

4. Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Nigeria

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Abstract

Accessibility is indeed a precondition for people with disabilities to enjoy their human rights as it ensures that they have the same opportunities and choices as others. Without accessibility, many rights such as the right to education, work, health and freedom of expression, become inaccessible or out of reach for people with disabilities. Even the possibility of accessing justice by seeking redress and obtaining remedies for infringement of rights would be impeded. Using a doctrinal research methodology, the paper explored the access impediments to social services for persons with disabilities in Nigeria. The paper found that the problem of accessing social services is an even bigger challenge for people with disabilities. Inaccessible physical environments, inadequate assistive technology or rehabilitative devices, and poor services, systems, and policies continue to hinder the access of persons with disabilities to social services in Nigeria. The paper therefore recommended, among other things, that to develop an intervention that is effective in promoting the access of people with disabilities to social services, it is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of the potential impediments to such access and the influence they have on it. There is also a need to mainstream disability into development policies and social services, as this promotes inclusion and addresses the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing these services.

Keywords: Access, Impediments, Persons with Disabilities, Social Services, Nigeria.

Introduction

Disability is a global phenomenon that transcends geographical, cultural, religious, gender and socioeconomic boundaries. Its prevalence and incidence are high around the world making it crucial to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities (Haruna, 2017). According to recent estimates, more than one billion people worldwide are disabled with approximately 190 million of them living with severe disabilities, many of those affected live in developing countries including Nigeria, where an estimated 25 million people have one form of disability, making up about 15% of the population (Ayub & Abubakar, 2022). Persons with Disabilities often face obstacles in many aspects of their lives, including schools, families, banks, and other public places. This can lead to adverse socioeconomic outcomes, such as limited access to education and jobs, increased poverty rates and poor health. The World Bank (2019) has found that people with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation and crime than people without disabilities. Similarly, people with disabilities often have limited access to basic amenities and live independently from others in society (Ibid). In fact, access to social services is crucial for facilitating social inclusion and upholding the fundamental human rights of people with disabilities. Ensuring access to social services will help to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities which are essential for achieving the goals of the sustainable development agenda 2030.

People with disabilities often face several barriers that prevent them from accessing social services, such as inaccessible buildings, transportation or information. These barriers may be physical such as buildings that are not accessible to those who use wheelchairs or crutches, or they may be mental, social or financial. Ojo found that patients with disabilities often feel disconnected and marginalized by the way they are treated as passive recipients of social support, rather than as active members of society who deserve basic needs like everyone else. According to Ojo (2017), the disjointed feelings experienced by people with disabilities are related to a lack of access to not just public infrastructure, but also information and communication technology, public policies, electoral system, transportation systems, employment opportunities, educational opportunities, housing and

health care. As Ayub and Rasaki (2021) observed, the lack of access to these basic needs and social services can have a significant negative impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities, including their ability to exercise their rights and live productive lives.

Nigeria has shown its commitment to promoting the well-being of persons with disabilities by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and enacting the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act. These legal instruments require that all public buildings be accessible to persons with disabilities and outlaw all forms of discrimination based on disability. Despite the legislation that exists at the international and national levels to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities, there are still gaps in providing equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to access social services in Nigeria.

The Concept of Disability

Disability refers to a broad range of conditions that impair an individual's ability to perform certain activities or participate fully in society. Disabilities are not just one form but are multidimensional. Physical disabilities, such as paralysis, amputation, or chronic health issues like arthritis or multiple sclerosis, can limit mobility or physical functioning and range from mild to severe. Intellectual disabilities, including Down syndrome or Fragile X syndrome, impact cognitive functioning and adaptive behaviour, influencing learning, reasoning, and problem-solving skills (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). Developmental disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and cerebral palsy, emerge early in life and can affect multiple areas of development, including physical, social, and cognitive domains (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2022).

Learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, or dyscalculia, manifest as specific difficulties with reading, writing, or mathematics, significantly affecting academic achievement and daily activities (Learning Disabilities Association of America, 2023). Sensory disabilities, like hearing or visual impairments, involve the partial or complete loss of one or more senses, impacting communication, access to information, and navigation (American Foundation for the Blind, 2023). Mental health disabilities, such as depression, anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia, affect emotional regulation, thinking, and behaviour, leading to significant impairments in daily functioning and social relationships (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2023).

Invisible disabilities, such as chronic pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, or epilepsy, are not immediately apparent but can be equally debilitating, affecting daily life and independence (Invisible Disabilities Association, 2023). Communication disabilities, including aphasia or stuttering, impact the ability to speak, understand, or use language effectively, often resulting from brain injuries, neurological disorders, or developmental issues. Additionally, multiple disabilities can occur simultaneously, compounding challenges and necessitating comprehensive support and accommodation.

The impact of disabilities is further shaped by social and environmental factors, including societal attitudes, cultural norms, accessibility, and the availability of support services. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of disabilities is crucial for developing inclusive policies and practices that ensure accessibility, equity, and full participation in all areas of life. By embracing this perspective, society can work toward removing barriers and creating environments where everyone could thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Defining Social Services and People with Disabilities

Social services are services designed to meet basic human needs for food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, economic security, and education. They also include services that help individuals develop their capabilities, such as job training and placement services (Gray, 2016). In addition to the services mentioned above, social services also refer to a wide range of programs and services provided by governments and other organizations to meet the needs of individuals, families, and communities. These programs and services aim to improve individuals' quality of life and help them become more self-sufficient.

People with disabilities on the other hand are those who experience limitations in their ability to function or participate in society due to physical, mental, or other health conditions that can be caused by genetic factors, environmental influences, accidents or diseases. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a person with a disability is someone who has long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that can hinder their full and effective participation in society when interacting with various barriers (CRPD, article 1). The World Health Organization (2011) defines persons with disabilities as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments whose interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Thus, a person with a disability is defined as someone who is unable to fully or partially meet their own basic needs and is unable to participate fully in the community due to physical, mental, emotional, or sensory limitations. Disability is therefore a complex and multi-faceted term that encompasses impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions (Onalu & Nwafor, 2021).

The Importance of Access to Social Services for People with Disabilities

Access to social services is vital for people with disabilities, as it can help them to live independently and participate fully in society. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that access to healthcare, education, employment, and social support are all important factors in promoting the health and well-being of people with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 13 December 2006) makes accessibility an overarching principle, which means that it applies to all aspects of the Convention, including healthcare, education, employment, and social support (CRPD, Article 3). Rimmer and Newcomer (2014) found that access to healthcare, education, and social support has a significant impact on the quality of life and well-being of people with disabilities. The study also found that people with disabilities who have access to these services are less likely to experience poverty and isolation and are more likely to be employed and participate in their communities (Rimmer and Newcomer, 2014). Access to social services can promote social inclusion and reduce the risk of social isolation and exclusion (Wehman, et al., 2014). It is not only important for individuals with disabilities, but also for their families and caregivers. Studies have shown that people with disabilities who have access to healthcare and social support are less likely to experience depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. They are also more likely to have better physical health, including improved cardiovascular health and lower rates of obesity (Wehman, et al., 2014). Additionally, access to education can

help people with disabilities gain the knowledge and skills they need to live independently and participate in their communities (National Council on Disability, 2018).

Moreover, research has shown that when people with disabilities have access to employment and other economic opportunities, it can lead to increased productivity and reduced costs for government programs. For instance, a study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that increasing the employment rate of working-age people with disabilities from 29% to 54% could reduce government spending on disability benefits by \$23.2 billion per year (Gustafson & Mueller, 2020). In addition to reducing Federal spending, access to social services can also reduce the family caregiving burden (Martire et al, 2005). It can reduce the number of hours that family members spend providing care and increasing satisfaction for both family members and persons with disabilities. This benefit can be particularly important for family caregivers, who often face significant stress and burden when providing care.

