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WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND THE CHALLENGES OF ACCESS TO POLITICAL OFFICE IN NIGERIA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this study was to examine the challenges in access to political office by Women with Disabilities (WWDs) in Nigeria. This became necessary because of the degree of exclusion that affects WWDs and their ability to access political office in the country. Also, the study examined how different socio-economic, cultural and structural factors limit access to political office for women in this category. Its sources of data were basically qualitative as a systematic review of materials was used for this exercise. The research strategy was based on two topics: (1) access to political office; and (2) disability. In this study, women (older than 18 years) with different kinds of disabilities (physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities) were included. Studies were excluded if they were not peer-reviewed and had a focus on men with disabilities. Twenty-four articles met the inclusion criteria for the final review. In each study, participants noted various barriers to access to political office. The paper therefore recommends that the Nigerian State needs to formulate and implement policies that would not only capture the collective interests of WWDs but also pay attention to their preferences and choices. This would go a long way to provide non-discriminatory inclusion of WWDs in the day-to-day running of the country.
Keywords: Disability Inclusion Policy Women Transparency Marginalisation Empowerment

Introduction

The inclusion of Women with Disabilities (WWDs) to the day-to day running of affairs of Nigeria is a huge challenge. Traditionally, the clamour has been for the interests of women generally without much attention paid to WWDs. This was hinged on the fact that all women are the same. On a closer look, WWDs form a critical mass whose political interests and needs are too critical to be glossed over. Thus, Women with Disabilities are more likely to have unmet political needs than women without disabilities.

WWDs also face different degrees of exclusion that affect their ability to access political office in Nigeria. Political office as used in this study implies Government Departments, Political Appointments, Elective Positions, etc. Studies indicate that WWDs are more likely not to be hired in government departments than women without disabilities (Abiola and Lanre, 2003). Also, others opine that WWDs experience greater discrimination (including stigmatization) in office than women without disabilities in the country (Agbalasjobi, 2010, Clayton, 2014). Certainly, there is a necessity by the Nigerian Government to formulate and implement effective policies to improve access to good jobs for WWDs. Multiple determinants (like low income, poor education, low quality health care, etc.) can lead to poor quality of life for WWDs in Nigeria, which in turn impacts their social inclusion (WHO, 2011).

Even before the turn of the millennium, a wide range of studies have been carried out investigating barriers in access to the socio-economic life for WWDs. For example, in the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, research shows that People with Disabilities (PWD) face outstanding unmet needs and PWD are more likely to be deprived from sex education programmes (Kotze, 2010). Some studies identified that People with Intellectual Disabilities (PWID) have less informal and formal opportunities to learn about sexual health than their counterparts without disabilities (Oliveina, Praod, de Sousa Lima, de

Oliveira, Moita, Mendes, 2013). Additionally, financial, physical, attitudinal and structural barriers have been cited in past studies (Eleweke, 2013; Kebeer, 2010).

However, these barriers differ from one society to another. Developing countries compared to their more advanced counterparts have different socio-economic contexts that affect access to political office for WWDs. For example, access to various information sources, like the internet, is more limited in developing countries than more advanced countries (Childs and Krook, 2009). Although quantitative studies (Ojok and Musenze,2019), (Ortiz and Greene,2007) mention that WWDs are more likely to experience poorer access to political office compared to their counterparts without disabilities, they do not provide enough details and evidence on the nature and diversity of the obstacles experienced by WWDs.

Background on Women with Disabilities

Indeed, disability is a challenge to both men and women in Nigeria. However, women with disabilities across the country are more disadvantaged as they suffer double amount of discrimination (Fiduccia and Wolfe, 1999), not only because they are disabled, but because they are disabled women. According to Arnade and Haefer (2006: 56), "while women with disabilities have much in common with men with disabilities, women with disabilities have to face multiple discrimination in many cases, so that they are often more disadvantaged than men with disabilities with similar circumstances."

