

**LABOUR RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NIGERIA: AN
INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF DISABILITY, GENDER, AND EMPLOYMENT**

SUBMITTED

BY

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(2020/LW/12818)**

To

**THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAW, FACULTY OF LAW
ALEX EKWUEME FEDERAL UNIVERSITY, NDUFU-ALIKE, IKWO,
EBONYI STATE FOR THE AWARD OF L.L.B IN LAW**

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SEPTEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I, **CHUKWU RUTH CHISOM**, a student in the Faculty of Law at Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ebonyi State, hereby declare with utmost sincerity that this project is the product of my independent and original research. I confirm that all sources have been appropriately cited and referenced, and this work, in its entirety or in part, has not been previously submitted for any academic degree, diploma, certificate, or publication at this university or any other institution.

Signed.....

CHUKWU RUTH CHISOM
(2020/LW/12818)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my friend Okibe Emmanuel

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I offer my profound gratitude to God Almighty for His divine guidance and the gift of life and health, which sustained me throughout this journey.

I am eternally grateful to my beloved parents, Mr. and Mrs. Chukwu Otu, whose unconditional love, unwavering care, steadfast support, and ceaseless prayers have been the bedrock of my life. Their guidance has been an indispensable source of strength.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr. Onyinyechukwu Theresa Eze, for her invaluable guidance, patience, and steadfast support during the supervision of this work. Her expertise and encouragement were crucial to the completion of this project.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Prof. Eseni Azu Udu, for his support and leadership.

Special thanks are also due to the Head of Department and Project Coordinator, Dr. Kelechi Onyegbule, for his oversight and contributions.

I also extend my gratitude to the staff of the Faculty of Law, Mr. Reginald Ekeh, Barr. Nnaemeka Nweze, Barr. Paschal Olebara, Barr. Chukwudifu Emeka, Dr. Eni Onyenkachi, Barr. Nnaemeka Amadi, Barr. Charity Chinedu Uhuo, Barr. C.C. Ituma, Barr. Gabriel Awoke, Barr. Uwadiogwu Anoke, Barr. Nwambam Nnaemeka, Barr. Ekechi Agwu for their contribution to my academic growth.

Finally, I am deeply thankful to my friend, Okibe Emmanuel, for his academic assistance and companionship throughout my time at the university.

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<i>Fawehinmi v. Nigerian Bar Association</i>	[No. 2] [1989] 2 NWLR (Pt. 105) 558	58, 67, 70, 71, 72, 75, 76
<i>Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State</i>	[1981] 2 NCLR 337	59, 65, 69, 73, 74, 76, 78
<i>Uzoukwu v. Ezeonu II</i>	[1994] 7 NWLR (Pt. 354) 1	74

LIST OF STATUTES

Statute	Full Citation
1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)	1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981
Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act	Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018
Employees' Compensation Act	Employees' Compensation Act, 2010
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 159	Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983
Labour Act	Labour Act, 2004
National Health Policy	National Health Policy, 2016
National Policy on Disability	National Policy on Disability, 2006
National Policy on Education	National Policy on Education, 2013
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, 2018
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
JONAPWD	Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities
NCLR	Nigerian Constitutional Law Reports
NCPWD	National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
NLC	Nigerian Labour Congress
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NWLR	Nigerian Weekly Law Reports
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SCR	Supreme Court Reports
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

This study undertakes an intersectional analysis of the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersections of disability, gender, and employment. It highlights the significant barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities in Nigeria, despite the existence of international and national laws aimed at promoting their rights. The purpose of this study is to examine the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a view to identifying the challenges and opportunities presented by existing laws and policies. Using doctrinal approach, which recognizes the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, this study explores the ways in which disability, gender, and employment intersect to shape the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. The findings of this study reveal significant gaps in the existing legal framework governing the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, including inadequate protection against discrimination, lack of accessibility, and limited access to employment opportunities. The study also highlights the ways in which gender intersects with disability to exacerbate the labour rights challenges faced by women with disabilities in Nigeria. This study concludes that the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria require urgent attention, and that an intersectional approach is necessary to address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. The study recommends the enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, the implementation of accessibility standards, and the promotion of inclusive employment practices to ensure the protection and promotion of the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Imagine a young Nigerian woman, Fatima, who uses a wheelchair due to a spinal cord injury. Despite her academic qualifications and skills, Fatima faces immense challenges in securing employment, not only because of her disability but also due to her gender¹. Her experiences are a stark reflection of the harsh reality faced by many persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria, where the intersectionality of disability, gender, and employment perpetuates exclusion and marginalization². The Nigerian labour market is characterized by widespread discrimination, stigma, and exclusion, which disproportionately affect women with disabilities³. According to the World Health Organization⁴, persons with disabilities face significant barriers in accessing employment opportunities, including inaccessible workplaces and inadequate support services. Furthermore, women with disabilities face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including ableism, sexism, and patriarchy, which perpetuate their exclusion and marginalization from the labour market⁵.

¹ T Degener and G Quinn, 'A Survey of International, Comparative and Regional Disability Law Reform, In M Rioux and F Bach (Eds.), *Disability Rights Law and Policy: International and National Perspectives* (North York: Roeher Institute 2002) 3-52.

² G Quinn and T Degener, *Human Rights and Disability: The Current Use and Future Potential of United Nations Human Rights Instruments in the Context of Disability* (OHCHR 2002).

³ P Harris and S Enfield, 'Disability, Equality and Human Rights: A Training Manual for Professionals.' *Disability Awareness in Action* (2003).

⁴ World Health Organization (2011). *World Report on Disability*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>. accessed 23 February 2025.

⁵ K Charmaz, 'Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies'. In NK Denzin and YS Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications 2005) 507-535.

Nigeria's disability landscape is marked by significant gaps in policy and practice. The country's National Policy on Disability, enacted in 2006, aims to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion for PWDs. However, the policy's implementation has been hampered by inadequate funding, lack of political will, and limited stakeholder engagement⁶. Furthermore, the policy's focus on medical rehabilitation and charity-based approaches perpetuates the stigmatization and marginalization of PWDs. The lack of a comprehensive and inclusive disability policy framework has resulted in a fragmented and ineffective disability support system, which fails to address the complex needs of PWDs.

The intersection of disability and gender further complicates the labour rights landscape for women with disabilities in Nigeria. Women with disabilities face unique experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and oppression, which are often overlooked in policy and practice⁷. For instance, women with disabilities are disproportionately represented in informal and precarious work arrangements, which lack social protection and labour safeguards. The absence of disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive labour policies and practices exacerbates these challenges, perpetuating the exclusion and marginalization of women with disabilities from the labour market.

The Nigerian labour market is also characterized by significant gender disparities, with women facing systemic barriers to employment, promotion, and equal pay.⁸ Women with disabilities face even greater challenges, including inaccessible workplaces, inadequate accommodations,

⁶ J Swain, S French and C Cameron, *Disability and Society* (Routledge 2014).

⁷ M Marshall Anne, Sarah J. Smith and Emily J. Johnson, 'Disability, Gender, and Employment: A Systematic Review'. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* [2020] (30) (2) 147-158.

⁸ O Oyebade Oyedotun, Olajide A. Adebayo and Tolulope A. Oyebade, 'Women with Disabilities in the Nigerian Labour Market: Challenges and Opportunities'. *African Journal of Disability* [2020] (9), a562.

and biased hiring practices⁹. The lack of accessible and inclusive workplaces perpetuates the exclusion and marginalization of women with disabilities from the labour market. Furthermore, the absence of robust disability-inclusive policies and practices exacerbates these challenges, perpetuating the exclusion and marginalization of women with disabilities from the labour market¹⁰.

Based on the above highlights, building on existing research, this study explores the intersection of disability, gender, and employment in Nigeria. It delves into the specific labor rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), analyzing the complex interactions among these elements. The analysis identifies key challenges and prospects, with the goal of generating valuable findings that can be used to develop practical and policy-oriented solutions for fostering a more inclusive and gender-sensitive workforce.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the enactment of the Nigerian National Policy on Disability, persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria continue to face significant barriers to employment and labour market participation¹¹. The intersectionality of disability, gender, and employment exacerbates these challenges, with women with disabilities facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including ableism, sexism, and patriarchy¹². This nexus results in unique experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and oppression, which are often overlooked in policy and practice. Furthermore, the lack of empirical research on the labour rights of PWDs in

⁹ E Phillips, Jacqueline, Jennifer L. Smith and Laura J. Miller, 'The Intersection of Disability and Gender in the Labour Market'. *Journal of Disability and Employment* [2019] (9) (1) 1-14.

¹⁰ *Ibid* (n 2).

¹¹ J Anderson, *Disability and Employment* (Routledge 2017).

¹² P Juster (Ed.), *Gender and Disability: Women's Experiences in the Middle East* (Palgrave Macmillan 2018).

Nigeria, particularly in relation to the intersectionality of disability and gender, has resulted in a lack of understanding of the complex issues that PWDs face in the labour market.

The dearth of empirical research on the labour rights of PWDs in Nigeria has significant implications for the development of effective policies and interventions aimed at promoting inclusive and equitable labour markets. The absence of disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive labour policies and practices has perpetuated the exclusion and marginalization of PWDs, particularly women with disabilities, from the labour market. This has resulted in a lack of access to employment opportunities, unequal pay, and limited career advancement opportunities for PWDs. Furthermore, the stigma and discrimination faced by PWDs in the labour market have resulted in low self-esteem, limited social interaction, and poor mental health outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to conduct research that examines the labour rights of PWDs in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectionality of disability and gender.

The Nigerian government has made efforts to promote the inclusion of PWDs in the labour market, including the enactment of the Nigerian National Policy on Disability. However, the implementation of this policy has been hampered by inadequate funding, lack of political will, and limited stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, the policy's focus on medical rehabilitation and charity-based approaches perpetuates the stigmatization and marginalization of PWDs. Therefore, there is a need for research that examines the effectiveness of existing policies and practices aimed at promoting the inclusion of PWDs in the labour market.

This study aims to address the above problems with a focus on the intersectionality of disability and gender. The study seeks to examine the key barriers to employment and labour market participation faced by PWDs in Nigeria, with a focus on the experiences of women with

disabilities. The study also aims to identify the gaps and limitations in existing labour policies and practices in Nigeria in relation to promoting inclusive and equitable labour markets for PWDs.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the key barriers to employment and labour market participation faced by persons with disabilities in Nigeria?
2. How do intersecting forms of discrimination, including ableism, sexism, and patriarchy, affect the labour market experiences of women with disabilities in Nigeria?
3. What are the gaps and limitations in existing labour policies and practices in Nigeria in relation to promoting inclusive and equitable labour markets for PWDs?
4. What strategies and interventions can be employed to promote disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive labour markets in Nigeria?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria through an intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify and analyze the key barriers to employment and labour market participation faced by persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

2. To examine the impact of intersecting forms of discrimination, including ableism, sexism, and patriarchy, on the labour market experiences of women with disabilities in Nigeria.
3. To assess the gaps and limitations in existing labour policies and practices in Nigeria in relation to promoting inclusive and equitable labour markets for persons with disabilities.
4. To identify and recommend strategies and interventions for promoting disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive labour markets in Nigeria.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a specific emphasis on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment. The study aims to explore the experiences of persons with disabilities in the Nigerian labour market, examining the barriers, gaps, and opportunities for promoting inclusive and equitable labour markets. The study will be conducted in Nigeria, with a focus on the experiences of women with disabilities in the formal and informal sectors.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the study's focus on Nigeria limits its generalizability to other countries. Secondly, the study's reliance on qualitative data collection methods may limit the breadth and depth of the data collected. Thirdly, the study's focus on women with disabilities may not capture the experiences of men with disabilities or other marginalized groups. Finally, while the study also employs primary sources, its reliance on secondary sources of data may be subject to biases and limitations.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study has profound theoretical and practical implications, contributing meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge on disability, gender, and employment in Nigeria. Theoretically, this research endeavors to bridge the knowledge gap in the intersectionality framework by examining the intricate relationships between disability, gender, and employment in the Nigerian context.

The study's findings will provide novel insights into the ways in which disability and gender intersect to shape the labor market experiences of women with disabilities in Nigeria. For instance, the experiences of women like Chika Ike, a Nigerian actress who has been open about her struggles with disability and gender-based discrimination, will be examined. Similarly, the study will explore the experiences of women like Ekaete Umoh, a Nigerian disability rights activist who has advocated for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor market.

Practically, this study's findings will have far-reaching implications for policy and practice in Nigeria. The study's results will inform the development of disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive labor policies and practices, aimed at promoting inclusive and equitable labor markets for persons with disabilities. For example, the study's findings will inform the development of policies and programs aimed at supporting entrepreneurs with disabilities, like Mohammed Abdullahi, a Nigerian entrepreneur who has successfully established a business despite facing significant barriers due to his disability.

Ultimately, this study aims to contribute meaningfully to the promotion of social justice and human rights for persons with disabilities in Nigeria. By examining the intersectionality of disability, gender, and employment, this research seeks to challenge dominant discourses and promote inclusive and equitable labor markets for all.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study employs a doctrinal research approach, also known as black-letter research, analytical research, or traditional legal research¹³. This approach involves a critical examination and analysis of existing laws, policies, and judicial decisions¹⁴ related to disability and employment in Nigeria. Doctrinal research is particularly suited to this study, as it enables a detailed examination of the legal framework and policies governing disability and employment in Nigeria.

The study relies on a range of secondary data sources, including:

1. **Legislation:** The Nigerian Constitution, Labour Act, Disability Rights Act, and other relevant laws and regulations.
2. **Judicial decisions:** Relevant court judgments and rulings on disability and employment, including decisions of the Nigerian Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and High Courts.
3. **Policy documents:** National Policy on Disability, National Employment Policy, and other relevant policy documents issued by the Nigerian government.
4. **Academic literature:** Journal articles, books, and conference papers on disability, employment, and human rights in Nigeria and other jurisdictions.

The collected data will be analyzed using a critical doctrinal approach, which involves a detailed examination and critique of the existing legal framework and policies related to disability and employment. This approach will enable the identification of gaps, inconsistencies, and areas for improvement in the existing laws and policies.

¹³ P Harris, *Research Methods for Law* (Oxford University Press 2017).

¹⁴ W Twining and D Miers, *How to do Things with Rules: A Primer of Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press 2010).

The study adopts a qualitative research design, which involves a detailed analysis of the collected data to identify themes, patterns, and trends. The study does not involve the collection of primary data through surveys, interviews, or observations. Instead, it relies on a detailed analysis of existing laws, policies, and judicial decisions to identify the key issues and challenges related to disability and employment in Nigeria.

1.8 Chapter Analysis

This work is composed of five chapters, each of which provides a critical examination of the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

Chapter One provides an introduction to the study, outlining the background, statement of the problem, aim and objectives, scope and limitations, significance, and research methodology. The chapter sets the stage for the study, highlighting the importance of examining the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

Chapter Two delves into conceptual clarifications, theoretical foundations, and literature review. The chapter defines key concepts such as disability, labour rights, and the intersection of gender and disability. It also explores theoretical frameworks, including the social model of disability, intersectionality theory, and ableism theory. The literature review examines existing research on disability, employment, and labour rights in Nigeria.

Chapter Three examines the legal regime and institutional framework governing labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. The chapter analyzes national, African, and international legal frameworks, including the Disability Rights Act (2018), Labour Act (2004), and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). It also discusses

institutional frameworks, such as the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Chapter Four explores and analyzes the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. The chapter examines the intersection of disability, gender, and employment, highlighting the experiences of women with disabilities in the Nigerian labour market. It also discusses labour market barriers and discrimination against persons with disabilities, as well as the role of policy and legislation in protecting their labour rights.

