

Assessing the Challenges of Persons with Disabilities in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examines the disability experiences, inclusions of persons with disabilities, support services and intervention programmes for persons with disabilities and domestication and implementations of the disability Acts in Southwest Nigeria. The study was conducted between June-December 2022 and employed quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative method, a total of 300 questionnaires was used to collect information from the various PWDs in each of the states in South West Nigeria. The qualitative research tools included the In-depth interviews (IDI), Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), were used on various stakeholders in the six states of south-west Nigeria such as MDAs, Legislators, Politicians/Political Aides, JONAPWD, CSOs/NGOs/FBOs, and Operators of Hotels/Schools/Public Building. The study reveals that the welfare of PWDs is still a far cry in the Southwestern States. The study found that PWDs are faced with financial challenges more, social exclusion and difficulties in accessing private and public facilities in the south west states. The paper concludes that there is need for more publicity, sensitization, lobbying and enactment of more laws to push for legislation at the state houses of assembly for the domestication of the Act.

Background to the Study

Disability is now a new phenomenon the world over. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) estimated that about 15 per cent (one out of every seven persons in the world) of the world's population live with one form of disability or the other and about 2-4 per cent of this population are experiencing major functioning disability. An estimated 110 million to 190 million people are experiencing significant disabilities and cannot manage daily lives without assistance. In Nigeria, about 25 million people or 15% of Nigeria population have disability, with many of them facing human rights abuses, including stigma, discrimination, violence, and lack of access to healthcare, housing and education (World Health Organisation, 2011). Globally, there have been strong agitations by disability rights groups and activists to establish legal rights for persons with disability (PWD) as bona fide members of society. This agitation started before the 1970s with legislation addressing the provision of some forms of social security or public assistance benefit to PWD. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, legislation centred on the rights of disabled people to the same right and protection enjoyed by the rest of the citizens under the law (Antonak, 1982). Over the years, PWD had advocated for their rights, established that they be considered based on individual merits and not on some stereotyped assumption about disability, thereby advocating for more meaningful participation in secular activities in the society (Imam and Mustapha 2016).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) in the mid-1990s examined the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH). It came up with a document on the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) emphasizing the social model approach to disability rather than the previously used charity and medical models (See: D'Alessio 2011; Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare 2010; Purtell, 2013). The charity model views PWD as unfortunate or victims of circumstance that society must care for as a moral responsibility. In contrast, the medical model considers disability as a physical, mental, sensorial and psychological deficiency found in an individual that limits a person's activities (Guardian Newspaper, December 2019). The radical model presents a radical reconceptualization of disability and sees that society disables people with impairments with failure to inclusive participation of PWD. CRPD and ICF identified environmental roles in facilitating or restricting involvement for people with disabilities. Other barriers identified include inadequate policies and standard, which do not consider the needs of PWD. Also, negative attitudes based on belief and prejudices. Lack of provision for services makes PWD to be vulnerable to deficiencies in service among others (World Bank, 2011).

It is instructive to note that law aimed at providing equal opportunity and recognition of the rights of PWD is still a far cry in Nigeria. Human rights are fundamental rights of individuals irrespective of their status. Rights are innate and not acquired by achievements or qualifications. For the fact that human rights are inalienable and universal, it, therefore, follows that we cannot discriminate between able persons and those with disabilities due to their functional physical impairments. A glimpse of the Nigeria Constitution in chapter IV Bill of Rights shows that it only guarantees citizens' rights generally with no specific provision dedicated to the protection of the right of PWD (Section 42, Nigerian Constitution 1999).

Nigeria in September 2010 ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and ever since, it has not submitted a report to the UN on the CRPD due to lengthy processes. The lack of adequate administrative infrastructure and effective legislation limits the impact of UNCRPD in Nigeria (Institute of Development Studies, 2020). Due to the poor implementation of the CRPD, Nigeria in 2019 signed the National Disability Legislation known as the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2018) into law after 9 years of persistent advocacy by disability rights groups and activists. (Human Right Watch, 2019). The act prohibits discrimination against people with disability. It also imposes penalties for non-compliance on individuals and corporate organisations. Also, it stipulates a five-year transitional period for public building and transport system to make their facilities accessible to PWD. It also establishes a national commission for persons with disabilities to oversee PWD access to housing, education and healthcare.