Globally, the task to include Women with Disabilities (WWDs) into the socio-economic and political life of nation-states is daunting. This is because disability inclusion is an essential condition to upholding Human Rights, sustainable development, peace and security. It is also central to the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind. According to the 2030 United Nations (UN) Report "the commitment to realizing the rights of persons with disabilities is not only a matter of justice, it is an investment in a common future" (Report of the UN Secretary General, 2020:7). Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 18 (4) of the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, also emphasizes the protection of rights of people with special needs (African Union, 2015). The rights of persons with disabilities are also reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (19993), the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (1995) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) (WHO & World Bank, 2011). Also, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development is a disability sensitive and inclusive framework through its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda presents a logical pathway and guidance from which the international community, national and local development machinery can deliver a disability inclusive programme.

Furthermore, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development has seven distinct targets and indicators on persons with disabilities regarding their access to employment, education in disability-friendly schools, accessibility to transport, accessibility to public spaces, inclusion and empowerment of individuals living with disabilities. Similarly, these targets and indicators enhance the capacity of different countries in disaggregating and availing data on disability (United Nations, 2018). However, new developments have shown that various governments are committed to integrating disability issues in their development agenda, thus providing further inclusivity framework in the different critical areas of development. This is in line with the RIO+20 Conference branded "the future we want". The intent of the conference was that sustainable development strategies must underscore the imperative benefit of developing practical accessibility and disability inclusion in all development blueprints.

In Nigeria, discrimination against Women with Disabilities is a common practice across the 36 states and Abuja (only the level and intensity of such discrimination vary). Although there has been a spirited effort for political empowerment of women by different governments across the country over the years, women with disabilities are still at special risk of political exclusion, even among fellow women. As a result, women with disabilities not only experience routine neglect but also lack the opportunities to

exercise and enjoy their political rights due to legal and institutional barriers in both peace time and in conflict. Besides, their rights to social protection, essential health services, protection before the law and participation in social and development activities, political decision-making and community life often are denied.

Nonetheless, political inclusiveness is a key aspect of democratic governance. This is true in Nigeria as it is in other countries of the world. However, due to intersecting factors such as age, ethnicity, class, culture, religion or disability, WWDs face many obstacles on the road to full equality and progress (Nabacwa, 2001). The classification of women as a homogeneous political group further deepens the exclusion of those with disabilities. Thus, quotas or Affirmative Actions have been introduced as legal frameworks that ensure the political representation of marginalized groups, either through reserved, legislative or voluntary party seats (Tamale, 2003; Yoon, 2004). However, the rise of gender quotas has increased access of women to political representation, specifically in the legislature (Tamale, 2001A, 2003; Yoon, 2004).

Women with Disabilities in Nigeria

WWDs in Nigeria are in the ire of political alienation. Poverty, Joblessness, Misery and social exclusion are the plights of Nigerian WWDs (McClan, 2010), who are marginalised and excluded from every sphere of life. Consequently, WWDs suffer stigma and discrimination based on their poverty, disabilities and gender. They are prevented from having employment and when they are afforded the opportunity to work, they are poorly paid (Human Rights Watch Report, 2010), earning only 56% of what men with disabilities receive. Moreover, the job market is twice accessible to men with disabilities than women with disabilities (who therefore are the poorest of the poor in the country). Also, Nigerian WWDs are prevented from creating a family, accessing information, healthcare and other government services, and more importantly, from taking part in the community's activities (Human Rights Watch Report, 2010). In terms of creating a family, WWDs are considered to be asexual, unable to marry, have and raise children. Research shows that WWDs "as compared with women without disabilities and men with disabilities are more likely to be unmarried or married later or divorced earlier (Naidu, Haffejee, Vetten and Hargreaves, 2005).

According to Kotse (2010:5), "African women with disabilities tend to be shunned in the marriage 'market', whereas more men with disabilities actually get married". In terms of healthcare, WWDs are exposed to sexual violence and rape and, consequently to HIV/AIDS. When they are infected with the disease, WWDs are not only discriminated against on the grounds of the disease, but also for being women, as well as for having a disability. (Human Rights Watch Report, 2010).