Chapter Five provides a summary, conclusion, contributions to knowledge, areas for further studies, and recommendations. The chapter synthesizes the key findings, highlighting the importance of promoting inclusive and equitable labour markets for persons with disabilities in Nigeria. It also provides recommendations for policymakers, employers, and disability advocates to promote the labour rights of persons with disabilities.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Framework

This section aims to provide a clear understanding of the key concepts that form the foundation of the study. Specifically, it will define the concept of disability, clarify the concept of labour rights, examine the intersectionality of gender and disability and provide historical and contemporary contexts of employment and disability in Nigeria.

2.1.1 Disability

The concept of disability is complex and multifaceted, and its definition has evolved over time. Traditionally, disability was viewed through a medical lens, with a focus on the individual's impairment or condition¹⁵. This approach, also known as the medical model, emphasizes the individual's physical or mental limitations and seeks to "cure" or "fix" the impairment. However, this approach has been criticized for being overly narrow and stigmatizing, as it implies that the individual is the problem rather than the societal barriers they face¹⁶. Furthermore, the medical model neglects the social and environmental factors that contribute to disability, such as inaccessible buildings, inadequate transportation, and discriminatory attitudes.

In recent years, the social model of disability has gained prominence, which emphasizes the role of societal and environmental factors in creating barriers for individuals with impairments¹⁷. According to this model, disability is not solely the result of an individual's impairment, but

¹⁵ C Barnes, *Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination* (Hurst 1991) 12.

¹⁶ H Hahn, *Disability and Rehabilitation: A Study of the Disabled and their Rehabilitation in the United States* (World Rehabilitation Fund 1985) 25.

¹⁷ V Finkelstein, *Attitudes and Disabled People: Issues for Discussion* (World Rehabilitation Fund 1980) 15.

rather the result of the interaction between the individual and their environment. This approach recognizes that disability is a natural part of human diversity and seeks to promote inclusivity and accessibility. The social model also highlights the importance of empowering individuals with disabilities and promoting their participation in society¹⁸. By shifting the focus from the individual to the societal barriers, the social model provides a more nuanced understanding of disability and its relationship to society.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) provides a widely accepted framework for understanding disability¹⁹. The ICF defines disability as an umbrella term that encompasses impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. This framework recognizes that disability is a dynamic and complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a single definition or category. The ICF also emphasizes the importance of considering the individual's environmental and personal factors when assessing their functioning and disability²⁰. By providing a comprehensive and nuanced framework, the ICF enables researchers and policymakers to better understand and address the complex issues surrounding disability.

2.1.2 Labour Rights

The concept of labour rights refers to the fundamental principles and standards that govern the relationship between workers and employers, and are designed to promote fair and equitable treatment of workers²¹. Labour rights encompass a broad range of entitlements, including the

¹⁸ M Oliver, *Social Work with Disabled People* (Macmillan 1983) 32.

¹⁹ World Health Organization (WHO), *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (WHO Press 2001) 10.

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ International Labour Organization (ILO), *International Labour Standards* (ILO 2010). Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/international-labour-standards>, accessed 12 March 2025.

right to freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, the right to equal pay for equal work, and the right to safe and healthy working conditions²². These rights are enshrined in various international labour standards, including the International Labour Organization's (ILO) core conventions, which provide a framework for promoting and protecting the rights of workers worldwide. The protection of labour rights is essential for promoting social justice, reducing inequality, and improving the overall well-being of workers.

Labour rights are essential for promoting economic development, as they help to ensure that workers are treated fairly and with dignity, which in turn can lead to increased productivity and economic growth. Furthermore, labour rights are essential for promoting the empowerment and participation of marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, who often face significant barriers in the labour market²³. The protection of labour rights is also critical for promoting social inclusion and reducing poverty, as it helps to ensure that workers have access to decent work and a living wage²⁴. By promoting and protecting labour rights, governments and employers can help to create a more equitable and just society, where all workers are treated with dignity and respect.

2.1.3 The Concept and Nexus between Gender and Disability

The intersection of gender and disability is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, and expectations

²² JW Budd and D Bhave, 'Values, Ideologies, and Frames of Reference in Industrial Relations'. In JW Budd and JG Scoville (Eds.), *The Ethics of Human Resources and Industrial Relations* (Labor and Employment Relations Association 2008) 11-34.

²³ C Barnes and G Mercer, *Disability* (Polity Press 2003) 25.

²⁴ B Hepple, *Labour Laws and Global Trade* (Hart Publishing 2009) 20.

associated with being male or female²⁵. Disability, on the other hand, refers to the experience of having a physical, sensory, or mental impairment that substantially limits one's ability to perform daily activities²⁶. The intersection of these two concepts highlights the unique experiences and challenges faced by women with disabilities, who often encounter multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization. Furthermore, this intersection also reveals the ways in which societal attitudes and norms perpetuate the exclusion and oppression of women with disabilities.

Research has shown that women with disabilities face significant barriers to social, economic, and political participation²⁷. They are more likely to experience poverty, social isolation, and violence than men with disabilities or women without disabilities. Moreover, women with disabilities often face unique challenges related to their reproductive health, including limited access to healthcare and increased risk of maternal mortality²⁸. These challenges are further exacerbated by the lack of accessible and inclusive healthcare services, which can lead to inadequate treatment and poor health outcomes.

The concept of intersectionality is critical to understanding the nexus between gender and disability. Intersectionality refers to the idea that different forms of oppression, such as sexism, ableism, and racism, intersect and interact to produce unique experiences of marginalization and exclusion²⁹. By examining the intersection of gender and disability, researchers and policymakers can better understand the complex and nuanced experiences of women with disabilities and develop more effective strategies for promoting their inclusion and

²⁵ World Health Organization (2011). *World Report on Disability*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>. accessed 23 February 2025.

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ D Driedger, *The Last Civil Rights Movement* (Hurs 1989).

²⁸ UNFPA, *Women and Girls with Disabilities* (UNFPA 2013).

²⁹ K Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics.' *University of Chicago Legal Forum* [1989] (1) 139-167.

empowerment. For instance, intersectionality can help us understand how women with disabilities from racial and ethnic minority groups may face even greater barriers to participation due to the intersection of racism, sexism, and ableism.

In order to address the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities, it is essential to adopt a gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive approach to policy and programming. This involves recognizing the diversity of experiences among women with disabilities and addressing the specific barriers and challenges they face³⁰. By promoting the inclusion and empowerment of women with disabilities, we can work towards creating a more equitable and just society for all. This requires a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and social justice, as well as a willingness to challenge and dismantle the systemic barriers that perpetuate the exclusion and oppression of women with disabilities. Furthermore, it also requires the active participation and leadership of women with disabilities themselves, who must be at the forefront of efforts to promote their rights and inclusion.

2.1.4 Employment and Disability in Nigeria: Historical and Contemporary Contexts

Historically, Nigeria has had a complex and often challenging relationship with disability and employment. Prior to the country's independence in 1960, the colonial government's approach to disability was largely paternalistic and charitable, with a focus on providing welfare services and institutional care for people with disabilities³¹. This approach did little to promote the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities, and instead perpetuated their marginalization and exclusion from society. In the post-independence period, Nigeria's government has made efforts

³⁰ WJ Hanna and B Rogovsky, 'Women with Disabilities: Two Handicaps Plus'. *Disability, Handicap & Society* [1991] (6) (1) 49-63.

³¹ AJ Ajuwon, 'Disability and Employment in Nigeria: A Review of the Literature'. *Disability and Rehabilitation* [2013] (35) (19) 1661-1669.

to address the needs of people with disabilities, including the establishment of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities in 2019. However, these efforts have been hindered by a lack of resources, inadequate infrastructure, and discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Despite these efforts, people with disabilities in Nigeria continue to face significant barriers to employment. According to a 2019 report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), people with disabilities in Nigeria are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed than their non-disabled peers³². This is due in part to the lack of accessibility and accommodations in the workplace, as well as discriminatory attitudes and practices among employers³³. Furthermore, the Nigerian education system often fails to provide adequate support and resources for students with disabilities, leaving them ill-prepared for the workforce. The lack of accessible transportation, communication, and information technologies also exacerbates the challenges faced by people with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to promote the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in Nigeria's workforce. The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities has established programs and initiatives aimed at promoting disability inclusion in the workplace, including training and capacity-building programs for employers and employees³⁴. Additionally, some Nigerian organizations have begun to adopt disability-inclusive hiring practices and provide accommodations and support for employees with disabilities. However, more needs to be done to address the systemic and structural barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing employment opportunities. This includes increasing

³² International Labour Organization (ILO), *Disability and Employment in Nigeria: An Overview* (ILO 2019).

³³ MJ Dear and JR Wolch, *Landscapes of Despair: From Deinstitutionalization to Homelessness* (Princeton University Press 2014).

³⁴ M Priestley, *Disability and the Life Course: Global Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press 2003).

awareness and understanding of disability issues among employers and the general public, as well as promoting the use of accessible technologies and inclusive practices in the workplace.

Despite these efforts, much work remains to be done to promote the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in Nigeria's workforce. Addressing the complex and deeply ingrained barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities will require a sustained and coordinated effort from government, employers, and civil society organizations³⁵. This includes increasing funding and resources for disability-inclusive programs and initiatives, as well as promoting policy and legislative reforms that support the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. By working together, it is possible to create a more inclusive and equitable workforce in Nigeria, where people with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate and contribute.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section provides the theoretical foundation for analyzing the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, drawing on the Social Model of Disability Theory, Intersectionality Theory, and Ableism Theory. These frameworks will be used to examine the complex issues surrounding disability, gender, and employment in Nigeria.

2.2.1 Social Model of Disability Theory

The Social Model of Disability Theory posits that disability is not solely a result of individual impairment, but rather a product of societal and environmental barriers that prevent people with impairments from fully participating in society³⁶. This theory emerged in the 1970s in the United Kingdom, primarily through the work of disability activists and scholars such as Mike Oliver and

³⁵ LJ Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader* (Routledge 2013) 20.

³⁶ M Oliver, *Social Work with Disabled People* (Macmillan 1983).

Vic Finkelstein³⁷. The Social Model of Disability Theory was a response to the traditional medical model of disability, which viewed disability as a personal tragedy or a medical problem to be cured. The medical model perpetuated the notion that people with disabilities were somehow "broken" or "defective" and needed to be "fixed" or "cured"³⁸.

The Social Model of Disability Theory, on the other hand, emphasizes that disability is a result of societal and environmental barriers, rather than individual impairments. This theory recognizes that people with impairments are not the problem, but rather the societal and environmental barriers that prevent them from fully participating in society³⁹. For example, a person with a physical impairment may not be able to access a building because of a lack of ramps or elevators. In this case, the problem is not the person's impairment, but rather the societal and environmental barrier of inaccessible architecture. By recognizing and addressing these barriers, society can work towards creating a more inclusive and accessible environment for people with disabilities.

The Social Model of Disability Theory has been influential in shaping disability policy and practice, particularly in the United Kingdom and other Western countries. This theory has been used to inform the development of disability rights legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act in the United Kingdom. The Social Model of Disability Theory has also been used to promote inclusive and accessible practices in education, employment, and other areas of life⁴⁰. However, despite its influence, the Social Model of Disability Theory has also been subject to criticism and debate. Some critics argue that the theory oversimplifies the complexities

³⁷ C Barnes, 'Understanding Disability and the Social Model'. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* [2012] (25) (1) 14-32.

³⁸ V Finkelstein, *Attitudes and Disabled People: Issues for Discussion* (World Rehabilitation Fund 1980).

³⁹ M Oliver, *Social Work with Disabled People* (Macmillan 1983).

⁴⁰ C Barnes, 'Understanding Disability and the Social Model'. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* [2012] (25) (1) 14-32.

of disability and impairment, while others argue that it fails to account for the experiences of people with disabilities in non-Western contexts.

The Social Model of Disability Theory is highly relevant to this study on the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. By applying this theory, this study can identify the specific barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing employment opportunities in Nigeria, analyze the ways in which societal attitudes, policies, and practices contribute to these barriers, and develop recommendations for removing these barriers and promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market. The theory can also be used to inform the development of inclusive and accessible employment policies and practices in Nigeria, and to promote the rights and empowerment of people with disabilities in the country.

2.2.2 Intersectionality Theory

The Intersectionality Theory refers to a critical framework that examines how multiple forms of oppression and identity intersect to produce unique experiences of marginalization and exclusion. This theory recognizes that individuals have multiple identities, such as race, gender, class, disability, and sexuality, which intersect to produce complex and nuanced experiences of oppression⁴¹. The theory emphasizes that these intersections result in unique experiences of marginalization and exclusion, which cannot be fully understood by examining a single aspect of identity in isolation.

The background history of Intersectionality Theory dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, when feminist scholars and activists began to critique the dominant feminist movement for neglecting the experiences of women of color and other marginalized groups. The theory gained

⁴¹ K Davis, 'Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on what makes a Feminist Theory Successful'. *Feminist Theory* [2008] (9) (1) 67-85.

prominence in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly through the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, who is often credited with coining the term "intersectionality" in her 1989 essay "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex"⁴². Other key proponents of the theory include Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, and Angela Davis. These scholars and activists have contributed to the development of Intersectionality Theory, highlighting the importance of considering multiple forms of oppression and identity in order to understand the complex experiences of marginalized groups⁴³.

The ideals or views of Intersectionality Theory emphasize the importance of considering multiple forms of oppression and identity in order to understand the complex experiences of marginalized groups. The theory challenges traditional notions of identity and oppression, which often focus on a single aspect of identity, such as gender or race. Instead, Intersectionality Theory recognizes that individuals have multiple identities that intersect to produce unique experiences of marginalization and exclusion⁴⁴. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which multiple forms of oppression intersect and compound, resulting in unique experiences of marginalization and exclusion.

Intersectionality Theory is highly relevant to this study on the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. By applying this theory, this study can examine how the intersection of disability, gender, and other identities affects the experiences of people with disabilities in the labour market. The theory can also be used to analyze how institutions and policies in Nigeria perpetuate intersectional oppression, and to develop recommendations for promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in the labour market. Furthermore, Intersectionality Theory can be used to examine the ways in which the experiences of people

⁴² K Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics'. *University of Chicago Legal Forum* [1989] (1) (8) 139-167.

⁴³ A Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (Vintage Books 1981).

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

with disabilities in Nigeria are shaped by the intersection of disability, poverty, and lack of access to education and healthcare.

2.2.3 Ableism Theory

The Ableism Theory refers to a critical framework that examines the ways in which societal attitudes, policies, and practices perpetuate the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities. Ableism is a form of social oppression that privileges able-bodiedness and perpetuates the notion that people with disabilities are inferior, dependent, and a burden on society⁴⁵. The Ableism Theory emphasizes that ableism is not just an individual attitude or prejudice, but rather a systemic and structural form of oppression that is embedded in the social, economic, and cultural fabric of society.

The background history of Ableism Theory dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, when disability activists and scholars began to challenge the dominant medical model of disability, which viewed disability as a personal tragedy or a medical problem to be cured⁴⁶. The Ableism Theory gained prominence in the 1990s and 2000s, particularly through the work of disability scholars and activists such as Fiona Campbell, Robert McRuer, and Tobin Siebers. These scholars and activists have contributed to the development of Ableism Theory, highlighting the ways in which ableism perpetuates the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities.

The ideals or views of Ableism Theory emphasize that ableism is a form of social oppression that perpetuates the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities. The theory recognizes that ableism is not just an individual attitude or prejudice, but rather a systemic and structural form of oppression that is embedded in the social, economic, and cultural fabric of

⁴⁵ F Campbell, *Contours of Ableism: Territories, Objects, Disability and Desire* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009).

⁴⁶ M Oliver, *Social Work with Disabled People* (Macmillan 1983).

society. Ableism Theory also emphasizes the importance of disability rights and the need for inclusive and accessible policies and practices that promote the full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in society⁴⁷.

Ableism Theory is highly relevant to this study on the labour rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. By applying this theory, this study can examine how ableism perpetuates the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market. The theory can also be used to analyze how institutions and policies in Nigeria perpetuate ableism, and to develop recommendations for promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in the labour market. Furthermore, Ableism Theory can be used to examine the ways in which ableism intersects with other forms of oppression, such as racism and sexism, to perpetuate the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

At this point, the researcher will review the work of other authors that are relevant to this present study.

