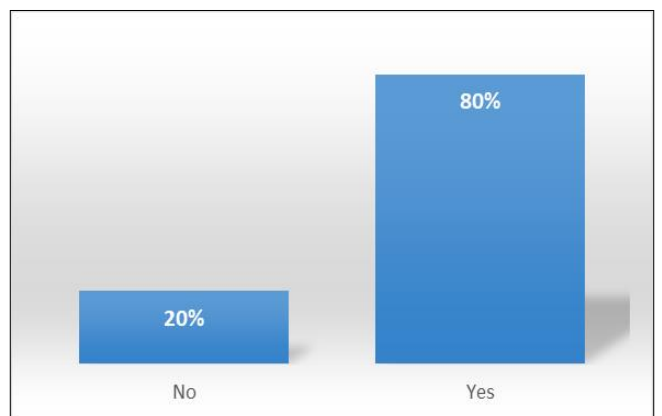
**Fig 7:** Demonstration of discrimination against women with disabilities

Considering Figure 7, it should be noted that 41.37% of women are deprived of the right to work while 31.03% of women have confessed that they are rejected. In addition, the rest (27.6%) think it is ignored.



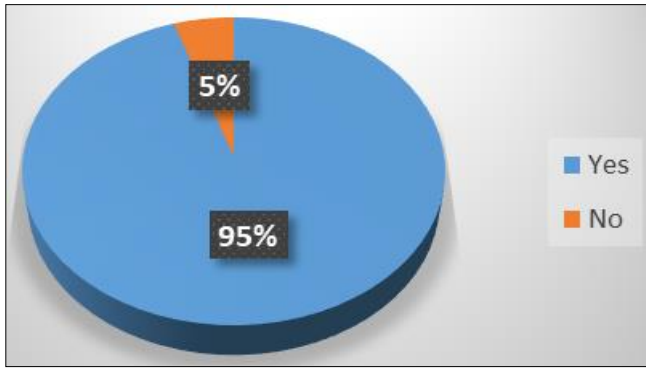
**Fig 8:** Reason for discrimination against women with disabilities

78.33% of respondents admitted that they are discriminated against because of their disability. On the other hand, 16.67% said that it is because they are not considered to be discriminated against. Finally, 5% think it's because of their sex.



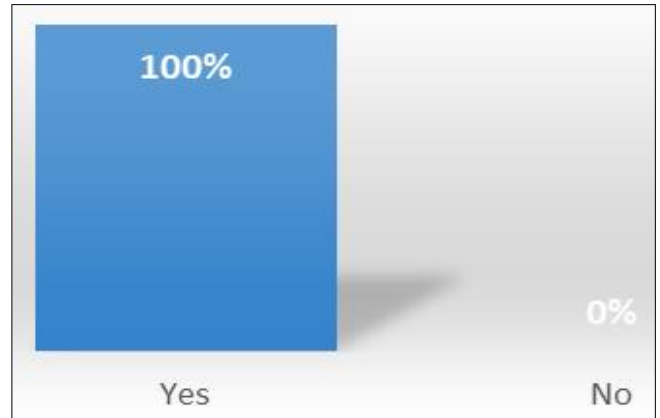
**Fig 9:** Distribution of the enjoyment of rights

At the end of this figure, 80% of women with disabilities said they enjoy the same rights as other citizens for the benefit of 20% who felt the opposite.



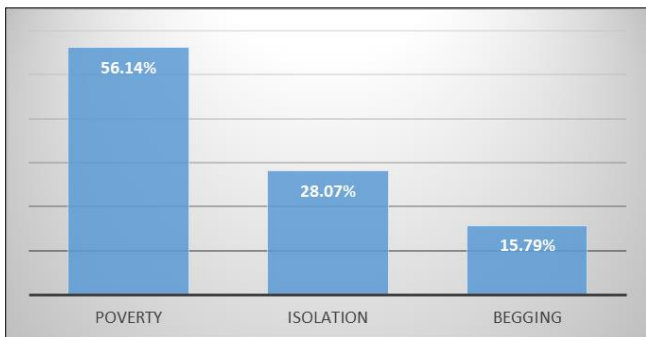
**Fig 10:** Influence of Discrimination on the Lives of People with Disabilities

The figure above shows that the majority (95%) of women said that the discrimination they experience affects their lives. In addition, 5% revealed that the discrimination they suffer does not affect their lives.



