



Disability Rights Legislation in Nepal: Status, Challenges, and Way Forward

Kamala Oli¹

¹*Saipal Legal Service, Bijuli Bazar, Kathmandu*

Manuscript Received: 28 May 2024

Accepted: 16 September 2024

Final Revision: 03 April 2025

Abstract

Legislation concerning the rights of persons with disabilities encompasses legal instruments aimed at safeguarding their rights and interests, ensuring equal participation and inclusion in societal affairs. This paper investigates the landscape of rights legislation provided for persons with disabilities in Nepal, where disability issues are analyzed within social and legal discourse frameworks. Utilizing the content analysis method, this article synthesizes qualitative aspects of legal frameworks, policy documents, and existing scholarly literature with insights gleaned from secondary sources. Key concepts under scrutiny include government attention to disability rights initiatives and international obligations, the degree of legal adherence, and the accessibility of services for persons with disabilities. The research findings highlight notable legislative efforts made by the government to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities; however, their effectiveness relies on enforcing legislation, strengthening public institutions, and encouraging contributions from non-governmental organizations. Implementing such legal frameworks was found to be weak for several reasons, including infrastructural deficiencies, lack of accurate statistical information, and inadequate policy and structural interventions at the sub-national level. Media review revealed various barriers to accessibility, education, employment, health services, social inclusion, and legislation, while also acknowledging some benefits received by persons with disabilities in education, employment, institutionalization, social protection, and resilience. Recommendations arising from this inquiry advocate for bolstered enforcement mechanisms, resource allocation, increased public awareness efforts, improved accessibility standards, and empowerment of diverse stakeholders. This research is significant given the urgent need to address the ongoing challenges in effectively implementing rights for persons with disabilities in Nepal.

Keywords: Disability, disability rights, human rights, inclusion, legislation

Corresponding author: K. Oli (kamalaolithapa@gmail.com)

© Author; Published by Nepal Public Policy Review and peer-reviewed under the responsibility of Policy Research Institute, Nepal. Licensed under CREATIVE-COMMONS license CC-BY-NC 4.0



नेपालमा अपाङ्गता सम्बन्धित अधिकार कानून: स्थिति, चुनौती र अबको बाटो

कमला ओली^१

^१साइपाल कानूनी सेवा, बिजुली बजार, काठमाडौं

Manuscript Received: 28 May 2024

Accepted: 16 September 2024

Final Revision: 03 April 2025

सार

अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको अधिकार सम्बन्धी कानूनमा उनीहरूको अधिकार र हितको रक्षा गर्दै सामाजिक मामिलामा समान सहभागिता र समावेशीकरण सुनिश्चित गर्ने कानूनी उपकरणहरू समाविष्ट हुन्छन्। नेपालमा अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको लागि प्रावधान गरिएका अधिकारसम्बन्धी कानूनको परिदृश्य अध्ययन गरी तयार पारिएको यस लेखमा सामाजिक र कानूनी बहसको ढाँचाभित्र रहेर अपाङ्गता सम्बन्धी मुद्दाहरूको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। द्वितीयक स्रोतहरूबाट सङ्कलन गरिएका अन्तर्दृष्टिहरू सहित कानूनी व्यवस्था, नीतिगत दस्तावेजहरू, र अनुसन्धान कृतिहरूको गुणात्मक विश्लेषण गर्नका लागि सामग्री विश्लेषण विधि प्रयोग गरिएको छ।

अध्ययनका लागि अपाङ्गतासम्बन्धी अधिकारका पहलहरू र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय दायित्वहरूप्रति सरकारको ध्यानाकर्षण, कानूनी अनुपालनको अवस्था, र अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको सेवामा पहुँचजस्ता अवधारणाहरूको आधार लिइएको छ। अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको अधिकारको रक्षा गर्न सरकारले गरेका विधायिकी प्रयासहरू उल्लेखनीय रहेको पाइयो; यद्यपि, तिनको प्रभावकारिताका लागि कानून कार्यान्वयनको अभ्यास, सार्वजनिक संस्थाहरूको सुदृढीकरण र गैरसरकारी संस्थाहरूको योगदान प्रोत्साहन गर्नु आवश्यक देखिन्छ। पूर्वाधारको कमी हुनु, सही तथ्याङ्कीय जानकारी उपलब्ध नहुनु र प्रादेशिक र स्थानीय स्तरमा पर्याप्त नीति र संरचनात्मक हस्तक्षेपहरू नहुनुजस्ता विविध कारणहरूले गर्दा यस्ता कानूनी ढाँचाहरूको कार्यान्वयनको अवस्था कमजोर रहेको पाइयो। मिडियामा आएका विषयवस्तुहरूको समीक्षा गर्दा पहुँच, शिक्षा, रोजगारी, स्वास्थ्य सेवाहरू, सामाजिक समावेशीकरण र कानूनमा धेरै अवरोधहरू उल्लेख भएको देखियो जबकि शिक्षा, रोजगारी, संस्थागतकरण, सामाजिक सुरक्षा र अनुकूलनमा अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूले प्राप्त गरेका केही लाभहरू पनि मननयोग्य छन्। सुदृढ कार्यान्वयन संयन्त्र, स्रोत विनियोजन, जनचेतना अभिवृद्धिका प्रयासहरू, पहुँचयोग्य मापदण्डहरूको अवलम्बन र सरोकारवालाहरूको सशक्तिकरण गर्दै नेपालमा अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको अधिकारको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयनमा आइपरेका चुनौतीहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्नुपर्ने टङ्कारो आवश्यकताको पैरवी गर्न यो अनुसन्धानका नतिजाहरू महत्वपूर्ण रहेको अपेक्षा गरिन्छ।

Keywords: Disability, disability rights, human rights, inclusion, legislation

Corresponding author: K. Oli (kamalalithapa@gmail.com)

© Author; Published by Nepal Public Policy Review and peer-reviewed under the responsibility of Policy Research Institute, Nepal. Licensed under CREATIVE-COMMONS license CC-BY-NC 4.0



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In recent decades, the global discourse surrounding disability rights has undergone significant evolution, driven by a growing recognition of the rights and dignity of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), adopted in 2006, stands as a landmark international instrument affirming the rights of individuals with disabilities and outlining obligations for state parties to ensure their full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life. This paradigm shift toward a rights-based approach to disability has catalyzed legislative reforms and policy initiatives worldwide to dismantle barriers to equality and foster inclusive societies (United Nations [UN], 2006).