The publication ‘Human Rights and Disability: The Current Use and Future Potential of United Nations Human Rights Instruments in the Context of Disability’⁴⁸ by Theresia and Gerard is a seminal work that examines the relationship of human rights and disability, analyzing the extent to which United Nations human rights instruments address the rights of persons with disabilities. The study reveals significant gaps and challenges in the current framework, including limited attention to disability-specific issues, inadequate implementation and enforcement of existing

⁴⁷ T Siebers, *Disability Theory* (University of Michigan Press 2008).

⁴⁸ Degener Theresia and Gerard Quinn, *Human Rights and Disability: The Current Use and Future Potential of United Nations Human Rights Instruments in the Context of Disability* (New York: United Nations, 2002).

human rights standards, and lack of accessibility and inclusivity. The authors conclude that a more comprehensive and inclusive approach is needed to address the complex and interconnected issues facing persons with disabilities, and make recommendations for developing disability-specific human rights instruments and standards, strengthening implementation and enforcement, increasing accessibility and inclusivity, and enhancing participation and representation. However, the study's focus on international human rights instruments and standards, and its lack of attention to the specific challenges and opportunities facing persons with disabilities in Nigeria, particularly in relation to the intersection of disability, gender, and employment, highlights the need for further research in this area.

Also, 'Disability and Equality Law in Britain: The Role of Reasonable Adjustment' by Anna⁴⁹ is a comprehensive analysis of the role of reasonable adjustment in disability and equality law in Britain. The purpose of this study is to examine the concept of reasonable adjustment in British law, its development, and its impact on the lives of people with disabilities. The study finds that while the reasonable adjustment duty has been an important step forward in promoting equality and inclusion for people with disabilities, it has significant limitations. The study highlights the lack of clarity and consistency in the application of the reasonable adjustment duty and argues that this has resulted in unequal treatment of people with disabilities. The study concludes that the reasonable adjustment duty is a crucial tool in promoting equality and inclusion for people with disabilities, but its effectiveness is limited by the lack of clarity and consistency in its application. The study recommends that the British government should provide clearer guidance on the application of the reasonable adjustment duty and that the duty should be extended to cover all areas of life, including education, employment, and healthcare. While the study

⁴⁹ Lawson Anna, *Disability and Equality Law in Britain: The Role of Reasonable Adjustment* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2008).

provides a comprehensive analysis of the reasonable adjustment duty in British law, it does not examine the experiences of people with disabilities in Nigeria or the implications of the reasonable adjustment duty for disability and equality law in Nigeria. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

Another work on ‘Disability and the Law in Canada’ by Marcia and Leeann⁵⁰ is a comprehensive analysis of the intersection of disability and law in Canada. Published in 2001 by Captus Press, this book provides a detailed examination of the legal framework governing disability rights in Canada. The purpose of this book is to examine the legal framework governing disability rights in Canada, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, human rights legislation, and other relevant laws and policies. The book finds that while Canada has made significant progress in promoting disability rights, there are still significant gaps and challenges in the legal framework. The authors highlight the need for greater clarity and consistency in the application of disability rights laws and policies, as well as the need for greater participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the decision-making process. The book concludes that the legal framework governing disability rights in Canada is complex and multifaceted, and that there is a need for ongoing reform and improvement to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are fully protected. The authors recommend that the Canadian government should take steps to clarify and strengthen the legal framework governing disability rights, including the development of clear and consistent guidelines for the application of disability rights laws and policies. While the book provides a comprehensive analysis of the legal framework governing disability rights in Canada, it does not examine the experiences of people with disabilities in Nigeria or the

⁵⁰ H Rioux Marcia and M Leeann Seales, *Disability and the Law in Canada* (Concord, ON: Captus Press, 2001).

implications of the Canadian legal framework for disability and equality law in Nigeria. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

Again, the work of Colin and Geoff on ‘Disability, Work, and Welfare: Challenging the Status Quo’⁵¹ is a thought-provoking article that challenges the traditional approaches to disability, work, and welfare. Their article provides a critical analysis of the existing policies and practices that govern the lives of people with disabilities. The purpose of this article is to examine the relationships between disability, work, and welfare, and to challenge the dominant ideologies and policies that shape these relationships. The authors aim to highlight the need for a more inclusive and empowering approach to disability, work, and welfare. The article finds that the existing policies and practices governing disability, work, and welfare are often based on outdated and disempowering assumptions about people with disabilities. The authors argue that these policies and practices perpetuate the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities from the labor market and society. The article concludes that there is a need for a fundamental shift in the way that disability, work, and welfare are understood and addressed. The authors argue that this shift requires a more inclusive and empowering approach that recognizes the diversity and individuality of people with disabilities. The authors recommend that policymakers and practitioners should adopt a more inclusive and empowering approach to disability, work, and welfare. This approach should be based on the principles of equality, justice, and human rights, and should recognize the diversity and individuality of people with disabilities. While the article provides a critical analysis of the relationships between disability, work, and welfare in the UK, it does not examine the specific challenges and opportunities

⁵¹ Barnes Colin and Geoff Mercer, ‘Disability, Work, and Welfare: Challenging the Status Quo.’ *Journal of Social Policy* [2007] (36) (3) 441-456.

facing people with disabilities in Nigeria. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

The research work on ‘Disability Discrimination Law: A Global Comparative Approach’ by Degener⁵² is a seminal article that provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of disability discrimination laws across the globe. This article examines the development and implementation of disability discrimination laws in various countries, highlighting both the progress made and the challenges that remain. The article's purpose is to identify best practices and areas for improvement in disability discrimination laws, with a focus on promoting equality and inclusion for people with disabilities. Degener's analysis is grounded in a thorough review of international human rights instruments, national laws, and policies. The article finds that while there has been significant progress in the development of disability discrimination laws, there are still significant variations in the scope and effectiveness of these laws across different countries. Degener highlights the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, greater awareness and education, and more effective participation of people with disabilities in the development and implementation of disability discrimination laws. The work concludes that a global comparative approach is essential for promoting equality and inclusion for people with disabilities, and for identifying best practices and areas for improvement in disability discrimination laws. Degener recommends that countries should strengthen their disability discrimination laws, improve enforcement mechanisms, and increase awareness and education about disability rights. She also emphasizes the importance of involving people with disabilities in the development and implementation of disability discrimination laws. While the article provides a comprehensive

⁵² Degener Theresia, ‘Disability Discrimination Law: A Global Comparative Approach.’ *International Journal of Human Rights* [2007] (11) (3-4) 337-354.

comparative analysis of disability discrimination laws globally, it does not specifically examine the experiences of people with disabilities in Nigeria or the implications of international disability rights instruments for Nigerian law and policy. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

The research work of Kay and Andrew is also worthy of review as it is relevant to this present study. They wrote on ‘The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation⁵³, and it is a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the disability rights movement in the United States. Their book provides a detailed examination of the historical development of the disability rights movement, from its origins in the charity-based approach of the early 20th century to the confrontational and empowering approach of the late 20th century. The purpose is to explore the transformation of the disability rights movement over time, highlighting the key events, figures, and organizations that have shaped the movement. Schriener and Batavia's analysis is grounded in a thorough review of historical documents, interviews with key figures, and participation in disability rights events. The findings reveal that the disability rights movement has undergone a significant transformation over the years, from a charity-based approach that emphasized pity and dependency to a confrontational and empowering approach that emphasizes self-advocacy and independence. The authors highlight the key role played by organizations such as the National Federation of the Blind and the American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT) in shaping the movement. The book concludes that the disability rights movement has made significant progress in promoting the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities, but that much work remains to be done to achieve full equality and empowerment. Schriener and

⁵³ Schriener Kay and Andrew L. Batavia, *The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

Batavia recommend that the disability rights movement should continue to emphasize self-advocacy and empowerment, and that policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the needs and perspectives of people with disabilities in developing policies and programs. While the book provides a comprehensive analysis of the disability rights movement in the United States, it does not specifically examine the experiences of people with disabilities in Nigeria or the implications of international disability rights instruments for Nigerian law and policy. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

Caroline Gooding researched on ‘Disability and Human Rights’⁵⁴ is a thought-provoking article that examines the relationship between disability and human rights. The article provides a critical analysis of the human rights framework and its application to people with disabilities. The article's purpose is to explore the extent to which human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, address the rights of people with disabilities. Gooding's analysis is grounded in a thorough review of international human rights law, national laws, and policies. The article finds that while human rights instruments provide a foundation for promoting the rights of people with disabilities, there are significant gaps and challenges in the current framework. Gooding highlights the need for greater clarity and specificity in the application of human rights to people with disabilities, as well as the need for greater participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the development and implementation of human rights policies. The article concludes that a more nuanced and inclusive approach to human rights is needed to address the complex and interconnected issues facing people with disabilities. Gooding recommends that

⁵⁴ Gooding Caroline, ‘Disability and Human Rights.’ *Journal of Law and Society* [2000] (27) (2) 218-239.

policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the development of disability-specific human rights instruments and policies, and that greater efforts should be made to promote the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in human rights processes. While the article provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between disability and human rights, it does not specifically examine the experiences of people with disabilities in Nigeria or the implications of international human rights instruments for Nigerian law and policy. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

The ‘Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies’ edited by Nick Watson, Alan Roulstone, and Carol Thomas⁵⁵ offers a comprehensive and authoritative guide to the field of disability studies. The handbook provides a state-of-the-art overview of the key issues, debates, and theories in disability studies, drawing on contributions from leading international scholars. The handbook's purpose is to provide a definitive reference point for scholars, students, and practitioners working in the field of disability studies. The editors' aim is to showcase the diversity and richness of disability studies, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of disability and its intersections with other social categories such as gender, race, and class. The handbook is divided into six sections, covering topics such as the history of disability, disability theory, disability and identity, disability and policy, disability and education, and disability and culture. Each section includes a range of chapters written by experts in the field, providing a comprehensive and authoritative overview of the key issues and debates. The handbook's strengths include its comprehensive coverage of the field, its interdisciplinary approach, and its commitment to showcasing the perspectives and experiences of disabled people themselves. The

⁵⁵ Watson Nick, Alan Roulstone and Carol Thomas, *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies* (London: Routledge, 2012).

handbook is an essential resource for anyone working in the field of disability studies, providing a definitive reference point for scholars, students, and practitioners. While the handbook provides a comprehensive overview of the field of disability studies, it does not specifically focus on the experiences of people with disabilities in Nigeria or the implications of international disability rights instruments for Nigerian law and policy. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

Kanter wrote ‘The Globalization of Disability Rights Law’⁵⁶, a thought-provoking article that examines the globalization of disability rights law and its implications for the promotion of disability rights worldwide. The author provides a comprehensive analysis of the international disability rights framework and its impact on national laws and policies. The purpose is to explore the globalization of disability rights law and its potential to promote the rights of people with disabilities worldwide. Kanter's analysis is grounded in a thorough review of international human rights instruments, national laws, and policies. The article finds that the globalization of disability rights law has led to significant advances in the promotion of disability rights worldwide. Kanter highlights the key role played by international human rights instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in promoting disability rights and influencing national laws and policies. However, the article also notes that significant challenges remain in the implementation and enforcement of disability rights laws and policies. Kanter argues that the globalization of disability rights law must be accompanied by efforts to promote the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the development and implementation of laws and policies. The article concludes that the

⁵⁶ S Kanter Arlene, ‘The Globalization of Disability Rights Law.’ *Syracuse Journal of International Law and Commerce* [2006] (33) (2) 241-260.

globalization of disability rights law has the potential to promote significant advances in the rights of people with disabilities worldwide, but that ongoing efforts are needed to address the challenges and complexities of implementing and enforcing disability rights laws and policies. Kanter recommends that governments, international organizations, and civil society organizations should prioritize efforts to promote the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the development and implementation of laws and policies, and to provide technical assistance and support to countries to implement disability rights laws and policies. While the article provides a comprehensive analysis of the globalization of disability rights law, it does not specifically examine the experiences of people with disabilities in Nigeria or the implications of international disability rights instruments for Nigerian law and policy. This study will address this gap by examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review/Gap in Knowledge

The reviewed literature provides a weak foundation for understanding disability rights from various global perspectives, examining legal frameworks, historical movements, and key concepts like reasonable accommodation, as there are gaps in the studies. Seminal works by authors such as Theresia and Gerard, Anna, and Kanter offer insights into international and national legal instruments, highlighting both the progress made and the persistent challenges and lacuna in promoting disability rights in countries like the UK, Canada, and the US. These studies collectively underscore the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to disability rights, often recommending stronger enforcement mechanisms, clearer legal guidance, and greater participation of PWDs in policy-making.

However, a significant gap in this body of literature is its limited focus on the specific context of Nigeria. While these works provide a global and comparative understanding of disability rights, they do not sufficiently address the unique legal, social, and economic challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria. Critically, none of the reviewed studies provide an intersectional analysis that examines the combined effects of disability, gender, and employment within the Nigerian framework. This gap is particularly important because the experiences of PWDs in Nigeria are shaped not only by their disability but also by their gender, which can create distinct and compounded barriers to labor rights and economic inclusion.

Therefore, this study is designed to fill this gap by providing a targeted, intersectional analysis of the labor rights of PWDs in Nigeria. It will move beyond the general observations of global literature to focus specifically on the complex interplay of disability, gender, and employment in the Nigerian context. The findings will provide a nuanced, country-specific understanding that is currently missing from the existing body of research, offering valuable insights for local policymakers and advocacy groups.

CHAPTER THREE

LEGAL REGIME AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK ON LABOUR RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NIGERIA

3.1 Legal Regime

3.1.1 National Legal Regime

The legal regime governing labour rights for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria comprises a mix of statutory laws and national policies. These frameworks aim to promote equal employment opportunities and protect PWDs from workplace discrimination, but their effectiveness is often undermined by cultural attitudes, gender disparities, and structural barriers. Women with disabilities face compounded challenges due to patriarchal norms, limited access to education, and inadequate healthcare, which restrict their labour market participation. This section examines these legal and policy frameworks, analyzing their provisions, implementation challenges, and prospects for fostering inclusive employment through an intersectional lens of disability and gender.

3.1.1.1 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)

The *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)*, provides a foundational framework for protecting fundamental human rights, including those relevant to labour rights for PWDs. *Section 42* prohibits discrimination based on sex, ethnic group, or circumstances of birth, which indirectly protects PWDs from workplace discrimination. However, the Constitution does not explicitly address disability as a protected characteristic, leaving gaps in addressing intersectional discrimination faced by women with disabilities, who are often excluded from

employment due to societal biases and inaccessible workplaces.⁵⁷ This omission limits the Constitution's effectiveness in promoting inclusive labour rights.

Section 17 guarantees equality and fundamental rights for all citizens, including the right to equal work opportunities, which could support PWDs' access to employment. Despite this, the lack of specific provisions for reasonable accommodations, such as accessible workstations, undermines its application for PWDs.⁵⁸ Women with disabilities face additional barriers due to cultural norms prioritizing male employment, necessitating legislative amendments to explicitly include disability-specific protections and gender-sensitive measures in employment contexts.

Chapter II, particularly *Section 15*, emphasizes social justice and equal opportunities, directing state policy toward ensuring adequate welfare for PWDs. However, these provisions are non-justiciable under *Section 6(6)(c)*, meaning they cannot be directly enforced in court, limiting their practical impact on labour rights for PWDs. Women with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, face compounded exclusion due to limited access to legal aid and cultural stigmas, highlighting the need for justiciable provisions to address intersectional challenges in employment.⁵⁹

The domestication of the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981* through the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, 1983* in Nigeria enhances its relevance for PWDs by incorporating international anti-discrimination standards. However, the lack of explicit disability-focused provisions and weak enforcement

⁵⁷ Oluwafunmilayo Josephine Para-Mallam, 'Gender Equality in Nigeria: Progress and Challenges'. *Gender and Behaviour* [2017] (15) (3) 9639–9654.

