

CHAPTER VIII: DISABILITY AND HEALTH

Disabled people are often the most disadvantaged citizens in a society. Many do not have access to basic services such as education, employment, health and even recreational facilities.

The term “disability”, as it applied to humans, refers to any condition that impedes the completion of daily tasks, using traditional methods or physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual¹. As such, it should be borne in mind that disability is not something one has to be born with as it can develop later in life as well².

Guyana has National Commission on Disability (NCD) and other non-governmental organizations which aim at promoting the welfare of the disabled citizens, but the work of these organizations is limited by accurate information regarding the size and activities of the disabled people. Hence, the objectives of this chapter are to identify:

- Distribution of disabled population;
- Age-sex pattern of disabilities;
- How the disabilities were acquired?
- Access of disabled people to education; and
- Opportunity for employment for disabled people.

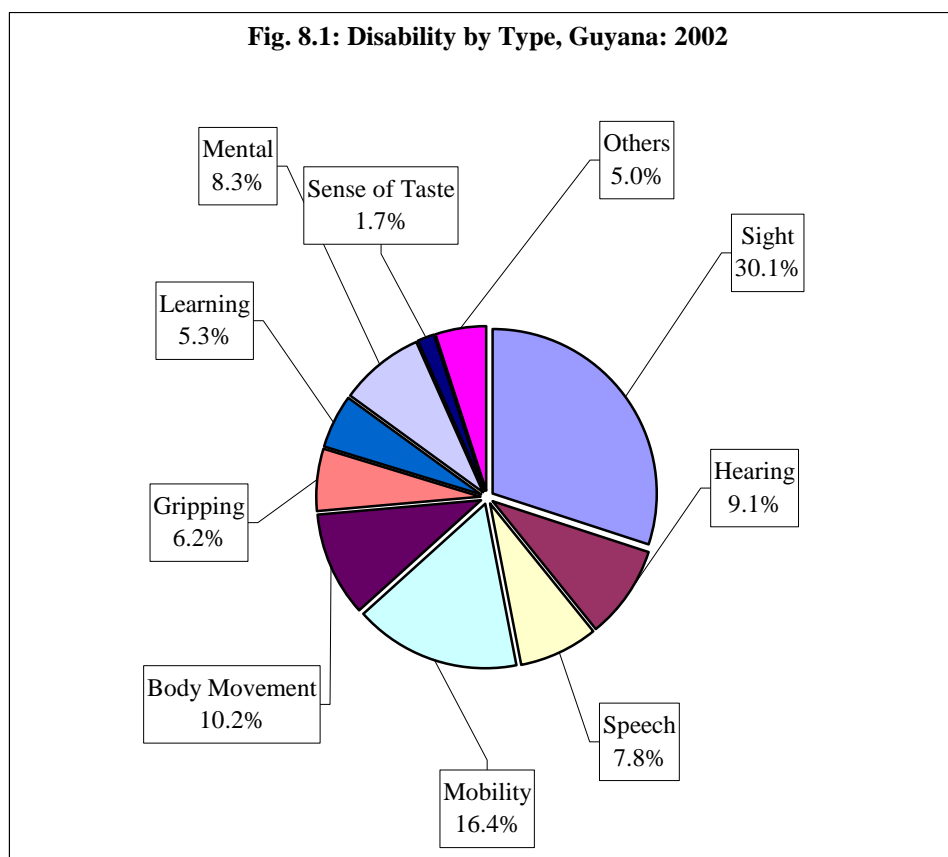
8.1 Distribution of Disabled Population

Within the framework of the definition, the number of citizens living with some form of disabilities in Guyana was 48,419, about 6.4 percent of the total population. The distribution by sex indicates that females outnumber males - with 51.1 percent (24,767) of them compared to 48.8 percent (23,652) males (see Appendix B.8.1). As there was no similar data in 1991, our analysis is limited to the 2002 distribution.

Figure 8.1 shows percent distribution of disabled people by types, and further elaborated in Table 8.1a by region of residence and sex. Accordingly, visual impairment or sight, was a major cause of disability in Guyana, and constituted 30.1 percent (14,577) of the total disabled persons. Significant proportions were also reported to be suffering from mobility impairment (16.4 percent), body movement (10.2 percent) and hearing (9.1 percent). About 8.3 percent (4,017) was reported having mental impairment, which is quite substantial considering the embarrassment this group sometimes pose to others in the absence of a rehabilitation camp. The least type, perhaps because of its less intensity to really disabling people in performing their normal activities was those who lost their sense of taste (1.7 percent).

¹Marsha Katz and Nancy The Rural Fact Sheet (Available online at: [Maxsonhttp://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/training/publications/fact_sheets/disability_defined.asp](http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/training/publications/fact_sheets/disability_defined.asp))

² Ibid



Disparities exist in disability in Guyana, as it can be demonstrated by the fact that females affected by visual impairment were slightly higher than males – 33 compared to 27 percent of males, and more than one-third of the disabled citizens in Regions 2, 7 and 10 were reported to have sight impairment. The pattern of disability by types as presented by the remaining regions did not diverge much from the national experience (Table 8.1a).