In some parts of Nigeria, the vulnerability of WWDs to sexual violence, rape and HIV/AIDS is aggravated by the myth that sex with a disabled person will cure HIV/AIDS (presumably an even more twisted version of the so-called "Virgin Cure") that is based on the common misconception that people with disability are not sexually active and therefore have to be virgins (Kotze, 2010). In addition, rapists target WWDs as they are unable to run away if they are physically impaired, scream if hearing impaired and unable to speak, and identify the rapist later if visually impaired. In addition, women and girls with disabilities are specifically vulnerable to marital rape. Attempts to address the problem of discrimination against WWDs in Nigeria include measures such as the adoption of the African Decade for Persons with Disability (2000-2009) and the transformation of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. Added is the special attention to WWDs which was illustrated by the adoption of a single provision on "Special Protection of Women with Disabilities" in the African Women's Protocol (Djoyou Kamga and Biegon, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

One of the most challenging of the new directions in development theory has been opened up by feminist scholarship, especially after its forward leap from women's studies to gender studies. It was not till about 1970 (Boserup, 1970) that women figured seriously in mainstream development literature, and their 'discovery' was flawed on at least two crucial counts.

First, it was generally but mistakenly assumed that because women had demonstrated not benefited from the development process, they had been 'excluded' from it and now needed to be brought in. This was a view that was seized upon with some eagerness by the international development community. The United Nations (UN) launched its Decade for Women in 1975 at its first World Conference on Women, held in Mexico, which followed barely a year after the 1974 UN Conference on Population in Bucharest. The ideological juxtaposition of the Third-World population explosion and the relative underdevelopment of its women led to the idea that there was a trade-off between women's production and reproduction functions, and that raising women's socio-economic status would lower birth rates. The international aid machine revved up to combine family planning programmes with income-generating projects for women, whether in rural co-operatives or urban slum communities centres (Mies, 1986).

Socialist feminists soon condemned these programmes for obscuring and compounding the nature of global production relations whereby women's production work in formal, non-organized, non-protected sectors, articulated with the global system of capital accumulation in a double, or even triple chain of super exploitation (Mies, 1986). The second problem with the 'Women in Development' (WID) discourse was epistemological, connected with the concept of women as a unitary, analytical category. This was blown apart by the post-modern turn in feminist critique. Why assume that women are the same the world over? What do middle-class white women in New York have in common with rural black women growing coffee for export in Africa, or with the cloth cutters in the garment sweat-shops of Asia? Radical feminists have sought an answer in patriarchy, the notion, namely, that even if women are not the same, their subordination by men is universal.

A gradual change of focus on to broader issues of 'gender' moved the study of 'women in development' on to a less ambitious, but for all that more empowering, plane. Gender studies do not assume that there is a stable, homogeneous category called 'women', with identical interests and desires. It focuses instead on relations between men and women as these are socially constructed (Waylen, 1996). Gender relations vary greatly in different cultural and historical contexts. Also, the concept of inter-sectionalism (the classification of women into – race, age, class or disability, which serves as mechanisms of exclusions) will be used to analyze the struggles of WWDs within the larger women's movement for equality, particularly in political representation (which is the focus of this paper).

It is important to consider the significance of existing literature on gender and inter-sectionalism within women's groups and disability movements; but more importantly how these ideas have influenced thoughts on political representation. The theory of inter-sectionalism was propounded by Crenshaw (1989). It is regarded as one of the most vital contributions to the study of feminism because it recognizes and acknowledges the uniqueness among women. 'It is an important tool to understand and examine any social practice, individual or group experiences, structural arrangement, or cultural configuration' (Davis, 2008). It is pertinent to ensure that the achievements for one marginalized group do not come at the expense of others, and an effort sufficiently accentuates the interests of those at the intersections of disadvantage. As such, policymakers must be attentive to feminist claims that have impact on sexism, racism and other forms of bias that are inextricably linked (Hughes, 2011).

In addition, the Critical Mass theory (CMT) was also used in this paper. According to Childs and Crook (2009), women may be unable to exert influence in a legislature, unless they grow from a few individuals into a considerable minority or 'critical mass'. A common assumption in critical mass theory

literature is that as numbers increase in legislative chambers, women will build solidarity to advocate for policies related to women's concerns (Childs and Crook, 2009). However, critiques argue that increased numbers of women in a legislature may not necessarily translate to ability to influence policy outcomes (Donley, Studlar, and Ian, 2002; Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers, 2007). Factors such as allegiance to party objectives and increase in minority numbers may result in deviated interests. Women may focus their attention on other political agenda and not represent the interest of the entire group. Furthermore, their numbers may not always be sufficient to grow supportive alliances (Dahlerup, 2013).