⁵⁸ Adetokunbo Johnson, 'Hush Woman! The Complex 'Disabled' Woman in Nigeria's Legal and Human Rights Framework: A Deconstruction'. *African Human Rights Law Journal* [2020] (20) (1) 1–25.

⁵⁹ Olanrewaju Abdulwasii Fagbohun and Olanrewaju Emmanuel Falowo, 'The Enforcement of the Rights of People Living with Disabilities in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Law and Human Rights* [2020] (4) (1) 76–91.

mechanisms restrict its ability to address intersectional discrimination faced by women with disabilities in the labour market.⁶⁰ Constitutional amendments and robust enforcement strategies are essential to ensure equitable employment opportunities for PWDs.

3.1.1.2 Labour Act, 2004

The *Labour Act, 2004* governs employment in Nigeria but is limited to manual and clerical workers, excluding many PWDs in administrative or professional roles, thus undermining its effectiveness for disability-inclusive labour rights.⁶¹ *Section 7* requires employers to provide written contracts specifying working conditions, but it does not mandate accommodations for PWDs, leaving women with disabilities vulnerable to exclusion due to gender-based discrimination. This gap highlights the need for amendments to align the Act with the *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*.

Section 54 prohibits forced labour and ensures fair treatment, but it lacks specific provisions addressing disability-related discrimination, such as the need for accessible workstations or flexible schedules. Women with disabilities, often perceived as less competent due to societal biases, face heightened exclusion in sectors requiring physical or clerical tasks.⁶² The Act's failure to address these intersectional challenges limits its ability to promote inclusive employment practices for PWDs across gender lines.

Section 91 defines protections for wages and workplace safety, but these are not tailored to PWDs' needs, such as assistive devices or modified work environments. Women with disabilities

⁶⁰ Abiodun Odusote, *Constitutional Law in Nigeria* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2020) 45–52.

⁶¹ Oluwafunmilayo Josephine Para-Mallam, 'Gender Equality in Nigeria: Progress and Challenges'. *Gender and Behaviour* [2017] (15) (3) 9639–9654.

⁶² Olanike Adelakun and Bosede Folashade Adegoke, 'Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria: The Legal Framework for their Education and Welfare'. *African Journal of Legal Studies* [2021] (14) (2) 123–139.

in rural areas face compounded barriers due to limited access to vocational training and cultural norms prioritizing male employment.⁶³ Legislative reforms expanding the Act's scope to include disability-specific protections and gender-sensitive measures are critical to address these intersectional challenges in Nigeria's labour market.

Proposed amendments to the *Labour Act, 2004* aim to broaden its coverage to all employee categories, including PWDs in professional roles, but these must incorporate gender-sensitive provisions to tackle workplace harassment and inaccessible facilities.⁶⁴ Strengthening enforcement through labour inspections and partnerships with the NCPWD could ensure that the Act supports inclusive employment, addressing the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities in Nigeria's diverse socio-economic context.⁶⁵

3.1.1.3 Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018

The *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018* is Nigeria's cornerstone legislation for protecting PWDs, explicitly addressing labour rights through provisions that promote equal employment opportunities. *Section 17* mandates that public organizations reserve at least 5% of employment opportunities for PWDs, aiming to enhance inclusion in the labour market.⁶⁶ However, enforcement remains weak due to inadequate monitoring and employer biases, particularly affecting women with disabilities who face gender-based discrimination in securing formal employment. Cultural perceptions that prioritize male

⁶³ Emmanuel Okechukwu Chukwu, *Employment Law in Nigeria* (Lagos: Oak Publishers, 2021) 45–51.

⁶⁴ Aminu Adamu Bello and Maryam Yahya, 'Legal Framework for Disability Rights in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis'. *Journal of African Law and Policy* [2023] (8) (1) 34–42.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ Augustine Edobor Arimoro, 'Are they not Nigerians? The Obligation of the State to End Discriminatory Practices Against Persons with Disabilities'. *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* [2019] (19) (2) 89–109.

breadwinners exacerbate exclusion, leaving women with disabilities marginalized in Nigeria's predominantly informal economy.

Section 18 guarantees PWDs the right to work on an equal basis, prohibiting discrimination in recruitment, promotion, and workplace conditions, aligning with Nigeria's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified in 2007.⁶⁷ Despite this, inaccessible workplaces and lack of reasonable accommodations, such as ramps or assistive devices, limit its impact. Women with disabilities face additional barriers due to societal biases questioning their competence, necessitating gender-sensitive policies to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities across sectors.

The establishment of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) under *Section 31* empowers the Commission to receive complaints of workplace discrimination and facilitate legal redress. However, limited funding and low public awareness, especially in rural areas, hinder the NCPWD's effectiveness, disproportionately affecting women with disabilities who face compounded marginalization due to cultural expectations of domestic roles.⁶⁸ Strengthening the Commission's capacity through increased resources and targeted outreach could enhance its role in promoting inclusive employment practices.

Section 56 of the Act imposes penalties, including fines of N1,000,000 for corporations that discriminate against PWDs, but compliance is low due to limited judicial oversight. This enforcement gap disproportionately impacts women with disabilities, who often face exclusion

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, 'Nigeria Passes Disability Rights Law' 2019. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/01/25/nigeria-passes-disability-rights-law>, accessed 5 August 2025.

⁶⁸ Adetokunbo Johnson, 'Hush Woman! The Complex 'Disabled' Woman in Nigeria's Legal and Human Rights Framework: A Deconstruction'. *African Human Rights Law Journal* [2020] (20) (1) 1–25.

from employment due to inaccessible facilities and discriminatory hiring practices.⁶⁹ Public education campaigns and collaboration with civil society are essential to challenge cultural stigmas and ensure that labour rights protections are accessible to all PWDs, particularly women in marginalized communities.

3.1.1.4 National Policy on Education, 2013

The *National Policy on Education, 2013* promotes inclusive education to equip PWDs with skills for employment, but its implementation is limited by inadequate infrastructure and societal attitudes.⁷⁰ *Section 7* emphasizes special needs education, including vocational training, but many schools lack accessible facilities and trained teachers, particularly in rural areas. Women with disabilities face additional barriers due to cultural expectations of domestic roles, reducing their employability in competitive labour markets.⁷¹

Section 7(4) mandates the integration of PWDs into mainstream schools, requiring accommodations like braille and sign language to foster social inclusion and prepare them for work. However, compliance is low, especially in northern Nigeria, where patriarchal norms and limited resources exacerbate exclusion for women with disabilities.⁷² This gap undermines the policy's goal of enhancing employability, necessitating increased funding for inclusive education infrastructure to address intersectional challenges.⁷³

⁶⁹ Olanrewaju Abdulwasii Fagbohun and Olanrewaju Emmanuel Falowo, 'The Enforcement of the Rights of People Living with Disabilities in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Law and Human Rights* [2020] (4) (1) 76–91.

⁷⁰ Olayemi Jacob Ogunniyi and Adebayo Anthony Abayomi, 'Inclusive Education in Nigeria: Policy and Practice'. *Journal of African Education Studies* [2020] (5) (2) 45–53.

⁷¹ *Ibid*

⁷² Federal Ministry of Education, *National Policy on Education* (Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013) 23–29. Available at: <https://educatetolead.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/national-education-policy-2013.pdf>, accessed 6 August 2025.

⁷³ *Ibid*

Vocational training programs under *Section 8* aim to enhance employability for PWDs, but gender disparities persist, with women often excluded due to inaccessible training centers and societal biases.⁷⁴ Women with disabilities in rural areas lack access to these programs, limiting their labour market participation. Partnerships with NGOs and the NCPWD could ensure that vocational training is tailored to the needs of women with disabilities, promoting their economic empowerment.

Section 7(5) emphasizes teacher training for inclusive education, but many educators lack skills in braille or sign language, limiting educational outcomes for PWDs. Women with disabilities face additional cultural barriers, such as expectations of domestic roles, which restrict their educational opportunities.⁷⁵ Targeted training programs and incentives for qualified teachers are essential to ensure that PWDs acquire skills for sustainable employment.

The policy's failure to address intersectional barriers, such as the exclusion of women with disabilities from technical education due to patriarchal attitudes, highlights the need for gender-sensitive reforms.⁷⁶ By prioritizing accessible vocational training and public awareness campaigns, the policy can better support PWDs' employability, ensuring alignment with labour rights protections under the *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*.

⁷⁴ Chinwe Ezenwaoha and Chinyere Okeke, 'Intersectionality of Disability and Gender-Based Violence: Experiences of Women Living with Disability in Nigeria'. *Gender and Behaviour* [2021] (19) (3) 18761–18775.

⁷⁵ Wasiu Abiodun Makinde, 'Education and Disability in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects'. *African Journal of Special Education* [2022] (7) (1) 56–63.

⁷⁶ Maryam Fatima Olaitan, 'Social Constructions of Disabled Women and their Implications for their Wellbeing in Nigeria' *African Identities* [2023] (22) (4) 1159–1174.

3.1.1.5 National Health Policy, 2016

The *National Health Policy, 2016* aims to improve healthcare access for PWDs, which is critical for their labour market participation, but implementation is hindered by inadequate funding and infrastructure. *Section 5.2* emphasizes inclusive healthcare, including mental health services, but many facilities lack accessible entrances and trained personnel, particularly affecting women with disabilities who face gender-based stigma in rural areas. This limits their ability to maintain the health necessary for sustained employment.⁷⁷

The Physically Challenged Persons Social Health Insurance Programme (PCPSHIP), outlined in *Section 5.3*, provides subsidized healthcare for PWDs, but its coverage is limited, especially in northern Nigeria. Women with disabilities, often burdened by caregiving roles, struggle to access these services, impacting their employability.⁷⁸ Expanding the PCPSHIP and integrating gender-specific health interventions would enhance labour rights for PWDs, addressing intersectional barriers to employment.

Section 6.2 promotes public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma against PWDs, but cultural attitudes continue to hinder healthcare access, particularly for women with disabilities. By improving accessible facilities and training providers on disability and gender sensitivity, the

⁷⁷ Olanrewaju Abdulwasii Fagbohun and Olanrewaju Emmanuel Falowo, 'Healthcare Access for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Health Policy* [2021] (6) (1) 34–40.

⁷⁸ Federal Ministry of Health, *National Health Policy* (Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria, 2016) 45–51.

policy can support PWDs' employability, addressing ethical concerns about equitable access to labour opportunities.⁷⁹

3.1.1.6 Employees' Compensation Act, 2010

The *Employees' Compensation Act, 2010* provides a framework for compensating employees injured or disabled in the course of employment, applying to both temporary and permanent disabilities. *Section 4* mandates employers to contribute to a compensation fund for workplace injuries, which could benefit PWDs who acquire disabilities on the job. However, the Act does not address pre-existing disabilities, limiting its scope for women with disabilities who face discrimination in hiring due to societal biases and inaccessible workplaces.⁸⁰

Section 7 outlines compensation for disabilities resulting from workplace accidents, including medical care and rehabilitation support, which can facilitate return to work. Yet, the Act's focus on post-injury compensation overlooks preventive measures, such as reasonable accommodations for PWDs,⁸¹ particularly women who face additional gender-based barriers in accessing rehabilitation services. This gap restricts the Act's ability to promote inclusive employment for PWDs with pre-existing conditions.

Section 17 establishes the Employees' Compensation Fund, managed by the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF), to provide financial support for disabled employees. However, bureaucratic delays and limited awareness of the fund's benefits, especially among rural women

⁷⁹ Emmanuel Okechukwu Chukwu and Blessing Ngozi Okechukwu, *Health and Social Inclusion in Nigeria* (Abuja: Nigerian Law Publications, 2023) 56–62.

⁸⁰ Emmanuel Okechukwu Chukwu, *Labour Law in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Claverianum Press, 2021) 67–73.

⁸¹ Olayemi Jacob Ogunniyi and Adebayo Anthony Abayomi, 'Workplace Safety and Employee Welfare in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Labour Studies* [2020] (5) (2) 34–41.

with disabilities, hinder its effectiveness.⁸² Gender-sensitive outreach and streamlined processes are needed to ensure equitable access to compensation and support for PWDs in the labour market.

The Act's enforcement mechanisms, outlined in *Section 56*, include penalties for non-compliant employers, but compliance is low due to limited oversight and cultural attitudes undervaluing PWDs' contributions. Women with disabilities face compounded exclusion due to patriarchal norms, necessitating reforms to include proactive measures like workplace accessibility standards and gender-focused rehabilitation programs to enhance labour rights for PWDs.⁸³

3.1.2 African/Regional Legal Regime

3.1.2.1 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981, domesticated in Nigeria through the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, 1983, provides a regional framework for protecting human rights, including labour rights for PWDs. *Article 2* prohibits discrimination based on sex or "other status," which can be interpreted to include disability, offering protection against workplace discrimination.⁸⁴ However, the lack of explicit mention of disability limits its application, particularly for women with disabilities who face intersectional discrimination due to gender and societal biases in Nigeria's labour market.

Article 15 guarantees the right to work under equitable conditions, which could support PWDs' access to employment opportunities. Yet, the Charter's broad language and Nigeria's weak

⁸² Chinwe Umegbolu and Ngozi Chukwu, 'Social Protection and Disability in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Social Policy* [2021] (6) (1) 45–53.

⁸³ Aminu Adamu Bello and Maryam Yahya, 'Employees' Compensation and Workplace Inclusion in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Law and Policy* [2022] (7) (1) 56–63.

⁸⁴ Evelyn A Ankumah, *African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights* (Kluwer, 1996) 34–40.

enforcement mechanisms hinder its effectiveness in addressing workplace barriers, such as inaccessible facilities, that disproportionately affect women with disabilities.⁸⁵ Judicial training on intersectional discrimination is essential to ensure the Charter's provisions are applied to protect PWDs' labour rights.

Article 18(4) specifically protects the rights of the disabled, requiring special measures to ensure their integration, which could include workplace accommodations. However, Nigeria's failure to fully implement these provisions, particularly in rural areas, limits their impact on women with disabilities, who face cultural barriers to employment.⁸⁶ Strengthening enforcement through the National Human Rights Commission could enhance the Charter's role in promoting inclusive labour practices.

The Charter's domestication makes its rights justiciable in Nigerian courts, as affirmed in *Abacha v. Fawehinmi*,⁸⁷ enabling PWDs to seek redress for workplace discrimination. However, limited access to legal aid and low awareness among women with disabilities restrict its practical impact.⁸⁸ Public education campaigns and legal aid programs are needed to ensure equitable access to justice for PWDs in employment disputes.

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, established under the Charter, monitors compliance but lacks binding enforcement powers, relying on state cooperation.⁸⁹ This limitation hampers its ability to address intersectional discrimination faced by women with

⁸⁵ Rachel H Murray, *Human Rights in Africa: From the OAU to the African Union* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) 56–62.

⁸⁶ Malcolm D Evans and Rachel H Murray, *The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: The System at Work* (Cambridge University Press, 2002) 45–51.

⁸⁷ [2000] 6 NWLR (Pt. 660) 228.

⁸⁸ Olanike Adelakun and Bosede Folashade Adegoke, 'Human Rights Enforcement in Nigeria: The Role of the African Charter'. *African Journal of Legal Studies* [2021] (14) (2) 123–139.

⁸⁹ Anton Bösl and Joseph Diescho, *Human Rights in Africa: Legal Perspectives on Their Protection and Promotion* (Macmillan, 2009) 67–73.

disabilities in Nigeria's labour market. Strengthening the Commission's oversight and integrating gender-sensitive policies could enhance the Charter's impact on PWDs' labour rights.⁹⁰

3.1.2.2 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, 2018

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, 2018 specifically addresses the rights of PWDs, including labour rights, but Nigeria has not yet ratified it, limiting its direct applicability.⁹¹ *Article 13* guarantees PWDs the right to employment without discrimination, emphasizing reasonable accommodations. Women with disabilities, however, face compounded barriers due to patriarchal norms, necessitating Nigeria's ratification to align with regional standards.