The act is divided into eight sections as follows.

- (a) Prohibition of discrimination and awareness of programmes
- (b) Accessibility to physical structure
- (c) Road transportation
- (d) Seaports, railways and airport facilities
- (e) Liberty, right to education, health and first consideration in queues, accommodations and emergencies
- (f) Opportunity for employment and participation in politics and public life
- (g) Establishment of the national commission for persons with disabilities.
- (h) Appointment and duties of executive secretary and other staff

This act makes it the first step towards Nigeria's obligations fulfillment of the CRPD. It is disheartening to note that only nine out of the 36 states in Nigeria, namely: Lagos, Ekiti, Ondo, Anambra, Kano, Kogi, Kwara, Jigawa Plateau and Bauchi, have state-level disability laws. Lagos state is located in Nigeria's southwest region of Nigeria with states like Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Ekiti and Ondo. Lagos state has been the model and vanguard of legislation in Nigeria, including major stakeholders in its policies, cutting across all vulnerable groups in the state.

Theoretical Orientation

The study is anchored on the social model of disability which sees disability as a social creation (Barnes 1992). The model considers disabilities has necessitated by discrimination, social exclusion and accessibility barrier which is different from individual's bodily problems. The social model sees disability to be social oppression, or collective exclusion being experienced by PWDs (Oliver, 1990; Barnes & Mercer, 2004) In a nutshell, bodily impairments are aggravated by social exclusion, oppression and barriers in accessing services that people encounter (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). The model has received wide acceptance in United Kingdom, United States, Canada and other developed countries because it guarantee the fundamental human rights of PWDs. It is a practical tool for explaining and discovering issues on disadvantage, discrimination and exclusion experienced by PWDs (Oliver, 2004). It is an important model for understanding the systemic oppression of PWDs by non-disabled majority in society and social institutions (Eleweke & Ebenso, 2016). Therefore, this study examines the disability experiences, inclusion of persons of persons with disabilities, support services and intervention programmes for PWDs and domestication and implementations of the disability acts in South-west Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative technique, questionnaire method was used to gather data on the disability experience, inclusion of persons with disabilities, support services and intervention programmes for PWDs, domestication and implementation of the disability act and knowledge of the disability act in the south-western states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Osun.

For the qualitative technique, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), Key informant interviews and interactions were held with the various stakeholders such as, MDAs, Legislators,

Politicians/Political Aides, JONAPWD, CSOs/NGOs/FBOs, Operators of Hotels/Schools/Public Building

For the quantitative data, 50 questionnaires each was administered in Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states totaling 300 to various clusters of PWDs identified in each of the states. The quantitative data analysis involved the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17 version. Parametric and non-parametric statistical tools were utilised to analyse the generated quantitative data. The univariate analysis involved the use of frequency distributions, percentages, charts and graphs to depict the descriptive statistics on the distribution of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics.

For the qualitative aspect, in-depth interview was used to elicit information in order to have a clearer understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation. Content analysis was employed for analysis, through the Nvivo 8 software. Themes from the interviews and discussion transcripts that have been identified from the range of objectives, theoretical and conceptual frameworks were validated through the deductive method. Information derived from in-depth interview was transcribed and content-analysed under different headings depicting the various aspects of the discussion to complement the quantitative data.

Results

Respondents' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	137	46
	Female	163	54
2	Marital Status		
	Single	161	54
	Married	116	39
	Widowed	17	6
	Divorced/Separated	6	2
3	Religion		
	Christian	137	46
	Muslim	141	47
	Traditional	22	7
4	Ethnicity		
	Yoruba	224	75
	Hausa	24	8
	Igbo	42	14
	Others	10	14