Methodology

Research Strategy

A structured literature search for this study was carried out using qualitative method to generate the required data. This was done on papers with emphasis on WWDs. The strategy was based on two main topics: (a) access to political jobs and (b) disability. Also, a hand-searching reference list of research and review papers was used to further identify articles which met the study's inclusion criteria.

Selection of Studies

In the context of this study, only qualitative study designs were eligible for inclusion. Thus, observational studies (cross sectional, prospective and case-control), experimental (randomized controlled and quasi-experimental) and review papers were excluded from the study. Also, only women (older than 18) with different kinds of physical (hearing loss) and intellectual disabilities (Down syndrome) were included.

In order to guarantee proper screening of the papers used for this study, thematic analysis was used. Thus, the themes and codes of the study are tabulated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Themes and Codes of the Study

Themes	Codes
WWDs are sidelined in Politics in Nigeria	• WWDs seek inclusion in electoral process. • WWDs demand the right to vote and be voted for. • The cost of running for elective post is too high for WWDs.
Socio-cultural factors affect WWDs in Nigeria	• WWDs are vulnerable and victims of sexual violence • Socio-cultural Practices deprive WWDs from accessing political office. • Addressing sexual desires and pressure on WWDs contribute to their empowerment.
WWDs seek equal justice in Nigeria	• Advocacy for legislation must ensure equal treatment of WWDs and other citizens. • Capacity building for WWDs. • Employment of WWDs in government departments.
WWDs seek a change in national policy through inclusive practices in Nigeria	• Involve WWDs in policy formulation process. • Quotas should be assigned to WWDs in national and state legislative assemblies. • Reduce the cost of running for offices for WWDs.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2023

WWDs are Sidelined in Politics in Nigeria

The papers reviewed in this section showed that in Nigeria, women have not yet achieved equal presentation with men. Even when they succeed in breaking through the ranks, the political terrain is not structured for them to function. For example, in 2007, the first and only woman, "Patricia Etteh" to ever win the position of Speaker of the House of Representatives in Nigeria, did not last 6 months in office. She was framed in a corruption scandal, forced to resign but was never indicted (BBC, 2007; Owete, 2007). This attests to the fact that women do not often receive the support and mentoring they need to compete with their male counterparts in politics (Agbalajobi, 2010; Apkan, 2018). Scholars have argued that patriarchy accounts for the low involvement of women in politics. Societal values assume that political activities are masculine and financiers and sponsors of politician's favour males over female candidates (Tamale, 1999; Agbalajobi, 2010; Muse and Narsiah, 2015). However, as Longwe (2000), observes, even women with the requisite financial capability confront obstacles in politics, due to institutional factors combined with a patriarchal political culture.

This is the harsh reality of 'most able-bodied women', but it is worse for WWDs. They are doubly marginalised, treated as unfit and incapable across all sectors of society, including politics. Here, the intersection of gender and disability is revealed (WHO/World Bank, 2011; DRF Nigeria Country Report, 2018). Also, studies show that barriers limiting political participation and representation of WWDs include but are not limited to lack of education and financial resources, lack of confidence, lack of political capacity and advocacy skills, stigma and negative social attitudes and poverty (Virbuso, 2018; Virendrakumar, Jolley, Badu, Schmidt, 2018).

Socio-Cultural Factors Affect WWDs in Nigeria

Findings in this section revealed that WWDs are often victims of socio-cultural restrictions in Nigeria. The papers reviewed here reveal evidence of sexual abuse both on domestic and public fronts. They also showed WWDs frustration in their inability to attain self-worth after each encounter. As result, the potential to realize their full potentials and its empowering impact on their lives is denied. Bakare-Yusuf's theorisation of eroticism, desire and pleasure, argues that women's quest for erotic fulfillment, agency, pleasure and desire provide a counter-narrative to what she called "hegemonic discourse of sexual terrorism" (Bakare-Yusuf, 2013: 29). Sexual desires form part of what it means to be a sexual being. These findings make clear that negative experiences can be disempowering. This resonates with Bakare-Yusuf's argument that an approach that focuses on the negative aspects of sexuality, such as disease, violence and abuse, leaves women (especially the young ones) paralysed with fear and that can be disempowering. The inclusion of sexual desire/pleasure as productive forces in these discourses is significant. It can serve to empower WWDs as 'sexual agents, entitled to pleasure and therefore responsible for their own sexuality' (Tepper, 2000: 283).