Nepal, a country characterized by its rich cultural diversity and rugged terrain, is home to a significant population of individuals with disabilities, estimated at around 650 thousand people (National Statistics Office [NSO], 2021). The journey toward realizing disability rights in Nepal mirrors broader global trends while grappling with unique socio-cultural and economic challenges. Despite progressive legislative measures, such as the Constitution of Nepal, 2015, and the Act on Rights of Persons with Disability (RPD), 2017, disparities persist in the lived experiences of PWDs, exacerbated by poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, and pervasive negative societal attitudes. Against this backdrop, a critical imperative arises to scrutinize the implementation of disability rights legislation and identify barriers hindering its effective enforcement.

Despite the existence of robust legal frameworks aimed at safeguarding the rights of PWDs, Nepal grapples with persistent challenges in translating these laws into tangible improvements in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Issues such as inadequate resource allocation, infrastructural deficiencies, societal stigma, and cultural barriers continue to impede the full realization of disability rights, perpetuating marginalization and exclusion. This disconnection between policy intent and practical outcomes reflects the need for a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing the implementation of disability rights legislation in Nepal. This study seeks to critically analyze the landscape of disability rights legislation in Nepal, focusing on identifying barriers to effective implementation and formulating recommendations for policy and practice.

1.2 Disability Rights and Legislation

Disability is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various forms of impairments, which may be physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability through its International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), viewing disability as an interaction between health conditions and contextual factors, such as environmental and personal elements (World Health Organization, 2001). This approach signifies a shift from the traditional medical model—which focuses solely on the individual’s impairments—to a social model that recognizes the role of societal structures in creating barriers for individuals with disabilities. This broader perspective is essential for understanding how disabilities affect individuals’ ability to participate fully in society.

Disability rights extend beyond medical care to encompass a wide range of human rights that aim to ensure individuals with disabilities can enjoy their rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. These rights include access to education, employment, healthcare, and participation in political and public life. Degener (2016) emphasizes that framing disability within a human rights context requires states to not only remove barriers but also to actively promote the inclusion and participation of PWDs in all aspects of society. This approach is fundamental in combating discrimination and fostering an inclusive environment where all individuals can thrive.

On the global stage, the recognition and protection of disability rights have significantly advanced through various international instruments. The United Nations CRPD represents a comprehensive and binding international framework that shifts the focus from viewing PWDs as objects of charity or medical care to recognizing them as holders of rights with inherent dignity and autonomy (UN, 2006). The CRPD requires state parties to adopt legislative, administrative, and other measures to fully realize all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all PWDs. The impact of the CRPD has been profound, inspiring legislative reforms and policy initiatives worldwide aimed at dismantling barriers to equality and inclusion. Harpur (2012) has noted that the CRPD has been pivotal in promoting a new paradigm of disability rights that emphasizes accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and the importance of combating stereotypes and prejudices. This paradigm shift is further supported by global development frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes specific goals and targets to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong

learning opportunities for all, explicitly mentioning persons with disabilities (UN, 2015).

In developing countries, the practical realization of disability rights poses both a significant challenge and a crucial opportunity. These nations often contend with resource constraints, infrastructural deficits, and socio-cultural barriers that hinder the full inclusion of PWDs. However, there is growing recognition of the importance of disability rights as integral to broader development objectives.

Mitra (2017) argues that ensuring the inclusion of PWDs is a matter of human rights and a key component of social and economic development. Inclusive policies and practices can lead to enhanced productivity, reduced poverty, and greater societal cohesion. Strengthening disability rights in developing countries is essential for sustainable development and equity. The CRPD provides a robust framework for states to develop and implement policies that promote the full participation of PWDs in all aspects of life. This effort is analyzed within the broader human rights and social justice movements, which advocate for dismantling barriers and promoting an inclusive society where all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can contribute to and benefit from development (Mégret, 2007). Ensuring that the principles enshrined in international instruments like the CRPD are translated into meaningful action on the ground is critical for realizing disability rights.

1.3 Disability Rights Framework

Certain core principles form the foundation of the disability rights framework, ensuring that PWDs are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. These principles include dignity, autonomy, non-discrimination, full participation, and inclusion. Dignity emphasizes the inherent worth of every individual, while autonomy empowers PWDs to make decisions about their lives and pursue independent living. Non-discrimination ensures equal treatment and opportunities by eliminating barriers to access. Full participation enables active involvement in all societal, economic, and political processes, and inclusion ensures that PWDs are integrated into all aspects of mainstream society. Technological advancements, emerging technologies, and new rights have become essential to the framework. Digital accessibility ensures that individuals with disabilities can access digital platforms, services, and tools without obstacles, including screen readers, closed captioning, and other accessibility tools. Artificial Intelligence contributes to enhancing assistive technologies and improving access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Additionally, data privacy is critical for safeguarding

sensitive information while ensuring the secure use of digital technologies for persons with disabilities.