5	Educational Attainment No formal Education Informal Education (Arabic, Nomadic etc) Completed Primary School Completed Secondary School Completed Tertiary School	40 60 61 127 12	13 20 20 42 4
6	Age Category 18-35 years 36-60 years	171 129	57 43
7	Occupation Govt. Worker / Civil Servant Professional Worker Self-Employed Trader Business Man / Woman Farmer / Agric. Worker Artisan Religious Leader / Missionary Youth Corps Member Student Unemployed Youth/ Adult Others	2 14 62 13 21 76 20 1 6 82 3	1 5 21 4 7 25 7 .3 2. 27 1
8	Average monthly income (in Naira) Less than N50,000 N50,001 – N100,000 N100,001 – N200,000 N400,001 – N500,000 Above N500,000 Don't Know / Refused	226 49 1 2 7 15	75 16 .3 1 2 5
9	Urbanization Rural Urban	217 82	73 27

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table above shows respondents' socio-demographic characteristics in the six states in southwest Nigeria. The gender composition shows a larger percentage of females' participation (54%) across the six states in southwest Nigeria. The World Disability Report (2011) says that over 25 million Nigerians have at least one disability and that more than 50 percent of the 25 million Nigerians living with disability are females corroborates the reason for this high number of female respondents. The respondents' marital status indicates that 54% constitutes those who are single and 39% are married. The respondents' religious affiliation shows that majority of the respondents 46% were Christians in the six states in southwest Nigeria. This is expected, as the

people in southern parts of Nigeria are predominantly Christians. Furthermore, the respondents' ethnicity indicates that 75% were Yoruba speaking people. Again, this is expected as the study areas are predominantly Yoruba states. The respondents' educational attainment indicates that those who completed secondary constitute the majority (42%) across the six states in southwest Nigeria. The respondents' age category shows that 57% were in age bracket of 18-37, which can be categorised as productive age. Also, the respondents' occupations show that unemployed youth and adult (27%) constitute the majority and those who are self-employed (21%) across the six states in southwest Nigeria. Apart from Lagos and Ekiti that have a sizeable number of PWDs in the public sector, it is not the same story in the four other states like Ondo, Osun, Ogun and Oyo. The respondents' monthly income show that 75% earn less than N50, 000 per month and another 16% monthly income range between N50,001-N100,000. Lastly, respondents' resident pattern shows that majority (73%) lives in rural area and 27% are urbanites.

Disability Experience

Disability exists in several forms and types. WHO (2014) identifies 6 broad areas of disability such as: impaired sight or difficulty in seeing; impaired hearing or difficulty in hearing; difficulty in communicating; difficulty in walking; mind or mental impairment or difficulty in concentration/remembering; and difficulty with self-care. Disability can be said to be the state of being incomplete physically, mentally or otherwise. Disability may also occur through accident, spiritual attack and injection. Majority of the respondents (49%) in south-west are physically challenged, follow by 26% who are hearing impaired. Studies have shown that the major causes of motor disability are injuries from accidents on the road, at home, or the workplace; domestic violence; birth trauma; and infectious diseases such as polio and leprosy(Meyer and Mok, 2008; WHO, 2014).This is result of the finding is captured in the table 1.1 below:

Table 2: Perception of PWD

Variables		Frequency	Per cent
Perception as a person with disability	As a normal person in society	141	47.0
	Different from others in society	108	36.0
	Don't know/ refused	51	17.0
	Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In terms of how PWDs see themselves, 47% of the respondents see themselves as normal persons in the society and 36% of the respondents see themselves different from other members in the society. This is averred from the responses obtained from the field.

Table 3: Greatest Challenge of PWDS
Source: Field Survey 2022

Variables		Frequency	Per cent
Greatest challenge as a person with disability	Social exclusion	40	13.3
	Lack of finance	98	32.7
	Mobility	21	7.0
	Discrimination by the public	83	27.7
	Unemployment	58	19.3
	Total	300	100.0

Regarding the greatest challenge faced by PWDs, majority of the respondents 32.7% identified finance as one of their greatest challenge, 27.7% mentioned discrimination and 13.3% alluded to social exclusion. It is very glaring that PWDs are also faced with a lot of challenges including human rights abuses, stigmatization, discrimination, violence, and lack of access to healthcare, housing and education (World Health Organisation, 2011).