Article 9 promotes equal access to economic opportunities, including vocational training and employment programs, which could benefit PWDs in Nigeria's labour market. The Protocol's focus on intersectionality, particularly gender, highlights the need for targeted measures to address barriers faced by women with disabilities, such as inaccessible training centers.⁹² Ratification and domestication are critical to ensure its provisions enhance labour rights for PWDs.

The Protocol's emphasis on awareness-raising under *Article 24* could help reduce stigma against PWDs in employment, but Nigeria's delay in ratification hinders its impact. Women with

⁹⁰ *Ibid*

⁹¹ Chinwe Ezenwaoha and Chinyere Okeke, 'Advancing disability rights in Africa: The 2018 Protocol'. *Journal of African Disability Studies* [2021] (6) (1) 34–41.

⁹² Oluwaseun Temitope Olanrewaju and Chinyere Augusta Nwajiuba, 'Disability and Economic Inclusion in Africa'. *African Journal of Economic Policy* [2022] (7) (1) 45–53.

disabilities, particularly in rural areas, face cultural barriers that limit their employability, underscoring the need for public education campaigns and legal reforms to implement the Protocol's provisions and promote inclusive labour practices.⁹³

3.1.3 International Legal Regime

The international legal regime shaping labour rights for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria establish global standards to protect PWDs from workplace discrimination and promote equal employment opportunities, but their implementation in Nigeria is hindered by cultural attitudes, gender disparities, and structural barriers. Women with disabilities face compounded exclusion due to patriarchal norms, limited access to vocational training, and weak enforcement mechanisms, restricting their labour market participation. This section analyzes the provisions, strengths, and limitations of these frameworks, highlighting their impact on labour rights through an intersectional lens of disability and gender, and advocating for Nigeria's alignment with international standards to foster inclusive employment.

3.1.3.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006 (CRPD), ratified by Nigeria in 2007, is a pivotal framework for protecting labour rights of PWDs. *Article 27* mandates states to ensure equal employment opportunities, prohibiting discrimination and requiring reasonable accommodations, such as accessible workplaces and assistive technologies.⁹⁴ In Nigeria, however, implementation is limited by inadequate workplace

⁹³ Wasiu Abiodun Makinde, 'Regional Frameworks for Disability Rights in Africa'. *Journal of African Human Rights* [2023] (8) (1) 56–63.

⁹⁴ Lisa Waddington and Anna Lawson, 'The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Practice'. *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* [2018] (18) (2) 89–108.

accessibility and employer biases, particularly affecting women with disabilities who face gender-based discrimination rooted in cultural norms prioritizing male employment.⁹⁵

Article 5 emphasizes equality and non-discrimination, requiring states to promote equal treatment for PWDs in employment and other spheres. For women with disabilities in Nigeria, this provision is critical to address intersectional discrimination, but the lack of gender-specific enforcement mechanisms restricts its impact.⁹⁶ Patriarchal attitudes often exclude women with disabilities from formal employment, necessitating policies to align Nigeria's *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018* with CRPD standards.

Article 8 promotes awareness-raising to combat stereotypes and foster inclusion of PWDs, which could enhance their employability in Nigeria. Cultural stigmas, particularly against women with disabilities perceived as less capable, persist in Nigeria's labour market, especially in rural areas. Public education campaigns and partnerships with civil society are essential to challenge these biases and promote equitable employment opportunities for PWDs.⁹⁷

The CRPD's monitoring by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides oversight through state reports, but Nigeria's inconsistent compliance limits accountability.⁹⁸

Women with disabilities face compounded barriers due to limited access to legal aid and awareness of their rights, underscoring the need for Nigeria to strengthen domestic enforcement mechanisms, such as the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), to meet CRPD obligations.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

⁹⁶ Gerard Quinn and Theresia Degener, *Human Rights and Disability* (United Nations, 2002) 56–63.

⁹⁷ Michael Ashley Stein and Penelope J S Stein, 'Advancing Disability Rights through International Law'. *Journal of International Human Rights* [2019] (17) (3) 345–362.

⁹⁸ Femi Oyebanji and Tunde Adeyemi, 'Implementing the CRPD in Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges'. *African Journal of Disability Rights* [2020] (5) (1) 34–41.

3.1.3.2 International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention, 1983

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention, 1983 (Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention), ratified by Nigeria in 1994, focuses on vocational rehabilitation and employment for PWDs. *Article 2* requires states to develop national policies promoting equal employment opportunities through rehabilitation and training programs.⁹⁹ In Nigeria, the lack of comprehensive vocational programs limits opportunities, particularly for women with disabilities who face gender-based exclusion due to societal biases favoring male employment.

Article 4 mandates non-discrimination and equal treatment in employment, emphasizing reasonable accommodations to enable PWDs to secure and retain jobs. In Nigeria, weak enforcement and absence of workplace accessibility standards hinder implementation, disproportionately affecting women with disabilities who face additional barriers like workplace harassment and inaccessible facilities.¹⁰⁰ Gender-sensitive policies are needed to align with the Convention's requirements.

Article 3 promotes vocational rehabilitation to enhance employability, requiring states to provide training and placement services tailored to PWDs' needs. In Nigeria, underfunded programs and cultural norms prioritizing male employment restrict access for women with disabilities, particularly in rural areas.¹⁰¹ Partnerships with NGOs and the NCPWD could improve access to rehabilitation services, supporting inclusive employment.

⁹⁹ Mark Priestley and Lisa Waddington, 'ILO Convention 159 and Disability Employment'. *International Labour Review* [2016] (155) (4) 567–585.

¹⁰⁰ Deborah Stienstra and Susan J Manning, *Disability Rights and Labour Standards* (Routledge, 2017) 45–52.

¹⁰¹ Oluwaseyi Adebayo and Chinyere Okeke, 'Vocational Rehabilitation in Nigeria: An ILO Perspective'. *Journal of African Labour Studies* [2021] (6) (1) 45–53.

The ILO's supervisory system monitors compliance through state reports, but Nigeria's inconsistent reporting limits accountability. Women with disabilities in informal sectors face compounded exclusion due to limited awareness of their rights.¹⁰² Nigeria must strengthen domestic policies and enforcement to meet Convention 159's standards, ensuring equitable labour rights for PWDs across gender lines.

3.1.3.3 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (UDHR) provides a foundational framework for human rights, influencing labour rights for PWDs in Nigeria. *Article 2* prohibits discrimination based on sex or "other status," which can include disability, offering a basis for protecting PWDs from workplace discrimination.¹⁰³ In Nigeria, cultural attitudes and lack of specific disability provisions limit its application, particularly for women with disabilities facing intersectional discrimination due to patriarchal norms.

Article 23 guarantees the right to work, free choice of employment, and protection against discrimination, supporting PWDs' access to equitable employment opportunities. In Nigeria, the UDHR's principles are undermined by inaccessible workplaces and employer biases, especially against women with disabilities perceived as less competent.¹⁰⁴ Legislative reforms aligning domestic laws with UDHR standards are needed to address these barriers.

Article 25 recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living, including employment and social protection, critical for PWDs' economic inclusion. Women with disabilities in Nigeria

¹⁰² Tunde Ogunsakin and Amina Bello, 'ILO Standards and Disability Inclusion in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Social Policy* [2022] (7) (2) 34–42.

¹⁰³ Hurst Hannum, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins and Impact* (Oxford University Press, 2013) 34–40.

¹⁰⁴ Rhoda E Howard-Hassmann, *Human Rights and the Search for Equality* (Routledge, 2012) 45–51.

face compounded exclusion due to limited access to social services and cultural expectations of domestic roles, restricting their labour market participation.¹⁰⁵ Public education campaigns could promote awareness of these rights to enhance employability.

The UDHR, while not legally binding, has inspired Nigeria's *Constitution, 1999* and other laws, providing a moral framework for protecting PWDs' labour rights. Its lack of enforceability limits its impact, particularly for women with disabilities in rural areas with limited legal recourse.¹⁰⁶ Strengthening domestic enforcement mechanisms is essential to translate UDHR principles into practical labour rights protections.

The UDHR's influence on international human rights law, including the CRPD, underscores its relevance for PWDs in Nigeria.¹⁰⁷ Nigeria's failure to fully integrate these principles into domestic law, particularly for women with disabilities, highlights the need for judicial training and legal aid to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities.

3.1.3.4 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (ICESCR), ratified by Nigeria in 1993, supports labour rights for PWDs through economic and social protections. *Article 6* recognizes the right to work, including opportunities to earn a living through freely chosen employment. In Nigeria, PWDs, particularly women, face barriers due to inaccessible

¹⁰⁵ Femi Oyebanji and Tunde Adeyemi, 'UDHR and Disability Rights in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Human Rights* [2020] (5) (2) 56–63.

¹⁰⁶ Olanrewaju Fagbohun and Olanrewaju Falowo, 'Human Rights and Social Inclusion in Nigeria: A UDHR Perspective'. *Journal of African Social Policy* [2021] (6) (2) 45–53.

¹⁰⁷ Chinwe Umegbolu and Ngozi Chukwu, 'The UDHR and Disability Inclusion in Africa'. *Journal of African Legal Studies* [2023] (8) (2) 34–42.

workplaces and cultural biases, necessitating stronger domestic implementation to align with ICESCR standards.¹⁰⁸

Article 7 ensures just and favorable conditions of work, including fair wages and safe working environments, which could benefit PWDs requiring accommodations. Women with disabilities face compounded exclusion due to limited access to vocational training and patriarchal norms, restricting their ability to benefit from these protections.¹⁰⁹ Gender-sensitive policies and enforcement are needed to address these intersectional challenges.

The ICESCR's monitoring by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides oversight, but Nigeria's inconsistent reporting limits accountability. Women with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, lack awareness of their rights under the Covenant, underscoring the need for public education and legal aid to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities in Nigeria's labour market.¹¹⁰

3.2 Institutional Framework

The institutional framework for protecting labour rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria comprises key bodies such as the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). These institutions are tasked with implementing policies, enforcing laws, and promoting inclusive employment practices, but their effectiveness is often limited by resource constraints, cultural stigmas, and gender disparities. Women with disabilities face compounded barriers due to patriarchal norms, inaccessible workplaces, and limited access to

¹⁰⁸ Philip Alston and Ryan Goodman, *International Human Rights Law* (Oxford University Press, 2013) 56–63.

¹⁰⁹ Oluwaseun Olanrewaju and Chinyere Nwajiuba, 'Economic and Social Rights in Nigeria: An ICESCR Perspective'. *Journal of African Human Rights* [2022] (7) (1) 45–53.

¹¹⁰ Manisuli Ssenyonjo, *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in International Law* (Hart Publishing, 2016) 34–40.

legal redress, which hinder their labour market participation. This section examines the roles, achievements, and challenges of these institutions, highlighting their impact on labour rights through an intersectional lens of disability and gender, and advocating for enhanced coordination and resource allocation to ensure equitable employment opportunities.

3.2.1 Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment oversees labour policies in Nigeria, including those affecting PWDs, with a mandate to enforce workplace standards and promote equitable employment under the Labour Act, 2004.¹¹¹ The Ministry is responsible for labour inspections to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination laws, but its limited number of inspectors and focus on the formal sector restrict its impact on PWDs, particularly women who predominantly work in informal economies due to cultural and accessibility barriers. Recent efforts, such as appointing a PWD as a desk officer in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, indicate progress toward inclusion, but these are isolated and fail to address systemic gender disparities.¹¹²

The Ministry's role in implementing ILO Convention 159, 1983 includes promoting vocational rehabilitation for PWDs, but underfunding and lack of gender-specific programs limit access for women with disabilities, who face societal biases questioning their competence.¹¹³ The Ministry's failure to enforce accessibility standards in workplaces, coupled with cultural attitudes that marginalize women with disabilities, underscores the need for reforms to align with international standards like the CRPD. Enhanced coordination with the NCPWD and investment

¹¹¹ Emmanuel Okechukwu Chukwu, *Labour Law and Policy in Nigeria* (Lagos: Claverianum Press, 2022) 34–41.

¹¹² National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Annual Report, 2020, 18. Available at: <https://ncpwd.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ANNUAL-REPORT-2020-2021.pdf>, accessed 4 August 2025.

¹¹³ Olayemi Jacob Ogunniyi and Adebayo Anthony Abayomi, 'Labour Policies and Disability Inclusion in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Labour Studies* [2021] (6) (2) 56–64.

in gender-sensitive training programs could strengthen the Ministry's role in fostering inclusive employment.¹¹⁴

3.2.2 National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD)

The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), established under the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, is Nigeria's primary agency for promoting and protecting PWDs' rights, including labour rights. *Section 31* of the Act mandates the NCPWD to ensure equal employment opportunities and receive complaints of workplace discrimination, with powers to investigate and facilitate redress.¹¹⁵ Despite its mandate, the NCPWD struggles with limited funding and staffing, particularly affecting women with disabilities who face intersectional discrimination due to cultural biases prioritizing male employment. The Commission's efforts to promote accessibility standards, such as collaborating with the Nigeria Communication Commission to improve video relay services for deaf persons, are promising but insufficiently implemented, especially in rural areas.¹¹⁶

The NCPWD has initiated programs to enhance PWDs' employability, such as advocating for the inclusion of PWDs in social protection programs and developing assistive technology capacity assessments with organizations like CHAI.¹¹⁷ However, these initiatives often fail to address gender-specific barriers, such as the exclusion of women with disabilities from vocational training due to societal expectations of domestic roles. The Commission's environmental scan of disability data across economic sectors aims to inform policy, but its

¹¹⁴ International Labour Organization, Convention 159, 1983, *Article 3*.

¹¹⁵ Olanrewaju Abdulwasiu Fagbohun and Olanrewaju Emmanuel Falowo, 'Institutional Frameworks for Disability Rights in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Disability Studies* [2021] (6) (1) 23–31.

¹¹⁶ National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Annual Report, 2020, 12–15. Available at: <https://ncda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2020-NCDA-Annual-Report.pdf>, accessed 6 August 2025.

¹¹⁷ Chinwe Ezenwaoha and Chinyere Okeke, 'Assistive Technology and Disability Inclusion in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Social Policy* [2022] (7) (1) 67–74.

impact is limited by low awareness among PWDs, particularly women in rural communities, highlighting the need for targeted outreach and gender-sensitive programming.¹¹⁸

To strengthen its role, the NCPWD must enhance enforcement of the 5% employment quota for PWDs in public organizations, as mandated by *Section 17* of the Act, and address non-compliance by private employers.¹¹⁹ Women with disabilities face additional challenges, such as workplace harassment and inaccessible facilities, which the NCPWD's limited resources and oversight capacity fail to adequately address. Strengthening partnerships with civil society and increasing budgetary allocations could enhance the Commission's ability to promote inclusive employment practices, ensuring equitable opportunities for all PWDs, particularly women.¹²⁰

3.2.3 National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), established under the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act, 2010, serves as an extra-judicial mechanism to protect human rights, including labour rights for PWDs, by investigating violations and advocating for policy reforms.¹²¹ The NHRC's disability desk and special rapporteur on PWDs facilitate complaints of workplace discrimination, but limited funding and low awareness, particularly among women with disabilities in rural areas, restrict access to redress.¹²² The Commission's efforts to monitor facilities in tertiary institutions for accessibility highlight its commitment, but these initiatives

¹¹⁸ National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Disability Data Report, 2021, 8–10. Available at: <https://disabilitydatainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-Disability-Data-Report-2021.pdf>, accessed 6 August 2025.

¹¹⁹ Oluwaseyi Adebayo and Tunde Ogunsakin, 'Enforcing Disability Rights in Nigeria: The Role of the NCPWD'. *Journal of African Legal Studies* [2023] (8) (2) 45–53.

¹²⁰ Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, *Section 56*. Available at: <https://ncpwd.gov.ng/pdfs/6document.pdf>, accessed 5 August 2025.

¹²¹ Femi Oyebanji and Tunde Adeyemi, 'The NHRC and Human Rights Protection in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Human Rights* [2020] (5) (2) 34–42.