Table 8.1b examines the concentration of disabled citizens, and it shows disability to be a significant component of the population size, following almost the ranking order of the population in the ten administrative regions. As such, because Region 4 has the largest proportion of the total population, it possesses greater number of disabled people or about two-fifths of the disabled citizens live there, 17 percent in Region 6, 13 percent in Region 3, etc. This pattern of distribution of disabled people has been observed for each type of disabilities and among males and females separately.

Table 8.1a: Percent Distribution of Disabled Citizens by Types of Disability Classified by Region and Sex, Guyana: 2002

	Percent by Types of Disability in a Region										Total	
	Body											
Region	Sight	Hearing	Speech	Mobility	Movement	Gripping	Learning	Mental	Tasting	Others	Percent	Number
Both Sexes												
Region 1	27.2	13.2	7.9	11.8	8.6	7.6	7.2	8.4	6.3	1.7	100	2,744
Region 2	37.6	9.7	6.9	14.3	8.3	4.9	4.5	6.5	1.2	6.0	100	3,665
Region 3	30.3	9.1	8.3	17.4	11.4	6.1	5.2	8.5	1.1	2.7	100	6,257
Region 4	29.5	8.4	7.6	16.7	10.3	5.9	5.2	8.4	1.3	6.6	100	18,847
Region 5	29.5	9.7	7.3	16.3	10.1	5.9	5.0	9.4	1.6	5.0	100	3,863
Region 6	27.2	8.1	8.1	18.5	11.5	7.1	5.1	8.4	1.9	4.2	100	8,218
Region 7	34.9	11.4	8.8	13.8	7.3	4.9	5.3	7.0	1.3	5.2	100	770
Region 8	27.2	12.4	7.7	12.2	10.1	7.7	7.2	8.4	1.6	5.5	100	622
Region 9	29.6	10.4	11.0	17.5	10.0	5.9	6.2	8.1	0.1	1.2	100	730
Region 10	36.1	9.4	7.4	14.3	8.0	5.6	5.8	7.5	1.5	4.4	100	2,703
Total	30.1	9.1	7.8	16.4	10.2	6.2	5.3	8.3	1.7	5.0	100	48,419
Males												
Region 1	26.6	13.1	7.5	12.7	8.4	7.4	7.2	8.8	6.5	1.7	100	1,479
Region 2	33.2	10.1	8.6	15.6	8.9	4.9	4.9	6.7	1.4	5.8	100	1,751
Region 3	27.1	9.0	8.8	18.2	11.8	7.1	5.1	8.7	1.0	3.1	100	3,132
Region 4	26.3	8.5	8.5	17.0	10.3	6.5	5.5	9.2	1.3	6.8	100	8,878
Region 5	26.7	9.5	8.1	16.6	9.7	7.0	5.5	10.3	1.6	5.0	100	1,892
Region 6	23.6	8.2	9.2	19.3	11.5	7.9	5.1	8.6	1.9	4.8	100	4,041
Region 7	32.9	12.0	10.1	14.2	6.7	5.0	5.3	7.9	1.2	4.6	100	416
Region 8	27.5	11.9	7.9	11.3	9.1	8.2	6.8	10.5	1.7	5.1	100	353
Region 9	30.0	10.6	11.8	17.9	9.2	4.3	5.1	9.2	0.0	1.9	100	414
Region 10	32.6	9.6	7.6	15.3	8.1	6.3	6.1	9.3	1.2	4.1	100	1,296
Total	27.1	9.2	8.6	16.9	10.2	6.7	5.5	8.9	1.7	5.1	100	23,652
Females												
Region 1	27.7	13.4	8.5	10.8	8.9	7.7	7.2	8.0	6.0	1.7	100	1,265
Region 2	41.6	9.2	5.4	13.1	7.9	5.0	4.2	6.4	1.0	6.2	100	1,914
Region 3	33.6	9.2	7.7	16.5	11.1	5.1	5.2	8.2	1.1	2.3	100	3,125
Region 4	32.2	8.3	6.8	16.3	10.4	5.4	4.9	7.8	1.4	6.5	100	9,969
Region 5	32.3	9.9	6.5	16.1	10.6	4.9	4.6	8.6	1.5	4.9	100	1,971
Region 6	30.6	8.0	7.0	17.7	11.4	6.4	5.1	8.2	2.0	3.6	100	4,177
Region 7	37.3	10.7	7.3	13.3	7.9	4.8	5.4	5.9	1.4	5.9	100	354
Region 8	26.8	13.0	7.4	13.4	11.5	7.1	7.8	5.6	1.5	5.9	100	269
Region 9	29.1	10.1	9.8	17.1	11.1	7.9	7.6	6.6	0.3	0.3	100	316
Region 10	39.4	9.3	7.2	13.4	7.9	5.0	5.5	6.0	1.7	4.6	100	1,407
Total	33.0	9.0	7.0	15.8	10.2	5.6	5.1	7.7	1.7	4.9	100	24,767