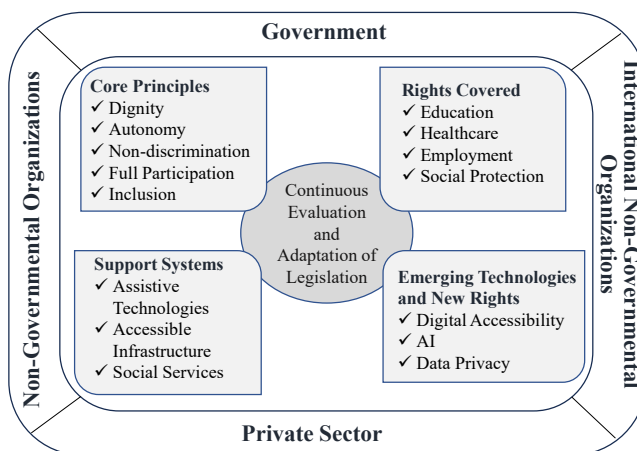


Fig 1. Figurative Representation of Disability Rights and its Dynamics, Source: Author's illustration

The disability rights framework highlights the rights that guarantee equal access and opportunities for PWDs. These rights include education, healthcare, employment, and social protection. The right to education ensures inclusive and equitable learning environments with appropriate accommodations. Accessible healthcare services and facilities safeguard the right to health and well-being. Employment rights focus on creating equal opportunities in the workplace, supported by reasonable accommodations and inclusive practices. Social protection encompasses financial support, social security, and community-based programs to uphold a dignified and secure life for individuals with disabilities. Effective implementation and enforcement require collaboration among key stakeholders to ensure the practical realization of these rights. The government plays a central role by enacting and enforcing laws, policies, and programs to promote disability inclusion. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) contribute by advocating for the rights of PWDs and providing direct services. At the same time, the private sector supports the framework by fostering inclusive employment practices, investing in assistive technologies, and ensuring accessible products and infrastructure.

Support systems are essential for enabling PWDs to access their rights effectively. Assistive technologies such as mobility aids, hearing devices, and communication tools empower individuals to lead independent lives. Accessible infrastructure ensures inclusivity in physical spaces like transportation and buildings, as well as on digital platforms. Social services, including counseling, rehabilitation, and community-based support, are vital for helping individuals and families manage

their needs. The framework emphasizes the continuous evaluation and adaptation of legislation to address emerging challenges and opportunities. As societal and technological changes evolve, policies and laws must be regularly reviewed and updated. Feedback from persons with disabilities, advocacy groups, and relevant stakeholders is crucial to ensuring that policies remain effective, inclusive, and responsive to individual needs. This dynamic approach ensures the long-term protection and advancement of disability rights.

2. Policy Gaps

Nepal faces substantial gaps that hinder the effective realization of disability rights. One critical challenge is the significant disparity between formulated policies and their practical application. Despite the presence of comprehensive legislation, including the Rights and Welfare of Disabled Persons Act and the Act Relating to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, numerous barriers impede the effective execution of these policies (Schedin, 2017). Limited resources pose a formidable obstacle, as the government often struggles to allocate sufficient funds to support disability rights initiatives. Consequently, essential services such as accessible infrastructure, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities remain inadequate, particularly in rural areas where resources are scarcer (Banskota, n.d.). Additionally, the lack of awareness and understanding among government officials and the general public exacerbates implementation challenges. Misconceptions and stigma surrounding disability often result in the marginalization of PWDs, further hindering their access to rights and opportunities.

The issue of accessibility emerges as a prominent policy gap in Nepal's disability rights framework. Despite legislative mandates requiring the creation of accessible environments in public spaces, transportation, and educational institutions, serious deficiencies persist. Physical barriers such as inaccessible buildings, lack of wheelchair ramps, and inadequate transportation options create substantial obstacles for PWDs, limiting their mobility and participation in various aspects of society. The absence of comprehensive guidelines and enforcement mechanisms exacerbates the problem, as adherence to accessibility standards remains inconsistent across different sectors. Consequently, PWDs continue to encounter significant challenges in accessing essential services and fully participating in social, economic, and political life. Addressing these policy gaps necessitates a multi-faceted approach, including increased resource allocation, heightened awareness campaigns, stringent enforcement of accessibility standards, and active engagement of stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of disability rights policies and promote the full inclusion of PWDs in Nepalese society.

Several pressing issues demand immediate attention. Persons with disabilities in Nepal, particularly in rural areas, are often confined to their homes due to a lack of accessible infrastructure and supportive services. In extreme cases, they face mistreatment, including being tied with ropes or kept in cages, which reflects deep societal stigmas and neglect. Despite the presence of local governments, there is a lack of accountability in ensuring adequate services and support for PWDs. A clear example of this gap is that autistic children are denied the opportunity to enroll in schools, depriving them of their fundamental right to education. These critical issues highlight the urgent need for targeted policy interventions and remedies.

Another significant concern is Nepal's unique geography, cultural norms, and employment structures, which are often incompatible with the needs of PWDs. The country's challenging terrain and traditional work types, such as agriculture and manual labor, create additional barriers to inclusion and participation. Existing disability rights frameworks and policies are frequently influenced by the context of developed nations, failing to address the specific realities of Nepal. Therefore, it is essential to recognize these unique challenges and introduce special policy provisions that cater to Nepal's geographical, cultural, and economic conditions. Raising these critical issues and formulating context-specific policies would not only ensure the protection of disability rights but also promote an inclusive and equitable society.

3. Research Method

This study utilized a qualitative research design that focused on literature review and content analysis of secondary data sources to assess the status of disability rights legislation in Nepal. An in-depth examination and rigorous screening of texts were conducted to ensure that the study thoroughly reviews existing laws, policy documents, academic literature, and reports from international and national organizations, providing comprehensive insights into disability rights in Nepal. Specifically, the study employed a thematic content analysis approach, categorizing and interpreting the textual data based on recurring themes, such as access to education, employment, healthcare, and social participation for persons with disabilities. A gap analysis was conducted through media analysis to identify shortcomings in legislation and implementation, highlighting areas where Nepal's policies fall short in addressing critical needs.

The key data sources included legislative documents such as the Rights and Welfare of Disabled Persons Act, 1982, and the Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017. Policy reports and reviews from national bodies, including the

Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, as well as international organizations like the UN and the WHO, provided critical perspectives on the implementation and impact of these laws. Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and theses were also analyzed to understand the broader socio-cultural and legal context. International conventions and guidelines, particularly the UNCRPD 2006, were critically studied to assess Nepal's compliance with international human rights standards.