There is also the issue of misconception about PWDs as most people see them as alms beggars in the society. This was shared by one of the interviewees in KII in Ogun state.

The truth is that the public believe that when you come closer to them you want to beg for alms or beg for money. The public also look down on PWDs without even conscious that the status of some of us are better than their own. I remember the day I needed to ask for direction from someone and she felt I wanted to ask for money but later realized I do not truly know the direction I was heading. In another instance, there was a misunderstanding with a PWD (a lady) precisely who was beaten by an able woman who also planned with some police officers to lie against the PWD. But unknown to them, one police officers had their voices recorded during their conversations and challenged them when they all came and played the recorded conversation to them. It was the recording that saved the PWD (lady) and the matter was addressed properly. The stigmatization and stereotype remained a serious issue of concern that should be immediately fast track through the proper implementation of discrimination against PWDs (Female/25 years/Yoruba/ JONAPWD /Ogun State)

As explained by one of the participants in Ondo

I, as a lame person can say categorically that my disability if not for God had posed many challenges on me ranging from financial constraint, which limit me from having access to facilities, neglect, stigma and sometime people ridicules.

Concerning accessing social infrastructure, health, financial aids, transportation, housing, employment I must it has been discouraging and heart breaking. I am only surviving through the help of good Nigerians (Male/25 years/ Yoruba/Ondo State)

INCLUSION OF PWDs

Table 4: Denial of Job Opportunity due to Disability

Source: Field Survey 2022

Variables		Frequency	Per cent
Denial of job qualified for because of disability	Yes	186	62.0
	No	40	13.3
	Don't know/ Refused	74	24.7
	Total	300	100.0

PWDs are affected by the inability to get jobs and even when they eventually gain employment, they face severe discrimination and prejudice in the course of their work. Work is an important activity for all human as it is a means by which we support our existence and cater for loved ones and ourselves. PWDs have in many cases been unable to measure up to chances nor have the opportunity to pursue jobs or do businesses, rather, they have experience segregation, discrimination, stereotype, and shame at work and in business environments. In terms of denial of job opportunity qualified for because of disability, majority (62%) of the respondents affirmed that they have been denied jobs they are qualified for because of their disabilities.

Table 5: Movement around Public and Private Facilities within the state

Variables		Frequency	Per cent
Eeasy moving around public and private facilities within the State	Yes	127	42.3
	No	130	43.3
	Don't know/ Refused	43	14.3
	Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In terms of movement around public and private facilities, there are divergent views based on the responses of the respondents. In fact, 42% of the respondents affirmed that they find it easy to move around public and private facilities within their state. Also, 43% of the respondents claimed they did not find it easy moving around public and private facilities within their state.

Table 6: Most common forms of Abuse PWDs suffer in the State

Variables		Frequency	Per cent
Most common form of abuse that persons	Discrimination by members of the public	84	28.0
		33	11.0

with disabilities suffer from in the State	Victimization	27	9.0
	Social exclusion	18	6.0
	Harassment by government officials	32	10.7
	Discrimination at work place	40	13.3
	Physical abuse	59	19.7
	Prejudice	6	2.0
	Poor physical structure for mobility	1	.3
	Others	300	100.0
	Total		

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Concerning the most common forms of abuse that PWDs suffer from their state, majority of the respondents affirmed that discrimination by the members of the public, prejudice, physical abuse, victimization, social exclusion, discrimination at workplace, harassment by government officials and poor physical structure for mobility.

SUPPORT SERVICES AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES FOR PWDs

There are divergent views from the respondents about support services and intervention programmes for PWDs. Majority of respondents (73%) affirmed that there are no support services and intervention programmes while 24% alluded to support services and intervention. Similarly, in the various qualitative data, the findings show that support services and intervention programmes for PWDs is still a far cry as Lagos and Ekiti states seems to have some support services and intervention programmes aimed at addressing the employment, empowerment, and housing needs of PWDs. In one of the interview sessions, one of the interviewees explained thus:

