

Comprehensive Accessibility Audit Report Rivers State

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Abstract

A comprehensive accessibility audit assessment in Port Harcourt and its environs with the objective to identify common accessibility challenges and recurring issues, prioritize the identified barriers based on their severity and impact.

Using Secondary and Primary Data. Public Building Were Inspected. Accessibility Was Determined Through Use of Checklist and Inspecting Sample Property. The Study Approached Was a Mixed Methodology; Quantitative and Qualitative Data Was Collected After a Desk Review Was Conducted. The Audit Inspected Physical Infrastructures, Transportation and Communications Systems, It Evaluated Access to Education, Conducting Stakeholders Interviews Towards Pro-Action for an Accessible Rivers State.

The Findings Revealed That 43.5% Of Respondent Do Not Have Knowledge of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disability Laws That Provides for Inclusion of Persons with Disability. Most Public Buildings Lack Ramps or Accessible Elevator, Making Access Difficult for PWDs. Transportation/Airport Facilities Create Barriers for PWDs As They Are Not Accessible. Banks and Educational Institutions especially tertiary institutions are still very inaccessible. A lot of this stemmed due to lack of viable disability law to allow for any form of enforcement of accessibility. The knowledge and awareness of persons who offer public service was also low when it came to prioritizing persons with disabilities and knowledge of disability laws.

Key Words

Disability, accessibility, Disability rights, persons with disabilities, Nigeria, rivers state, disability awareness, awareness, rights

Introduction

Persons with Disabilities (PWDS) Constitute a Significant Proportion of the World's Population. The World Health Organization and the World Bank Report on Disability (2011) Estimated That Fifteen Percent of The World's Population, Over One Billion, Are People with Disabilities. It Is Estimated That 80 Percent of PWDS Live in Developing Countries Including Nigeria (United Nations, 2010). The Most Recent Data Puts the Estimates To 35.1 million Persons in Nigeria (The Cable News, 2023).

However, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) In Developing Countries Are Disproportionately Represented Among The Poorest People (Philippa, 2005). They Have Long Been Stigmatized And Left Behind In Terms Of Personal Development And Social Interactions Because Of Different Factors (Shyirambere.)

The United Nations Has Then Put In Place The Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities (UNCRPD) Which Serves To Protect, To Respect And To Promote Their Rights Throughout The World. This Convention As Well As Its Operational Protocol Has Been Ratified By Many Countries All Over The World Including Nigeria. Some States Have Also Gone Ahead To Ratify The Convention At The Subnational Levels In Nigeria. However, There Is Still Some Way To Go In Terms Of Translating The Convention Into Actual Facts, Particularly, Article 9 Of The Convention Which Addressed The Issue Of 'Accessibility'.

In Nigeria, Structural And Physical Barriers To Accessing Public Buildings And Services Has Continued To Adversely Affect All Aspects Of The Lives Of People With Disabilities. Places Of Business, Healthcare, Education, Employment, Transport, Recreation, Sport And Leisure, And The Justice System Still Have Major Structural Barriers, Which Prevent People With Disabilities From Accessing Programs And Services Provided By These Entities (Eleweke, C. J.; Ebenso, J., 2016). In 2021 Minister Of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management And Social Development Sadiya Farouq, Stated That Over 95 Per Cent Of Public Buildings In Nigeria Are Not Accessible To Persons With Disabilities

According To Anne Sieberns (2018), “A Wheelchair-User Might Experience Difficulty Gaining Access To A Building Such As A Library Not Because Of The Wheelchair, But Because Of Environmental Barriers Such As Inaccessible Staircases, Narrow Aisles, And So On”. Thus, Being Disadvantaged At Every Turn Should Not Be The Norm Anymore, And Global Best Practices In Issues Relating To People With Disabilities Has To Be Followed To The Letter, In All Spheres Of Both Public And Private Life.

Rivers State Also Has A Law Which Seeks To Cater For PWDs In The State. The Rivers State Persons With Disability Welfare Enhancement Law No 11 Was Passed In 2012, However, The Law Seems Not To Provide Enough Protection For These Vulnerable Persons (Adiela,). Such A Legislation Ought Not To Merely Lie In Statute Books But Be Fully Implemented By Relevant Bodies.

To Conduct A Comprehensive Audit In Port Harcourt, Rivers State With Recommendations: Data Collection, Documentation, And Analysis Of Audit Findings To Identify Common Accessibility Challenges And Recurring Issues, Prioritize The Identified Barriers Based On Their Severity And Impact.

Specifically, The Assignment Aimed To:

- A Comprehensive Access Audit Report to Identify Barriers to Access in the State, Assess Compliance with Existing Legislation, and Identify Gaps In Legislation and Implementation Frameworks Related to Accessibility.
- It Will Evaluate the Accessibility of Existing Infrastructure and Services in Rivers State.

Materials and Methods

A mixed methodology both qualitative and quantitative research methods was used. This study used both primary and secondary data using a deductive approach. This methodology was better suited for this review as the approach is based on a pre-determined idea about how things ought to be.

Deduction followed a general to specific approach. Conclusions were drawn from a process of exploring evidence (provided in collected data) and using correct reasoning. The Qualitative Research Design Involved The Collection Of Extensive Narrative Data In Order To Gain Insights Into The Phenomena Of Interest I.E. Accessibility For PWDs In Rivers State.

Data Collection Methods

Secondary data was collected through literature review method used to collect extensive narrative data pertaining to accessibility and accessibility standards for PWDs in Rivers State. Secondary data was gathered from different researches through the internet data bases and scholarly data bases. A bit of research on a global scale has been conducted in accessibility domain, there is however a lot to be done in the Nigerian accessibility research domain.

Primary data was collected by conducting focus group discussions, carrying out key informant interviews, using a check list and finally an interview based questionnaire. These data tools were as a result of the mixed method study design of the audit. For the FGDS a discussion guide was used with probes to gather information from respondents and the KIIS were conducted using a key informant interview guide. Basic standards for accessibility gathered during the literature review served as the guide for the development of the checklist and an interview administered questionnaire was used for the quantitative aspect of the research. All tools were tested during a pilot and research assistants were trained to use the tools and conduct research, specifically accessibility audit.

Data Source

The research used literature from search engines, official publications of different national and state institutions. Internet and libraries were the main sources of the literature consulted. Key disability institutions' books

(reports, documentation on disability and researches) were also consulted.

Key Informant Interview

Key informant interviews KII was done with; manager of Cheshire home, chairman abali motor, the vice principal of special school, creek road, a rep of ministry of environment, principals of schools; chief medical director of private hospital, and medical officers at

primary health center, chairman media committee, manager of a popular bakery, media personnel in a radio house, ward officer, and religious and faith leaders.

Checklist

Using The Checklist Buildings Were Also Inspected To Ascertain Accessibility, See List Below.