Note: Derived from Appendix B. 8.1

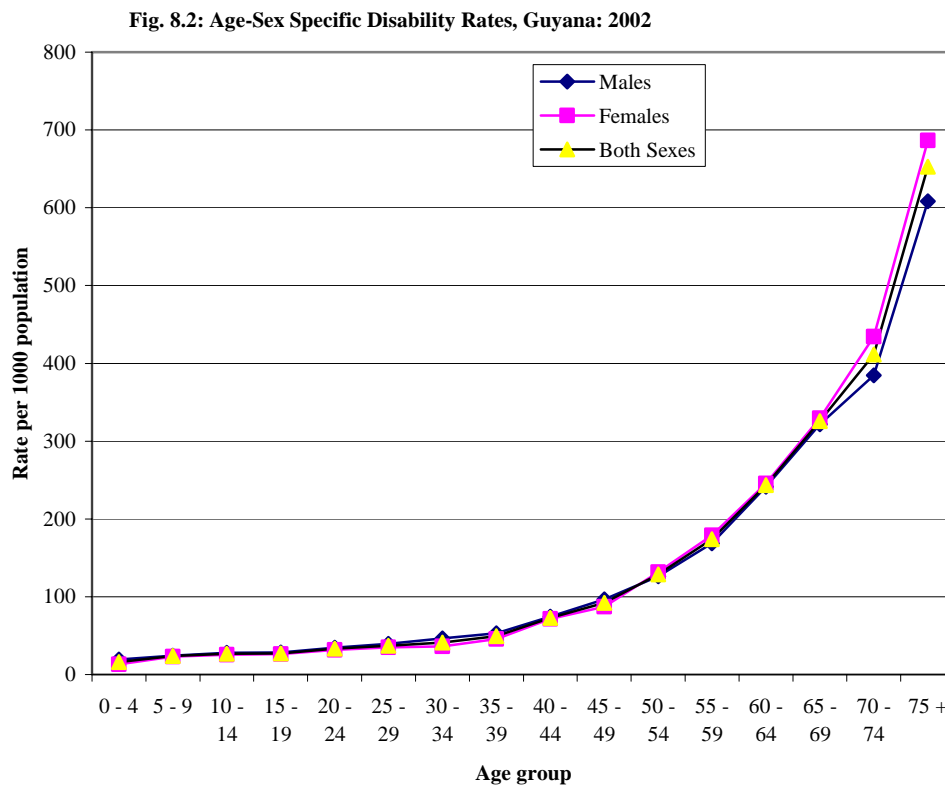
Table 8.1b: Percent Distribution of Disabled Citizens by Types of Disability Classified by Region and Sex, Guyana: 2002

Guyana, 2002											
	Percent of Disabled Citizens Within a Region										
	Body										
Region	Sight	Hearing	Speech	Mobility	Movement	Gripping	Learning	Mental	Tasting	Other	Total
Both Sexes											
Region 1	5.1	8.2	5.8	4.1	4.8	7.0	7.7	5.8	21.1	1.9	5.7
Region 2	9.5	8.0	6.7	6.6	6.2	6.1	6.5	6.0	5.3	9.0	7.6
Region 3	13.0	12.9	13.7	13.7	14.5	12.8	12.6	13.2	8.2	7.0	12.9
Region 4	38.1	36.0	38.1	39.6	39.3	37.5	38.0	39.6	31.0	51.7	38.9
Region 5	7.8	8.5	7.5	8.0	7.9	7.7	7.6	9.1	7.5	7.9	8.0
Region 6	15.3	15.1	17.6	19.2	19.0	19.6	16.3	17.3	19.6	14.1	17.0
Region 7	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.7	1.6
Region 8	1.2	1.7	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.3
Region 9	1.5	1.7	2.1	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.8	1.5	0.1	0.4	1.5
Region 10	6.7	5.8	5.3	4.9	4.4	5.1	6.1	5.1	4.9	4.9	5.6
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	14,577	4,410	3,763	7,921	4,946	2,984	2,564	4,017	817	2,420	48,419
Males											
Region 1	6.2	8.9	5.4	4.7	5.1	6.9	8.2	6.2	23.8	2.1	6.3
Region 2	9.1	8.1	7.4	6.8	6.4	5.4	6.5	5.6	6.0	8.3	7.4
Region 3	13.2	12.9	13.5	14.3	15.3	14.0	12.4	12.9	7.9	8.1	13.2
Region 4	36.5	34.7	37.2	37.7	37.8	36.1	37.8	38.7	29.0	49.6	37.5
Region 5	7.9	8.2	7.6	7.8	7.6	8.3	8.0	9.2	7.7	7.9	8.0
Region 6	14.9	15.2	18.2	19.4	19.3	19.9	15.8	16.5	18.9	16.0	17.1
Region 7	2.1	2.3	2.1	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.2	1.6	1.8
Region 8	1.5	1.9	1.4	1.0	1.3	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.5
Region 9	1.9	2.0	2.4	1.8	1.6	1.1	1.6	1.8	0.0	0.7	1.8
Region 10	6.6	5.7	4.8	4.9	4.4	5.1	6.1	5.7	4.0	4.4	5.5
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	6,402	2,180	2,038	4,006	2,410	1,594	1,300	2,109	403	1,210	23,652
Females											
Region 1	4.3	7.6	6.2	3.5	4.5	7.1	7.2	5.3	18.4	1.8	5.1
Region 2	9.7	7.9	6.0	6.4	6.0	6.8	6.4	6.4	4.6	9.8	7.7
Region 3	12.8	12.9	14.0	13.2	13.7	11.4	12.9	13.5	8.5	5.9	12.6
Region 4	39.3	37.3	39.0	41.6	40.8	39.1	38.3	40.6	32.9	53.7	40.3
Region 5	7.8	8.8	7.5	8.1	8.2	7.0	7.2	8.9	7.2	8.0	8.0
Region 6	15.6	14.9	16.9	18.9	18.8	19.2	16.8	18.0	20.3	12.3	16.9
Region 7	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.1	1.2	1.7	1.4
Region 8	0.9	1.6	1.2	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.7	0.8	1.0	1.3	1.1
Region 9	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.9	1.1	0.2	0.1	1.3
Region 10	6.8	5.9	5.9	4.8	4.4	5.0	6.2	4.4	5.8	5.4	5.7
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	8,175	2,230	1,725	3,915	2,536	1,390	1,264	1,908	414	1,210	24,767