The theoretical framework guiding this research integrates the Social Model of Disability (SMD) and the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to disability. The Social Model of Disability shifts the focus from individual impairments to societal barriers, emphasizing the need for societal and structural change to eliminate physical, attitudinal, and systemic obstacles that hinder the participation of PWDs. On the other hand, the HRBA frames disability rights as immediate and fundamental human rights, requiring the state to protect, promote, and fulfill these rights without delay. While the SMD identifies and conceptualizes societal barriers as the root of exclusion, the HRBA serves as a tool for interpreting policies and assessing their alignment with international human rights obligations. Together, these perspectives complement each other by enabling a dual focus: identifying barriers to inclusion and evaluating the state's legislative efforts to address these barriers and fulfill its obligations under the CRPD-2006.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Disability Rights and its Legislation in Nepal

4.1.1 Historical Context of Disability Rights

Nepal's journey towards recognizing and safeguarding disability rights has been a testament to progress and persistent challenges. Dating back to the pre-20th century era, individuals with disabilities in Nepal encountered formidable social stigma and limited avenues for societal integration. Their existence often revolved around familial care, with prevalent religious beliefs associating disabilities with divine punishment or misfortune (Thapaliya, 2016). However, the early 20th century marked a notable shift with the establishment of healthcare institutions tailored to address the medical needs of persons with disabilities, exemplified by the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, founded in 1956 (Eide et al., 2016). This nascent acknowledgment of healthcare requirements signified the initial steps towards recognizing the distinct needs of the marginalized population.

Throughout the 1970s, Nepal experienced a growing awareness of disability rights, paralleling the global rise of the human rights movement. This awakening was reflected in the establishment of entities such as the Social Service National Coordination Council in 1977 and the Ministry for Social Welfare in 1979, indicating a nascent recognition of the need for social support systems tailored to persons with disabilities (Nganga et al., 2021). The subsequent decades saw notable legislative progress, albeit marked by challenges. The enactment of the Rights and Welfare of Disabled Persons Act in 1982 represented a significant milestone, primarily focusing on welfare benefits and rehabilitation rather than comprehensive anti-discrimination measures (Schedin, 2016). The pro-democracy movement in the 1990s brought a renewed emphasis on human rights, fostering an environment conducive to further legislative advancements. Nepal's ratification of international conventions such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993 and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 highlighted the country's commitment to inclusivity and equal rights for all citizens, including those with disabilities.

The influence of international conventions like the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has played a pivotal role in shaping Nepal's legislative landscape (Schedin, 2017). These conventions provided a normative framework for Nepal's evolving disability rights legislation, emphasizing the principles of inclusivity, accessibility, and social justice. Looking ahead, Nepal faces a myriad of challenges in ensuring the full realization of disability rights. Bridging the gap between legislation and implementation, overcoming resource constraints, and fostering public awareness and acceptance remain the imperative objectives. By leveraging past achievements and addressing existing obstacles, Nepal can continue its trajectory toward a more equitable and inclusive society for all its citizens.

4.1.2 Alignment of Nepal's Legislation with the CRPD

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a comprehensive human rights treaty designed to protect the rights and dignity of PWDs. It requires states to ensure that PWDs enjoy all human rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. The CRPD encompasses a range of rights, including the right to accessibility, education, employment, health, and political participation. Nepal ratified the CRPD in 2010, committing to align its national legislation with the convention. The primary legislation governing disability rights in Nepal is the "Act Related to Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017" (RPD Act). The Act aims to

ensure the protection, empowerment, and promotion of rights for PWDs in Nepal. The RPD Act, 2017 reflects a significant step toward aligning with the CRPD, particularly regarding non-discrimination, accessibility, and the provision of social security for persons with disabilities. For instance, the Act emphasizes reasonable accommodation, inclusive education, and access to public infrastructure and services. The CRPD's principles, such as respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, and complete and effective social participation, are embedded in the RPD Act. However, despite these advances, several gaps remain. The enforcement mechanisms for the RPD Act are relatively weak, with inadequate monitoring and accountability structures. The Act does not fully adopt the CRPD's broad and inclusive definition of disability, potentially excluding some groups from its protection. Public awareness about the rights of PWDs and the resources allocated for the effective implementation of the law remain limited. The Act is criticized for not sufficiently addressing the rights and needs of persons with psychosocial disabilities, a key component of the CRPD.

4.1.3 Comparison of Nepal's Disability Legislation with Indian Legislation

India, like Nepal, has ratified the CRPD and enacted the "Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016" (RPD Act, 2016) to align with the Convention. Indian legislation is broader in scope compared to Nepal, covering a wider range of disabilities and providing more detailed provisions for enforcement. The RPD Act, 2016 of India recognizes 21 categories of disabilities, including both physical and mental disabilities. It provides a range of rights, including education, employment, social security, and accessibility. In contrast, Nepal's RPD Act, 2017 is less comprehensive, particularly regarding its definitions and categorizations of disabilities. Nepal recognizes fewer disability categories and lacks specificity in some areas compared to India. India's legislation includes provisions for establishing National and State Commissions for Persons with Disabilities, which serve as monitoring bodies. The act also prescribes penalties for non-compliance, providing a stronger enforcement mechanism. In contrast, Nepal's enforcement mechanisms are less robust. The lack of a strong, independent monitoring body makes implementing the RPD Act, 2017 more challenging.

The Indian Act mandates that the government and private entities ensure public buildings, transportation, and services are accessible to PWDs. It also includes provisions for PWDs' inclusion in political and public life. While Nepal's legislation emphasizes accessibility, practical implementation lags due to infrastructural and resource constraints. The Indian Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPD) Act guarantees free education for children with disabilities and mandates a 4%

reservation in government jobs. It also includes provisions for vocational training and self-employment. Nepal's RPD Act promotes inclusive education, but the resources and infrastructure to support it are insufficient. Employment opportunities for PWDs are limited, and the enforcement of employment quotas is weak. Comparing India's legislation highlights several areas where Nepal could improve, such as broadening the definition of disability, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and enhancing public awareness and resources. Nepal must address these gaps to fully realize the rights of PWDs and ensure their full participation in society.