S/N	Phala L.G.A	Eleme L.G.A.	Obio Akpor L.G.A.
1.	Ministry Of Health, Rivers State Ministries Building	Super F.M 933 Eleme	Rumuokoro Market.
2.	Excel Education Centre Plot 21/22 Trans-Amadi Layout	Market Square Onne.	Rivers State Television.
3.	Access Bank Along Lagos Bus Stop.	Kilimanjaro Refinery Junction.	Shoprite By Air Force.
4.	Civil Service Clinic.	Omega Life Care Hospital And Maternity 29b Old Refinery Road, Akpajo	Central Mosque Oil Mill
5.	United Bank For Africa Rivers State Secreteriat	Primary Health Care Centre Ogale.	Kilimanjaro Rumuodara.
6.	Fidelity Bank At Garrison Junction	Akpajo Market Akpaso Eleme	Market Square Rumuodara.
7.	Chicken Republic Diline Opp Rebisi Primary School	Daughters Of Charity Seminary Ogale Nchia Eleme	Our Lady Of The Holy Rosary Chaplency.
8.	Special Needs School.	Pentecostal Theological Seminary.	Genesis Restaurant Woji
9.	Market Square (Old G.R.A).	U.B.A Ales Eleme	Comprehensive Secondary School Oginigba.
10.	Css Nkpogu Rebisi (U.B.E).	National Orientation Agency.	Rivers State University.
11.	Bulk By Choice.	Ministry Of Local Government Affairs Nchia Eleme	Motor Park Rumuokoro.
12.	Okuru-Ama Modern Market.	Community Primary School Akpajo.	Kuna's International School Nwegwe.
13.	Chisco Park	Community Junior Secondary School Akpajo.	Family Love.
14.	Ministry Of Environment.	Community Senior Secondary School	Community Secondary School Rumuelu Woji.
15.	Giobus Bank Inside Rivers State Secretariat.	Model Primary Health Centre Akpajo	Zolive Branch Hospital Eneka. Government Technical College.
16.	Garrison Area.	Oxygen Resort Akpajo Hotel.	School Of Health Mile 4
17.	Las Mall Hotel De.	Federal Road Safety Commission 29 Hospital Road Ogale	Rumuodara Mini Market
18.	Sunday Market.	Central Mosque Alesa	Assemblies Of God Church
19.	Ministry Of Justice.	Ultra Modern Market Akpajo.	University Of Port Harcourt. Choba
20.	1804 Boutique Hotel.	Eleme Market.	G.T Bank Alcon Road.
21.	Uptown Beauty Centre.	Annalille Montessori School.	Genesis Cinema G.R.A.
22.	Rivers State Civil Service Commission.	Realcare Medical Center.	Randolph Hotel Rumuogaba.
23.	Mile 1 Park.	Priesthood Holy Charity Home.	De Palmae Hotel Gra

24.	Red's Rivers.	Alinu Critical Hospital.	Smile Shop Supermarket
25.	Spar Mall	Unity Bank Alesa	Uba Allon Road Woji
26.	Port Harcourt Cheshire Home.	Winners Chapel Refinery Junction.	Federal Secretariat Aba Road.
27.	Elekchia Women Market.	Trailer Park Market.	Lifecare Orphanage Home.
28.	Zion Barbershop.	General Hospital Ogale Nchia.	Uniport Radio Station.
29.	Jamb Office.	Sky Loft Hostel.	Smile Shop Supermarket
30.	Innotex.	Onne Trailer Park Eleme.	Assurance International Secondary School.
31.	St. John's Anglican Church.	Eleme Motor Park.	Access Bank Alcon Road.
32.	Nysc Office, Mile 1.	Akpajo Motor Park	University Of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital.
33.	Model Primary Health Care Centre.	Lukes Anglican Church.	De Nwagles Suite
34.	A Bungalow (Ogbunaba).	Kilimanjaro (F.D.T Roundabout).	Shell Club.
35.	Ube Abuloma.	Ecobank Alesa Eleme.	Peace Mass Motor Park.

Focus Group Discussions

The focus group discussions were carried in groups divided based on gender and disability specifically. We had four groups for the FGDs; persons with disabilities (male), persons with disabilities (female), persons without disabilities (male and female-group 1 and 2) and final for ease of communication with sign language, we had a group for those with hearing impairment. A total of 30 persons (male - 10, female – 20) of which 7 are persons without disabilities.

Survey

The qualitative aspect of the audit was carried out using a structured questionnaire. A total of 1006 questionnaires where the data source for this research.

Sampling

The sample size for quantitative and qualitative research was carefully selected, taking into account demographic characteristics. In particular, the context profiling enabled careful selection of respondent and the research gathered data from a wide range of participants in different sectors; public, private and social sector. From civil service, business, academia, market women, civil society organization, organizations of persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities. When introducing the research in communities, the research team maximized the participation of respondents and after data collection used it as a sensitization opportunity.

Qualitative Data

Collected data has been compiled and analyzed using the systematic review with the following steps:

- Framing questions for a review: as the problem to be addressed by the review has been clearly specified in the terms of reference, unambiguous and structured questions have been set.
- Identifying relevant work: the search for studies has been extensive; multiple resources (both computerized and printed) have been searched.
- Assessing the quality of studies to every step of the review
- Summarizing the evidence: an analysis has been done using a combination of data from multiple studies.
- Tools were developed for the research and administered through trained research assistant
- Interpreting the findings where recommendations have been graded by reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence

Quantitative Data

Quantitative field data was entered, cleaned and analyzed by a professional data analyst using HPSS toolbox and the Microsoft excel spreadsheet. Qualitative field data was analyzed by content analysis, highlighting emerging themes across different groups.

Limitations

Information collected through the listed above techniques might be missing details, components or underreporting the specific issues, also it is important to acknowledge that the completeness of data may affect the conclusions. Consequently, the conclusions

and recommendations should also be considered with caution.

Result and Discussion

1. Demography

In this study, a total of 1006 respondents with disabilities and respondents without

disabilities participated in the quantitative aspect of the research collection. The gender breakdown of these participants as shown in figure 2 shows below, shows that the respondents balanced out at that 50.5% (506) female and 49.7% (500) male.

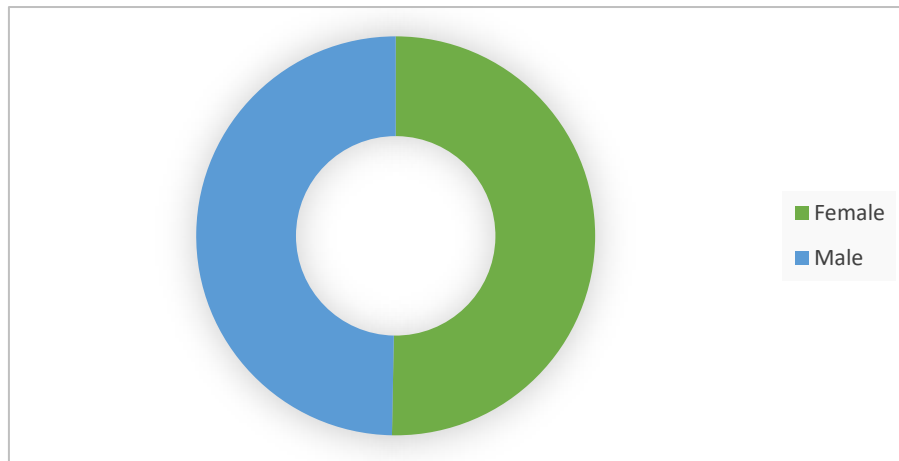


Figure 2: Gender Of Respondents

From Figure 3 Below, Of 1006 Respondents, 26.7% (269) Were Between The Ages 18-25, 33.5% (337) Were Between The Ages 26-35, 26.7% (269) Were Between The Ages 36-45,

11.2% (113) Were Between The Ages 46-55, None In The Age Group 56-65 And 1% (1) Were Between The Ages 66-Above. Which Implies That The Most Participated Are The Ages Between 26-35 Years.