Indeed, access to social services is essential for improving the lives of people with disabilities and their families. By reducing caregiving burden, increasing economic opportunities, and promoting health and well-being, access to social services can make a positive difference for all involved.

Rights of People with Disabilities to Access Social Services

Persons with disabilities have the same right to access social services as anyone else. These are not extra rights, but rather fundamental human rights that should be available to all people; regardless of whether they have a disability or not. This includes the right to access health care, education, employment opportunities and social support on an equal basis with others.

Healthcare Services

The right to health is a well-established right under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). ICESCR recognizes the right of all people to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (ICESCR, Article 12). The Convention on the Rights of the Child also requires state parties to recognize the rights of children with disabilities to specific assistance to ensure their effective access to health care and rehabilitation services in a manner conducive to the Child's achieving the fullest possible social integration (CRC, Article, 23). Furthermore, Article 25 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities affirms the right of persons with disabilities to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. This includes access to preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services, as well as to health-related services. The Article also specifies that states must take all appropriate measures to reduce infant and child mortality, provide clean water and sanitation, and combat diseases and malnutrition. Additionally, Article 25 calls for the provision of health-related information, education, and training to health professionals.

The right to health as outlined in Article 25 of the Convention must be interpreted in the light of the principles of the Convention outlined in Article 3. Article 3 of the Convention outlines the guiding principles, including respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, and non-discrimination. These principles should be taken into consideration when interpreting the right to health as outlined in Article 25. Section 21 of the Discrimination against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2018 also requires that health services be provided in a manner that is

accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes ensuring that health facilities are physically accessible, and that communication is accessible. Thus, the right to health includes access to vital public health programmes and to rehabilitation services, including residential care, community-based care and support services provided based on free and informed consent.

Educational Services

It is widely acknowledged that all children, regardless of their nationality, colour, religion, culture, background, or disability, have the right to an education. The right of people with disabilities to access high-quality education is a manifestation of their fundamental human rights, which are protected by both national and international law. According to section 17 of the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, persons with disabilities have a right to education free from discrimination or segregation at any level, including the right to free education up to secondary school. In addition, the Act stipulates that all public educational institutions must be inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities. They must have trained personnel to provide for the educational needs of people with disabilities. Moreover, the curricula of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions must include Braille, sign language, and other skills for communicating with people with disabilities (Ibid, section 18). These provisions are designed to ensure that people with disabilities can live dignified, self-sufficient lives and actively participate in community development. The Act also mandates subsidized education for special education personnel (Ibid, sections 18-19). These measures will go a long way in promoting integration and communication with persons living with disabilities in Nigeria. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which Nigeria has ratified, explicitly states that children with disabilities have the right to education on an equal basis with other children and that their education should be free from any discrimination (CRC, Article 28). Similarly, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affirms the rights of children with disabilities to education, without discrimination (Article 3). Moreover, Sustainable Development Goal 4 focuses on inclusive and equitable quality and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all, including the elimination of gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, especially for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities. Additionally, the proposal calls for building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and that create safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments. Indeed, the right to education in all, including persons with disabilities, is a fundamental human right that must be protected and promoted.

Employment Opportunities

Employment is central to the ability of people with disabilities to maintain a decent standard of living for themselves and their families and is a crucial factor influencing their ability to fully participate in society. Work is a defining feature of human existence and is viewed as a way for people to make individual contributions to their communities. For many people, work is a source of identity and a way to participate in society. However, for people with disabilities, barriers to employment can significantly limit their ability to participate in society. The Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act provides that persons with disabilities have the right to work on an equal basis with others. This includes the right to access opportunities to earn a