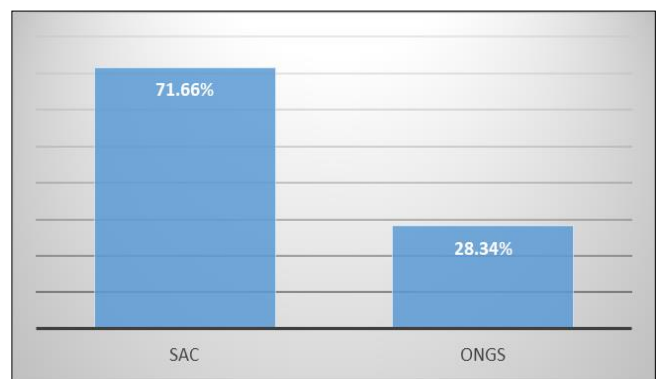
**Fig 13:** Distribution of Recognition of Support

This figure shows that all women with disabilities are supported by a structure.



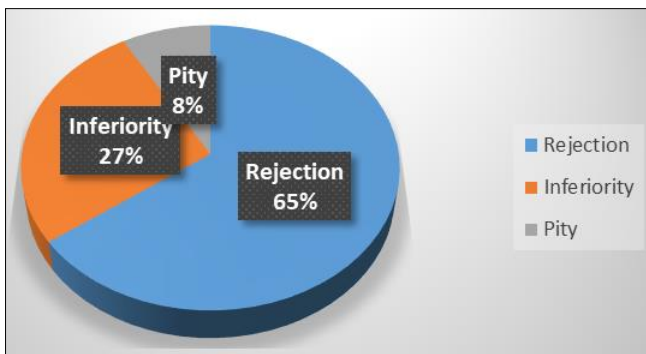
**Fig 11:** Discrimination way of influence

When asked how discrimination affects their lives, 56.14% of women recognized that they are living in poverty. In addition, 28.07% believe that this state of affairs plunges them into isolation. Finally the remaining 15.79% said that the situation has led to begging.



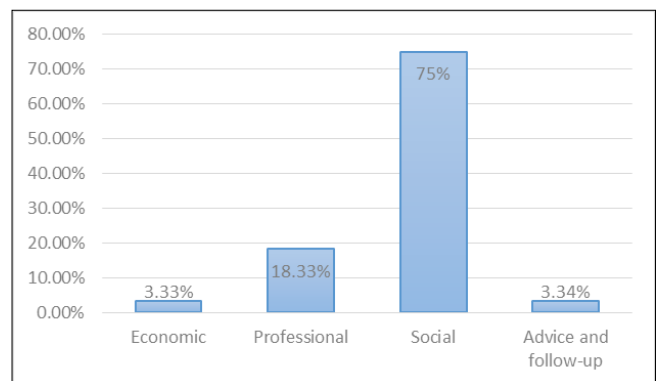
**Fig 14:** Support Structure

It is noted through this figure that 71.66% of women with disabilities are supported by the SAC unlike 28.34% who said they are supported by NGOs.



**Fig 12:** Feelings of abuse

Figure 12 highlights the feeling of women with disabilities as a result of the abuse they experience. Indeed, 65% of women feel they are rejected compared to 26.66% who said they feel inferior. Finally, the feeling of pity is felt by 8.34% of respondents.



**Fig 15:** Structural help area

This figure highlights the areas in which women with disabilities are helped. In fact, 75% of them benefit from social aid compared to 18, 33% who receive help at the professional level. Finally, the remaining 3, 33% and 3,34% are respectively accompanied by advice-monitoring and aid on the economic level.