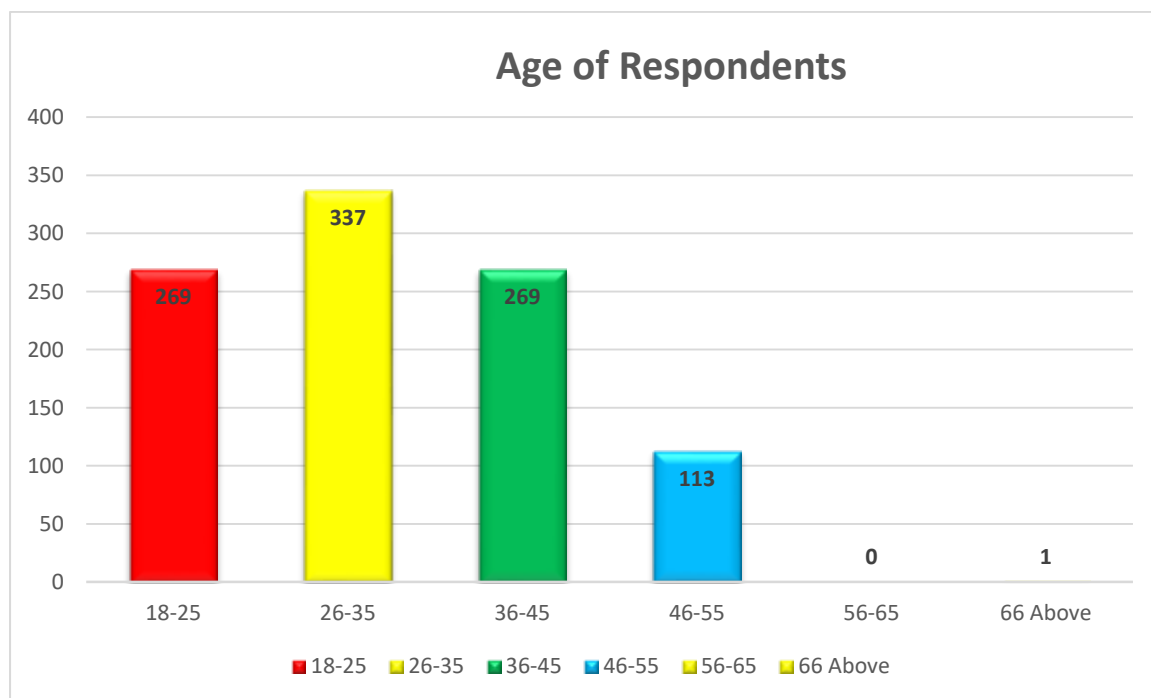


Figure 3: Age of Respondents

Figure 4 Implies That the Most Participated Are the Singles With 48.3% (486) Followed by the Married 46.1% (464) Of 1006 Respondents.

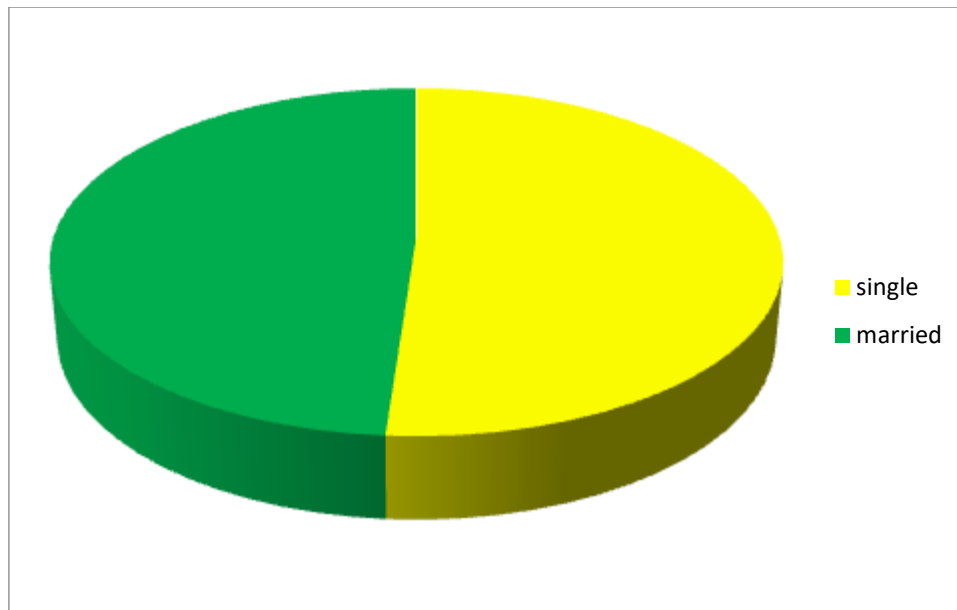


Figure 4: Marital Status Of Respondents

From Figure 5 Below 85.3% (858) Of the Respondent Do Not Agree to Have Any Form

of Disability While 14.7% (149) Of the Respondent Agreed to Have One Disability or The Other All Out Of 1006 Respondent.

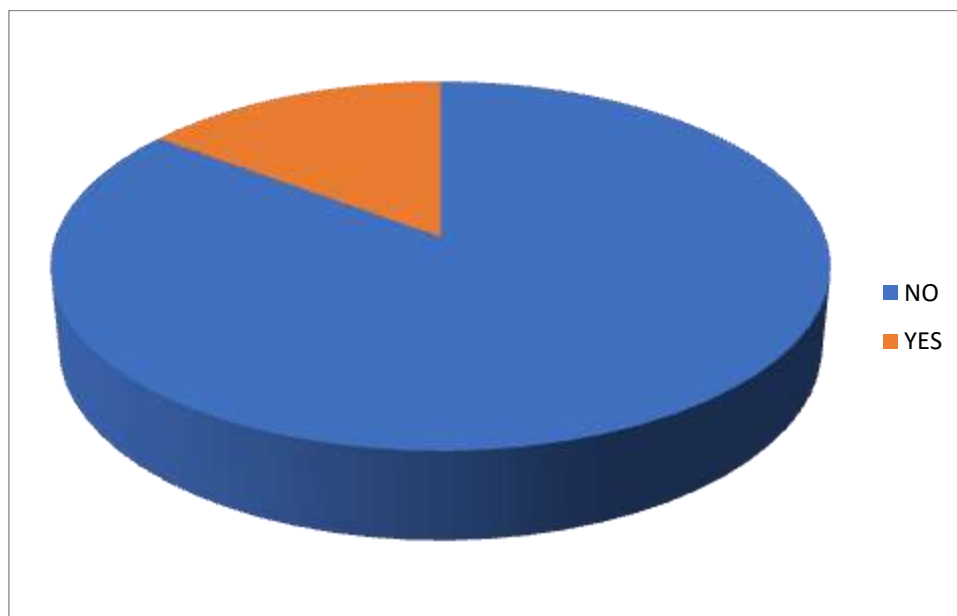


Figure 5: Disability Status of Respondents

Disability can be categorized under any of the following categories: physical (affects either temporarily or permanently, a person

physically and or mobility), sensory (affects one or more senses—sight, hearing, touch, taste, or spatial awareness), intellectual disabilities (difficulty communicating, learning, and retaining information),

psychosocial disabilities (affects per ones thinking, emotional state and behaviors). The study used a series of multiple answers questions, of which disability type was one of such. From the 149 respondent that said yes in figure 6 and 7 below, deductions were made of respondents of which 33.8% (51) have sensory

disability (26 female and 21 male), 59.6% (90) have physical disability (38 female, 52 male), 4.3% (6) have intellectual or learning disability (2 female and 2 male) and, 2.3% (4) have psychosocial disability (2 female and 2 male).

