

**DISCRIMINATION, EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND NEGLECT [DEAN] OF
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NIGERIA**

Akeem Olalekan Ayub

Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *Disability is a global concern, predisposes the sufferers to several challenges including discrimination, exploitation, abuse and neglect both at home and in the street. The conditions of being disabled could arise from birth or during one's lifetime and the sufferers find themselves incapacitated either mentally or physically which then limits their chances of accessing various opportunities in society. The paper argued that persons with disabilities [PWDs] are poorly treated by family members through physical and sexual abuse, exploitation of inheritance, rights infringement and or resources gathered from alms begging where used for such. The exploitation and abuse were made possible due to the heavy reliance of the PWDs on the family members to carry out certain tasks and for being perceived as a burden to the family. Also, the paper argued that PWDs are faced with a lot of discrimination in schools by their peers and tutors and are often neglected in terms provision of assistive devices, materials and adequate training for tutors to successfully transfer knowledge to them. The paper concluded that the treatment of the PWDs was poor, unfair and unjust and requires government intervention, NGOs and individuals' positive attitudinal change to alleviate their suffering experiences.*

KEYWORDS: discrimination, exploitation, abuse, neglect, persons with disabilities, treatment

INTRODUCTION

Disability is a common social, physical and psychological problem all over the world. The World Bank (2020) estimates that over one billion people of the world's population constituting 15%, suffer from one form of disability or the other, although, more prevalent developing countries like Nigeria. The estimate also shows that at least 190 million live with significant disabilities. This category of persons is commonly known as persons with disabilities (PWDs). The Report of the World Health Organization on World Disability Report in 2011 shows that about 25 million Nigerian people constituting 15% of the country's population have a disability (Ewang, 2019). Accordingly, a significant number of the PWDs in Nigeria experience discrimination, violence, stigma, and lack of access to adequate housing, education and healthcare. According to Ewang (2019), the report of WHO shows that 5% of adults with disabilities were literate while 98% of children with disabilities had no access to preparatory and elementary education. Their condition is critical that they are being discriminated against in schools, families, banks and various public places. The needs of the PWDs are neglected to the extent that they become exposed to adverse socioeconomic outcomes, causing them limited access to education, lower employment opportunities, increased poverty rates and poorer health outcomes.

The World Bank (2020) notes that PWDs are at a higher risk of various forms of abuse, neglect and easily become victims of exploitation and crime. Accordingly, they are more likely to be abused, neglected, exploited and discriminated against more than PWDs. Adepoju (2018) demonstrates that PWDs experience a lot of challenges even though they are sympathised with, they hardly access basic amenities to function independently of others in society. Condemning these people when establishing a marital relationship is a common thing in Nigeria. Adepoju (2018) observes that PWDs can hardly get a sexual or marital partner and such experience decreases affection, prevents desires for love, marriage or birthing children. The discrimination is so glaring that they are bashed for not knowing the important steps in their lives, most especially when they are seen with a love partner. The argument is put forward that where some of them successfully get married or become disabled after marriage, they predators prey on them via domestic violence, exploitation of their entitled pension and resources.

The discrimination, exploitation, abuse and neglect of these people violate their fundamental human rights daily in many different ways. According to Grassroots Researchers Associations [GRA] (2020), PWDs are hardly allowed to marry a person without any deformity by the family or even the community, probably due to the inability to access medical services or pay bills. Accordingly, PWDs are also neglected during the pilgrimage to holy lands and discriminated against during participation in school competitions. Evidence abounds that PWDs also face discrimination and poor treatment while seeking to rent an apartment and participate in the political process of their country. The poor treatment experienced by this set of people infringes on their rights to access equal education with others and to live as humans. PWDs are subjected to several types of discrimination in Nigeria. Etieyibo and Omiegbe (2016) affirm that PWDs, most especially the children, are exploited and abused by being sent out for alms begging by their parents or guardians. This is done to evoke a sense of sympathy from the general public at the expense of enrolling them in special schools that will take care of their special needs. In a situation where children with disabilities decline to go out for begging, they are threatened with beating or starvation. Etieyibo and Omiegbe (2016) note that where children refuse, they are severely punished and sometimes chased away from home. To avert such a problem, children with disabilities usually obey the wish of their parents.