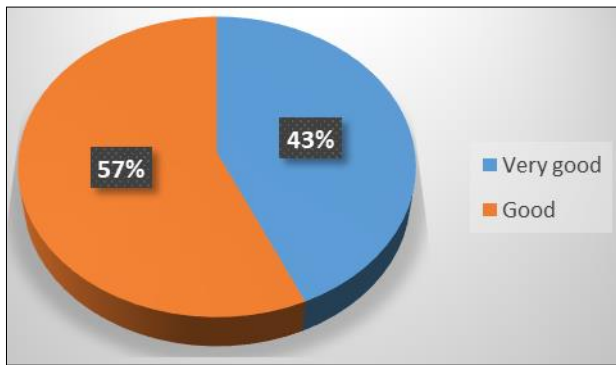


Fig 16: Appreciation of the management

Regarding the quality of care, 56.67% of women with disabilities felt that the care they receive is very good. In addition, 43.33% rated the quality of care as good.

**3. Analysis and discussion of the results**

**3.1 The causes of discrimination experienced by women with disabilities**

Women with disabilities considered in this research have mostly recognized that they are discriminated against. This results in deprivation of labor rights, rejection and ignorance. In fact, 41.37% of women surveyed are deprived of the right to work while 31.03% of them have confessed that they are rejected. In addition, 27.6% say they are rejected by society. This state of affairs is explained mainly by the respondents by the situation of disability that they live daily. Figure 9 says a lot about this reality, where it should be noted that 78.33% of women surveyed are discriminated against because of their disability. On the other hand, 16.67% said that it is because they are not considered to be discriminated against. Finally, 5% think it's because of their sex. It should also be noted that the majority of women with disabilities do not enjoy the same rights as other citizens. They are therefore injured. Considering all these aspects, we note a number of reasons which is at the origin of the discrimination of which they are victims. It is very much aware of this reality that an official from the Federation of Disabled People's Associations states: "Discrimination first and foremost is related to under-reporting. There are the socio-cultural burdens weighing on them because in Africa, it is thought that a woman with a disability is a being in her own right. In our traditions, some disabled people are considered as "Tôhossou" so they are not considered in the same way as the others..... information that brings together people who have no idea of the capabilities and potentialities that the latter possess ". In addition, the president of the association of women with disabilities adds: "The main cause related to the discrimination of people with disabilities including women is primarily disability in itself. Everything starts from disability, from disability,..... This state of affairs constitutes discrimination against these disabled people. Also in terms of education when the system does not take into account specific needs such as Braille, language, signs for people with disabilities is that they will not be able to benefit from the same teaching conditions advocated by the education system. Thus the main causes of discrimination is the fact that disability is not taken into account in development policies and programs, which means that the services provided are completely inaccessible to people with

disabilities. Through these poignant testimonies, it is important to remember that women with disabilities experience discrimination that prevents them from fully enjoying their rights as recommended by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 1948. In addition, it should be noted that the results of this research are almost identical to those of Gnane (2008) [4] and the ASPH report. Indeed, for Gnane (2008) [4] the causes that can discriminate against people with disabilities are:

- local beliefs and customs that may lead to disregard for people with disabilities;
- the lack of correct information from the community that creates confusion;
- ignorance of the value and possibilities of people with disabilities;
- the severity of the disability;
- Extreme poverty.

For the latter, this marginalization of people with disabilities from members of their communities tends to put them in another situation of disability outside the one they already have trouble managing. They are unable to work, to get married, to have children, and even unable to move and have relationships, freely with other members of the community who do not make it easy for them. In this context, he stresses that ignorance, abandonment, superstition and the weight of tradition have always been among the social factors that contribute to the isolation of persons with disabilities and hinder their development. That is, the social exclusion of people with disabilities is particularly true in developing countries where the socio-economic crisis that has led to a worsening of poverty has been going on for several years. Following the same logic, the report of the study of the ASPH (2015) [1] highlights that in the first place disability is considered the main cause of discrimination against these people. Disability is a real barrier to employment. Women with disabilities are subject to prejudices and stereotypes in the professional sphere and during recruitment processes.