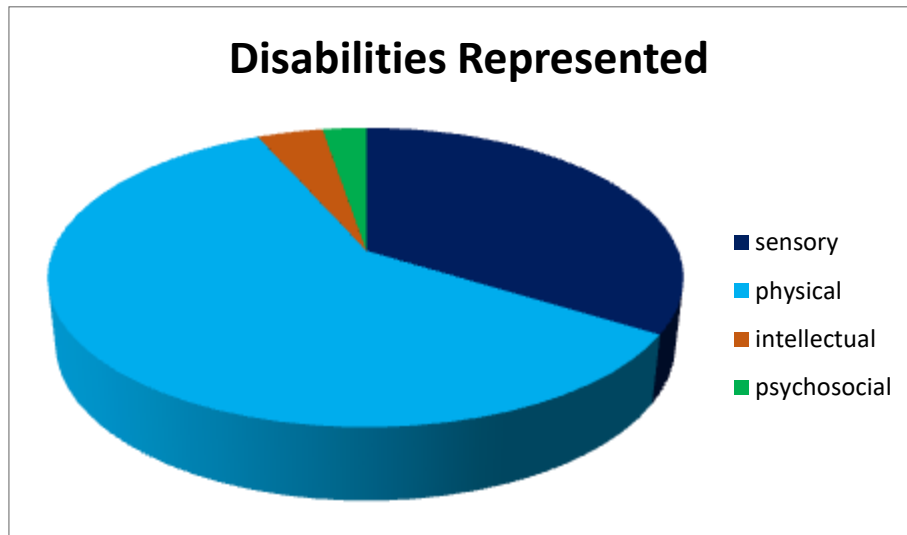


Figure 6: Disabilities Represented

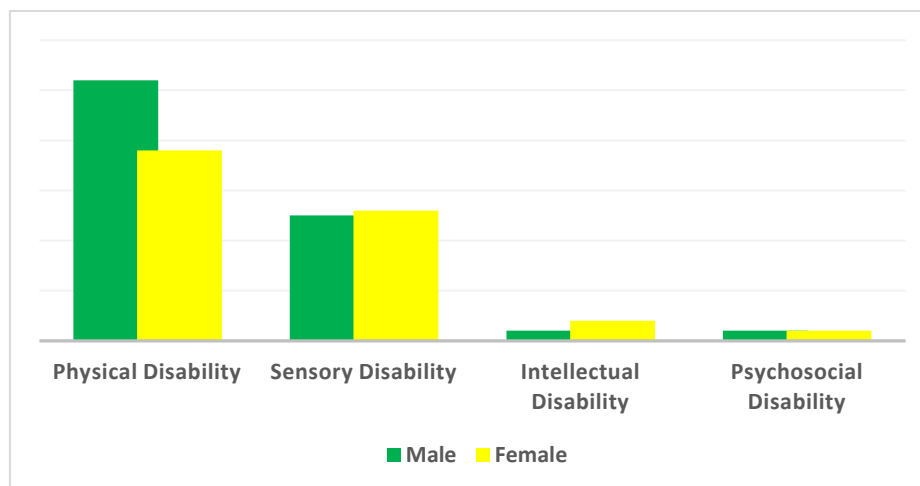


Figure 7: Respondents With Disabilities Represented Based On Gender Referring To Figure 9 Below, Out Of 858 Respondents Without Disabilities, Which Did Not Agree To Have Any Disability 73.7%

(700) Have Relatives Or A Person They Know With Disability While 26.3% (251) Do Not Have Any Relatives Or Know Any Person With Disability.

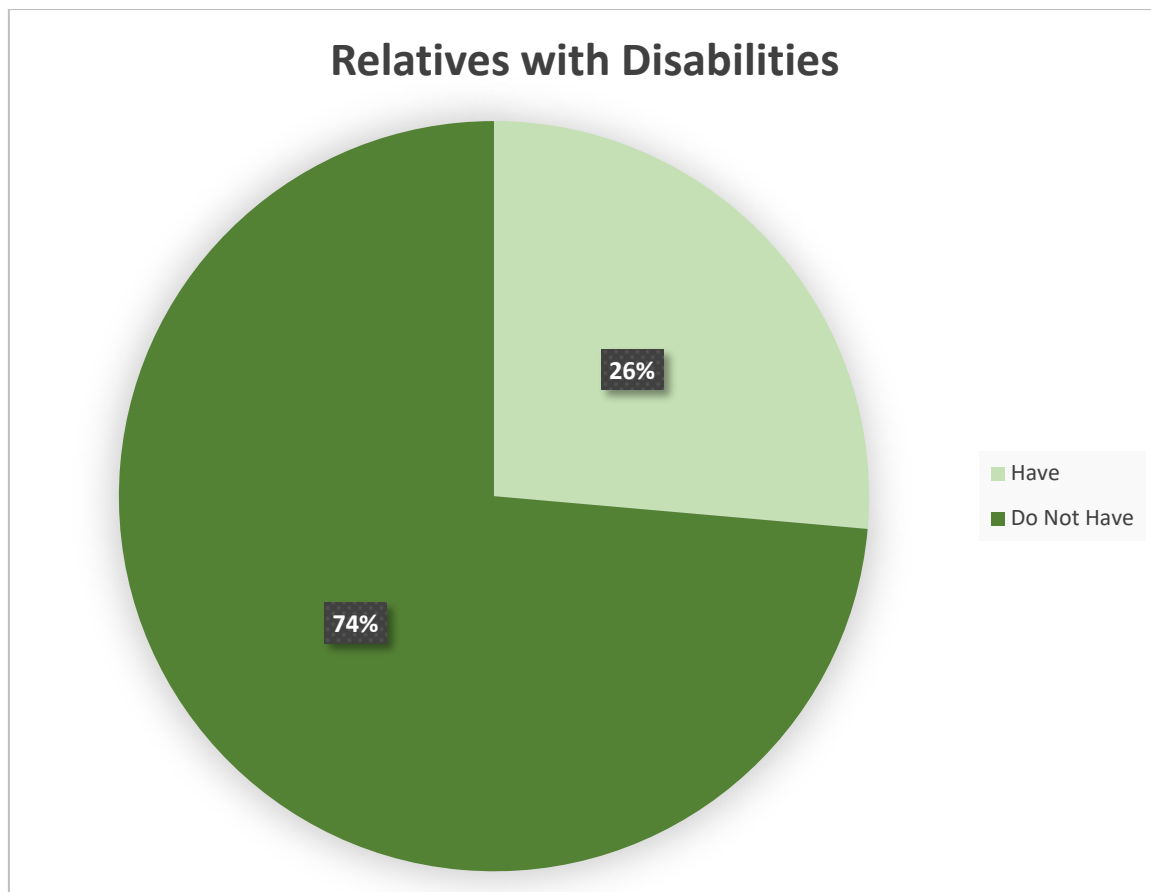


Figure 9: Respondents Without Disabilities With And Without Relative/Friend With A Disabilities

Figure 10 below shows the detail of sectors the respondents belong to, from the figure 10 and table 1 which shows the same data disaggregated by gender we see that 22.6% (227) respondents belong to the public sector, 62.1% (625) belong to the private sector, 3.68% (37) belong to the social and NGO sector and 11.6% (117). Our definition of these sectors was kept simple as public sector

referring to organizations owned and managed by the government including ministries, agencies, departments, schools, hospitals and different levels. The private sector were organizations, establishments and businesses (formal and informal), run and owned by individuals or groups, business entities. The third sector mainly had NGOs, churches so basically any persons or groups dealing in the benefiting of society and finally other and i don't know was for those who were unemployed, students and persons who out rightly did not know. We had our highest number of respondents in the private sector and each sector seemed to have females higher

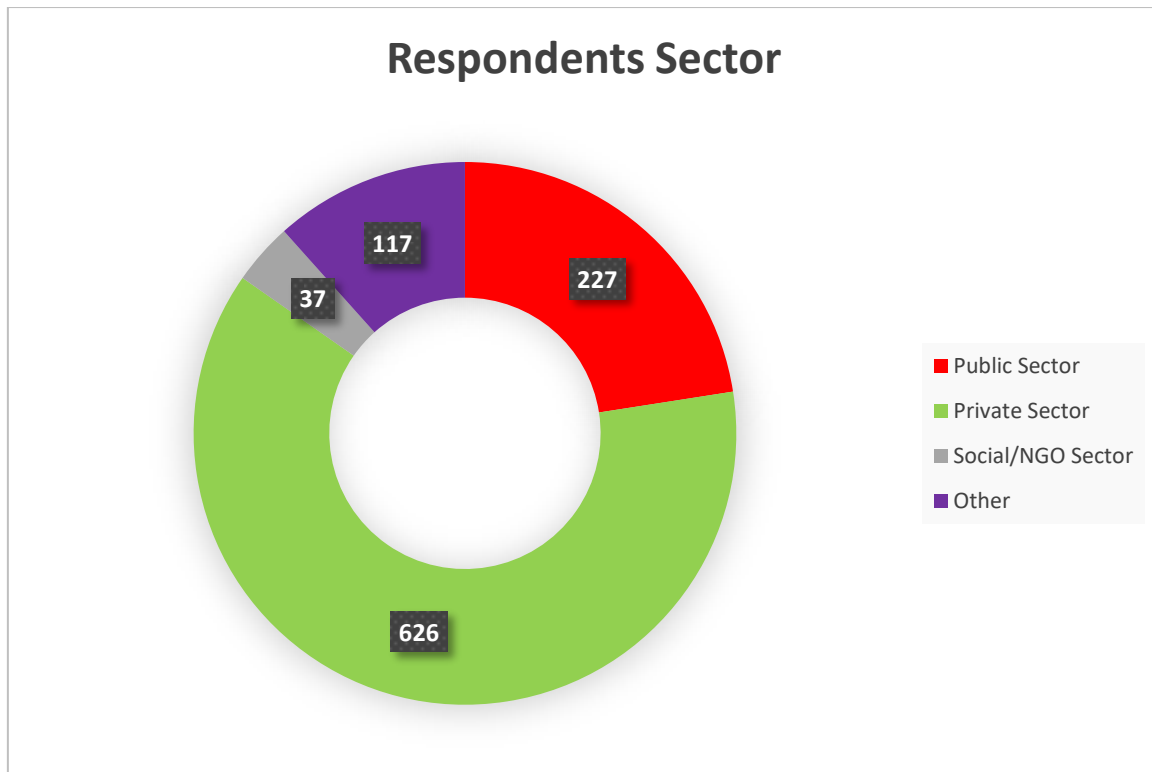


Figure 10: Respondents Sector Representation

Sector	Male	Female	Total
Public Sector	106	121	227
Private Sector	301	324	625
Social/Ngo Sector	17	20	37
Other/I Don't Know	53	64	117