Note: Derived from Appendix B.8.1

8.2 Age-Sex Patterns of Disabilities

According to the 2002 census, there were 42,577 disabled adults (15 years and over) and 5,842 disabled children (below 15 years) in Guyana. The age-sex specific disability rates, that is, the number of disabled persons in each age group divided by the given population in the same age group expressed per 1000 population is displayed in Figure 8.2. The graph portrays a picture typical of a central death rates schedule. But, unlike the age specific death rates, which has a U-shaped or J-shaped, depending on the nature of the data (whether from developed or less developed country), the age specific disability rates schedule for Guyana is concave, that is, relatively low at infancy, almost at zero, rising steadily, and then more gradually to a maximum at the very oldest ages. This conforms to the assertion by disabled right advocates who referred to disability as "Temporarily Able-Bodied" (TAB), as a reminder that many will usually become disabled, either from exhaustion (physical, mental or emotional), illness, poor health or poor fitness, especially if they happen at the aged and frail stages of life³.



³ From Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia: (Available online at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability>)

Disability in old age is one phase in life cycle, which comes due to exhaustion and physical weakness of the body system, but the proportion of children and adolescent reporting various types of disabilities is significant. Generally, within the disabled group, 12 percent of children below 15 years and 8 percent of youth, (15-24 years) were impaired, and the main causes of their disabilities were speech, learning and sense of taste (about 40 percent in each category respectively) (Table 8.2).

Similarly, about 30 percent of the senior citizens, (65 years and over) had disabilities. As expected, the aged disabled people were particularly affected by body movement (41 percent), mobility (40 percent), hearing (37 percent), gripping (33 percent) and sight (30 percent) respectively. As previously stated, mental incapacity was 8.3 percent on the overall, and of this, 35 and 22 percent of the adults 25-44 and 45-64 years respectively were affected by mental health difficulties. That almost 70 percent of persons who suffer from mental health difficulties are adults in the main working age groups (15-64 years) require further investigation to establish the cause of the illness (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2: Percent Distribution of Disabled Citizens by Age, Sex and Types, Guyana: 2002

Age Group	Sight	Hearing	Speech	Mobility	Body Movement	Gripping	Learning	Mental	Sense of Taste	Others	Total
Both Sexes											
0 - 14	7.9	13.3	24.7	8.3	8.3	11.0	22.6	14.4	27.5	16.5	12.1
15 - 24	6.2	8.6	14.2	4.6	5.2	6.8	16.7	12.0	12.1	8.8	8.0
25 - 44	20.3	20.4	28.6	15.9	15.6	19.2	30.9	35.2	19.6	22.4	21.6
45 - 64	34.1	20.1	15.9	31.3	29.2	29.2	16.0	22.4	17.5	33.2	27.9
65 +	29.9	36.7	15.8	39.5	41.2	33.2	12.9	14.9	20.7	18.6	29.5
NS	1.6	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.1	2.6	0.4	1.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	14,577	4,410	3,763	7,921	4,946	2,984	2,564	4,017	817	2,420	48,419
Males											
0 - 14	8.7	15.0	26.4	9.1	8.8	11.7	24.5	16.1	30.3	17.5	13.4
15 - 24	6.0	8.9	14.4	5.3	6.1	7.3	17.6	12.1	11.2	9.2	8.4
25 - 44	19.9	20.6	27.4	20.3	19.6	23.1	31.2	38.3	20.6	24.0	23.4
45 - 64	34.1	19.9	15.8	33.1	31.8	30.8	15.4	20.8	17.9	33.3	28.1
65 +	29.5	34.9	15.2	31.8	33.4	26.5	10.2	11.4	17.4	15.5	25.7
NS	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.5	1.0	1.2	2.7	0.5	1.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	6,402	2,180	2,038	4,006	2,410	1,594	1,300	2,109	403	1,210	23,652
Females											
0 - 14	7.2	11.7	22.7	7.4	7.8	10.1	20.6	12.5	24.9	15.5	10.7
15 - 24	6.4	8.3	14.0	3.9	4.4	6.2	15.7	11.9	13.0	8.5	7.6
25 - 44	20.5	20.2	30.0	11.4	11.8	14.7	30.6	31.7	18.6	20.7	19.8
45 - 64	34.1	20.3	16.0	29.6	26.8	27.4	16.7	24.2	17.1	33.1	27.8
65 +	30.2	38.5	16.6	47.4	48.7	41.0	15.7	18.9	23.9	21.8	33.1
NS	1.5	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.9	2.4	0.2	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	8,175	2,230	1,725	3,915	2,536	1,390	1,264	1,908	414	1,210	24,767

Note: NS = not stated. This table was derived from **Appendix B.8.2**.