These various aspects are in line with Megevand's (2005) theory which serves as a model for this study. Thus, the relationship of women with disabilities to themselves; their physical and mental health, their own perception constitutes the sphere of individuation advocated by the author. Moreover, the clear will of these women to access employment to ensure their empowerment and economic dependence represents the professional sphere. In addition, the relationships maintained by women with disabilities with society in relation to social norms and citizenship represent the sphere of society. However, all these facts are not without consequences on the lives of women with disabilities.

**3.2 Consequences of discrimination of women with disabilities**

The disability situation is a major factor that greatly influences the lives of the victims. In fact, 95% of women with disabilities surveyed, felt that their physical state has an influence on their existence. Thus, in terms of the impact of discrimination, 56.14% of women recognized that they are living in poverty. In addition, 28.07% believe that this state of affairs plunges them into total isolation. Finally the remaining 15.79% said that the situation has led to their begging. Faced with this situation of mistreatment, 65% of

women feel that they are rejected compared to 26.66% who say they feel inferior. Finally, the feeling of pity is felt by 8.34% of respondents. The statements made during the interviews further support this deplorable situation. Thus, the program officer of the Federation of Disabled People's Associations explains: "The consequences of office are related to poverty, underemployment, and dependence and begging. These women cannot meet their needs. We are witnessing cases of suicide. "Following the same logic, the head of the CPS states: "Women with disabilities are discarded from society and decision-making, they do not feel fulfilled. They are employed in trades and fields that others reject. We are witnessing a society evolving without taking into account the need and the opinion of all. In short, women are reduced to poverty, unemployment and begging. Women with disabilities are therefore embittered, dehumanized and disoriented, they do not know which Saint to devote themselves to live decently like any other living being. In addition, the results of the surveys corroborate those of Beleza (2003) [2] on discrimination against women with disabilities. The latter explains that for women with disabilities, the persistence of this source of discrimination adds to all the disadvantages resulting from disability, which are different depending on the nature and severity of the disability. But it is not a simple combination of disadvantages. For women, disability substantially amplifies the difficulties they already experience and at the same time serves as an excuse for maintaining discrimination against them. Indeed, while the idea of women's education and work is in itself discriminatory, it is more easily admitted that a disabled woman needs to be cared for by others, even if she has skills. to study and work, while one will be more demanding towards a handicapped man. It is more acceptable to renounce vocational rehabilitation for a woman who has suffered an accident than for a man. And even when one accepts equality for women and girls in general, differences arise if one or the other is handicapped. Since family and domestic tasks are mainly women's, the life of a disabled woman who has to cope alone is particularly painful. Women with disabilities are victims of prejudice and ignorance, often from their relatives, who, for the sake of protection, "hide" them and prevent them from leading a normal life, but also from the whole community society, which is not aware of their problems (Beleza, 2003) [2]. Faced with this situation, mechanisms to take care of these people are implemented.

### 3.3 Quality of care for women with disabilities

At the end of the field surveys, it appears that all women with disabilities are supported by a structure. Thus, 71.66% of women with disabilities are supported by the CPS unlike 28.34% who said they are supported by NGOs. These structures help them in the socio-professional and economic field in order to lighten their sentence. But it should be noted that the quality of care is not free of difficulties that hinder its effectiveness. This is confirmed by an NGO official: "The care of women with disabilities is done by the state, and we are in partnership with the ministry, the CPS, the centers RBC and the Fund of National Solidarity. These women are supported at home by projects, training because we do not yet have a budget that can take into account all the problems facing these women, but we do the guidance and support to regards these people. But compared to the past years the State begins to provide an effort in the care of

people with disabilities through the vote of the law to protect people with disabilities in the Republic of Benin. A law that has all the time slept in the drawers of the assembly but which, since April 13, 2017 was voted unanimously by the deputies ". However, he said: "The care of women with disabilities in Benin is not yet, because there is still much to do. It is still in its infancy, it must be really effective to empower women with disabilities.