Table 1: Respondents Sector Representation Based On Gender

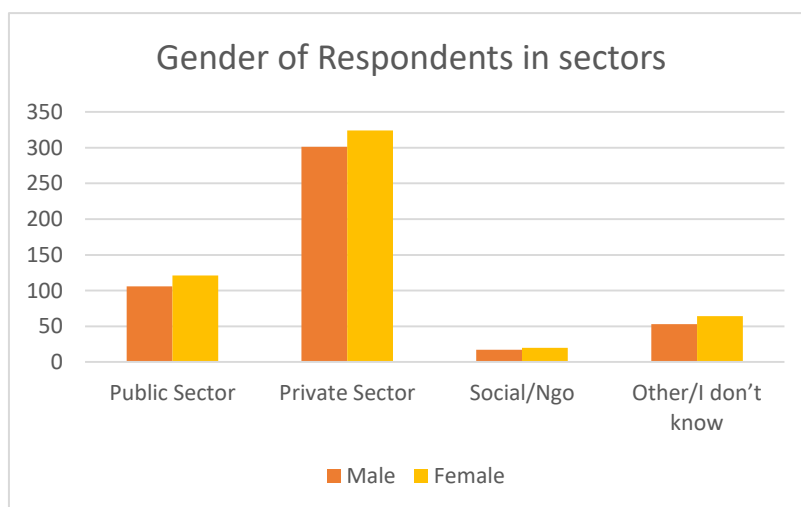


Figure 11: Respondents Sector Representation Based On Gender

2. Knowledge and Awareness

Figure 12 below shows that 56.5% (568) have not heard about Nigeria discrimination against person with disability while 43.5% (438) have heard about it.

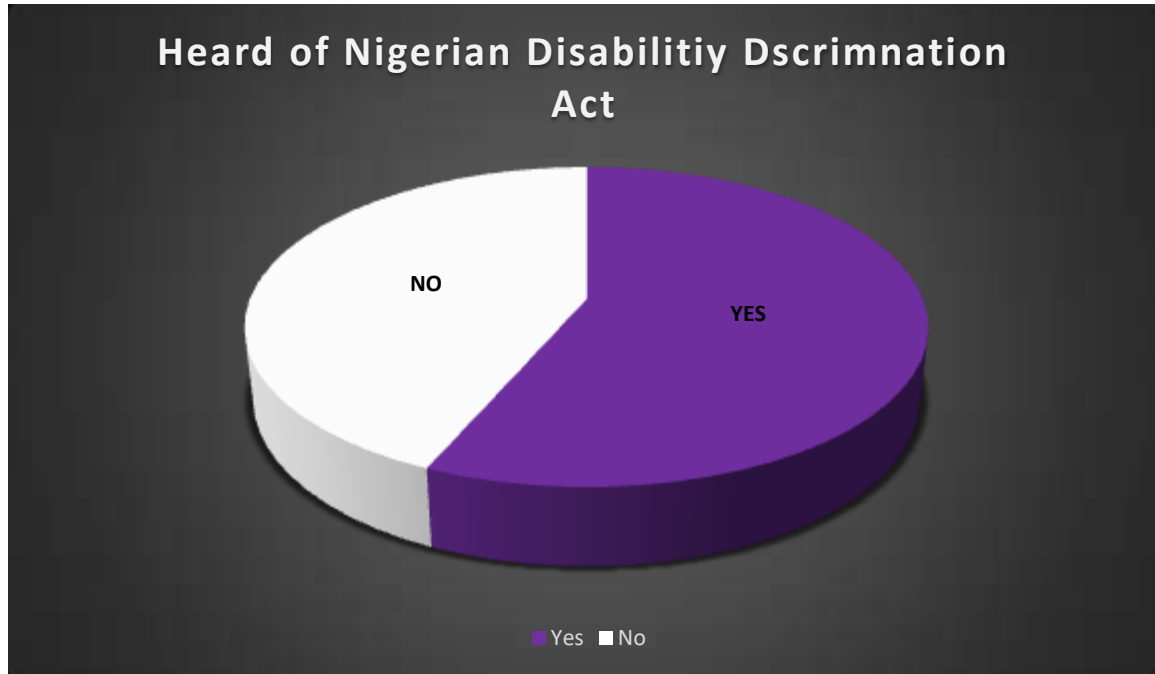


Figure 12: Knowledge of Nigerian Disability Discrimination Prohibition Act, 2018

From the figure 13 below the following deductions were made

Out of the 438 that responded yes from the above data

47.4% (208) heard about Nigeria discrimination against person with disability from the social media

37.2% (163) heard about Nigeria discrimination against person with disability from traditional media

12.9% (57) heard about Nigeria discrimination against person with disability from conferences

15.4% (66) heard about Nigeria discrimination against person with disability from either campaign, word of mouth etc.

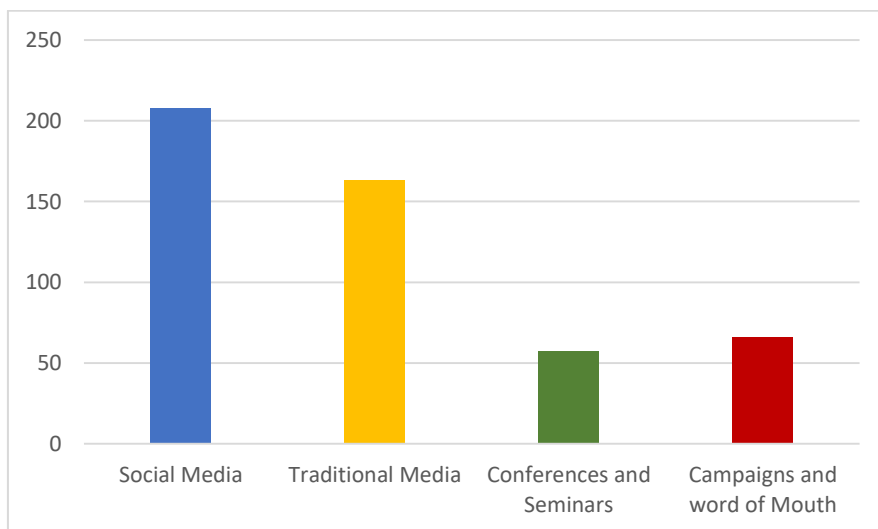


Figure 13: Source of Knowledge

3.Accessibility

Access in Health Centers

From the figure below the following deductions were made with respect to access to health centers, form 1006 respondents, 56.6% (569) say persons with disabilities can

have access into health care facilities and services provided in rivers state. 23.6% (237) says persons with disabilities do not have access into health care facilities and services in rivers state. And 19.8% (199) did not know anything about it.