living through freely chosen or accepted work in a labour market and work environment that is open and accessible to all (DAPDA, section 28). This means that employers regardless of disability could apply for and be considered for jobs. Employers must not make hiring decisions based on the applicant's disability, but rather on their skills and qualifications. A person discriminating against a person with a disability in the employment process is liable to a minimum fine of N250,000.00 (two hundred and fifty thousand Naira) which will be paid to the affected person with a disability (Ibid, section 28 (2)). Any company found to violate this provision will be liable to a minimum fine of N500,000.00 (Five hundred thousand Naira) and any principal officers of the company found to have been involved in the discrimination will be liable to an additional fine of N50,000.00 (fifty thousand Naira) (Ibid, section 28 (3)). Section 29 of the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act also requires all employers in public organizations to have at least 5% of their workforce made up of people with disabilities. This provision is intended to ensure that people with disabilities have access to equal employment opportunities and are not excluded from the workforce.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, like the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, affirms the right of people with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. This includes the right to work in a labour market that is open, inclusive, and accessible to people with disabilities (Article 27). The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities directs state parties to prioritize non-discrimination laws, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and positive measures as means of implementing the right to work for people with disabilities. Article 27 of the Convention encompasses access to general technical and vocational guidance programs, placement services and vocational and continuing training, as well as the promotion of vocational and professional rehabilitation. Similarly, Sustainable Development Goal 10 seeks to reduce inequality within and among countries by empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including people with disabilities.

Social Support

The rights of persons with disabilities to access social support are outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which has been ratified by Nigeria. According to the UNCRPD, people with disabilities have the right to enjoy access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and services open or provided to the public (CRPD, Article 9). In addition to the rights outlined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of Nigeria, which is based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, outlines the rights of persons with disabilities to social support. These include the right to health, education, vocational training, employment and rehabilitation (DAPDA, section 17). The Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities Act also guarantees equal access to public buildings, transportation, and communication services (DAPDA, section 19). All public buildings must be fitted with ramps and other facilities that make them accessible to and useable by people with disabilities. (DAPDA, section 57). The Act further requires that all public sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and all other facilities that are open to the public must be made accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs and those who are visually

impaired (Ibid, section 5). The Act allows for a five-year transitional period for public buildings and structures to be modified to be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities (Ibid, section 6). It also requires that all building plans be reviewed by the appropriate authority responsible for approval to ensure compliance with accessibility standards. It is an offence for an officer to approve a building plan that does not meet these requirements (Ibid, section 7). The right to social support for people with disabilities therefore includes a range of services and support that enable them to live in the community and participate in society. Despite legal protections, many persons with disabilities in Nigeria continue to face significant barriers to accessing social services.

Access Impediments to Social Services for People with Disabilities in Nigeria

People with disabilities face a variety of barriers when accessing social services including physical, attitudinal, and institutional barriers. These barriers have a significant impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families.

Physical Impediments

These refer to physical barriers present in the environment that prevent people with disabilities from accessing social services. They include inaccessible buildings, a lack of ramps or elevators, and a lack of Braille or audio signage. Lack of access to infrastructure like houses, offices and churches makes it difficult for people with disabilities to participate in society. Physical barriers like narrow doorways, inaccessible toilets, and lack of ramps make these structures inaccessible (Thompson, et al, 2021). Several barriers make hospitals inaccessible to people with disabilities. For example, there is a lack of ramps, narrow doorways, and inaccessible toilets (Mbada et al, 2021). These barriers pose challenges in accessing medical services and contribute to inequality in the system of treating patients. Thus, Persons with disabilities often face difficulties in accessing health services, such as limited availability of accessible hospitals and health personnel who are trained to provide services that are inclusive of people with disabilities. There is a lack of accessible information on disease prevention and symptom identification in Braille and large print formats, making it difficult for people with vision impairments to learn about health issues and take preventive measures. This lack of information can lead to increased health risks for people with vision impairments. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has noted that accessible health care requires both communication accessibility, such as sign language interpreters, and physical accessibility, such as accessible restrooms and entrances. However, people with disabilities, particularly those who are deaf, have speech or vision impairment, or have an intellectual disability, often face barriers to accessing effective healthcare services.