I will say there is very meager or no support from the state because looking into employment 35 PWDs was just employed in this present dispensation. Though, he (the Governor) appointed PWDs in his cabinet as policy makers. Nevertheless, out of about 2 Million registered PWDs in the state just 35 were employed. It is still assumed that nothing has been done. Not even empowerment that would have even helped in a way to alleviate the suffering of PWDs. In all sincerity, when all of this education, social infrastructure, health, financial aids, transportation, housing, employment/empowerment, assistive technology and ICT are stress it will be clear that PWDs have not been able to access any bit not to talk of benefitting from them. The Law clearly stated that 5% of the overall employment should be for the PWDs however, it is not implemented even in this dispensation that has involved PWDs in his cabinet and have even created agency for PWDs at the level of the state. In fact, all the categories of PWDs were appointed and represented in the agencies (visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically impaired as well as Abino. The truth is if during employment in the previous dispensation the PWDs are considered, today we have had more of them in government employment or perhaps if their agencies had been created and the PWDs are appointed in the agencies they would have been effectively represented at the level of the state (Male/35 years/ Yoruba/ JONAPWD /Ondo State)

Another participant in Lagos affirmed that:

There are support services available to PWDs in the state in terms of housing, and all other infrastructure but in terms of technology and ICT it is not encouraging at

all, it is very poor. There is still a long way to go in terms of ICT, before this there is need for accessibility of quality education, which will enhance the ICT to improve better (Female/45 years/Yoruba/MDA/ Lagos State)

Another participant in Ogun stated that:

I think the impact of such support services and intervention programmes are very low considering the number of PWDs in each state that have not even benefitted from such programmes. Most things have been tied to politics in Nigeria. If you are not a member of a political party, you will not benefit from government programmes. These are special people with special needs. Some of them lack employment, vocation, housing, medical care and mobility from one place to another is a big challenge. PWDs have been neglected in the scheme of things in this state. I know government cannot do it enough. That is why NGOs/CSOs and FBOs organisations need to come around and support them (Male/55 years/Ibo/CSO/Ogun State).

Also, one of the participants in Ekiti State said:

Like I had earlier said everything still narrow down to the fact that PWDs should be actively included in governance if they must be effectively represented. As you can see, I have my wife and my children are not in any way affected with any form of disability. My wife has been supportive in all ramifications. I can say the opportunity of education, empowerment/employment that I have seen, have largely affected my life positively. That is the more reason why I would stress the fact that PWDs should be given 99% access to education vis-à-vis skill acquisition training for those that could not go to school and proper empowerment for their better livelihood (Male/40 years/Yoruba/JONAPWD/Ekiti State).

In one of the FGDs Session in Lagos, many of the participants affirmed that the Lagos State Government through the Lagos State Office of Disability Affairs (LASODA) has been trying to address the challenges of PWDs through supporting them in education (scholarship to tertiary institutions in the state), provision of infrastructure to aid mobility of PWDs in public places and enactment of the disability law in the state. Also, the provision of financial support and free medical care for PWDs, free transportation for PWDs and job opportunities for PWDs. The believed that government can still do more by increasing the employment quota to 20 percent in the state to accommodate more of PWDs. In terms of benefitting from the support services and intervention programmes, majority of the respondents (71%) have not been beneficiaries of such programmes while 25% of respondents have personally benefitted from such programmes. Responses from other state like Ogun, Oyo and Osun show that majority 70% have not received any support from government like financial support and medical support. The respondents that affirmed to have received such support are from Lagos, Ekiti and Ondo States. Also, many of responses received show that majority of the respondents 56.7% affirmed that none of the categories of PWDs have received government support

DOMESTICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISABILITY ACT

The conditions of PWDs have been described as pitiful, deplorable, poor and devastating. Majority of the respondents affirmed this in their various assertions on the conditions of PWDs. Few of the respondents mostly from Lagos claimed that conditions of PWDs are good. Also, the findings from the qualitative data compliment some of these assertions. In one of the IDIs with the respondents in Ondo State, one of the directors in MDA.