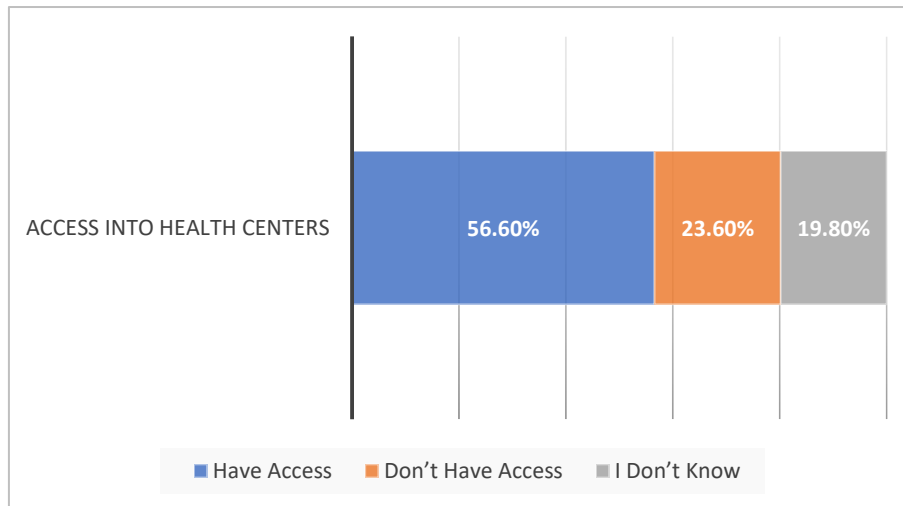


Figure 14: Access In Health Centers

Access into Schools

From The Figure below And Out Of 1006 Responses the Following Results Were Drawn Out

26% (262) Says Schools Are Easily Accessible For PWDS

55.3 (556) Says Schools Are Not Easily Accessible For PWDS

18.7 (188) Did Not Know

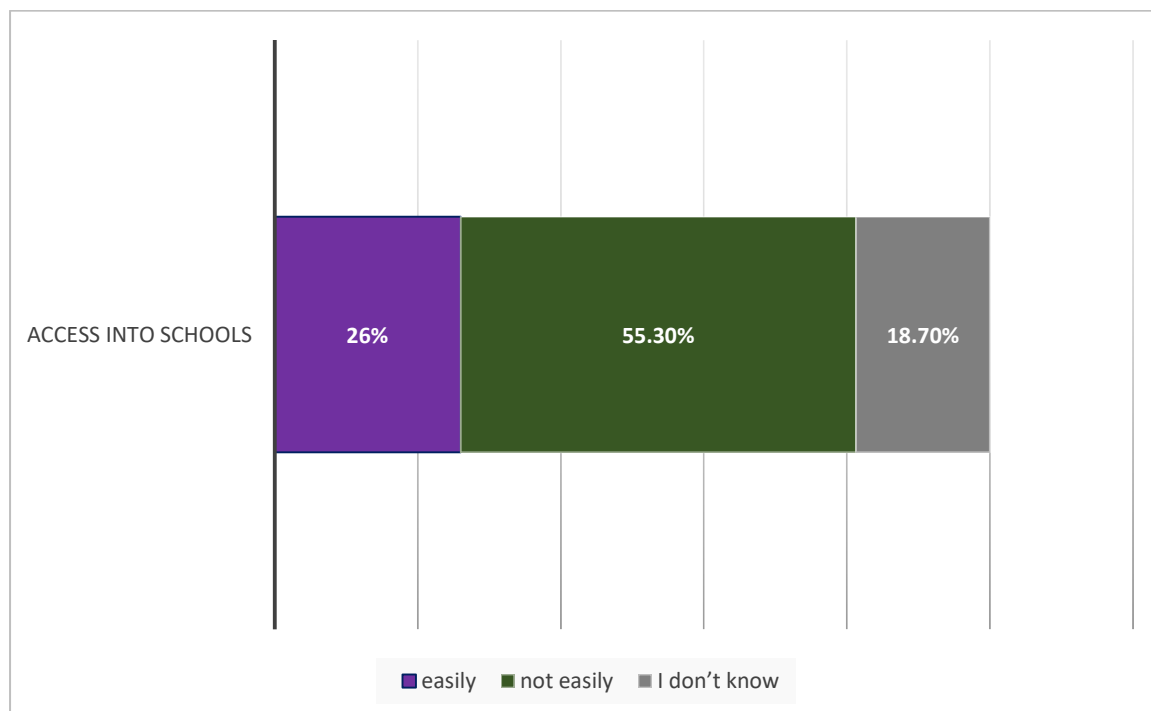


Figure 14: Access Into Schools

Access Into Religious Centers

From The Figure Below And Out Of 1006 Responses The Following Results Were Drawn Out

48.8% (491) Says Religious Centres Are Not Easily Accessible By PWDs
38% (382) Says Religious Centres Are Easily Accessible By PWDs
13.2% (133) Don't Know

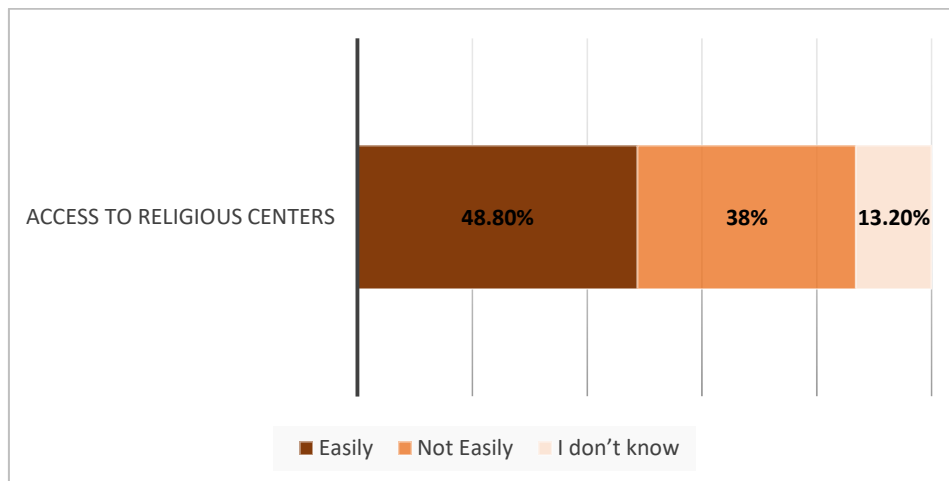


Figure 15: Access To Religious Centers

Access to Banks

From The Figure Below And Out Of 1006 Responses The Following Results Were Drawn Out

61.5% (619) Says Banks Are Not Easily Accessible By PWDs
26.7% (269) Says Banks Are Easily Accessible By PWDs
11.7% (118) Don't Know

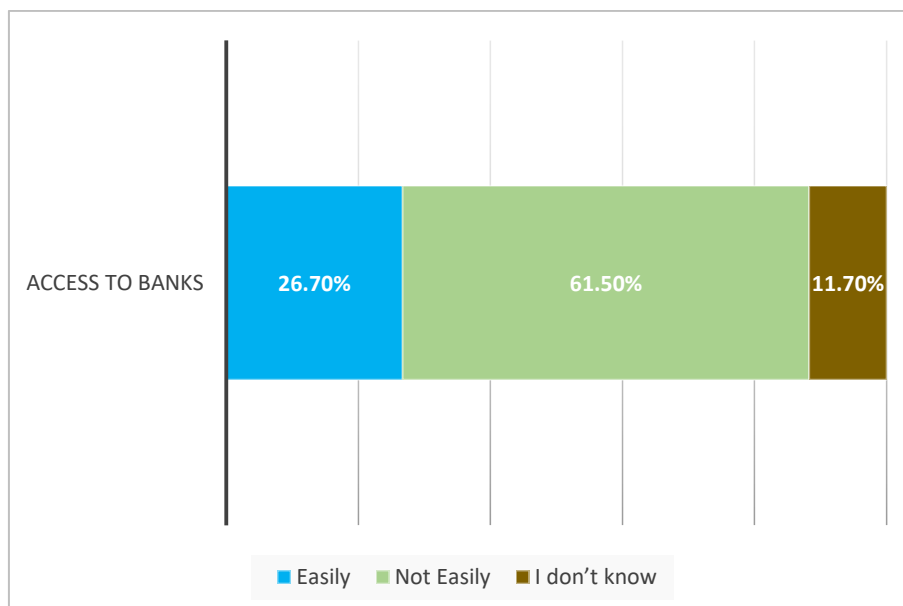


Figure16: Access To Banks

4.Participation In Decision Making

A key question asked was if persons with disabilities should be included in decision making processes like in the family. The figure

below from our respondents in the survey indicate that

44.4% (445) says disabilities should be included in terms of decisions that affect them in family, different institutions and establishments in rivers state

23.9% (239) says disabilities should not be included in terms of decisions that affect

them in family, different institutions and establishments in rivers state

31.9% (321) don't know

It is important to create more awareness and shed a more positive light on disability in this state to position the person with disability as one capable of decision making even at family level.