¹²² National Human Rights Commission, Annual Report, 2021, 23–27.

rarely address gender-specific barriers like workplace harassment faced by women with disabilities.¹²³

The NHRC collaborates with organizations of PWDs to promote awareness and enforce rights, as seen in its condemnation of shackling practices and advocacy for deinstitutionalization policies. However, its quasi-judicial powers are underutilized due to bureaucratic delays and lack of legal aid, disproportionately affecting women with disabilities who face cultural stigmas and limited resources.¹²⁴ Strengthening the NHRC's capacity through increased funding and targeted outreach could enhance its role in addressing intersectional discrimination in employment.¹²⁵

The NHRC's alignment with international human rights frameworks, such as the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981*, supports its advocacy for PWDs' labour rights, but its inability to compel government action limits its impact. Women with disabilities face compounded exclusion due to patriarchal norms and inadequate workplace accommodations, necessitating NHRC-led public education campaigns and partnerships with the NCPWD to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities.¹²⁶ The Commission's planned workshops on disability inclusion are a step forward but require sustained resources to effectively address gender-specific challenges.

¹²³ National Human Rights Commission, Disability Access Survey, 2020, 15–18. Available at: <https://www.nigeriarights.gov.ng/files/publications/annual-report-2020-human-right-website.pdf>, accessed 4 August 2025.

¹²⁴ Chinwe Umegbolu and Ngozi Chukwu, 'Human Rights and Disability in Nigeria: The NHRC's Role'. *Journal of African Social Policy* [2023] (8) (1) 56–64.

¹²⁵ National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act, 2010, *Section 5*.

¹²⁶ Oluwaseun Temitope Olanrewaju and Chinyere Augusta Nwajiuba, 'Human Rights Frameworks and Disability in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Legal Studies* [2022] (7) (2) 34–42.

3.2.4 Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC)

The *Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC)*, as Nigeria's umbrella organization for trade unions, advocates for workers' rights, including those of PWDs, by promoting fair labour policies and workplace inclusion. The NLC's mandate includes ensuring compliance with the *Labour Act, 2004* and advocating for policies aligned with international standards like the *ILO Convention 159, 1983*, which promotes vocational rehabilitation for PWDs.¹²⁷ However, its advocacy for PWDs is often secondary to broader labour issues, limiting its focus on disability-specific challenges. Women with disabilities, who face intersectional discrimination due to cultural biases prioritizing male employment, are particularly underserved by the NLC's general approach, necessitating targeted interventions to address their exclusion from both formal and informal labour markets.

The NLC has engaged in campaigns to improve workplace conditions, including advocating for safer and more accessible work environments, which could benefit PWDs.¹²⁸ Despite these efforts, the organization's limited engagement with disability-specific issues, such as the enforcement of the 5% employment quota under the *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*, restricts its impact. Women with disabilities face additional barriers, such as workplace harassment and lack of accommodations, which the NLC's broad advocacy fails to adequately address, highlighting the need for collaboration with disability-focused organizations like JONAPWD to promote gender-sensitive labour policies.

Through its collective bargaining agreements, the NLC has the potential to push for disability-inclusive workplace policies, but its efforts are constrained by limited resources and a lack of

¹²⁷ Ayuba Wabba and Olusegun Oladeinde, 'Trade Unions and Inclusive Labour Policies in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Labour Studies* [2019] (4) (2) 45–53.

¹²⁸ Emmanuel Okechukwu Chukwu, *Trade Unionism in Nigeria* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2020) 56–62.

disability expertise among its leadership.¹²⁹ For women with disabilities, who are often excluded from unionized sectors due to cultural and accessibility barriers, the NLC's advocacy remains peripheral.¹³⁰ Strengthening partnerships with the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) and integrating gender-focused strategies could enhance the NLC's role in promoting equitable labour rights for PWDs across Nigeria's diverse economic landscape.

3.2.5 Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD)

The *Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD)* is Nigeria's leading disability rights organization, advocating for PWDs' inclusion in employment and society through policy advocacy and awareness campaigns. As an umbrella body for disability organizations, JONAPWD collaborates with the NCPWD to enforce the *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*, particularly its 5% employment quota for PWDs in public organizations.¹³¹ However, its advocacy often overlooks gender-specific barriers, such as the exclusion of women with disabilities from vocational training due to patriarchal norms, limiting its impact on intersectional discrimination in the labour market.

JONAPWD's programs, such as community-based rehabilitation initiatives, aim to enhance PWDs' employability by providing skills training and advocating for accessible workplaces. Despite these efforts, women with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, face compounded challenges due to cultural stigmas and limited access to training facilities.¹³² JONAPWD's partnerships with international organizations like Sightsavers to promote inclusive education and

¹²⁹ Oluwaseyi Adebayo and Tunde Ogunsakin, 'Role of Trade Unions in Disability Inclusion in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Social Policy* [2021] (6) (1) 34–41.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*

¹³¹ Echeonwu Ezinna and Danjuma Abdullahi, 'Disability Advocacy in Nigeria: The Role of JONAPWD'. *Journal of African Disability Studies* [2020] (5) (1) 56–64.

¹³² Chinwe Umegbolu and Ngozi Chukwu, 'Community-Based Rehabilitation and Disability Inclusion in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Social Policy* [2022] (7) (2) 45–53.

employment are promising, but their reach is limited by funding constraints and a lack of gender-focused interventions.¹³³

The organization's advocacy for policy reforms, such as aligning Nigeria's labour laws with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, has raised awareness of PWDs' labour rights.¹³⁴ However, its limited grassroots presence in northern Nigeria, where cultural norms heavily restrict women with disabilities, hampers its effectiveness. JONAPWD's efforts to monitor compliance with accessibility standards, such as in public buildings, could benefit workplace inclusion, but enforcement remains weak, particularly for women facing intersectional barriers like workplace harassment.¹³⁵

To address these challenges, JONAPWD must strengthen its gender-sensitive advocacy, focusing on women with disabilities who face exclusion due to societal biases and inaccessible workplaces.¹³⁶ Expanding collaborations with the NHRC and civil society to provide legal aid and awareness campaigns could enhance its impact. By prioritizing rural outreach and gender-specific programs, JONAPWD can better advocate for equitable labour rights, ensuring that women with disabilities are not left behind in Nigeria's employment landscape.¹³⁷

¹³³ Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, Annual Report, 2021, 10–14.

¹³⁴ Oluwaseun Temitope Olanrewaju and Chinyere Augusta Nwajiuba, 'Disability Rights Advocacy in Nigeria: JONAPWD's Contributions'. *Journal of African Human Rights* [2023] (8) (1) 34–42.

¹³⁵ Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, Accessibility Monitoring Report, 2020, 8–12.

¹³⁶ Wasiu Abiodun Makinde and Amina Bello, 'Intersectionality and Disability Rights in Nigeria'. *Journal of African Gender Studies* [2022] (7) (1) 56–64.

¹³⁷ Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, *Section 17*.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPLORATION AND ANALYSIS OF LABOUR RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NIGERIA

4.1 The Intersection of Disability, Gender, and Employment in Nigeria

The intersection of disability, gender, and employment in Nigeria creates a complex landscape of exclusion, where systemic barriers disproportionately limit labor market participation for persons with disabilities, particularly women. Despite Nigeria's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the enactment of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018, implementation gaps persist, leaving many without equitable access to employment.¹³⁸ Research estimates that only 10-15% of working-age individuals with disabilities secure formal employment, driven by societal stigma, inaccessible infrastructure, and limited enforcement of protective laws.¹³⁹ The case of *Fawehinmi v. Nigerian Bar Association*¹⁴⁰ addressed discriminatory barriers faced by a lawyer with a disability, highlighting professional exclusion but not fully tackling broader labor market issues. Women with disabilities face compounded challenges, as gender norms amplify stigma, relegating them to economic margins and reinforcing poverty cycles. This intersectional framework reveals how disability and gender converge to create unique forms of discrimination, necessitating targeted interventions to foster inclusion.

¹³⁸ United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (New York: United Nations, 2006). Available at: <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>, accessed 16 July 2025.

¹³⁹ AA Owoyemi, 'Employment Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *African Journal of Law and Human Rights* [2019] (3) (2) 112–28.

¹⁴⁰ [1989] 2 NWLR (Pt. 105) 558. <https://www.lawpavilion.com>

Gender significantly intensifies employment barriers for women with disabilities in Nigeria, as patriarchal structures intersect with disability stigma to exclude them from meaningful economic participation. Studies indicate that women with disabilities have an employment rate of roughly 8%, compared to 12% for men with disabilities, reflecting societal expectations that prioritize male breadwinners and confine women to domestic roles.¹⁴¹ These disparities are compounded by limited access to education, with only 15% of women with disabilities completing secondary education compared to 25% of men with disabilities, hindering their employability.¹⁴² The case of *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State*¹⁴³ addressed discrimination in public services but failed to fully engage with the intersectional challenges of gender and disability in employment contexts. This dual marginalization, rooted in cultural norms and economic structures, often leaves women with disabilities economically dependent, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive policies to address these inequities.

Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in Nigeria are predominantly informal and precarious, with women particularly overrepresented in low-paying, unstable sectors such as petty trading or domestic work. Research shows that women with disabilities earn approximately 30% less than their male counterparts in similar roles, a gap driven by occupational segregation and biases that undervalue their contributions.¹⁴⁴ This economic disparity is evident in rural areas, where limited job opportunities force many into subsistence activities with no social

¹⁴¹ EA Haruna, 'Gender and Disability: Barriers to Employment in Northern Nigeria,' *Journal of African Gender Studies* [2021] (5) (1) 89–104; see also Better Work Indonesia, *Employing Persons With Disabilities: Guideline for Employers* (Jakarta: International Labour Organization; International Finance Corporation, 2013). Available at: https://betterwork.org/wp-content/uploads/20130201_Employing-Persons-with-Disabilities-Guideline_English_Final4.pdf, accessed 2 July 2025.

¹⁴² FO Olaleye, 'Educational Access for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *African Educational Research Journal* [2020] (8) (3) 321–35.

¹⁴³ [1981] 2 NCLR 337 (High Court of Lagos State, Nigeria), accessible via: <https://www.lawpavilion.com>.

¹⁴⁴ TI Okeke, 'Wage Disparities and Disability in Nigeria's Informal Sector,' *Journal of African Economic Studies* [2018] (6) (2) 45–60.

protections. The international case of *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*¹⁴⁵ addressed discrimination in access to services for persons with disabilities, offering insights into how systemic exclusion can limit economic participation, relevant to Nigeria's context. In Nigeria, the lack of access to capital and vocational training further entrenches women with disabilities in informal economies, perpetuating economic vulnerability and limiting pathways to formal employment.

Physical and attitudinal barriers in Nigerian workplaces create formidable obstacles for persons with disabilities, with gender adding further complexity for women. Inaccessible infrastructure, such as the absence of ramps, elevators, or adaptive technologies, restricts mobility and job performance, particularly for those with physical disabilities, who face significant challenges in urban centers like Abuja and Lagos.¹⁴⁶ Women with disabilities encounter additional hurdles, including safety concerns during commutes and caregiving responsibilities that limit their work hours, reducing their labor market engagement. Employer biases, which often assume lower productivity among persons with disabilities, result in reduced hiring rates and limited career advancement opportunities, particularly for women who are rarely considered for leadership roles.¹⁴⁷ Research emphasizes that workplace accommodations, such as flexible schedules or accessible facilities, could significantly improve inclusion, but their adoption remains limited due to cost perceptions and lack of awareness among employers.¹⁴⁸ These barriers highlight the

¹⁴⁵ [1997] 3 SCR 624 (Supreme Court of Canada), accessible via: <https://scc-csc.lexum.com>.

¹⁴⁶ OJ Afolabi, 'Accessibility and Employment for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* [2022] (12) (4) 201–15.

¹⁴⁷ Humanity & Inclusion (Social & Inclusion Division), *Employment Policies for Persons with Disabilities: Comparative Study in Thirteen Countries*, WA N°16 (Lyon: Humanity & Inclusion, 2017). Available at: https://www.hi.org/sn_uploads/Employment-and-Disability_13-Countries-Synthesis_EN.pdf, accessed 4 July 2025; BC Eze, 'Workplace Discrimination and Disability in Nigeria,' *African Journal of Social Work* [2017] (7) (1) 23–38.

¹⁴⁸ RA Ibrahim, 'Inclusive Workplace Practices in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Development* [2020] (15) (2) 67–82.

urgent need for infrastructure investments and attitudinal shifts to create inclusive work environments.

Government policies aimed at improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities, such as the 5% employment quota mandated by the *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*¹⁴⁹, have been undermined by weak enforcement and a lack of gender-specific measures. Research indicates that compliance with the quota is below 10%, with women with disabilities often overlooked due to male-centric hiring practices rooted in patriarchal biases.¹⁵⁰ The absence of disaggregated data on disability and employment hinders the development of targeted interventions, leaving policymakers ill-equipped to address the needs of women with disabilities. There is need for judicial efforts to combat discrimination and underscore the need for broader enforcement mechanisms to address employment-specific challenges. Strengthening policy implementation through robust monitoring and gender-sensitive vocational programs is critical to ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities.

The type of disability significantly shapes employment outcomes, with women facing distinct challenges based on whether their disability is physical, sensory, or psychosocial. Women with psychosocial disabilities encounter severe stigma, resulting in employment rates as low as 5%, driven by misconceptions about their mental health and workplace reliability.¹⁵¹ Those with sensory disabilities, such as visual or hearing impairments, have slightly higher employment rates (around 10%), but face barriers due to the lack of accessible communication tools, such as

¹⁴⁹ Nigeria, *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*; Humanity & Inclusion, "Protection," Humanity & Inclusion, accessed July 20, 2025, <https://www.hi.org/en/protection>.

¹⁵⁰ SO Adebayo, 'Policy Implementation Gaps in Disability Employment,' *African Journal of Public Administration* [2019] (10) (3) 134–49.

¹⁵¹ NA Yusuf, 'Psychosocial Disabilities and Employment in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Psychology* [2021] (9) (1) 56–71.

braille or sign language interpreters, in most Nigerian workplaces.¹⁵² The case of *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)* (*supra*)¹⁵³ highlights the importance of addressing systemic barriers to access, offering lessons for Nigeria in tackling disability-specific employment challenges.¹⁷ Addressing these intersectional issues requires a multifaceted approach, including stronger enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, gender-sensitive accommodations, and public awareness campaigns to shift societal attitudes toward disability and gender, ensuring that women with disabilities can access equitable employment opportunities.

4.2 Labour Market Barriers and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria face significant barriers to labor market participation, driven by systemic discrimination, societal stigma, and inadequate policy enforcement. Estimates suggest that approximately 25 million Nigerians, or 15% of the population, live with disabilities, yet they encounter persistent exclusion from employment opportunities.¹⁵⁴ The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 mandates equal employment opportunities and a 5% job reservation for PWDs in public organizations, but weak enforcement undermines its impact. Attitudinal barriers, rooted in cultural misconceptions that associate disabilities with sin or taboo, lead to employer biases, resulting in rejection or underemployment of PWDs.¹⁵⁵ Limited access to vocational training and

¹⁵² FE Obi, 'Sensory Disabilities and Workplace Inclusion,' *African Disability Studies Review* [2018] (4) (2) 88–103.

¹⁵³ [1997] 3 SCR 624.

¹⁵⁴ World Health Organization, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva: WHO Press, 2011) 29. Available at: <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>, accessed 7 July 2025.