I can emphatically say that in Ondo State the former Governor Olusegun Agagu really tried to train in skills, cater for the PWDs during training and even empower after the training. In fact, I want to say that the education I had privilege of today was together with skill of computer I acquired then is what has earned me the employment I have today. I remembered many of my friends in the same state like me benefited and are still enjoying the benefits today. The challenges that confront the PWDs is that government deny them of benefits like education, good health facilities that they should access with ease as a result of their challenges. To shock you the wife of Olusegun Agagu had an NGO and they really touch the lives of PWDs during that time. The trained PWDs with skills, empowerment and assist that they PWDs have good source of livelihood. Most if not all of the NGOs only want their pockets to be full against the real concern for the disabled (Male/52 years/Yoruba/ MDA/Ondo State).

One of the participants in the IDI in Oyo was very emphatic in her response on the conditions of PWDs in the state.

Disabled people in the state have neglected and seriously suffering. In fact, many of them have resulted into begging for survival except for those who are from wealthy family(ies). Government, CSOs, NGOs, and MDAs have not done enough to ameliorate the living conditions of PWDs. There is a huge gap when we considered what is obtainable in state like Lagos, Ondo and Ogun. We are still far behind. We do not know the direction of this government on the issue of disability.

It is very bad to say the least (Female/25 years/Yoruba/ JONAPWD /Oyo State).

In summation of many of the participants across the states is that of neglect as PWDs are made to struggle to survive on their own.

One of the Politician Interviewed in Ogun State affirmed that:

The government is trying its best to improve the conditions of PWDs in the state and all efforts is on in the state to domesticate the disability act. Very soon, the conditions of PWDs will improve. We are not resting on our oars (Male/ 48 years/Yoruba/Politician/Ogun State)

However, responses from Lagos State differ. One of the directors in MDAs in the state explained thus:

State of disability in the state have been functioning well and kudos to the state government because they create an agency to address the issues of people with disabilities known as Lagos State Office For Disability Affair (LASODA) which cater for PWDs. The agency ensures the welfare of the PWDs and they have different NGOs that registered with the agency. In addition, some of the PWDs are appointed in different capacity as special adviser on disability affairs and directors in various agencies. Apart from this, they are giving employment opportunities in MDAs in the state (Male/55 years/Yoruba/Director/ Lagos State)

The level of awareness of the discrimination against persons with disabilities (prohibition) act shows that 62% of respondents affirmed that they are not aware of the discrimination against persons with disabilities act and 38% claimed they are aware. This finding may be connected with the fact that only two out the six states in south-west have domesticated the act. Also, 34% of the respondents have knowledge of the rights under the act. In the qualitative study conducted among some of the stakeholders in the states. One of the CSOs interviewed in Osun explained further:

The discrimination against persons with disabilities (prohibition) Act2018 exist at the federal level but at the level of the states only two states have done that in the west. Others are just coming up with the law to curb or reduce the discrimination against PWDs. I believe it is not obvious that the Act is effective and efficient (Male/38 years/Ibo/JONAPWD /Osun State).

Also, another participant in Lagos enthused:

I think the law exists in Lagos before the federal government adopted it. That is why it is easy Lagos state to be ahead of other states. The various administrations in the state have focused on the plight of PWDs. I know every year that a weeklong activity is lined up to celebrate PWDs in State. I think Lagos State Government need commendation but they can still do better than this (Female/49 years/Yoruba/FBO/Lagos State).

In terms of domestication of the act in the states, majority of the respondents (81%) affirmed that it has not been domesticated with 15% of the respondents claiming it has been domesticated. As explained by one of the participants in Oyo state on domestication of the act:

It is not domesticated yet in Oyo State. However, there is plan by selected members of the house of assembly with the committee appointed and preoccupied with responsibility of ensuring that the right of the PWDs is protected to look into this act in the state. They intend to travel round the three senatorial districts and even across the local governments under each district to look inward on how to address and put in place law that will protect PWDs from being discriminated in state. They will be meeting with relevant stakeholders such as JONAPWD, CSOs, NGOs/ FBOs and others (Male/59 years/ Yoruba/Politician/Oyo State).