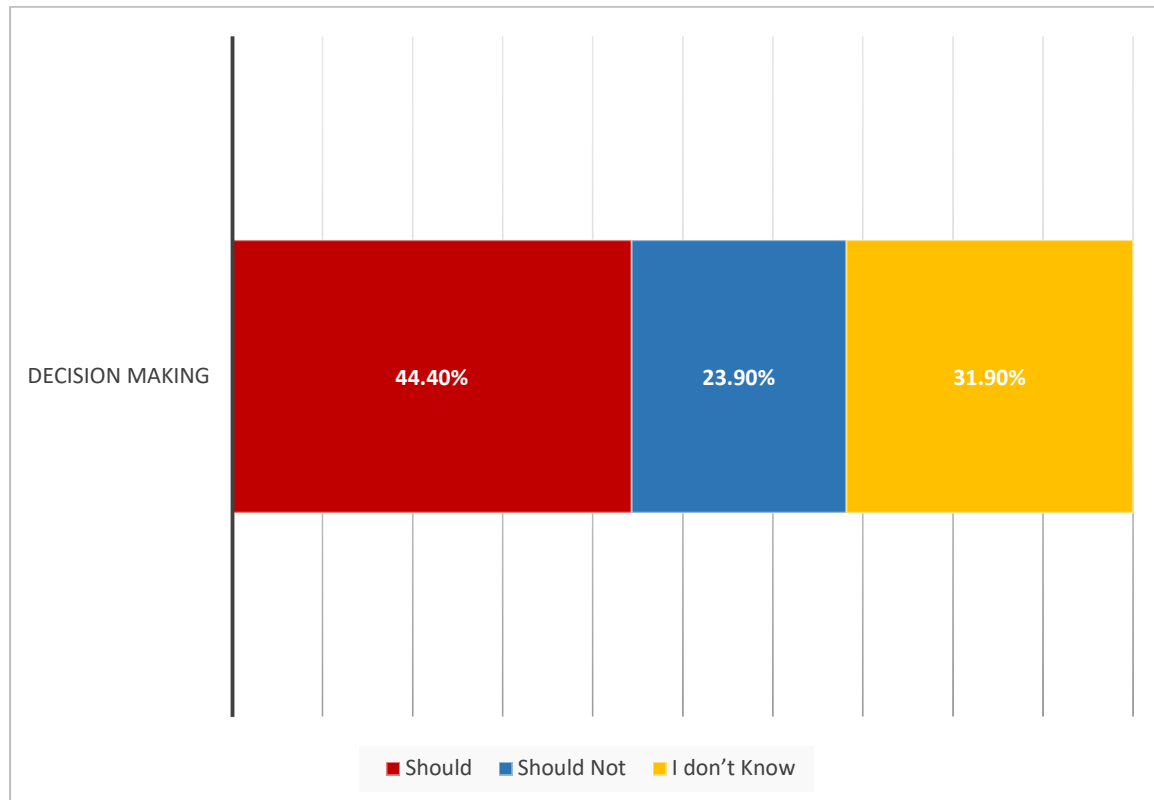


Figure 17: Participation In Decision Making In Determining Perceptions Around Accessibility For Persons With Disabilities Into Public Facilities As A Priority, Question Was Asked To All 1006 Respondents To Ascertain If They Felt If Persons With Disabilities Should Be Given Priority In Public Facilities And Opportunities In The State. The Figure Below Implies That

37.4% (376) Says Persons With Disability Should Be Given Priority In Public Facilities And Opportunities In Rivers State

35.2% (354) Says No To Persons With Disability Given Priority In Public Facilities And Opportunities In Rivers State

27.4% (276) Said I Don't Know

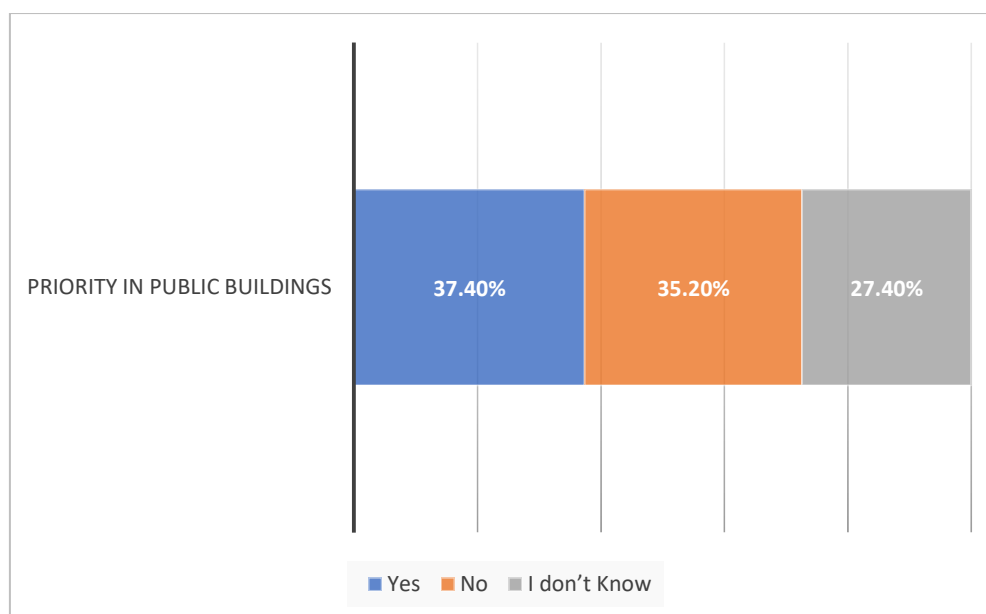


Figure 18: Priority in Public Buildings and Opportunities

2. Knowledge of the Disability Inclusion Laws

Findings 1: The Knowledge of The Disability Inclusion Laws Is Not Popular Among Majority of Residents in Rivers State.

The Respondent Who knows The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Law Know It Either from social media, Traditional Media, Conference and Campaigns, Respondent in Focus Group Discussion Also Stated That They Got To Know About The Law Through Some Civil Society Organizations Like FAECARE Foundation.

3. Access to Government Buildings

Findings 2: Some of the Government Buildings Are Not Accessible

Within Port Harcourt metropolis most buildings are non-universal as they lacked such facilities as slope ramp, wheelchair ramp, width of doors and manicule, floor level of entrance, stairs, handrail and guard rail, placement signage, accessible meeting room, elevator and modified toilet (Ubani P., et. Al., 2020). A number of high profile government buildings including the ministry of works who is supposed to supervise the implementation of inclusive physical projects such as construction of roads, buildings, e.t.c is not disability friendly (Umeh & Joab-Peterside, 2021). Other public buildings such as the state

judiciary complex and rivers state house of assembly are inaccessibility to PWDs (the tide, 30th august 2023). Some of the government building do not have accessible ramps, no lift even when the buildings are story building. Checklist results (inspected facilities) showed that most government buildings lack basic accessibility minimal standard e.g availability of ramp.

4. Accessibility in Schools

Findings 3: Most Schools In Rivers State Are Not Accessible In Term Of Structure And Inclusive Education Model

Some secondary school visited had newly constructed ramps in the schools while some schools had ramps that were old and not accessible to students with disability in tertiary institutions in rivers state also face sever challenges in accessing many public facilities especially high-rise buildings such as canteen, hostels, library, school clinic, faculties, and playgrounds within the schools (Bumma, Et. Al., 2020).