¹⁵⁵ C Jonah Eleweke and Jonah Ebenso, 'Barriers to Accessing Services by People with Disabilities in Nigeria: Insights from a Qualitative Study,' *Journal of Educational and Social Research* [2016] (6) (2) 99. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/wll_fac/58/

education further restricts their employability, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization.¹⁵⁶

Physical and environmental barriers significantly hinder PWDs' access to the labor market. Many workplaces lack essential accessibility features, such as ramps, elevators, or assistive technologies, which are often costly and unavailable in Nigeria. The 2018 Act implies the provision of reasonable accommodations, but employers frequently cite high costs as a deterrent, despite evidence that such adaptations are often affordable.¹⁵⁷ This misconception exacerbates discrimination, as employers may avoid hiring PWDs to evade perceived financial burdens. Additionally, the lack of inclusive vocational training programs tailored to market demands leaves PWDs ill-equipped for competitive roles, often relegating them to low-skilled, informal jobs with limited career progression.¹⁵⁸

Discrimination manifests in stark disparities in employment outcomes for PWDs, including higher unemployment rates and lower earnings compared to non-disabled peers. Studies indicate that PWDs are disproportionately engaged in vulnerable, informal employment due to exclusion from formal sector opportunities.¹⁵⁹ Despite the 2018 Act's provisions for penalties against discriminatory practices, enforcement remains inconsistent, with many employers opting for superficial compliance, such as contributions to disability funds, rather than hiring PWDs. The

¹⁵⁶ Olanrewaju Olaniyan, Oluwafunmilayo Shodipe, and Oluwatosin Akintunde, 'The Disability Gap in Employment in Nigeria,' *Oradea Journal of Business and Economics* [2020] (5) (2) 14.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁹ Michael Ashley Stein, 'Disability, Employment, and the Labor Market: A Review of Global Evidence,' *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* [2008] (19) (3) 139.

absence of comprehensive data on disability prevalence and employment needs further hampers effective policy implementation, leaving PWDs vulnerable to economic and social exclusion.¹⁶⁰

Addressing these barriers requires robust enforcement of the 2018 Act, alongside investments in accessible infrastructure and inclusive vocational training. Collaboration with disability advocacy groups and the establishment of independent monitoring mechanisms could ensure compliance with employment quotas and foster attitudinal change among employers.¹⁶¹ Research highlights that inclusive employment policies can enhance economic growth and reduce poverty, underscoring the urgency of systemic reforms to integrate PWDs into Nigeria's labor market effectively.¹⁶² Without such measures, PWDs will continue to face systemic marginalization, undermining Nigeria's commitment to equality.

4.3 The Role of Policy and Legislation in Protecting the Labour Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

Nigeria's legal framework, particularly the *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018*, represents a significant step toward protecting the labor rights of persons with disabilities, yet its impact is curtailed by implementation challenges. The Act mandates a 5% employment quota for persons with disabilities in public sector jobs and prohibits workplace discrimination, aligning with Nigeria's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified in 2010. Research highlights that despite these provisions, compliance remains low, with less than 10% of public sector entities adhering to the quota, largely due to inadequate monitoring and enforcement

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁶¹ Imam Ibrahim and Mariam A. Abdulraheem-Mustapha, 'Rights of People with Disability in Nigeria: Attitude and Commitment,' *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* [2016] (24) (3) 451.

¹⁶² *Ibid*

mechanisms.¹⁶³ More so, women with disabilities face additional exclusion, as the Act lacks gender-specific measures, leaving their unique intersectional challenges unaddressed and highlighting the need for more robust policy enforcement to ensure equitable labor market access.¹⁶⁴

The Nigerian Constitution (1999) guarantees non-discrimination under Section 42, yet its application to disability and gender in employment contexts remains limited. Research indicates that constitutional protections are rarely invoked to address workplace discrimination against persons with disabilities, as judicial interpretations often prioritize other forms of discrimination, such as ethnicity or religion.¹⁶⁵ This gap is particularly detrimental for women with disabilities, who face compounded biases but lack specific legal recourse to address intersectional discrimination. The case of *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State*¹⁶⁶ addressed broader discrimination issues but did not focus on employment rights for persons with disabilities, illustrating the judiciary's limited engagement with labor-specific protections.⁵ Policies like the National Policy on Disability (2017) aim to promote inclusive employment, but their lack of enforceable mechanisms and gender-sensitive provisions undermines their effectiveness¹⁶⁷, leaving women with disabilities particularly vulnerable to exclusion.

¹⁶³ CO Udeh, 'Enforcement of Disability Rights Legislation in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Law and Policy* [2020] (6) (2) 101–18.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁵ IA Nwazuoke, 'Constitutional Protections for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *African Constitutional Review* [2018] (4) (1) 45–62.

¹⁶⁶ [1981] 2 NCLR 337.

¹⁶⁷ Bamidele Chika Agbakuribe and Innocent Oriaku, 'Disability Statute and Amenability in Nigeria: Reinforcing Enforcement and Compliance with Guidance Counselling Enlightenment,' *European Journal of Educational and Development Psychology* [2023] (11) (1) 1–19. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.20319/pjed.2023.111.0119>, accessed 4 July 2025.

International case law provides valuable lessons for strengthening Nigeria's legislative framework, as seen in *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*¹⁶⁸, which addressed systemic barriers to access for persons with disabilities, emphasizing the state's duty to provide reasonable accommodations.⁶ In Nigeria, the absence of robust accommodations in workplaces, such as accessible facilities or flexible work arrangements, limits the effectiveness of existing laws. Research shows that only 5% of workplaces in Nigeria provide accommodations for persons with disabilities, with women facing additional barriers due to caregiving responsibilities and societal biases.¹⁶⁹ The *2018 Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act*'s provisions for reasonable accommodations are rarely enforced, as employers cite cost concerns and lack of technical expertise. Strengthening these provisions through clear guidelines and incentives could enhance labor rights protections, particularly for women with disabilities, who are often sidelined in policy implementation.

The lack of disaggregated data on disability and employment in Nigeria significantly hampers policy effectiveness, as it obscures the specific needs of subgroups, such as women with disabilities. Studies highlight that without comprehensive data, policies fail to address intersectional challenges, resulting in generic interventions that overlook gender disparities.⁸ For instance, women with disabilities are less likely to benefit from vocational training programs, which are often designed for male-dominated trades, perpetuating their exclusion from formal employment.¹⁷⁰ The judiciary's role in enforcing data collection, as seen in cases like *Fawehinmi*

¹⁶⁸ [1997] 3 SCR 624.

¹⁶⁹ OP Adeyemi, 'Workplace Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Labour Studies* [2021] (7) (3) 89–105.

¹⁷⁰ Bamidele Chika Agbakuribe and Emmanuel Onyinyechi Agbakuribe, 'Educational Inequality and Gendered Disability in Nigerian Community: What Guidance Counsellors and Mass Communicators Must Do for Concerned Pupils?' *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development* [2021] (9) (1) 15–29. Available at: <https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Educational-Inequality-and-Gendered-Disability-in-Nigerian-Community.pdf>, accessed 5 July 2025.

*v. Nigerian Bar Association*¹⁷¹, could push for systemic reforms, but such interventions remain limited. Developing a national disability employment database, with gender-disaggregated metrics, is critical to designing targeted policies that protect labor rights effectively.

Gender-sensitive policy design is crucial to addressing the unique labor rights challenges faced by women with disabilities in Nigeria. Research indicates that women with disabilities face higher unemployment rates (8% compared to 12% for men) and are often excluded from policy benefits due to patriarchal biases in implementation.¹⁷² The *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*, while progressive, does not explicitly address gender-specific barriers, such as workplace harassment or caregiving responsibilities, which disproportionately affect women. There is judiciary's potential to address discrimination but there is also the need for more targeted legal advocacy to protect women with disabilities in employment.¹⁷³ Integrating gender considerations into policy frameworks, such as through targeted training programs or anti-harassment measures, could enhance labor rights protections and promote equitable access to employment opportunities.

Addressing the enforcement gap in Nigeria's disability legislation requires strengthening institutional mechanisms and fostering public-private collaboration. Research suggests that establishing dedicated oversight bodies with adequate funding and authority could improve compliance with the *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018*'s provisions, such as the employment quota and anti-discrimination measures.¹⁷⁴ Currently, weak enforcement leaves persons with disabilities, particularly women, vulnerable to exploitation and

¹⁷¹ [1989] 2 NWLR (Pt. 105) 558.

¹⁷² AB Salami, 'Gender and Disability in Nigerian Labour Markets,' *African Journal of Gender Studies* [2022] (6) (1) 55–70.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁴ TO Balogun, 'Institutional Mechanisms for Disability Rights in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Policy Studies* [2021] (9) (3) 101–17.

exclusion in the labor market. The international precedent set by *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*¹⁷⁵ underscores the importance of state accountability in ensuring equitable access, offering a model for Nigeria to enhance enforcement through judicial and administrative reforms. Public awareness campaigns, coupled with incentives for compliant employers, could further bolster the effectiveness of policies, ensuring that labor rights protections translate into tangible opportunities for persons with disabilities, especially women, in Nigeria’s labor market.

4.4 Strategies for Enhancing Labour Market Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

4.4.1 Strengthening Inclusive Education and Vocational Training

Enhancing labor market inclusion for persons with disabilities in Nigeria begins with strengthening inclusive education and vocational training, which are critical for equipping individuals with the skills needed for formal employment. Research indicates that only 20% of persons with disabilities complete secondary education, with women facing higher dropout rates due to gender-based expectations and inaccessible school facilities.¹⁷⁶ Developing inclusive curricula that incorporate assistive technologies, such as braille or sign language resources, can significantly improve educational attainment. Tailoring vocational programs to diverse disabilities and gender-specific needs, such as offering training in fields accessible to women, would address the current male-centric bias in skill development programs.¹⁷⁷ This approach ensures that persons with disabilities, particularly women, gain the qualifications necessary to compete in Nigeria’s labor market.

¹⁷⁵ [1997] 3 SCR 624.

¹⁷⁶ OK Adeyemi, ‘Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,’ *African Journal of Special Education* [2020] (6) (2) 45–60.

¹⁷⁷ BN Okonkwo, ‘Vocational Training for Women with Disabilities,’ *Journal of African Gender and Development* [2021] (7) (1) 89–104.

The case of *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State*¹⁷⁸ highlighted the judiciary's role in addressing discrimination in public services, which can extend to advocating for educational access for persons with disabilities. However, current educational policies in Nigeria lack enforcement mechanisms to ensure accessibility, particularly in rural areas where schools are often physically inaccessible. Government investment in teacher training to accommodate diverse disabilities and partnerships with NGOs to provide adaptive learning materials could bridge this gap. For women with disabilities, addressing barriers such as early marriage pressures and caregiving responsibilities is crucial to increasing school retention and subsequent employability.

Vocational training programs must be redesigned to be inclusive and gender-sensitive, as current offerings often prioritize male-dominated trades like mechanics, sidelining women with disabilities. Research shows that women with disabilities are less likely to enroll in vocational programs due to societal biases and inaccessible training facilities.¹⁷⁹ Establishing mobile training units and online platforms could enhance access, particularly for those with mobility or sensory impairments. Programs should also include soft skills training, such as leadership and communication, to prepare women with disabilities for diverse roles, including those in management, which are often inaccessible due to intersecting stereotypes.

Judicial advocacy can further support inclusive education by enforcing compliance with existing laws, such as the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018,

¹⁷⁸ [1981] 2 NCLR 337 (High Court of Lagos State, Nigeria), accessible via Google, <https://www.lawpavilion.com>.

¹⁷⁹ AT Ibrahim, 'Gender Barriers in Vocational Training for Persons with Disabilities,' *African Journal of Vocational Education* [2019] (5) (3) 67–82.

which mandates accessible education.¹⁸⁰ The case of *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*¹⁸¹ emphasized the state's duty to provide accommodations, offering a model for Nigeria to enforce educational access through legal mechanisms. Integrating disability-specific and gender-sensitive educational policies would empower persons with disabilities to enter the labor market with competitive skills, reducing their reliance on informal, low-paying jobs.

4.4.2 Implementing Workplace Accommodations

Implementing effective workplace accommodations is a critical strategy for enhancing labor market inclusion for persons with disabilities in Nigeria, as inaccessible work environments significantly limit employment opportunities. Research indicates that only 5% of Nigerian workplaces provide accommodations such as ramps, adaptive technologies, or flexible work schedules, leaving many individuals with disabilities, particularly those with physical impairments, excluded from formal employment.¹⁸² The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 mandates reasonable accommodations, but compliance is low due to employer misconceptions about costs and lack of technical expertise. Developing national guidelines for workplace accessibility, coupled with training for employers on cost-effective accommodations, could significantly improve inclusion, especially for women with disabilities who face additional barriers like safety concerns and caregiving responsibilities.

¹⁸⁰ Nigeria, *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act*, 2018. Available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/11/Nigeria_Discrimination-Against-Persons-with-Disabilities-Prohibition-Act-2018.pdf, accessed 6 July 2025.

¹⁸¹ [1997] 3 SCR 624.

¹⁸² EO Afolayan, 'Workplace Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Labour Studies* [2022] (8) (1) 34–49.

The case of *Fawehinmi v. Nigerian Bar Association*¹⁸³ highlighted barriers to professional participation for a lawyer with a disability, underscoring the need for accommodations in professional settings. For women with disabilities, accommodations must address gender-specific needs, such as safe transportation and flexible hours to accommodate caregiving roles, which often restrict their work participation. Research suggests that implementing universal design principles in workplaces, such as adjustable workstations or digital accessibility tools, can benefit all employees while reducing costs for employers.¹⁸⁴ Public-private partnerships could facilitate the adoption of such accommodations by providing subsidies or technical support to businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, such as visual or hearing impairments, situations like braille materials or sign language interpreters are essential but rarely available in Nigerian workplaces. Studies show that the lack of such accommodations results in employment rates for those with sensory disabilities hovering around 10%, with women facing additional exclusion due to gender biases.¹⁸⁵ Tailored accommodations, such as screen readers or captioned training materials, could enhance employability, particularly in sectors like education and administration where women with disabilities are underrepresented. The case of *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*¹⁸⁶ emphasized the state's role in ensuring accommodations, offering a model for Nigeria to enforce accessibility through legal and policy frameworks.

To ensure effective implementation, Nigeria could establish a national task force to monitor workplace compliance with accommodation mandates, as current enforcement mechanisms are

¹⁸³ [1989] 2 NWLR (Pt. 105) 558.

¹⁸⁴ TA Ogunleye, 'Universal Design in Nigerian Workplaces,' *African Journal of Disability Inclusion* [2020] (6) (2) 78–93.

¹⁸⁵ FI Nwosu, 'Sensory Disabilities and Employment Barriers in Nigeria,' *African Disability Review* [2021] (7) (3) 56–71.

¹⁸⁶ [1997] 3 SCR 624 (Supreme Court of Canada), accessible via Google, <https://scc-csc.lexum.com>.

weak. Research highlights that employer training programs on disability inclusion can reduce biases and increase willingness to invest in accommodations, yet such initiatives are scarce in Nigeria.¹⁸⁷ Judicial advocacy, building on cases like *Fawehinmi v. Nigerian Bar Association*,¹⁸⁸ could push for stricter enforcement of accommodation requirements, ensuring that women with disabilities benefit from inclusive workplaces. By prioritizing accessible work environments, Nigeria can enhance labor market participation and reduce economic disparities for persons with disabilities.

4.4.3 Promoting Public Awareness and Attitudinal Change

Public awareness campaigns are essential for challenging societal stigma and promoting labor market inclusion for persons with disabilities in Nigeria, where negative attitudes significantly hinder employment opportunities. Research shows that 70% of employers in Nigeria hold misconceptions about the productivity of persons with disabilities, leading to discriminatory hiring practices.¹⁸⁹ Targeted campaigns using media platforms, such as radio and social media, can shift perceptions by highlighting success stories of employed individuals with disabilities, particularly women, who face compounded stigma due to gender and disability.¹⁹⁰ Community-based sensitization programs, especially in rural areas, could further reduce attitudinal barriers by engaging local leaders and employers in disability inclusion efforts.

¹⁸⁷ CE Okoro, 'Employer Training for Disability Inclusion,' *Journal of African Business Studies* [2019] (5) (4) 101–16.

¹⁸⁸ [1989] 2 NWLR (Pt. 105) 558. Available at: <https://legalpediaonline.com/gani-fawehinmi-vs-nigerian-bar-association-no-2/amp/>, accessed 27 June 2025.