In addition to difficulty in accessing healthcare services, people with disabilities also face poor educational outcomes due to a lack of accessible infrastructure and learning materials. Furthermore, the buildings at tertiary institutions are often not constructed with the needs of people with disabilities in mind. These buildings, like many other public buildings, are not accessible to people with disabilities. Children with visual impairments often struggle to learn in school due to the lack of accessible materials, such as Braille materials and textbooks. Also, the high cost of accessible textbooks presents an additional challenge for visually impaired children from low-income families. As a result, blind students often rely on friends to dictate assignments, notes, and even textbooks to them, to comprehend and participate in class activities (Ojo, 2019). In addition to household

poverty, other barriers to educational access include inaccessible physical structures, a lack of appropriate information format, in-class communication support, a lack of assistive technology, and discrimination (Kett, 2017).

Moreover, a lack of accessible transportation systems further discourages the social inclusion of people with disabilities. The lack of assistive technologies and other resources to support people with disabilities prevents them from fully integrating into the mainstream of society. In a study of six Nigerian cities (Bauchi, Enugu, Kano, Lagos, Rivers and Abuja), Odufuwa (2017) found that many persons with disabilities have limited or no access to public transportation. This barrier hinders their daily activities and prevents them from fully participating in urban life. The poor state of public transportation services in Nigerian cities forced persons with disabilities to spend additional money on hiring a professional attendant when making trips. Persons with disabilities who use wheelchairs, walking sticks, and other mobility aids often cannot use public transportation in Nigerian cities. (United Nations, 2007). For example, Fatimah Aderonmu, a 24-year-old woman who lost the use of her limbs in childhood, faces daily challenges in accessing social services. According to Aderonmu, (as cited in Abolade, 2021) the lack of wheelchair accessibility on pedestrian bridges makes it impossible for her to use public transportation. With a wry smile, she said:

Now that I use a wheelchair, I just avoid pedestrian bridges. I can't make use of public means of transportation because they are inaccessible. I prefer to go out in private vehicles or use cab-hailing services and this comes with high financial implications because even though I stay in Ogun State, most of my activities take place in Lagos.

In addition to a lack of accessible transportation, persons with disabilities in Nigeria face many barriers to accessing public buildings. There is often no wheelchair access at street crossings, and public buildings often lack accessible facilities. Affordable and practical mobility aids are also scarce. The lack of accessible transportation and public facilities presents significant challenges to persons with disabilities in Nigeria. These barriers not only make it difficult for people with disabilities to move around and access basic services, but also create a sense of isolation and exclusion.

Attitudinal Impediments

Attitudinal impediments are the result of society's negative perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities. It is no secret that people with disabilities often face prejudice and discrimination against others. This perception is not inclusive and does not consider the experiences and needs of people with disabilities. As a result, persons with disabilities face stigmatization and discrimination and are often denied the dignity and opportunities they deserve. Society's perception of people with disabilities as objects of charity, rather than as full and equal members of society, only compounds the problem. The LINKS Sector Scan has identified attitudinal impediments as the most significant barrier to employment for people with disabilities due to a lack of understanding and knowledge about disability (LINKS, 2021). One of the most common attitudinal impediments is when individuals focus only on a person's impairment, rather than seeing them as a whole person. Almost one-third of people with disabilities reported that they receive negative feedback or inadequate attention from potential employers after disclosing their impairments (Ibid). In addition, people with disabilities

often experience stigma and discrimination because of their disability. Many people in society have a lack of understanding or awareness about people with disabilities, which can lead to misunderstanding and stereotypes. Some people also believe that they are not capable of certain activities or are a burden on society.

Furthermore, healthcare providers often make their services inaccessible and discriminate against patients with disabilities. This is due in part to a lack of basic knowledge about human rights and the right to healthcare among many healthcare workers. As a result, people with disabilities often have difficulty accessing healthcare services. People with disabilities face often discrimination and denial of medical attention at rural and urban centers, where they may be treated with disdain by healthcare workers. This discrimination is based on their disability and can prevent them from getting the care they need. Attitudinal impediments also affect access to educational services, as Nigeria's educational system separates children with disabilities from those in traditional classrooms. This segregation system reinforces the mistreatment and discrimination of children with disabilities. Additionally, it limits the opportunities available to children with disabilities and reinforces the idea that they are somehow less deserving of a quality education. The segregation system deprives children with disabilities of opportunities for socialization, including isolation, abuse, and neglect. Overall, attitudinal impediments hurt people with disabilities in several areas, including education, healthcare, and employment. These barriers can lead to a cycle of discrimination, mistreatment and neglect, which further isolates people with disabilities from the rest of society. Efforts to address attitudinal barriers must therefore address both the root causes of these attitudes and the systemic issues that perpetuate them.