Having realised the poor treatment of PWDs, several advocacies emerged to ensure that they face no discrimination, exploitation, abuse and neglect as well as getting their rights protected. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) called for the full integration of PWDs in societies in addressing their challenges. World Bank (2020) reports that over 170 countries have ratified the CRPD, leading to increased development of disability policies and laws against discrimination of PWDs. In Nigeria, several efforts have been made to ensure that PWDs are treated equally with other members of society without prejudice or discrimination. The Nigeria Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol on May 28, 2007 and October 27, 2008 respectively. The Convention seeks among other things, “To promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.” The International Labour Organisation Convention also signed the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of (Disabled) No. 159 of 1983 on July 14, 2010 to make provision for “employment of persons with disabilities without discrimination”.

The 2018 Act on Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition), which Nigeria's President, Muhammadu Buhari claimed that he had not received as of January 17, 2018 on national television was later signed on January 23 after 9 years of relentless advocacy by disability rights groups and activists. The law "prohibits discrimination based on disability and imposes sanctions including fines and prison sentences on those who contravene it. It also stipulates a five-year transitional period for modifying public buildings, structures, and automobiles to make them accessible and usable for people with disabilities". Ojo (2017) expresses that the law will establish a National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, responsible for "ensuring that people with disabilities have access to housing, education, and healthcare where it will be empowered to receive complaints of rights violations and support victims to seek legal redress amongst other duties". With several advocacies and laws on protecting the rights of the PWDs, they are still at risk of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and neglect in the family, at schools and in many public places. It is on this observation, that the paper examines how these challenges play out in the family and at schools.

Conceptual Review: Disability and Persons with Disabilities [PWDs]

Disability is a term that means different things to different people and is used daily through conversations. Disability as a concept has no specific definition, therefore, it is 'complex, dynamic, multidimensional and contested', its definition covers impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions (WHO & The World Bank, 2011). A disability is any conditions or impairments (cognitive or intellectual, mental, physical, developmental, sensory, or a combination of multiple factors) that restrict a person to do certain activities or interact with the world around them. The occurrence of disability may be from birth or during a person's lifetime.

'Persons with disabilities [PWDs] include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others' (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [UNCRPD], 2006, p. 4). The definition associates disability to impairment and defining disability as an interaction, clearly implies that 'disability is not an attribute of the person' (WHO & World Bank, 2011, p. 5). 'An impairment on its own would not lead to a disability should there be a completely inclusive and comprehensively accessible environment' (Al Ju'beh, 2015, p. 13), which includes addressing attitudinal barriers such as stereotypes, prejudices and other forms of paternalistic and patronising treatment (Schulze, 2010, p. 27).

World Health Organization (2001) defines disabilities as "an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2016) notes that disabilities are characterised by the following conditions; deafness, blindness, paraplegia (paralysis of the lower half of the body), diabetes, autism, depression, epilepsy and HIV. Similarly, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2016) argues that disabilities cover diverse conditions including

- i. the congenital absence or adventitious loss of a limb or a sensory function;
- ii. progressive neurological conditions like multiple sclerosis;
- iii. chronic diseases like arteriosclerosis;
- iv. the inability or limited ability to perform such cognitive functions as remembering faces or calculating sums;
- v. and psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

From a medical point of view, disability is understood as a physical or mental impairment of an individual causing him or her personal and social consequences. The individuals face several challenges primarily or solely due to their impairments. In contrast, the social point of view sees disability as “a relation between an individual and her social environment: the exclusion of people with certain physical and mental characteristics from major domains of social life. Their exclusion is manifested not only in deliberate segregation but in a built environment and organized social activity that precludes or restricts the participation of people seen or labelled as having disabilities” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).