Another participant in Ondo state described the domestication as:

I think it has been domesticated partially. Why I said partially is because the act has been signed into law but the agency that will coordinate it has not been fully inaugurated by the state government. Lagos has its own agency for disability and that is what we want here too (Male/ 44 years/ Yoruba/ JONAPWD /Ondo State)

It is pertinent to note that Lagos State is about the only state in the Southwest that has fully domesticated the act. Through this effort, other states are trying to adopt the Lagos State model to domesticate their own act. Part of the effort was the creation of the Lagos State Office of Disability Affairs (LASODA) in June 2011 by Lagos State Special People's Law (LLSPL). The law upholds the rights of all persons living with disability in the state by safeguarding them against

discrimination and ensuring equal rights and opportunities. Access to employment still constitutes major setbacks as employment and livelihood policies and programmes still elude PWD.

In terms of rating the efforts of the state government towards the domestication of the Act, majority of the respondents (73%) considered it to be very poor. Also, 20% of the respondents said it is poor below is the percentage of respondents

Table 7: Efforts of Government towards the Domestication of the Act

Variables		Frequency	Per cent
Efforts of the State Government towards the domestication of the ACT?	Very poor	219	76.3
	Poor	58	20.2
	Fair	10	3.5
	Total	287	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 8: Barriers Hindering the Domestication of the Act in the State

Variables		Frequency	Per cent
Barriers hindering the domestication of the Act in the State?	Lack of willingness of the Governor	65	21.7
	Lack of willingness on the part of State House of Assembly members	65	21.7
	Environmental factors	51	17.0
	Cultural factors	65	21.7
	Lack of fund	52	17.3
	Others (Specify)	2	.7
	Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Concerning the barriers hindering the domestication of the act in the state, many of the respondents affirmed the lack of willingness on the part of the governor, lack of willingness on the part of the state houses of assembly, cultural factor, environmental factor and lack of fund as the barriers hindering the domestication of the act in the state.

Also identified as part of the barriers hindering the domestication of the act in the states are lack of political will on the part of the leader, poor data management system to capture all the PWDs in the various states based on their type of disability or cluster they belong. There is also the problem of inability of government official to involve experienced, qualified and learned PWDs to represent them among policy makers. As explained by one of the CSOs interviewed in Lagos:

The barriers hindering the domestication PWDs are so enormous that it will take the Grace of God for government to show seriousness on the issues of PWDs. We must enact laws that fully guaranteed their rights as citizens of this country that we give them right to quality education, social security, employment, medical care, housing, transportation and inclusion in governance. These rights are not too much to ask and considering the fact that the line between ability and disability is very thin. I think we must all rise up to support the PWDs in all states in Nigeria to get their rights (Male/28 years/ Yoruba/CSO/Lagos State).

In terms of what can be done to mitigate those barriers hindering the domestication of the act, the respondents advocated for sensitization, enlightenment and execution of the acts in those states that are yet to sign the act into law. This will ensure that they access to quality health care system, quality education, effective transport system, gainful employment opportunities in both public and private sector, inclusion in governance and knowledge in ICT. As explained by one of the participant in Osun state

PWDs must have 99% access to quality education at all levels either in federal, state or in the local governments. They (PWDs) must all have access to quality health care that will ensure that they are being taken care of without any stress or hindrance. The health care centre home must be built in such a way that when they want to access it does not poses stress on them. For instance, health centres must not be too high for PWDs on crutches as well as on wheelchairs. PWDs needed to also be empowered with skill acquisition of different kinds especially ICT, CCTV camera installation and the likes to ensure facilities are provided for them to practicalize the skills acquired and to ensure they have source of livelihood. These applies to every aspect of needs for the sustenance of PWDs (Male/33 years/Yoruba/ JONAPWD/Osun State)

Another participant in Ogun State

There should be a good data system of PWDs. They must ensure they are given less strained and privilege for employment and other opportunities, plan better health facilities for them and assist them in accessing good transport system that government should strive to put in place (Female/40 years/ Ibo/CSO/Ogun State).

Many of the respondents advocated for more publicity, sensitization, lobbying and enactment of more laws to push for legislation at the state houses of assembly for the domestication of the act. Relevant stakeholders must brace up and ensure more efforts towards actualizing the domestication of the act in other states yet to implement it.