8.3 How Disabilities Was Acquired?

The source of disabilities is important, since, it would help policy-makers to adopt measures aimed at reducing the likelihood of the illness. Generally, about 41 percent of the disabilities were result of accident, 26 percent did not know or did not state how disability was acquired, and 18 percent had acquired it from birth, while 15 percent was caused by diseases (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3: Percent Distribution of Disabled Citizens by Type and How Disability Acquired, Guyana: 2002

Disability Types	How Disability Acquired				Total	
	Birth	Disease	Accident	Not stated	Percent	Number
Both Sexes						
Sight	5.9	12.8	47.7	33.5	100	14,577
Hearing	23.3	12.1	37.2	27.4	100	4,410
Speech	49.8	7.1	22.5	20.6	100	3,763
Mobility	11.0	23.6	45.7	19.7	100	7,921
Body Movement	10.9	20.9	47.7	20.5	100	4,946
Gripping	13.4	23.0	41.8	21.8	100	2,984
Learning	46.2	10.3	20.8	22.8	100	2,564
Mental	31.5	14.3	30.3	23.9	100	4,017
Sense of Taste	16.4	8.4	24.5	50.7	100	817
Others	17.4	10.0	45.2	27.4	100	2,420
Total	17.7	15.3	40.7	26.3	100	48,419
Males						
Sight	6.0	16.8	43.8	33.3	100	6,402
Hearing	23.7	15.0	34.4	27.0	100	2,180
Speech	48.7	8.1	21.9	21.3	100	2,038
Mobility	11.3	31.1	38.9	18.6	100	4,006
Body Movement	11.4	27.2	42.2	19.2	100	2,410
Gripping	13.1	30.7	35.4	20.8	100	1,594
Learning	46.2	11.5	18.8	23.5	100	1,300
Mental	32.0	16.5	26.4	25.2	100	2,109
Sense of Taste	16.4	8.9	22.3	52.4	100	403
Others	18.3	14.1	40.6	26.9	100	1,210
Total	18.6	19.7	36.0	25.7	100	23,652
Females						
Sight	5.8	9.7	50.8	33.7	100	8,175
Hearing	22.9	9.3	40.0	27.8	100	2,230
Speech	51.1	5.9	23.3	19.7	100	1,725
Mobility	10.7	16.0	52.5	20.7	100	3,915
Body Movement	10.4	14.9	53.0	21.7	100	2,536
Gripping	13.7	14.2	49.1	23.0	100	1,390
Learning	46.1	9.0	22.8	22.1	100	1,264
Mental	31.1	11.9	34.6	22.4	100	1,908
Sense of Taste	16.4	8.0	26.6	49.0	100	414
Others	16.4	5.8	49.9	27.9	100	1,210
Total	16.9	11.1	45.2	26.8	100	24,767

Significantly, about half of those suffering from speech and learning difficulties had been born with the impairment respectively. Similarly, sight, body movement, mobility and gripping were mainly result of accident (up to more than two-fifths in these categories), while birth disorders and accident were responsible for mental health deficiencies in equal proportions of about one third.

Disaggregating disabilities between the sexes indicates more males being impaired by diseases (19.7 percent) than females (11.1 percent). In contrast, more females (45.2 percent) were impaired by accident compared to 36.0 percent among the males. Nearly, equal proportions of disabled males or females said birth complication was responsible for their misfortune; at the same time, about a quarter of them did not state how the illness was originated (Table 8.3).

8.4 Employment Opportunities for Disabled People

Labour force participation rates among the disabled people are given in Table 8.4 and illustrated graphically in Figure 8.3. Despite no job discriminations against disabled people in Guyana, they do not have the same opportunities to participate in the labour force. Of the 42,577 disabled persons (15 years and over), 22 percent (9,388) were in the labour force, that is, were economically active and were working or had the need for work. This rate was nearly three times lower, when compared with non-disabled people in Guyana (see chapter 6).