Both the medical and social models are considered in this paper. Hence, disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that constrains or limits individuals’ interaction with other members of their society and which often predisposes them to several challenges including discrimination, exploitation, abuse and neglect. The conditions, whether cognitive, developmental, physical or a combination of these, can be present from birth or arise during a person’s lifetime and make it more difficult for the person to execute certain activities or interact successfully with those around them without hindrance. The sufferers of these physical or mental impairments are regarded as persons with disabilities.

Exploitation and Abuse of Persons with Disabilities in the Family

Exploitation and abuse of PWDs are perpetrated in the family by the parents down to the siblings including extended family members and family friends. PWDs are often isolated and dependent on a small circle of families and friends or caregivers for critical support. While some of them assist with basic physical needs, they also maltreat these PWDs. This creates a bad experience and psychologically burdens the victims who find themselves in the dilemma of choosing between glaring abuse and an uncertain future. Schulze (2010) notes that physical disabilities result in psychological burden by socially depriving PWDs of economic survival. In either case, families with disabled members are often stigmatized and sometimes even ostracized by their communities. The family has failed to protect the interest and promote the wellbeing of PWDs via their action. PWDs are poorly cared for, mistreated, often ignored, neglected and discriminated against in the family and society.

Generally, adequate attention and provision for the needs of the PWDs throughout their lives bother families a lot and require a lot of sacrifice including financial, emotional, social and physical supports. The family should be a haven for these PWDs, however, the reverse has been the case as they sometimes get ostracized and their legal rights get infringed. Isiaka (2019) notes that the capacity of PWDs to exercise their free will is declined by the family’s control on deciding when to go out and where to go, what to do and how to do things. These families control the activities of the PWDs by keeping them away from people to avoid being stigmatised or shamed without knowing that they are abusing and lowering their self-esteem.

In the average Nigerian family, Isiaka (2019) argues that deaf children are seriously maltreated but the lucky ones end up being sent to institutions for care or adopted by teachers, probably due to lack of knowledge and information on taking care of them. Accordingly, deaf children who live with their families are side-lined and fail to learn the skills to communicate properly. The development and the choices of the children are limited by the poor treatment received from the families.

The maltreatment of these special persons is worsened when their conditions are assumed to result from being witches or fiends. Isiaka (2019) avers that disabilities are religiously and culturally stigmatised with the beliefs that they are caused by a supernatural force of evil or witchcraft. In this case, disabled persons can be ostracized or exiled. They are then treated as unworthy persons and forced to live in hostility and sometimes rendered homeless for shaming and leading the family into poverty. Exposure to several maltreatments by the family results in the waste of talents and denial of opportunities of the PWDs, hence, the circle of poverty continues and the reach of the full potential of these PWDs becomes a difficult task. It is not surprising to see the PWDs constituting a significant proportion of the poorest of the poor in the country because the poor treatment from both the family and society creates inequalities which restrict their access to education, employment, asset accumulation, health care, and opportunities for participation in social and community development.

PWDs from poor families are sent out for begging as a means for medical and economic survival. Madukwe (2012) critically assessed the increase of begging by PWDs in the streets for alms and reported that more than 80% of them resided in poor parts of the country. Accordingly, 30% and 20% of the PWDs were street youths and children respectively and were more vulnerable to abuse including violence, rape or sexual abuse. Madukwe (2012) expressed that governments most especially the Lagos State Government was forced to take steps in ensuring the safety and protection of the PWDs on disusing them for alms begging. The time for schooling is then diverted to begging for family survival and to the improvement of the condition of a disabled family member. Okakwu (2019) relates that the cost of educating one cognitively disabled child is capable of educating ten physically stable children in good schools. The PWDs in the family are poorly treated for being perceived as a source of stress or burden and creating difficulty while attending to their special needs.