Discussion of findings

The study elicited responses on important issues like disability experiences in terms of the challenges facing persons with disabilities, inclusions of persons with disabilities planning for public facilities, support services and intervention programmes available for persons with disabilities or enjoyed by the them in the southwestern state and domestication of the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018 and factors hindering the implementations of the disability acts

The findings reveal that the welfare of PWDs is still a far cry in the Southwestern States. While state like Lagos and Ondo States are doing all they could to improve the welfare of PWDs through provision of jobs, support and encouragement, other states have not done much in this direction. This lack of attention and care explains why many PWDs in South west feel neglected. In spite of the negative perception of the public against PWDs, the PWDs see themselves as normal people that can do what able bodied cannot do. The study found that PWDs are faced with financial

challenges more, social exclusion and difficulties in accessing private and public facilities in the south west states.

Also, the study found that job discrimination among PWDs is quite alarming despite the provision of the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, majority of the PWDs were still being denied job opportunities especially in states like Oyo, Ekiti and Osun. Similarly, in terms of common forms of abuse among PWDs, respondents identified: Discrimination by members of the public, physical abuse, Discrimination at workplace, victimization, harassment by government official and social exclusion.

The study revealed that few of the respondents have benefitted from state government intervention programmes for PWDs. The responses emanated from Lagos and Ondo States while majority of the PWDs have never benefitted from any intervention programmes. Few of the PWDs in Lagos considered the conditions of PWDs as very good. In terms of the domestication of the Act, only Lagos and Ondo have so far done that, while states like Ekiti, Ogun and Oyo are about to do that. Some of the reasons adduced by the PWDs for the barriers hindering the domestication of the Act is lack of willingness by State House of Assembly Members, lack of willingness on the part of the State Governor, Environmental factors and cultural factors. On what can be done to mitigate barriers hindering domestication of the Act, they advocated for more publicity, sensitization, lobbying and enactment of more laws to push for legislation at the state houses of assembly for the domestication of the Act.

Recommendations

- **Amplify the Voice of PWDs:** The first thing is to break the PWDs silence across all clusters. This can be done by empowering, encouraging, and mobilizing PWDs to speak out about their plights on stigmatization and harassment in communities across the states. Nothing can be compared to one's happiness. This can be achieved by increasing awareness of the importance of speaking out and reporting cases against violations of their rights to access public utilities, education, health care, transportation, employment and inclusion in governance.
- **Females PWDs should be conscious of their environment:** Women and girls must be sensitised to be vigilant and report suspicious sexual advancement or harassment to them from their family members (such as uncles, fathers, and brothers), teachers, and others to the appropriate authorities (such as police, human right groups, JONAPWD. Beyond this, there should be targeted advocacy to men and boys in the communities to protect the vulnerable groups in their communities and ensure that women and girls especially female PWDs are protected from perpetrators in their various communities across the states.

- **Economic Empowerment of PWDs:** Deliberate actions should be put in place by local, state, federal governments, CSOs, FBOs and NGOs towards the economic empowerment of PWDs in our communities across the states. Through these efforts, they would be able to withstand the challenges of poverty, exclusion, and neglect since they have a sound economic base to assist their families.
- **Implementation of existing laws and policies:** There is the need to implement discrimination against persons with disabilities (prohibition) act and to domestication in the states in the federation. The various stakeholders, including CSOs and human rights groups, NGOs must increase advocacy and campaigns to ensure that all state governors implement this law in their respective states. This will address the various problems faced by PWDs. Other laws and policies should also be enacted to strengthen the lapses in previous ones. The law should empower the police department with special funds to investigate cases of exclusion, denial of job opportunities, cases of stigmatization, harassments and others associated with PWDs.
- **Provision of more jobs for PWDs:** There is a need for CSOs, FBOs and NGOs through their development partners and funders to develop programmes that will create jobs and vocations for the unemployed PWDs in our communities and assist them with soft loans with low interest to support their families. The support will assist in reducing unemployment in our societies.

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