In the same vein, the head of the CPS clarifies: "In the Centers for Social Promotion, there is a service in charge of people with disabilities and the elderly. This service aims to identify children, women and finally men with disabilities. Within the CPS we come to identify and value the talents and potentialities of these children to show that they are full people with the same rights as everyone else. At the level of women with disabilities we organize sensitization, we try to accompany them in decision-making bodies to show in fact that they are useful for the nation, their families and society. We also try to do everything possible to implement their professional and social integration in the trades of their choice, to accompany them also through professional training ".

In view of all these details, it should be made clear that the policies to be implemented must enable them to lead an independent life, to ensure their subsistence through work, to choose their private, professional or family life, to attend schools ordinary, to frequent public and private places like everyone else, to make the whole of society benefit from their experience, their abilities and their talents. It is very important that women with disabilities are first considered from the point of view of their abilities. In order to ensure equal treatment for women with disabilities, it is not enough to avoid discrimination or to adopt, as for persons with disabilities in general, positive or compensatory measures. In all areas, there must be an awareness of the difference society makes between the sexes. The adopted policies and measures must take this into account and pursue a conscious search for equality. For example, it has been shown that vocational training programs must take into account differences and be accompanied by measures to prevent such differences (eg family responsibilities) from affecting their effectiveness. Some areas have been identified as crucial to the status of women with disabilities. These are the following areas: types of training, hours, places of training, taking on family responsibilities. The situation is particularly critical when it comes to occupational re-employment. This idea is reflected in the need for an integrated approach to equality issues, including for women with disabilities. This means that policies for people with disabilities need to be adopted, designed and evaluated with the aim of ensuring equal treatment for women, but also some areas have been identified as crucial in terms of the status of women with disabilities. These are: education and training, employment, social policy, participation and access to decision-making, sexuality, prejudice and social representation, motherhood, life social and domestic, and violence. Measures must be taken in all these areas to enable women with disabilities to enjoy independence, autonomy, participation and integration into social life. In all of these areas, disability policies need to be formulated and adopted keeping in mind that they will not succeed for women if there is no awareness of this difference between the sexes. There is a need to focus on certain types of solutions such as the need for integrated education, the promotion of self-

esteem, the need for effective vocational rehabilitation, access to a childcare system, the possibility, if necessary, of personal assistance, the promotion of networks of organizations of women with disabilities and self-help groups, the consultation of women with disabilities and their organizations, the affirmation sexuality and the right to found a family, the presence of girls and women with disabilities in the media in ordinary situations, the prevention and repression of any abuse and the immediate access of victims to adequate assistance.

#### 4. Conclusion

Disability is becoming a major concern due to an increase in prevalence, which can be explained by aging populations and the higher risk of disability among older people, but also by the global increase in chronic health problems such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and mental health disorders. This state of affairs has a much greater negative impact on women living with disabilities because they are mostly victims of double discrimination. They are marginalized, abused because of their weakness.

At the end of the research carried out, such as the questionnaire and interview survey, it should be noted that disability undoubtedly influences the socio-professional integration of women with disabilities. The latter feel overwhelmingly rejected by their relatives. This creates within them feelings of inferiority and frustration that sometimes plunge them into isolation and mental depression. In the face of this deplorable situation, state structures and non-governmental organizations are trying to help them. However, efforts are still needed to perfect the quality of these benefits to alleviate the suffering of these women. These results can be likened to those of the article of the Handicap International on the injustice of a double discrimination of women with disabilities which estimates that women with disabilities are twice as threatened by domestic violence as women with disabilities other women. They are therefore more exposed to the risk of abuse (HI, 2008). As a result, the respect and enforcement of the various laws that protect these people must be rigorously implemented to alleviate the feelings of discrimination and frustration that these people face daily. However, taking into account the suggestions made in the context of this work would be of great help in solving some of this acute problem. We must therefore dare to believe that this research will serve to stimulate a dynamism to the structures concerned. Therefore, it is essential to ask all actors at various levels to converge their efforts in order to achieve better objectives.

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