The opportunities to express sexuality give WWDs that openness to explore and exercise agency. Similar findings that can be located within the literature demonstrate that women in diverse settings consider their sexuality as a source of power and a mechanism for shaping and controlling their destinies (Hawkins, Cornwall, and Lewin 2011). These findings also illuminated the restraints that exist, particularly in northern Nigeria, with the expression of sexual desire. The review also showed that WWDs from that region of the country expressed more restraints to their sexual expression. Scare tactics and stigma leave women feeling disempowered and less able to assert themselves. However, there is a rising erotica industry in Northern Nigeria mostly authored by northern women for northern women. These are avenues where women are presently finding sexual expressions and subverting male domination (Sanusi, 2016) 'If women were allowed to express themselves freely, this would mean that they might elude male control' (Bakare-Yusuf, 2013, 31). Similarly, attention to pleasure can help tackle sexual violence (Hawkins, Cornwall and

Lewin, 2011).

How a person has internalized the cultural messages about various aspects of sexuality will have a profound impact on the person's experience of sexual pleasure. Positive feelings of attractiveness were found to have engendered healthy self-esteem and confidence, enabling informed decisions which WWDs consider a form of empowerment. Self-perception of attractiveness is a vital principle which enables a positive and fulfilling sexual experience (Shakespeare, Richardson, 1996). More enlightened attitudes may therefore open up possibilities for positive sexual expression and pleasure experiences which translate into empowerment for WWDs in Nigeria.

WWDs Seek Equal Justice in Nigeria

According to Section 42(1) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution "A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination" (Government of Nigeria, 1999: 35). This shows that the Nigerian Constitution has always supported women's participation in politics. However, in practice, it is a platitude of extensive discrimination (Agbalajobi, 2010; Muse and Narsiah, 2015).

Furthermore, Nigeria is signatory to different international legislations which guarantee the rights of People with Disabilities (PWDs). For example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Article 29, focuses on, "participation in political and public life" (UNCRPD, 2006:30). These national and international frameworks guide the countries towards fairer representation, even if they are currently falling short.

WWDs Seek a Change in National Policy Through Inclusive Practices in Nigeria

Political inclusiveness is a key aspect of democratic governance. This is true in Nigeria as it is in other countries of the world. Nigeria is an emerging democracy on the African continent where the challenge of women marginalization is rife. Although considerable efforts have been made in the country (especially since the turn of the millennium), a lot needs to be done to guarantee the political integration of WWDs through deliberate policy programmes of the ruling administration according to the findings in this review. Furthermore, this study that political representation was discussed from a descriptive standpoint, that is, numerical representation of women with disabilities in political offices (Yoon, 2004; Agbalajobi, 2010; Burnet, 2011). Due to intersecting factors such as age, race, class, culture, religion or disability, WWDs face many obstacles on the road to full equality and progress (Nabacwa, 2001).

Apart from the above, the classification of women as a homogeneous political group further deepens the exclusion of those with disabilities (Crenshaw, 1989; Davis, 2008). Thus, quotas or Affirmative Actions have been introduced as legal frameworks that ensure the political representation of marginalized groups, either through reserved legislative or voluntary party seats (Tamale, 2003; Yoon, 2004). The rise of gender quotas has increased access of women to political representation, specifically in the legislature (Tamale, 2001A, 2003; Yoon, 2004). Quotas cast light on inter-sectionalism that exists among minority groups and provide entry spaces (Tamale, 2003; Burnet, 2011; Kadaga, 2013; Clayton, Josefsson, and Wang, 2014). Studies reveal that countries with quotas have a significantly higher percentage of women in parliament (Tamale, 2001A, 2003; Abimanyi-Ochom& Mannan, 2014; Zero Project, 2015). However, some scholars have argued that quotas may not be the most effective means of achieving equal representation (Longwe, 2000; Mansbridge, 1999, 2005; Hughes, 2011; Muriaas and Wang, 2012).