"Most Teachers In Special Schools Do Not Know Sign Language, So It Becomes Hard To Teach Deaf Students. The Teacher Will Just Be Pointing On The Board Using Local Signs Because They Don't Know How To Sign. A Teacher Must Be Able To Sign And Explain To Match His Teaching" –RWD

5. Access to Banks

Findings 4: Access To Banks Is Not A Reality In River State.

The entrances to banks in Port Harcourt are particularly not “disability friendly”. The kinds of security doors currently in use in banks are narrow cages, making access into these banks barely possible for people using walking aids and impossible for people using wheelchairs (the cable).

A respondent with hearing impairment has this to say during the FGD session;

“Banks Need To Do Better. Like For Us That Are Hearing Impaired, There’s Always Problem Of Language Barrier. So It Makes Accessibility Hard For Us Because We Are Not Easily Understood Because Of The Language Barrier.” RWD

However, Respondent With Says PWDs Are Given First Considerations In Queues And 31:8 Percentage Of Respondent Says They Are Not Given Consideration In Queue It Is Worthy Of Note That PWDs From Difference Constituencies Were Also Respondent As Seen In Figure 6 Above.

6. Access To Recreational Facilities

Findings 5: Recreational Facilities Are Not Particularly Designed To Ease Accessibility for PWDS

Some Recreational Facilities That Exists In The City Of Port Harcourt include port harcourt pleasure park, Port Harcourt zoo & amusement park. Most persons with disability experienced difficulties accessing recreational centers, as most of them do not have ramps. Toilets are also not disability friendly. Checklist was used to access public places in rivers state only few of inspected places were accessible, it was also observed that even when entrances are accessible, not all areas in these recreational facilities are accessible. Some recreational facilities like big shopping malls and cinemas did have washrooms marked for persons with disabilities, they however seemed to be taken over by employees as special toilets.

7. Accessibility Standard in Public Transportation

Findings 6: Accessibility Standard in Road Public Transportation For PWDs Is Still A Concern

On accessibility of public vehicle (transport) 77% of the respondent says that public transportation is not accessible. This is mainly linked to types of buses used in the stat and the reality of very high transport if one opts for

smaller vehicles and charter vehicles. There was also the concern about the general attitude of drivers and conductors when it came to assisting passengers with disabilities. This remains a challenge as different public parks are run by different arms of the road transport workers union with varying standards.

8. Accessibility Standard in Air Transportation

Finding 7: Interaction with airline line staff shows readiness to comply with reasonable accommodation however it is not for them to provide it.

“It Is Not For Us To Provide Services For PWDs Is Left For Fann To Provide The Facility And We Will Pay For It Just Like We Pay For Others” -Airline Staff

Other FANN Staff Interviewed Said They Are Not Aware Of Any Plans For Reasonable Accommodation For Persons With Disability Especially With Regards Getting Into The Aircraft Without Support.

“...For Now We Have Wheelchairs We Lift Them Up And They Have Not Been Any Injury To Them.”

This Is A Classic Case Of Poor Knowledge And Awareness Of Accessibility Standards, Terms And Actions.

9. Access to Health Facilities

While some health facility structures have some basic requirement like ramps, especially the model primary healthcare facilities, many healthcare facilities like private hospitals, still lack accessible health facilities and trained staff in disability , the consulting beds are mostly not adjustable and so requires assistance from a health personnel. There is also the language barriers which are also there, no sign language interpreter in most cases.

10. Other Accessibility Concerns

Respondents with Disability Have This To Say During FGDS And Avenues For In-Depth Interviews,

....” So, health-wise, i can't really say i can access the services of these hospitals and health facilities. You talked about the markets; the way the markets are built is appalling. In fact you can't even access the market because before you get to the market, you'll see people trading along the road. And so you are constrained not to even go inside because you can't walk with the heavy crowd and chaotic nature of the market environment. To a large extent, it will also deny you the opportunity... if you are interested to go into trading, as a

petty trader, you may be hampered because the place is not well organized. So i think this is my own personal experience." RWD

"let me start with, like, in my church, most times when i get into the toilet the tiles are very slippery, the surface. Once there's water on it, with these my crutches, i can't easily just... because any step will be as if i want to slip. So, most times what i do if i observe the tile is very slippery, i drop the crutches by the side, use my and hold the wall gradually". RWD

Respondents Without Disabilities Who Are Critical Stakeholders Also Agree That The Knowledge Of Inclusive Laws Is Low And There Is A Growing Consensus Among The Respondents In KII And FGD That Although There Is A Law For Welfare Of Persons With Disability The Implementation Is At Zero Level, Communications And Educational Materials Are Also Inaccessible A Respondent Without Disability At The Fgd Says

".....More so, most of these schools don't have sign instructors. So what about the people who find it difficult to understand the classes, nobody interprets to them, no sign instructors. From primary to tertiary, no sign instructors to help those with hearing difficulties and all that?" RWOD

Checklist Direct Finding

Throughout The Population Sample, No Facility Inspected Had All The Requirements For Accessibility Standard For Instance In PHALGA LGA. Question 20 On The Checklist Which Says, ***"Is There A Sign Indicating Priority Seats For People With Disabilities....?"*** Only One Facility Had This Requirement; Suffice To Say That Accessibility Is Still Vague And Practiced Very Independently In Rivers State,

A Question Asked Through The Questionnaire While Triangulating Corroborated This Point. The Question Was ***'Do You Think That Rivers State Is Accessible For PWDs?'***

To The Question, 56.5 Percent Of Respondents Through The Questionnaire Responded ***'No Rivers State Is Not Accessible.'*** There is definitely a lot of work to be done.

Like This Respondent Expressed Passionately ***"I find it difficult going to the bank, going to restaurants, and then some health centers. Starting with the bank, when i get to the bank, the security will have to come to my aid because the crutches can't pass before unable***

to pass. That is number one. Number two, the staircases are very dangerous for me. Like, i use a bank, so one knows what it looks like. Then restaurants, most restaurants, the tiles there are very slippery for my crutches, so i find it difficult to enter restaurants. Some churches as well is difficult for one to access because the tiles there are very slippery; you find it difficult. Then health centers, we'll be asked to go for tests and all that, upstairs, and it's not very easy, sometimes it's very dangerous. So, accessibility is not easy." RWD

Conclusion

Conclusively, rivers state has not passed the accessibility audit as accessibility is still done by ear and as knowledge on disability rights continues to gain traction. Some facilities did show a lot of initiative when it came to providing access for the public including persons with disabilities, like big shopping malls. Disability must move away from welfare model which is further reinforced by the non-implemented law called the rivers state persons with disabilities welfare enhancement law.

There must be very intentional strides to domesticate the disability discrimination prohibition act or sign to law a rights based law in rivers state, leading to unmet rights of a significant number of its population including accessibility. A domesticated functional law will also give power to enforcement of the provisions of the law. Inclusion of persons with disabilities on a rights basis not individual or welfare, will greatly increase productivity and income for the state.

Accessibility is beyond just ramp construction, it is also removing the barriers to access in the physical environment as well as information and communication and in different all aspects like in education, healthcare, justice etc. It is about thinking universal design or providing reasonable accommodation to ensure there is equal and full access for everyone. Accessibility is pivotal in inclusion, failure of which it will be very difficult for persons with disability to function on an equal basis. Implementing these recommendation rivers state can ensure equal access and opportunities for persons with disabilities promoting social integration and inclusivity which will boost rivers state.

11. Checklist Showing Facilities without Stair Case Yet No Ramps

Location	No Of Facilities with Staircase	No Of Ramps	Facilities Without Ramps	Total Inspected
Eleme	16	3	13	35
Phalga	22	8	14	35
Obio Okpio	24	10	14	35

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Persons With Disabilities	PWDs
Respondent With Disability	RWD
Respondent Without Disability	RWOD
Organization Of Person With Disabilities	OPDs
Focus Group Discussion	FGD
Key Informant Interviews	KIIs

Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest

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