Okakwu (2019) establishes that children with cognitive disabilities are considered a weighty burden that often results in their neglect by families. Being visually disabled does not amount to a loss of consciousness but a child with a cognitive disability may not be conscious of anything. Depending on others for survival throughout life existence for everything is key to children with visual disability. But, the question and fear here are how will children with visual disabilities survive if their key caregivers eventually die? The poor treatment of persons living with cognitive disabilities is exacerbated by the demise of their welfare managers, although, may become better where inheritance is left behind. However, the inheritance can be exploited by family members, caregivers or people entrusted them with. They exploit them using their closeness and position of trust to access their financial resources or scam them through a fake lottery and home improvement. Human Rights Watch (2020) reports that where widows become disabled after the demise of their spouses, they are kicked out of the inheritance left by their spouses by the families of the deceased.

The PWDs suffer in the hands of family caregivers who increasingly exploit and isolate them, and acquire costly items with their money without consent and desire. By implication, the cash of the disabled is lavishly spent and gifted to others unnecessarily. It is indicative that bills for essential services or utilities are unpaid and or terminated by the so-called family caregivers who extravagantly mismanage cash, valuables or financial resources for selfish and wicked interest. The assets or estate documents of a person who suddenly becomes disabled due to unforeseen circumstance and are handled by close relatives may be changed or transferred without genuine explanation or knowledge of the victim. Human Rights Watch (2020) posits that guardians and conservators including family members or close friends who take care of the PWDs and manage their cash benefits on their behalf, are known to exploit them. Madukwe (2012) argues that a man's life and family are threatened when he becomes disabled through unnatural events e.g. accidents. On this note, the source of livelihood is often lost to disability in the forms of loss of limbs. Close associates e.g. wife can abandon the man to his fate, leave him with difficult tasks like writing and eating with no or little assistance from a few people around. This equally generates pity that may later result in repulsion.

Human Rights Watch (2020) reports the interviews of 140 Mexican people comprising of 38 adults with disabilities including the deaf, the blind and the autistic, that majority of them had experienced sexual, physical and emotional abuse as well as neglect and confinement to rooms or beds from their families since childhood. Accordingly, those with cerebral palsy were abused by parents and siblings by hitting, throwing them to the side of the wheelchair or berating and calling them all sort of name. This triggers an emotional imbalance of anger, cry and regrets. Living independently of their abusers is with no option because such a decision has been insurmountably inhibited by their poor health status and the sole dependence on their abusers for accessing daily needs. Governments and the laws reinforce the dependence of PWDs on families without recourse to independent lifestyles and by legally requiring the relatives to receive pension and resources on behalf of them.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline (2020) asserts that PWDs are more likely to experience domestic violence in the family because of the power and control they possess over them. Domestic violence is globally perpetrated, however, it is often treated as a private matter in Nigeria. Therefore, victims of domestic violence, whether abled or disabled, hardly report their experience to authority unless detected through a report by a third party and investigation. In a situation where domestic violence is perpetrated against PWDs, they are very unlikely to leave the abusive home, probably the abusers are the carers or conservators. The seriousness of the domestic violence between couples can lead to a permanent disability in spouses with temporary disability. A husband can batter, sexually and physically abuse his wife for being disabled and burdensome to the family. This is when the condition of the wife affects the activities and financial status of the husband.

Fact remains that abuse is perpetrated against people of all backgrounds, gender and status but more committed against PWDs. A disabled wife and mother can be likened to bad parents, condemned for faking their disability even when it is real and shamed and humiliated for their condition. The husband can refuse a disabled wife from visiting the bathroom at will and to complete important recovery tasks. Sexual activity may be instigated by the spouse without respect to the partner's consent and in some cases, assistive devices are ceased, damaged or broken. Abusive partners control, threaten and harm their spouses who are disabled with the justification that their disability demands it. The National Domestic Violence Hotline (2020)

observes that the medications of PWDs are intentionally withheld by some wicked family members or sometimes overdose them in a dangerous and non-prescribed way and prevent their access to doctors for medical complaints.