Institutional Impediments

Institutional impediments are policies, laws, and practices that, even if they are not explicitly discriminatory, have the effect of excluding or disadvantaging persons with disabilities. These barriers may not be intentional, but they still deny people with disabilities access to equal opportunities and full participation in society (WHO, 2021) For example, a person who uses a wheelchair may not be able to enter a financial institution if there is no ramp. Someone with sensory processing issues may struggle to complete their work without reasonable accommodation, such as noise-cancelling headphones. (Elekwe & Ebenso, 2016). The LINKS Sector Scan identified lack of access to capital as the biggest barrier to success for disabled entrepreneurs. It also found that disabled entrepreneurs are not registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission and may not be aware of or be able to afford the costs associated with regulatory standards such as product registration with the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control and therefore do not benefit from government procurement opportunities (LINKS, 2019). According to McColl (2006), the challenges patients with disabilities face in hospitals are systemic, due to policies and hospital management. A lack of qualified doctors and long waiting times for patients are common problems, but even more so for patients with disabilities. McColl further asserted that hospitals often exclude patients with disabilities from special treatments because they are perceived as a burden on the physician's time.

In addition, studies have shown that patients with disabilities face a variety of systematic barriers to accessing good health, less access to adequate healthcare, and riskier health behaviours (Ayub & Rasaki, 2021). Private hospitals are often understaffed, and there may not be enough staff on duty to deal with the needs of patients with disabilities. This can lead to a lack of appropriate services for patients with disabilities, as well as geographical

inequalities in the provision of medical services, caused by the irresponsibility of hospital owners and managers (Ibid). These conditions can be stressful experiences for patients with disabilities from seeking necessary medical care. This can exacerbate their health problems and infringe on their fundamental human rights. Patients with disabilities face many challenges when seeking medical care. Lack of policy frameworks, quality social services and an unequal geographical distribution of services are all institutional impediments that prevent people with disabilities from accessing the social services they need. Without the right policies and services, people with disabilities may not be able to fully participate in society and may experience negative consequences as a result.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The importance of social services for people with disabilities cannot be overstated. International instruments and national legislation, such as the Disability Act in Nigeria, exist to promote access to healthcare, education, employment, buildings, transportation systems and assistive technologies. Despite this, people with disabilities are still a disadvantaged group, with difficulty accessing these services and systems. Based on these findings, the paper, therefore, recommends that to create an intervention that is effective in promoting the access of people with disabilities to social services, it is necessary to identify and understand potential barriers to access and their impacts. Mainstream disability issues are included in all development policies and social services. To be effective, this mainstreaming process should include the participation of people with disabilities in decision-making processes at all levels of government, and at all stages of policy development, including planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Again, Laws that support structural change for persons with disabilities should be implemented in Nigeria, as structural barriers are a major challenge to accessing services for this population. The Discrimination against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2018 should be amended to include specific provisions for transportation security for persons with disability. National councils on disability should be established, including representation from all disability groups in the country. The charity model of disability, in which people with disabilities are viewed as passive recipients of help, should be replaced with a new model that views people with disabilities as active contributors to the economy. To shift from a charity model to a rights-based model, stakeholders such as the local private sector, civil society organizations, and governments should collaborate on initiatives that build awareness of the rights-based model. There is also the need to provide assistive devices, skills, and training for people with disabilities. Promote inclusive environments in schools. Build more barrier-free transportation systems and plan new systems with the perspectives of people with disabilities in mind. This will involve understanding the different circumstances that create barriers for people with disabilities.

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