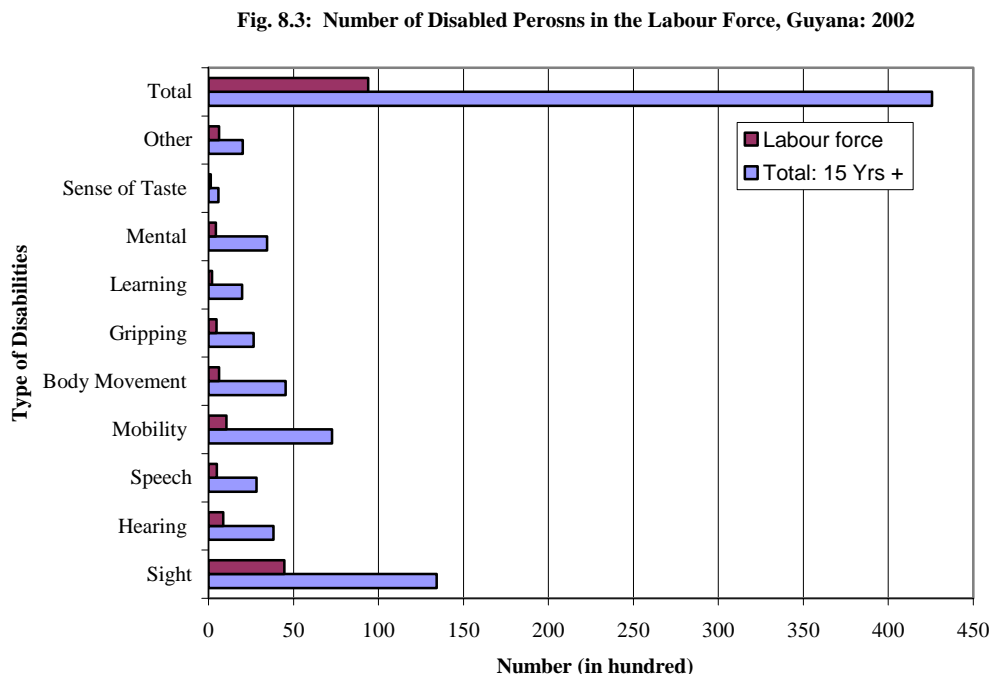


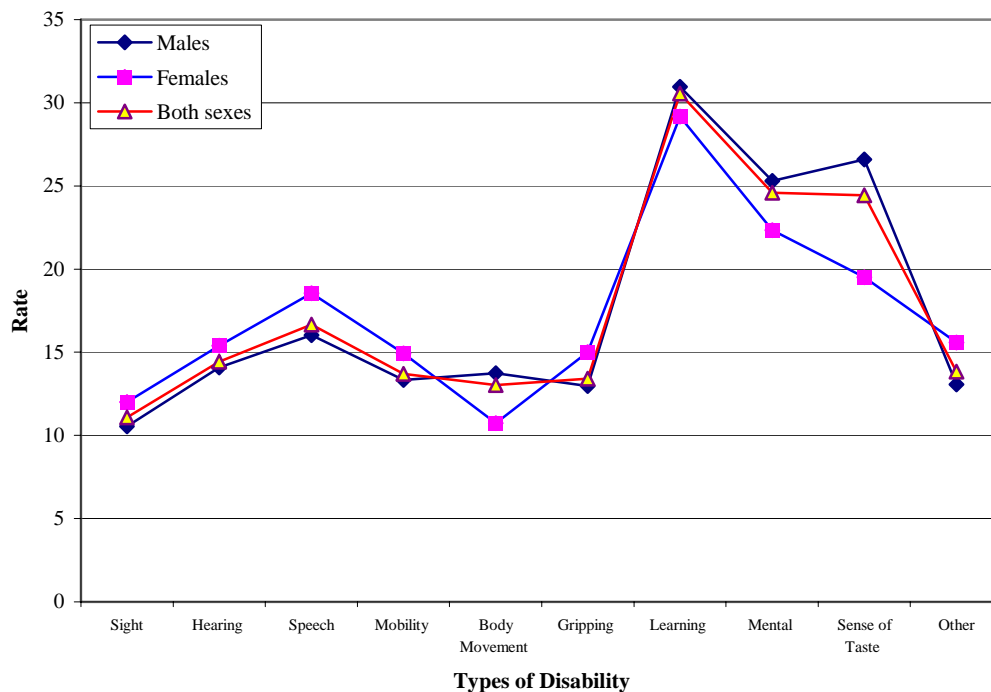
Table 8.4: Employment Status of the Disabled Citizens 15 years and Over Classified by Types of Disability and Sex, Guyana: 2002