Ojo (2017) established that PWDs in Nigeria, most especially women and girls, are three times likely to experience gender-based violence from male partners or relatives, more than other women without disabilities. Similarly, Isiaka (2019) reports that research has shown the existence of a relationship between disability and abuse with emphasis that women with disabilities experience domestic violence abuse as well as sexual assault more than 'healthy women'. The abuse has a long term physical and psychological impact on the lives of the PWDs. Continuous abuse of the PWDs makes them experience low self-esteem, and are deceived to believe that their abuse is somehow deserved and inherently exploited for their weakness, considered less human, less valuable with no developmental impact on the family and the community and less likely to report abuse to authorities.

Reporting cases of abuse experienced from family relatives by people with cognitive disabilities to authority may not be given due consideration and training to understand their condition may be inadequate. Agency Report (2019) posits that intellectual or cognitive disability remains the worst form of disability because it stresses the sufferers, hence treated as kids. Also, the medical personnel who attend to them find it difficult to understand their health problem by their inability to say exactly the nature of their sickness when they fall sick. The living environments of PWDs are segregated in such a way that they are easily maltreated. Additionally, people with intellectual disabilities who are abused by a group of family members tend to have restricted access to police, medical or social services representatives, advocates and any other groups who can intervene and assist.

Knowing that report of abuse by PWDs to law enforcement agencies is difficult, points to the reason for being continually targeted by those close to them for abuse. Similarly, the conditions of this set of individuals force them to heavily rely on their abusers without realising their victimisation and even where aware, they continue to live with the fate. Where a person is physically disabled, they are indisposed to bullying and incapacitated to protect themselves against all sorts of abuse from their friends and families. Also, a mentally disabled person is conditioned to trust people who would exploit their resources without their awareness.

Discrimination and Neglect of Persons with Disabilities at Schools

It is no longer news that education remains the right of every child globally without prejudice to ethnicity, race, religion, culture, background or disability. Access to quality education by PWDs amounts to the exercise of fundamental human rights, guaranteed by both national and international laws. The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act which was recently passed provides that 'a person with disability shall have an unfettered right to education without discrimination or segregation in any form'. It further stipulates that 'all public educational establishments shall be run to be inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities'. This is to ensure that PWDs enjoy a full decent, dignified and self-reliant life and to facilitate their active participation in community development. However, education of the PWDs is seen as a mere charitable act in Nigeria. These children with disabilities remain excluded from the educational system and exposed to various forms of abuse and discrimination based on their disabilities.

The education of the PWDs has been threatened by the abuse experienced daily in Nigerian schools. The abuse as often perpetrated in schools ranges from sexual, physical, emotional to financial and includes people of all ages. Aransiola (2019) considers the abuse of PWDs as inhuman treatment while reporting the case of a deaf female child who was sexually abused in a school at Kuje, Federal Capital Territory and subsequently got withdrawn from school by the parents to ensure successful criminal investigation against the alleged and prevent further abuse. This situation led to the suspension of two teachers and also restricted the access of the victim to quality education. Aransiola (2019) also reports a case of rape against a female student in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin. These incidences corroborate that PWDs face discrimination, neglect and abuse in schools.

Aransiola (2019) expresses that PWDs most especially the children face multiple barriers including physical and psychological inaccessibility to mainstream schools, negative attitudes and stereotypes from teachers and peers and the high cost associated with meeting the special needs of these special children. Unavoidably, the barriers create persistent inequalities in the educational system of the country and make life difficult for PWDs to secure good employment to sustain themselves. Fact remains that the vulnerable like the PWDs find it difficult to access education at will and that inhibits the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal on education for all without any barriers.