4.2 Legislative Framework for Disability Rights in Nepal

The disability rights legislation in Nepal, anchored by the Constitution of 2015 (Government of Nepal [GON], 2015) and reinforced by the RPD Act, 2017 (GON, 2017b), along with other supportive policies, represents a progressive approach to disability rights. By shifting from a welfare-based model to a rights-based model, Nepal has established a strong foundation for protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, ensuring their full participation in society. However, effectively implementing these laws and policies remains crucial to overcoming existing challenges and achieving true inclusivity. Table 1 presents the major provisions regarding the rights of PWDs established through legislative documents across different time periods. Gaps observed in the formulation and implementation of these documents have been noted in the last column.

Table 1: Legal Provisions in Nepal Regarding the Rights of Disabled Persons

S.N.	Laws/policies and relevant articles/ sections	Provisions	Missing provisions
1.	Welfare of Disabled Persons Act, 1982 [Sections 1, 2, 18, 19, 20]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines “disabled person” and “helpless disabled persons” (Section 2) • Establishes “Disabled Person Home” for subsistence (Section 2) • Mandates registration and inventory of disabled persons (Section 18) • Government as plaintiff in cases related to disability rights (Section 19) • Policy formulation for welfare programs (Section 20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited scope for inclusion in broader social, economic, and political life • Lack of comprehensive definitions and classifications of disabilities

S.N.	Laws/policies and relevant articles/ sections	Provisions	Missing provisions
2.	National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability, 2006 [Part B, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the Disability Service National Coordination Committee (Section 1) • Reviews and amends discriminatory laws (Section 2) • Establishes a national center for disability information and research (Section 3) • Promotes awareness and positive attitudes through national campaigns (Section 4) • Adopts affirmative action for training and employment (Section 5) • Ensures disability-friendly public infrastructures (Section 6) • Develops sign language and Braille (Section 7) • Focuses on free education to higher education with medium schools and hostels (Section 9) • Community Based Rehabilitation and national fund (Section 13). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdated compared to current international standards • Lacks detailed strategies and timelines for implementation • Limited focus on intersectionality with other forms of marginalization
3.	Constitution of Nepal, 2015 [Articles 18, 29, 31, 42, 43] (GON, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantees equality and non-discrimination (Article 18) • Prohibits exploitation and ensures protection for persons with disability (Article 29) • Ensures right to education (Article 31) • Provides rights to social justice for marginalized groups including disabled persons (Article 42) • Mandates social security for disabled persons (Article 43) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak enforcement mechanisms for inclusive education and employment opportunities • Limited accessibility standards in public services

S.N.	Laws/policies and relevant articles/ sections	Provisions	Missing provisions
4.	Act on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017 [Sections 7-57] (GON, 2017b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive classification of disabilities into ten types • Prohibits discrimination based on disability (Section 7) • Ensures rights to community life, education, health services, and social security • Provides free legal aid and accessible public services • Includes provisions for assistive devices and rehabilitation centers (Sections 46-49) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited implementation timelines for accessibility standards • Insufficient monitoring mechanisms for compliance
5.	Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disability, 2017 [Sections 7.1-7.3, 8.1-8.13, 9.1-9.17] (GON 2017a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures equal access to quality education (7.1) • Provides life skills-oriented education (7.2) • Establishes lifelong learning opportunities (7.3) • Guarantees free education at all levels based on capacity (8.1) • Mandates disability-friendly curriculum and evaluation (8.3) • Promotes inclusive school cultures (8.4) • Focuses on capacity development through formal and informal education. (9.1) • Inclusivity from school to university for physical and mental capacity (9.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of specific mechanisms to ensure schools are truly disability-friendly • Limited vocational training to help people with disabilities join workforce for employment purposes • Insufficient implementation and monitoring mechanisms.
6.	National Inclusion Commission Act, 2017 [Sections 1, 2, 3(a-1), 4, 8, 9, 15,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes the National Inclusion Commission • Defines key terms related to inclusion and marginalized communities (Sections 1, 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited enforcement power to ensure recommendations are implemented • Dependency on government for

S.N.	Laws/policies and relevant articles/ sections	Provisions	Missing provisions
	14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25] (GON, 2017c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions include reviewing policies, monitoring implementation, recommending special programs, and conducting research (Section 3(a-1)) • Submits annual reports to the President (Section 18) • Impartiality and Code of Conduct provisions (Section 15) 	<p>resources may affect independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act could better address intersectionality of various forms of marginalization, like disability with gender or ethnicity
7.	<p>The National Guidelines for Disability Inclusive Health Services, 2019</p> <p>[Sections 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4, 3.5.1-3.5.5, 3.6, 4.1-4.9]</p> <p>(Department of Health Services [DHS], 2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to improve health outcomes for PWDs by addressing barriers to access (Section 1.1) • Provides guidance for respectful and dignified health care (Section 1.2) • Explains models of disability and promotes inclusive services (Sections 2.1, 2.2) • Identifies barriers and emphasizes empowerment (Sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2) • Outlines health rights and state obligations (Section 2.5) • Provides good practices for inclusion (Section 3.4) • Addresses primary health care (Section 3.5.1), wellness support (Section 3.5.2), medical care (Section 3.5.3), rehabilitation (Section 3.5.4), and sexual/reproductive health (Section 3.5.5) • Focuses on health systems strengthening (Section 3.6) and implementation/ monitoring (Chapter 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks specific details on enforcement monitoring • Provides limited guidance on resource allocation • Lacks details regarding specific training programs for health professionals • Could benefit from more emphasis on community engagement and community health worker roles

The Welfare of Disabled Persons Act (1982) was Nepal's first legislative effort to address the needs of persons with disabilities. This Act primarily focused on welfare and rehabilitation, offering various services aimed at improving the living conditions

of disabled individuals. It included provisions for healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, although its implementation was limited in scope. The Act mandated the establishment of welfare homes and rehabilitation centers and emphasized vocational training to enhance employment prospects for persons with disabilities. Despite its pioneering role, the Act largely adhered to a charity and medical model of disability, viewing disability as a condition requiring medical treatment and support rather than as a societal issue demanding structural change and inclusion.