Employment Status	Types of Disability										
	Body										
	Movem Grippi										
Both Sexes	Sight	Hearing	Speech	Mobility	ent	ng	Learning	Mental	Tasting	Other	Total
Total: 15 Yrs +	13,427	3,823	2,833	7,265	4,537	2,657	1,985	3,438	592	2,020	42,577
Labour force	4,468	873	492	1,059	622	470	216	431	135	622	9,388
Employed	3,973	747	410	914	541	407	150	325	102	536	8,105
Unemployed	495	126	82	145	0	63	66	106	33	86	1,283
Not in LF	8,959	2,950	2,341	6,206	3,915	2,187	1,769	3,007	457	1,398	33,189
Males											
Total: 15 Yrs +	5,843	1,854	1,500	3,640	2,198	1,407	981	1,769	281	998	20,471
Labour force	2,853	639	368	818	473	370	168	328	94	436	6,547
Employed	2,552	549	309	709	408	322	116	245	69	379	5,658
Unemployed	301	90	59	109	65	48	52	83	25	57	889
Not in LF	2,990	1,215	1,132	2,822	1,725	1,037	813	1,441	187	562	13,924
Females											
Total: 15 Yrs +	7,584	1,969	1,333	3,625	2,339	1,250	1,004	1,669	311	1,022	22,106
Labour force	1,615	234	124	241	149	100	48	103	41	186	2,841
Employed	1,421	198	101	205	133	85	34	80	33	157	2,447
Unemployed	194	36	23	36	16	15	14	23	8	29	394
Not in LF	5,969	1,735	1,209	3,384	2,190	1,150	956	1,566	270	836	19,265
Percentage											
Both Sexes											
Total: 15 Yrs +	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Labour force	33.3	22.8	17.4	14.6	13.7	17.7	10.9	12.5	22.8	30.8	22.0
Employed	88.9	85.6	83.3	86.3	87.0	86.6	69.4	75.4	75.6	86.2	86.3
Unemployed	11.1	14.4	16.7	13.7	0.0	13.4	30.6	24.6	24.4	13.8	13.7
Not in LF	66.7	77.2	82.6	85.4	86.3	82.3	89.1	87.5	77.2	69.2	78.0
Males											
Total: 15 Yrs +	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Labour force	48.8	34.5	24.5	22.5	21.5	26.3	17.1	18.5	33.5	43.7	32.0
Employed	89.4	85.9	84.0	86.7	86.3	87.0	69.0	74.7	73.4	86.9	86.4
Unemployed	10.6	14.1	16.0	13.3	0.0	13.0	31.0	25.3	26.6	13.1	13.6
Not in LF	51.2	65.5	75.5	77.5	78.5	73.7	82.9	81.5	66.5	56.3	68.0
Females											
Total: 15 Yrs +	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Labour force	21.3	11.9	9.3	6.6	6.4	8.0	4.8	6.2	13.2	18.2	12.9
Employed	88.0	84.6	81.5	85.1	89.3	85.0	70.8	77.7	80.5	84.4	86.1
Unemployed	12.0	15.4	18.5	14.9	0.0	15.0	29.2	22.3	19.5	15.6	13.9
Not in LF	78.7	88.1	90.7	93.4	93.6	92.0	95.2	93.8	86.8	81.8	87.1

Note : LF = Labour force

The participation rates varied by sex and by type of disabilities. For example, the overall participation among disabled women was 13 percent, about two and half times lower than disabled men who had 32 percent participation rate. People with learning difficulties and mental health problems, followed by groups impaired with body movement, mobility, gripping and speech difficulties in that order were least likely to be in the employment.

Fig. 8.4: Unemployment Rates Among Disabled Persons, Guyana: 2002



Although, a small number was in the labour force, however, 86 percent of disabled persons who sought for jobs were employed, and 14 percent unemployed as compared with 88 percent employed and 12 percent unemployed among the non-disabled persons. It was also observed that unemployment was higher among people with learning difficulties and mental health cases as compared to disabled persons with visual incapability (Figure 8.4).

8.5 Disabled People Access to Education

Education being the universal key to success, access to it is critical for self actualization and achievement, and because education for people with disabilities is special, it tends to limit their achievements even, if the desires are there to learn. Besides, Hannah Mitchell⁴ noted that the social and economic conditions of persons with disabilities can prevent them from equal access to education. This sub-section mainly focuses on the enrolment rate among disabled citizens as well as their level of educational achievement in Guyana.

⁴ Hannah Mitchell (2005), Raising the Profile of Disability in Guyana, National Commission on Disabilities Survey Based on 1,500 Disabled Persons (Available online at: <http://www.statisticsguyana.gov.gy/>)

Table 8.5 reveals that only 7.4 percent (3,483) of the people with disabilities currently attended school either full time or part time, and that there was no gender disparity in the enrolment rate. Of note, the attendance rate of people with mobility, body movement, gripping and mental disabilities was much lower, when compared to the average for the entire disabled groups. Unless the mental group whose low attending rate can be justified by mental health, it can be assumed that difficulty of movement reasonably prevented the other groups from accessing learning.

Table 8.5: Distribution of Disabled Citizens 5 Years and Over by Types of Disability, Attending Or Not Attending and Attending Rate, by Sex, Guyana: 2002