Discussion of Findings

The focus of this study was to identify barriers in access to political office for WWDs through the thematic review of qualitative literature. The intent was to examine the most important barriers in access to political appointments for WWDs in Nigeria from qualitative research findings. The findings of this study demonstrate that WWDs need a variety of supports to better access political offices. In this review WWDs in the country reported different obstacles to their efforts at securing either appointments in government departments or political appointments. In some of the cases studied, WWDs experienced political alienation in access to services like government relief packages. The alienation referred to here would not only reduce effective interaction between WWDs and the Nigerian government but also reduce their ability to access government socio-economic services.

The researchers also found out that personal factors like cognitive, mobility and sensory impairment limit WWD's ability to seek and understand the needed information. Also, lack of awareness and knowledge among government officials in different departments about disability and the proper methods of communication with WWDs would affect the quantity and quality of interpersonal relationships between social welfare providers and WWDs. In this regard, government representatives should develop their capacity to facilitate interpersonal relationship through providing substructures, education courses and various communication tools so that all people with different disabilities could have a satisfactory and effective relationship with government.

Some studies in this review indicated that socio-cultural factors could have a major role in poor access to political offices for WWDs. Maternal status and age in some of the low-income arrears covered in this study affected access to government appointments. Put differently, WWDs living in rural areas face deeper problems in receiving the needed information for their survival than their counterparts in urban metropolis. In many of the local communities covered in this study, WWDs have to travel a long distance to access government offices. Besides, WWDs identified environmental barriers as parts of the problems they face. The study shows that women with cognitive, vision and hearing impairments face special barriers to access government healthcare facilities. To overcome this problem, the Nigerian government and the different health systems it controls should have specific policies to accommodate all forms of disabilities. Healthcare services need to be accessible to disadvantaged groups in society. WWDs, like women without disabilities, have similar rights to be parents, to have a child, to look after their babies on their own. In some of the studies covered in this research work, WWDs had to prove to their family members and the authorities that they have the needed qualifications to be suitable parents. For this, advocacy from the PWD, families, NGOs and public organizations is necessary to support the rights of WWDs.

Furthermore, in many of the literatures reviewed in this study, it was cited that WWDs faced financial problems in their bid to seek political offices. In some of them, WWDs (especially those who were married), usually relied on their family income and reported better access to different financial resources in comparison to single women with disabilities. Often, WWDs were unemployed and did not have any income. Also, in this study, it was revealed that many WWDs were especially worried about their future

Noted, various quantitative studies have been done about extra costs of living with disability. Some of these studies discovered that older adults with disabilities face higher out of pocket payments and transportation costs in comparison to other age groups. Nonetheless, this is a review of identified qualitative literature related to the limitations in the capacity of the Nigerian government to adequately provide care for all consumers, including WWDs. In order to limit the disparities in the system, there is a need for the government and the larger society to recognize the social model of disability. The social model of disability aligns with the World Health Organizations International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health in acknowledging that limitations in participation for PWDs are largely defined by the environment and not their disability itself. Approaching the design and delivery of care utilizing concepts from Universal Design, would not only ensure care was accessible to WWDs, but to all consumers.

Indeed, women without disabilities experience some similar challenges to access political offices in comparison to WWDs. In general, some variables such as age (being older), socio-economic factors (low income), marital status, household dimension, education (being illiterate) and employment status (job insecurity and job instability) affect access to political offices for women without disabilities as well. Financial dependence and economic factors are considered as one of the most significant factors in access to political offices for women with and without disabilities. In comparison, women are more likely than men to be uninsured and employed. In sum, women with and without disabilities compared to men have different problems and different patterns of needs and political aspirations that must be considered by the Nigerian government.

Conclusion

The findings in this study show that WWDs do not only experience financial and physical barriers in access to political offices, but also face discriminatory and disrespectful behaviours from the Nigerian Government. Also, a lot of factors combine to alienate WWDs from full participation in national development. These include: (a) socio-cultural impediments; (b) political exclusion; (c) insensitivity on the part of government officials and (d) lack of specific policy programmes directed at addressing the needs of WWDs in the country. Furthermore, the review discovered that efforts have been made by successive administrations in the country to address the specific needs of WWDs to guarantee their inclusiveness. Nevertheless, a lot more is needed to harness the immense potentials of WWDs towards national development. After, Nigeria needs every citizen (both able and disabled ones) to realize her set objectives for an all-inclusive development.

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