The Constitution of Nepal, 2015, marks a significant milestone in the country's legislative framework regarding disability rights. It explicitly acknowledges the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs), ensuring their inclusion and participation in all spheres of life. Article 18 guarantees the right to equality, prohibiting discrimination on various grounds, including disability. Article 42 explicitly mandates the state to make special provisions for the protection, empowerment, or advancement of persons with disabilities. This inclusive approach aligns with international human rights standards, emphasizing equal access to opportunities, social justice, and the removal of societal barriers. The Constitution's progressive stance sets a foundational legal framework that reflects Nepal's commitment to upholding and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Act on Rights of Persons with Disability, 2017 represents a paradigm shift in Nepal's approach to disability legislation, moving from a welfare-oriented model to a rights-based framework. This Act is comprehensive, covering a wide array of provisions that promote the social inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability across various sectors, including education, employment, and access to public services. Additionally, it mandates the adaptation of public buildings, transportation systems, and communication services to ensure accessibility for PWDs. The Act stipulates inclusive education, vocational training programs, and employment quotas in both public and private sectors to foster economic independence for PWDs. It ensures access to healthcare and rehabilitation services, enhancing the quality of life and well-being of individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, it provides legal aid and representation to protect the rights of PWDs within judicial processes.

These provisions reflect the principles of the UNCRPD, which Nepal ratified in 2010. The 2017 Act conforms to international standards and establishes a foundation for a more inclusive society by addressing the social and structural barriers faced by PWDs.

The Act on Rights for Persons with Disabilities, 2017 represents a significant step forward in aligning national legislation with international human rights standards. Particularly following UNCRPD, the Act provides a broad and inclusive definition of disability, encompassing physical, mental, intellectual, and sensory impairments, which aligns with the Social Model of Disability (Shakespeare, 2013). It prohibits discrimination based on disability, ensuring equality in education, employment, healthcare, and access to public services (Goodley, 2017). The Act also emphasizes accessibility in the built environment, transportation, information, and communication, promoting a more inclusive society (Imrie, 2017). Additionally, it establishes monitoring mechanisms, including a national committee to oversee implementation and address human rights violations, which are essential for the enforcement and protection of rights. These provisions collectively aim to empower PWDs and ensure their full participation in society.

Despite its strengths, the UNCRPD has notable weaknesses that hinder its effectiveness. One major issue is the lack of specific implementation timelines, which risks delays and inconsistent enforcement (Degener, 2016). Additionally, the convention provides limited details on enforcement mechanisms, raising concerns about the ability to adequately address violations and protect rights (Quinn, 2009). Furthermore, it lacks a strong focus on intersectionality, failing to address the unique challenges faced by PWDs who also experience discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Crenshaw, 1989). These gaps highlight the need for a more comprehensive and well-resourced approach to disability rights.

The government should develop a comprehensive implementation plan that includes specific timelines, progress indicators, and clear lines of responsibility. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms—such as empowering the national committee to investigate complaints and impose sanctions—is also crucial. Adequate financial and human resources must be allocated, including a dedicated budget for disability-related programs and capacity-building initiatives. Addressing intersectionality through policies and programs that consider the diverse needs of PWDs is essential.

In addition to the Constitution and the RPD Act, several other policies and regulations complement Nepal's legislative framework on disability rights. The Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2017 aims to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream education systems by providing necessary resources and support services to facilitate learning (GON 2017a). The National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability, 2006 outlines a comprehensive approach to disability, emphasizing prevention, rehabilitation, and equal participation in societal activities. Various social protection schemes, such as disability allowances and scholarships

for students with disabilities, are implemented to support the economic and educational advancement of disabled individuals. Collectively, these policies and regulations enhance the legislative framework, ensuring a multi-faceted approach to disability rights in Nepal.

4.3 Institutions Related to the Rights of the Persons with Disability

PWDs in Nepal have historically faced systemic barriers to inclusion in social, economic, and political spheres. Recognizing the need to safeguard their rights and promote their well-being, various public institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been established. These institutions play a pivotal role in policy formulation, advocacy, service delivery, and legal enforcement to ensure the dignity and rights of PWDs. This section provides an overview of key public institutions and NGOs that are actively working to promote disability rights in Nepal.

4.3.1 Public Institutions

The government of Nepal has taken several initiatives to institutionalize disability rights through various public institutions. These institutions are tasked with policy development, executing legal provisions, building capacity, and delivering services for PWDs. They work in collaboration with local governments, NGOs, and international organizations to foster an inclusive society.

Table 2: Public Institutions Related to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nepal

S.N.	Institution and year of establishment (AD)	Major Functions
1	National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN) - 1993	Advocacy, policy recommendation, capacity building, and awareness programs for disability rights.
2	Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) - 1981	Formulation and implementation of disability-related policies, social protection programs, and coordination with stakeholders.
3	Department of Civil Registration - 2014	Issuance of disability identity cards, maintaining disability-related records, and facilitating social security benefits.
4	National Disability Direction Committee - 2017	Coordinating inter-ministerial efforts for disability-friendly policies and implementation of national disability rights strategies.

4.3.2 Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations have been essential in advocating for disability rights and providing services that support government efforts. They focus on areas such as education, rehabilitation, independent living, and policy advocacy. They play a vital role in enhancing government initiatives by delivering direct support services, advocacy, legal aid, and research on disability-related issues. Often operating at the grassroots level, these organizations bridge gaps in service delivery and policy implementation. They partner with international agencies to carry out inclusive education programs, vocational training, and accessibility initiatives.