Disability Types	Number			Attending Rate
	Both Sexes	Attend	Not Attend/Total	
Sight	1,121	13,194	14,315	7.8
Hearing	415	3,872	4,287	9.7
Speech	456	3,076	3,532	12.9
Mobility	297	7,447	7,744	3.8
Body Movement	152	4,677	4,829	3.1
Gripping	134	2,748	2,882	4.6
Learning	252	2,196	2,448	10.3
Mental	251	3,641	3,892	6.4
Sense of Taste	117	630	747	15.7
Others	288	2,027	2,315	12.4
Total	3,483	43,508	46,991	7.4
Males				
Sight	496	5,767	6,263	7.9
Hearing	222	1,887	2,109	10.5
Speech	248	1,643	1,891	13.1
Mobility	157	3,746	3,903	4.0
Body Movement	77	2,264	2,341	3.3
Gripping	75	1,456	1,531	4.9
Learning	123	1,101	1,224	10.0
Mental	146	1,879	2,025	7.2
Sense of Taste	59	300	359	16.4
Others	143	1,004	1,147	12.5
Total	1,746	21,047	22,793	7.7
Females				
Sight	625	7,427	8,052	7.8
Hearing	193	1,985	2,178	8.9
Speech	208	1,433	1,641	12.7
Mobility	140	3,701	3,841	3.6
Body Movement	75	2,413	2,488	3.0
Gripping	59	1,292	1,351	4.4
Learning	129	1,095	1,224	10.5
Mental	105	1,762	1,867	5.6
Sense of Taste	58	330	388	14.9
Others	145	1,023	1,168	12.4
Total	1,737	22,461	24,198	7.2

Despite their impairments, a large percentage of the disabled citizens had achieved some form of higher education. As reflected in Table 8.6, 16 percent (7,500) had acquired no education, 41.3 percent primary education, 34.6 percent secondary education, and about 3.3 percent post secondary and tertiary education combined. Up to 1.3 percent had obtained specialized form of education, but was not clearly stated, while those who did not state their educational achievement at all amounted to nearly 3.5 percent (Table 8.6).

About one-third of those with speech and learning disabilities had no education, while as expected a quarter of those with mental health problems had no education (Table 8.6).

The educational achievement exhibited by the disabled citizens is unprecedented, but not really surprising, because only 18 percent (8,583) of the 48,419 reported with disabilities had acquired the illness leading to their impairment from birth. Apparently, majority may have achieved the educational standard prior to the incident of their unfortunate situation.

Table 8.6: Percent Distribution of Disabled Citizens 5 Years and Above by Types of Disability and Highest Education Level, by Sex, Guyana: 2002

Disability Types	None/ Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	Post University/Te rtiary	Other	Not Stated	Percent	Number
Both Sexes									
Sight	7.5	39.8	43.6	1.8	3.3	0.5	3.5	100	14,315
Hearing	18.6	44.0	29.3	1.1	1.0	2.3	3.7	100	4,287
Speech	32.5	37.9	19.6	1.0	0.9	4.3	3.9	100	3,532
Mobility	13.6	44.3	35.7	1.3	1.4	0.7	3.1	100	7,744
Body Movement	15.5	44.6	33.8	1.1	1.5	0.5	3.1	100	4,829
Gripping	17.3	43.5	32.3	1.2	1.5	0.8	3.4	100	2,882
Learning	35.9	37.8	17.8	0.5	0.5	3.8	3.7	100	2,448
Mental	25.2	37.8	28.8	1.2	0.9	1.9	4.2	100	3,892
Taste	19.5	39.5	29.3	2.3	2.0	0.9	6.4	100	747
Others	7.8	42.0	42.5	2.1	2.6	0.7	2.3	100	2,315
Total	16.0	41.3	34.6	1.4	1.9	1.3	3.5	100	46,991
Males									
Sight	6.3	39.4	44.1	1.9	3.9	0.6	3.8	100	6,263
Hearing	15.7	44.6	31.1	1.4	1.0	2.3	3.7	100	2,109
Speech	31.4	37.5	20.1	1.1	1.1	4.7	4.1	100	1,891
Mobility	11.1	42.0	40.0	1.3	1.7	0.7	3.1	100	3,903
Body Movement	12.5	42.7	38.3	1.3	1.8	0.6	2.9	100	2,341
Gripping	13.9	43.0	35.3	1.4	2.0	1.0	3.5	100	1,531
Learning	33.7	37.2	19.9	0.7	0.5	4.1	4.0	100	1,224
Mental	23.2	37.4	30.5	1.2	1.2	2.3	4.1	100	2,025
Taste	17.8	37.9	30.6	1.9	2.8	1.4	7.5	100	359
Others	6.2	41.2	42.4	2.4	3.8	1.0	3.0	100	1,147
Total	14.4	40.5	36.2	1.5	2.3	1.5	3.7	100	22,793
Females									
Sight	8.4	40.2	43.2	1.8	2.8	0.5	3.2	100	8,052
Hearing	21.3	43.4	27.6	0.9	0.9	2.3	3.6	100	2,178
Speech	33.8	38.3	19.0	0.9	0.7	4.0	3.5	100	1,641
Mobility	16.1	46.5	31.4	1.2	1.0	0.6	3.2	100	3,841
Body Movement	18.3	46.3	29.6	0.8	1.3	0.4	3.3	100	2,488
Gripping	21.1	44.1	29.0	1.0	0.8	0.5	3.4	100	1,351
Learning	38.1	38.5	15.6	0.4	0.6	3.4	3.4	100	1,224
Mental	27.4	38.3	26.9	1.1	0.5	1.4	4.2	100	1,867
Taste	21.1	41.0	28.1	2.6	1.3	0.5	5.4	100	388
Others	9.4	42.7	42.6	1.7	1.4	0.5	1.7	100	1,168
Total	17.4	42.1	33.2	1.3	1.5	1.1	3.3	100	24,198