The educational system of Nigeria is based on segregation between regular students in traditional classrooms and PWDs whose learning takes place at special schools. There is no doubt that the segregation contributes to an abuse of and discrimination against CWDs. Aransiola (2019) asserts that the segregation system excludes the CWDs from sufficient socialisation to actively, appropriately and morally relate with other members in the society. The segregation can also expose special children to several human rights cases of abuse. Sadly, PWDs in Nigerian schools are seen by teachers as a burden when they are enrolled in schools with other able children. Aransiola (2019) reveals that the problem is largely due to inadequate assistive devices and teaching materials which are lacked by many schools for both disabled and non-disabled children. It is indicative that the school curriculum was designed specifically for all children without much consideration for children with special care. Also, teachers who have not passed through any training on how to handle PWDs lack the methodology to successfully achieve the objectives of topics in subjects they teach.

PWDs especially those suffering from cerebral palsy are severally abused in schools including rude stares. Cerebral palsy is a condition or disorder that affects a person's movement or ability to maintain balance and posture and is considered a motor disability in childhood. Children with cerebral palsy are challenged and stigmatised by their peers and teachers in schools. CWDs often find it embarrassing to ask questions in class because they are sometimes shunned by their tutors or consider their questions irrelevant. Where peers in schools claim to help female special children, they molest them by sexually touching their sensitive parts while being assisted to climb stairs or enter school buses. Abusive comments are also made on their hips and breasts.

Learning in schools for the CWDs is complicated by the lack of access to braille material and textbooks designed for the blind are costly for blind children whose parents are poor. In universities, blind students are known to depend on friends to dictate assignments, notes and

even entire textbooks for comprehension and actively taking parts in school activities. Submission of assignments is quite worrisome for this category of students, although, they are sometimes assisted by lecturers who truly understand their condition and ask them to submit their works via CDs and flash drives. PWDs face huge challenges by being victims of casualties during school crises. Ojo (2017) notes that teachers sometimes refuse to train the PWDs, give them extra attention, and openly discourage them from acquiring knowledge by neglecting their nature of assimilation. Awareness of this kind of treatment could force some PWDs to either withdraw from schools or relocate to another to compete intellectually.

The Agency Report (2019) affirms that the learning environments in Nigeria for PWDs are not conducive and lack the mechanisms to protect the children from being vulnerable to several forms of abuse in the schools. PWDs in schools are sexually molested by both academic and non-academic staff in schools, both elementary and tertiary institutions. National Bullying Prevention Centre (2020) argues that students with disabilities are more bullied in schools than those without disabilities and it impacts their learning, school and education. Ultimately, the academic grades drop, class concentration becomes difficult, interest in education is lost, thus, school enrolment declines. Ojo (2017) posits that the rights of the PWDs are abused daily not only in the schools but outside the schools, influenced by the government, private sector and other citizens. The continuous abuse of the rights of these special beings cannot be dissociated from lack of access to information and awareness on their rights.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper concludes that disability is real and that majority of PWDs face DEAN at one time or another in the family or at school. The family has not been a haven for the PWDs as they are preyed on by their guardians, parents, siblings and family friends consciously and unconsciously. It is important to note that couples with disabilities also experience DEAN through gender-based violence, although, it is mostly perpetrated against women and girls. Schooling has also been made difficult for the PWDs due to lack of assistive materials, physical and psychological inaccessibility to mainstream schools, negative attitudes and stereotypes from teachers and peers and the high cost associated with meeting the special needs of these special children. It is put forward in this paper that the environment and the society of the PWDs limit their functioning and create other disabilities through inaccessible physical environment, inadequate relevant assistive technology or rehabilitative devices, poor services, systems and policies that hinder the full participation of people with one health condition or the other in all areas of life.

The dependence on the significant members in the family and peers at schools for care and support due to disabilities make the sufferers vulnerable to poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, social isolation in their place of residence. Although, the level of DEAN experienced by the PWDs depends on the type and nature of their disability. While there is perpetual abuse of the PWDs, the rate at which such abuse is detected and reported is low due to the nature of the disability, difficulty in communicating their concerns, the worry of being considered unserious by constituted authorities, unwillingness to relieve the abusers due to inevitable needs and a strong emotional connection, and intentional reluctance in informing

others about family members' or friends' betrayal. The poor treatment and the horrible conditions of the PWDs are relatively known as they are kept away from the public eyes.