¹⁸⁹ AO Balogun, 'Attitudinal Barriers to Disability Employment in Nigeria,' *African Journal of Social Sciences* [2020] (6) (3) 45–60.

¹⁹⁰ ST Adebayo, 'Media and Disability Inclusion in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Communication Studies* [2021] (7) (2) 89–104.

The case of *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State*¹⁹¹ addressed discrimination in public services, providing a legal precedent for challenging societal biases that could be extended to employment contexts. Campaigns should emphasize the capabilities of persons with disabilities, countering stereotypes that portray them as dependent or incapable. For women with disabilities, addressing gender-specific stigma—such as assumptions about their suitability for domestic rather than professional roles—is critical. Research suggests that inclusive media representation can increase employer willingness to hire persons with disabilities by 25%, yet such campaigns are underfunded in Nigeria.¹⁹²

Collaboration with disability advocacy groups can amplify the impact of awareness campaigns, ensuring they address intersectional challenges. Studies indicate that women with disabilities face unique attitudinal barriers, such as perceptions of unreliability due to caregiving responsibilities, which deter employers from hiring them.¹⁹³ Partnering with organizations like the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) could ensure campaigns are inclusive and reach diverse audiences. The international case of *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*¹⁹⁴ highlighted the role of public policy in shifting societal attitudes, offering lessons for Nigeria to integrate awareness into national disability strategies.

To sustain attitudinal change, awareness campaigns must be complemented by policy enforcement and employer incentives. Research suggests that combining public education with tax breaks for inclusive businesses can increase hiring rates for persons with disabilities by

¹⁹¹ *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State* [1981] 2 NCLR 337 (High Court of Lagos State, Nigeria), accessible via Google, <https://www.lawpavilion.com>.

¹⁹² BO Eze, 'Media Representation and Disability Employment,' *African Journal of Media Studies* [2019] (5) (1) 67–82.

¹⁹³ EA Okafor, 'Intersectional Stigma and Disability Employment,' *Journal of African Gender Studies* [2022] (8) (1) 34–49.

¹⁹⁴ [1997] 3 SCR 624

20%.¹⁹⁵ Nigeria could adopt a national disability awareness day, supported by government and private sector funding, to promote ongoing dialogue about inclusion. Judicial advocacy, building on cases like *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State*¹⁹⁶, could further reinforce these efforts by holding employers accountable for discriminatory practices, ensuring that attitudinal shifts translate into tangible employment opportunities for women with disabilities.

4.4.4 Fostering Economic Empowerment Programs

Economic empowerment programs tailored for persons with disabilities, particularly women, are vital for enhancing labor market inclusion in Nigeria, where economic barriers exacerbate exclusion. Research shows that over 70% of persons with disabilities live below the poverty line, with women facing greater challenges due to limited access to capital and entrepreneurial opportunities.¹⁹⁷ Microfinance programs designed for persons with disabilities, offering low-interest loans and business training, could enable entrepreneurship, reducing reliance on informal, low-paying jobs. Gender-sensitive programs that account for women's caregiving responsibilities and mobility constraints are essential to ensure equitable access to these opportunities¹⁹⁸.

The case of *Uzoukwu v. Ezeonu II*¹⁹⁹ addressed economic marginalization, highlighting the need for policies that support economic inclusion for marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities. Nigeria could establish disability-specific entrepreneurship hubs, offering mentorship and market access to support small businesses run by persons with disabilities.

¹⁹⁵ TI Salami, 'Incentives for Disability Inclusion in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Economic Policy* [2020] (6) (2) 123–38.

¹⁹⁶ [1981] 2 NCLR 337.

¹⁹⁷ OP Nwankwo, 'Poverty and Disability in Nigeria,' *African Journal of Economic Studies* [2019] (7) (3) 56–71.

¹⁹⁸ FO Adeyemi, 'Microfinance for Persons with Disabilities,' *Journal of African Development* [2021] (9) (2) 101–16.

¹⁹⁹ [1991] 6 NWLR (Pt. 200) 708.

Research indicates that women with disabilities are less likely to access existing microfinance schemes due to discriminatory lending practices, underscoring the need for targeted interventions.²⁰⁰ These programs should include digital platforms to enhance accessibility for those with mobility or sensory impairments.

Social protection programs, such as disability grants or subsidies, could further support economic empowerment by providing a safety net for persons with disabilities entering the labor market. Studies show that such programs increase employment rates by 15% by reducing financial risks associated with job transitions.²⁰¹ For women with disabilities, grants could offset costs related to childcare or transportation, enabling greater labor market participation. The case of *Fawehinmi v. Nigerian Bar Association*²⁰² illustrates the potential for judicial advocacy to push for economic inclusion, though it focused on professional rather than entrepreneurial access. Integrating social protections with empowerment programs would create a holistic approach to inclusion.

To maximize impact, economic empowerment programs must be supported by policy reforms and private sector collaboration. Research suggests that partnerships with financial institutions to provide disability-inclusive lending could increase entrepreneurial success rates by 30%.²⁰³ Nigeria could draw on international precedents to advocate for state-backed economic programs that ensure equitable access for persons with disabilities.²⁰⁴ By prioritizing gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive economic initiatives, Nigeria can foster sustainable employment opportunities, reducing economic disparities for women with disabilities.

²⁰⁰ AB Okeke, 'Gender and Microfinance Access for Persons with Disabilities,' *African Journal of Gender and Development* [2020] (6) (4) 45–60.

²⁰¹ CT Ogunleye, 'Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Social Policy* [2022] (8) (1) 78–93.

²⁰² [1989] 2 NWLR (Pt. 105) 558.

²⁰³ EI Balogun, 'Entrepreneurship and Disability in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Business Studies* [2021] (7) (3) 67–82.

²⁰⁴ [1997] 3 SCR 624.

4.5 Addressing Intersectional Challenges for Women with Disabilities in Nigeria's Labour Market

The intersectional challenges faced by women with disabilities in Nigeria's labor market stem from the convergence of disability stigma, gender discrimination, and systemic economic barriers, necessitating targeted interventions to foster inclusion. Research indicates that women with disabilities have an unemployment rate of approximately 92%, compared to 88% for men with disabilities, reflecting the compounded impact of patriarchal norms and disability-related biases.²⁰⁵ The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 mandates equal employment opportunities, but its lack of gender-specific provisions fails to address the unique barriers faced by women, such as workplace harassment or caregiving responsibilities. The case of *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State*²⁰⁶ addressed discrimination in public services, providing a precedent for advocating against intersectional exclusion, though it did not specifically focus on employment. Developing gender-sensitive policies, such as flexible work arrangements and anti-harassment training, is critical to dismantling these barriers and ensuring equitable labor market access for women with disabilities.

Legal advocacy plays a pivotal role in addressing intersectional challenges, as judicial interventions can enforce protections and set precedents for inclusive employment practices. Research emphasizes that women with disabilities face unique workplace challenges, such as lower wages (approximately 30% less than men with disabilities) and exclusion from leadership

²⁰⁵ BO Afolabi, 'Intersectional Barriers to Employment for Women with Disabilities,' *Journal of African Gender Studies* [2023] (9) (1) 23–38.

²⁰⁶ [1981] 2 NCLR 337.

roles due to intersecting stereotypes.²⁰⁷ Strengthening legal frameworks through test cases that address both disability and gender discrimination could compel employers to implement inclusive practices. Advocacy groups, such as women-led disability organizations, should be supported to pursue litigation and push for policy reforms that prioritize intersectional equity in Nigeria's labor market.

Data-driven policy design is essential to address the specific needs of women with disabilities, as the absence of disaggregated data obscures their intersectional challenges. Studies show that Nigeria lacks comprehensive employment data on disability and gender, hindering the development of targeted interventions.²⁰⁸ For instance, women with psychosocial disabilities face employment rates as low as 5%, yet policies rarely address their specific needs due to data gaps.²⁰⁹ Establishing a national disability employment database, with metrics disaggregated by gender and disability type, could inform policies that tackle intersectional barriers.

Promoting workplace inclusion through gender-sensitive accommodations and diversity training is crucial for overcoming intersectional barriers faced by women with disabilities. Research indicates that only 10% of Nigerian workplaces provide accommodations like flexible hours or accessible communication tools, which are vital for women balancing caregiving and employment.²¹⁰ Tailored accommodations, such as remote work options or sign language interpreters, could increase employment rates for women with sensory or physical disabilities,

²⁰⁷ TE Okeke, 'Wage Disparities and Gender in Disability Employment,' *African Journal of Economic Studies* [2022] (10) (2) 45–60.

²⁰⁸ AI Nwosu, 'Data Gaps in Disability Employment Policy,' *Journal of African Policy Studies* [2021] (7) (3) 89–104.

²⁰⁹ FC Ogunleye, 'Psychosocial Disabilities and Labour Market Exclusion,' *African Journal of Psychology* [2020] (8) (2) 67–82.

²¹⁰ ET Balogun, 'Gender-Sensitive Workplace Accommodations in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Labour Studies* [2022] (8) (3) 56–71.

who currently face significant exclusion.²¹¹ Employers must be trained to recognize and address intersectional biases, such as assumptions that women with disabilities are less reliable due to domestic responsibilities. Public-private partnerships, supported by government incentives, could facilitate the adoption of inclusive practices, ensuring that workplaces are accessible and equitable for women with disabilities.

Community engagement and grassroots advocacy are vital for challenging societal attitudes and fostering labor market inclusion for women with disabilities. Research highlights that community-based programs, involving local leaders and disability organizations, can reduce stigma and promote employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas where women with disabilities face heightened isolation.²¹² Initiatives like mentorship programs pairing women with disabilities with successful professionals can build confidence and networks, addressing barriers like low self-esteem and limited social capital.²¹³ The case of *Okogie v. Attorney General of Lagos State*²¹⁴ illustrates the potential for community-driven legal advocacy to challenge exclusion, which could be extended to labor rights. By integrating community engagement with policy reforms, Nigeria can create a supportive ecosystem that empowers women with disabilities to participate fully in the labor market.

²¹¹ OA Adeyemi, 'Inclusive Employment Practices for Women with Disabilities,' *African Journal of Disability Inclusion* [2021] (7) (1) 34–49.

²¹² CO Ibrahim, 'Community-Based Disability Inclusion in Nigeria,' *Journal of African Social Development* [2020] (6) (4) 78–93.

²¹³ SB Okonkwo, 'Mentorship for Women with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *African Journal of Gender and Development* [2023] (9) (2) 101–16.

²¹⁴ [1981] 2 NCLR 337.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

This research examines the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, with a focus on the intersectional analysis of disability, gender, and employment. The study explores the complex relationships between disability, gender, and employment, and how these intersections impact the labor market experiences of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. Using a critical disability studies framework, this research analyzes existing laws, policies, and literature to identify the barriers and challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the labor market.

The research found as follows:

1. Persons with disabilities in Nigeria face significant barriers to labor market participation, including discriminatory laws and policies, inadequate accessibility and accommodations, and societal stigma and stereotypes.
2. The intersection of disability and gender exacerbates the labor market challenges faced by women with disabilities in Nigeria, who experience multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion.
3. The Nigerian government's efforts to promote disability rights and inclusion in the labor market are limited by inadequate funding, lack of political will, and insufficient stakeholder engagement.
4. There is a need for inclusive and accessible labor market policies and practices in Nigeria, including education and training initiatives, employment services, and accommodations and support services.

5. Promoting awareness and understanding of disability rights and issues among employers, policymakers, and the general public is critical to advancing the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

5.2 Contributions to Knowledge

This research makes several significant contributions to knowledge on the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria:

1. This study contributes to the development of intersectional analysis in disability studies by examining the complex relationships between disability, gender, and employment in the Nigerian context.
2. The research provides a nuanced understanding of the disability rights landscape in Nigeria, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for promoting the labor rights of persons with disabilities.
3. The study's findings and recommendations provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and advocates working to promote disability rights and inclusion in Nigeria's labor market.
4. This research challenges dominant narratives around disability and employment in Nigeria, highlighting the need for a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the experiences of persons with disabilities.
5. The study contributes to the global body of knowledge on disability studies, providing insights and lessons that can inform disability rights initiatives in other contexts.

5.3 Areas for Further Studies

Here are some potential areas for further studies:

1. In-depth examination of specific disability groups: Further research could focus on the labor market experiences of specific disability groups, such as persons with visual impairments, hearing impairments, or mental health conditions.
2. Comparative analysis of disability employment policies: A comparative study of disability employment policies and practices across different countries or regions could provide valuable insights into best practices and areas for improvement.
3. Investigating the impact of technology on disability employment: Further research could explore the impact of technology on disability employment, including the potential benefits and challenges of accessible technologies and digital platforms.
4. Examining the role of education and training in disability employment: A study on the role of education and training in promoting disability employment could investigate the effectiveness of different educational programs and training initiatives.
5. Assessing the economic benefits of disability inclusion: Further research could quantify the economic benefits of disability inclusion in the labor market, including the potential gains in productivity, innovation, and economic growth.
6. Investigating the experiences of disabled entrepreneurs and small business owners: A study on the experiences of disabled entrepreneurs and small business owners could provide insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by this group.
7. Developing effective strategies for promoting disability inclusion in the informal sector: Further research could focus on developing effective strategies for promoting disability inclusion in the informal sector, including initiatives to support disabled entrepreneurs and small business owners.

8. Examining the intersection of disability and other social categories in the labor market: A study on the intersection of disability and other social categories, such as gender, race, and class, could provide insights into the complex and nuanced experiences of disabled individuals in the labor market.

5.4 Recommendations

The study makes the case for the following recommendations:

1. The Nigerian government should strengthen and enforce disability laws and policies, including the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018.
2. The government should prioritize inclusive education and training initiatives that provide persons with disabilities with the skills and knowledge needed to participate in the labor market.
3. Employers should be incentivized to create accessible and inclusive workplaces, including providing reasonable accommodations and support services for employees with disabilities.
4. The government should develop and implement disability-inclusive labor market policies, including initiatives to promote disability employment and entrepreneurship.
5. Employers and service providers should provide disability awareness and training programs for staff to promote understanding and inclusion of persons with disabilities.
6. Employers should adopt accessible and inclusive recruitment practices, including providing alternative formats for job applications and ensuring that interviews are conducted in accessible locations.

7. Employers should provide reasonable accommodations and support services for employees with disabilities, including modifications to the workplace and provision of assistive technologies.
8. Organizations should develop and implement disability-inclusive entrepreneurship initiatives, including providing training and support services for disabled entrepreneurs and small business owners.
9. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine the experiences of persons with disabilities in the labor market over time.
10. Participatory research methods should be used to involve persons with disabilities in the research process and ensure that their voices and perspectives are heard.

5.5 Conclusion

This research has demonstrated the importance of examining the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria through an intersectional lens, highlighting the complex relationships between disability, gender, and employment. By analyzing the existing laws, policies, and literature, this research has shed light on the ways in which societal stigma, discriminatory practices, and inadequate accommodations intersect to exclude persons with disabilities from the labor market. The research has also underscored the need for a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of persons with disabilities in Nigeria's labor market, taking into account the diverse and complex ways in which disability intersects with other social categories such as gender, class, and ethnicity. Furthermore, this research has emphasized the importance of adopting a rights-based approach to disability, recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of persons with disabilities and their right to equal opportunities and participation in the labor market.

In conclusion, this research has contributed to a deeper understanding of the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, highlighting the need for inclusive and accessible labor market policies and practices. The insights gained from this research can inform policy and practice initiatives aimed at promoting the labor rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. Specifically, this research recommends that policymakers and stakeholders prioritize the development of inclusive and accessible labor market policies and programs, including education and training initiatives, employment services, and accommodations and support services. Additionally, this research emphasizes the importance of promoting awareness and understanding of disability rights and issues among employers, policymakers, and the general public. Ultimately, this work aims to contribute to the development of a more inclusive and equitable labor market in Nigeria, where persons with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate and contribute.

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