In line with the above, the paper recommends that:

- i. Any actions or activities that will invade the personalities, dignity and life of PWDs should be denounced and discontinued.
- ii. Government should design policies to combat all forms of abuse and discriminatory practices against the PWDs by undertaking effective and appropriate measures aimed at raising awareness throughout the country.
- iii. Family members should develop a strong love for those with one disability or the other with the assumption that no one is free from health challenges which can render one dependent on others for survival. The suffers should be shown love and made feel belonged by responding to their needs as required.
- iv. Both governments and non-governmental organisations should help in the provision of assistive devices, skills and training needed by the PWDs in schools to enable them to participate actively and equally like every other student. Policies that will prioritise the education of the PWDs should be formulated and implemented. This will enable PWDs to learn, play and interact equally in a diverse environment.
- v. Security personnel and other key stakeholders should be well trained to detect unreported exploitation and abuse of the PWDs in schools and at home. Where it is observed that the rights of the PWDs are infringed, individuals in their community should take it as a responsibility to report such cases to the appropriate authorities for swift action.

References

- Agency Report (2019 August 2). Group Condemns Spate Of Abuse Of Children With Disabilities. <https://www.independent.ng/group-condemns-spate-of-abuse-of-children-with-disabilities/>
- Al Ju'beh, K. (2015). Disability inclusive development toolkit. Bensheim: CBM.
- Aransiola, O. (2019). International Day of Persons with Disabilities: No Nigerian Child Must Be Left Behind. ThisDay News. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/12/05/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-no-nigerian-child-must-be-left-behind/>
- Etieyibo, E. & Omiegbe, O. (2016). Religion, culture, and discrimination against persons with disabilities in Nigeria. African Journal of Disability, 5(1), 192. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5433448/>
- Ewang, A. (2019 January 25). Nigeria Passes Disability Rights Law. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/01/25/nigeria-passes-disability-rights-law>
- Grassroots Researchers Associations [GRA] (2020). Challenges of Persons with Disabilities in North-Eastern Nigeria. <https://www.grassrootresearchers.org/challenges-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-north-eastern-nigeria/>
- Human Rights Watch (2020 June 4). Mexico: Families Abuse, Neglect People with Disabilities.
- Isiaka, A. (2019 August 27). In Nigeria, disability activists say social stigma is greatest obstacle to human rights. Global Voices - Citizen media stories from around the world.

- <https://globalvoices.org/2019/08/27/in-nigeria-disability-activists-say-social-stigma-is-greatest-obstacle-to-human-rights/#>
- Madukwe, B. (2012). Lagos Special People's Law to the rescue of PWD. Vanguard News. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/lagos-special-peoples-law-to-the-rescue-of-pwd/>
- National Bullying Prevention Centre. (2020). "Top 10 facts parents, educators, and students need to know".
- Okakwu, E. (2019 November 1). Nigeria: Despite New Law, Nigerians Living With Disabilities Lament Discrimination. Premium Times. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201911010085.html>
- Ojo, J. (2017). What Nigerians with disabilities want. Punch News. <https://punchng.com/what-nigerians-with-disabilities-want/>
- Schulze, M. (2010). Understanding the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Handicap International.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2016). Disability: Definitions, Models, Experience. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/disability/>
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline (2020). Domestic Violence & People with Disabilities. <https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/domestic-violence-disabilities-2>
- World Health Organization (2001). International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), Geneva: World Health Organization.
- WHO & The World Bank. (2011). World report on disability. Geneva: WHO
- World Bank (2020 May 15). Understanding Poverty: Disability Inclusion. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disability>
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [UNCRPD]. (2006). Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and optional protocol. New York: UN.