Table 3: Non-Governmental Organizations Related to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nepal

S.N.	Organization and year of establishment (AD)	Major activities	Major achievements
1	National Mental Health Self Help Organization (KOSHISH) - 2008	Advocates for deinstitutionalization and independent living Provides mental health support for persons with psychosocial disabilities	Organized consultations on deinstitutionalization Promoted community-based rehabilitation programs Raised awareness about mental health issues among disabled populations
2	Nepal Disabled Women's Association (NDWA) - 1998	Empowers women with disabilities through education, employment, and advocacy	Advocated for gender-sensitive disability policies Provided vocational training to women with disabilities Established networks for women's empowerment at local levels
3	Disability Rights Advocacy Society - 2010	Promotes accessibility and inclusion through policy advocacy	Played a key role in drafting provisions for accessible infrastructure in public spaces Conducted training programs for local officials on disability-inclusive practices
4	Handicap International Nepal - 2000	Promotes disability rights through rehabilitation, livelihood support, and accessibility initiatives	Introduced community-based rehabilitation programs, facilitated inclusive education, and improved mobility aid distribution

S.N.	Organization and year of establishment (AD)	Major activities	Major achievements
5	Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN) - 2011	Advocates for the rights of visually impaired youth, provide skill development, and promote inclusive education	Successfully advocated for accessible textbooks and screen-reading technology in universities
6	Karuna Foundation Nepal - 2007	Prevents disability and improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities through healthcare and social inclusion programs	Launched the 'Inspire2Care' model, improving maternal and child healthcare services to prevent disability

4.4 Conditions of Implementation of Disability Rights Legislation in Nepal

The implementation of disability rights legislation in Nepal is carried out through a network of policies, institutional frameworks, and grassroots initiatives. Key mechanisms include the formulation of national policies and action plans, as well as the establishment of dedicated bodies to oversee and facilitate the implementation of these laws. The Government of Nepal has introduced several national policies and legislative measures that align with the principles outlined in the Act on Rights for Persons with Disabilities (2017) and international conventions like the UN-CRPD (GON, 2017b). These efforts are further supported by the National Inclusion Commission Act (2017), which ensures the protection and promotion of the rights of marginalized and disabled communities (GON, 2017c).

The National Guidelines for Disability Inclusive Health Services (2019) play a crucial role in facilitating access to healthcare for PWDs by ensuring that health services are adapted to meet their specific needs (Ministry of Health and Population, 2019). These policies aim to create an inclusive environment through comprehensive strategies encompassing education, employment, healthcare, and accessibility (Adhikari, 2019; Jung & Shiwakoti, 2017). Despite these frameworks, systemic challenges persist, such as insufficient funding, a lack of coordination among implementing bodies, and inadequate training and awareness programs. For instance, while the law mandates accessibility adaptations in public infrastructure, many buildings and transport systems remain inaccessible due to financial constraints and a lack of technical expertise (S. Acharya, 2016). Grassroots organizations frequently report that the practical implementation on the ground does not always reflect legislative intentions, indicating a significant gap between

policy formulation and execution (T. Acharya, 2021). A lack of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms further exacerbates this gap, making it difficult to ensure compliance with existing laws. Non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups remain crucial in bridging this gap by pushing for stronger implementation measures, raising awareness, and assisting in capacity-building programs.

Additionally, public-private partnerships could enhance funding and technical expertise to improve accessibility and inclusivity across various sectors. Government agencies and institutions play a crucial role in implementing disability rights legislation in Nepal. The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens is primarily responsible for policy formulation and coordination of disability-related programs. This ministry collaborates with other departments, such as the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and the Ministry of Health and Population, to ensure a holistic approach to disability rights (Devkota et al., 2023). Specialized bodies like the National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFDN) significantly contribute to advocacy, raising awareness, and monitoring the enforcement of disability rights. These agencies work closely with local governments to implement policies at the grassroots level, ensuring that the needs of PWDs are integrated into community development plans (Paudel et al., 2016). Despite these efforts, challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiency, a lack of inter-agency collaboration, and limited capacity at the local level hinder effective implementation. For instance, the NFDN often highlights the slow pace of policy enactment and the frequent disconnect between central policy decisions and local-level execution (Schedin, 2017).

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical processes that ensure the effective implementation of disability rights legislation in Nepal. Monitoring involves systematically collecting data to assess progress, while evaluation interprets this data to determine the interventions' value, impact, and effectiveness. Together, they form a feedback mechanism that ensures accountability, identifies gaps, and facilitates evidence-based decision-making. In Nepal, however, questions arise about whether M&E processes align with their stated goals and principles. While the framework aims to monitor compliance and evaluate outcomes, challenges persist in translating these goals into measurable impacts, particularly in the implementation of disability rights.

A key concern is the lack of reliable and disaggregated data on the disability population, which hampers the monitoring process and prevents evidence-based evaluations (Banskota, n.d.). Without accurate data, it is difficult to judge the impact of policies, assess their outcomes, or ensure that interventions meet the actual needs of PWDs. Furthermore, existing M&E mechanisms often face systemic challenges

such as inadequate funding, limited technical expertise, and weak stakeholder engagement. For instance, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal and watchdog organizations like the National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFDN) regularly highlight these limitations, emphasizing the need for better data collection, resource allocation, and capacity-building initiatives (Thapaliya, 2016).

To understand the effectiveness of policy implementation, it is essential to examine policy capacity, administrative capacity, and state capacity, which collectively form the “capacity triangle” necessary for effective policy outputs. Policy capacity refers to the ability to design and adapt effective laws and frameworks. In Nepal, while the legislative frameworks such as the RPD Act (2017) reflect a strong intent, the ability to adjust policies based on M&E findings remains weak. Administrative capacity involves the ability of institutions to implement, monitor, and evaluate these policies. Nepal struggles with insufficient technical expertise, trained personnel, and poor inter-agency coordination, which affects the execution and monitoring of disability rights laws. Finally, state capacity—the ability to mobilize resources, engage stakeholders, and deliver services—remains constrained due to resource limitations and ineffective collaboration among government bodies and non-governmental organizations. The relationship among these three capacities is critical: weak administrative capacity impedes the implementation of strong policies, while poor state capacity undermines resource mobilization and service delivery, thereby limiting the overall impact of disability rights legislation.

To bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation, Nepal must strengthen its M&E systems by aligning them with clear goals and principles. This requires enhancing inter-agency collaboration, improving data collection processes, and ensuring better coordination among government bodies, independent organizations, and civil society. Additionally, targeted investments are needed to build administrative and state capacities, including funding for accessibility services, technical training for personnel, and stakeholder engagement programs. By addressing systemic barriers and strengthening the capacity triangle, Nepal can create a robust M&E system that generates reliable data, enables impactful evaluations, and ensures meaningful progress in the realization of disability rights.

4.4.1 Nepal Government’s Annual Policy and Program

Nepal’s annual budget over the past five fiscal years shows a growing focus on disability rights and inclusion. This increasing emphasis reflects the government’s recognition of the importance of supporting PWDs across multiple sectors. In the

fiscal year (FY) 2018/19 budget speech, the Nepalese government announced the establishment of a National Disability Fund designed to support the needs of PWDs (Ministry of Finance, 2018). This initiative marked a significant step toward institutionalizing support for this population. The following year, the FY 2019/20 budget introduced a disability-inclusive education program aimed at improving access to education for children with disabilities (Ministry of Finance, 2019). This program sought to address existing disparities in educational opportunities by creating more inclusive learning environments and providing necessary resources. The FY 2020/21 budget further prioritized the needs of PWDs by focusing on the provision of assistive devices and rehabilitation services. Additionally, the budget allocated funds for establishing disability resource centers intended to serve as hubs for providing various support services (Ministry of Finance, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the vulnerabilities of PWDs, prompting the government to allocate specific funds in the FY 2021/22 budget for social security allowances targeted at those affected by the pandemic (Ministry of Finance, 2021).

Nepal has made notable progress in establishing disability resource centers, primarily through collaborative efforts among government bodies, NGOs, and community-based initiatives. While comprehensive data on the exact number of functioning centers is limited, the National Federation of the Disabled – Nepal (NFDN) plays a pivotal role, supporting a network of over 400 organizations across 76 of 77 districts. These centers have facilitated Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs focusing on rehabilitation, education, vocational training, and raising awareness about disability rights. The successful implementation of such programs has positively contributed to enhancing the self-reliance and living conditions of PWDs. However, the effectiveness of these centers is mixed due to several challenges. Inconsistent funding, often dependent on external sources, hampers sustainability and service quality. Moreover, societal attitudes toward disabilities, rooted in stigma and a medical model perspective, limit the full potential of resource centers to address social inclusion. Policy ambiguity and weak local implementation further exacerbate these challenges, as national disability policies are not always effectively translated into actionable outcomes at the local level. Despite growing community awareness through media and outreach programs, gaps in infrastructure, resource allocation, and inter-agency coordination persist. Addressing these systemic issues with clear policies, sustainable funding, and improved integration of services will be critical to maximizing the impact of disability resource centers and ensuring meaningful inclusion for PWDs in Nepal.

The FY 2022/23 budget speech highlighted the government's ongoing commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Key initiatives

announced included the establishment of a fund for the development of disability-friendly infrastructure, providing skill-based training programs tailored for PWDs, and implementing a disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction program (Ministry of Finance, 2022). These initiatives represent a continued effort by the government to create a more inclusive society that recognizes and supports the diverse needs of all citizens.

4.4.2 Policy and Structure at the Sub-National Level

The 2015 Constitution of Nepal guarantees the rights of PWDs and mandates that the government develop and implement laws and policies to protect these rights. In response, significant progress has been made in formulating disability-inclusive policies at both the provincial and local levels. By 2022, all seven provinces in Nepal had enacted disability-related policies and legislation. For instance, Province 2 introduced a disability allowance program to financially support persons with disabilities. At the same time, Gandaki Province established a disability development fund to promote inclusive development initiatives. At the local level, some municipalities have implemented disability-friendly infrastructure projects, including accessible public buildings and transportation systems. However, critical examination reveals that these projects often remain underutilized or inaccessible to the target groups.

In many cases, infrastructure is developed in institutions or urban areas, while PWDs—particularly in rural regions—are often confined to their homes due to a lack of support systems and awareness. This raises the question of whether infrastructure development truly addresses the needs of PWDs or replicates models that are not integrated with broader education, work, and living environments. For example, digital infrastructure could significantly connect PWDs to education, employment, and healthcare; however, such systems remain largely underdeveloped and inaccessible.

Infrastructure planning and implementation must adopt a more holistic and integrated approach to overcome these limitations. Programs should be tailored to empower PWDs through education, skill development, and support initiatives that align with their specific disability categories. For instance, education programs must incorporate accessible learning tools and technologies, while support systems must focus on employment opportunities, health services, safety measures, and avenues for socialization. Simply constructing accessible buildings is insufficient; policies and programs must ensure that PWDs can actively participate in and benefit from these facilities. This requires creative thinking and innovative planning to

break away from conventional approaches that fail to address the lived realities of PWDs. Solutions must critically consider integrating infrastructure with education, work, and daily living. This includes promoting digital accessibility, community-based rehabilitation programs, targeted social protection schemes, and a stronger emphasis on grassroots-level empowerment. Only by addressing these systemic gaps and prioritizing practical, needs-based interventions can Nepal move beyond symbolic progress and ensure the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities.

4.4.3 Inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Nepal has made concerted efforts to align its development priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), paying particular attention to including persons with disabilities. The government's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) report on the SDGs highlighted several initiatives related to disability rights and inclusion. One of the key achievements noted in the VNR report was the enactment of the RPD Act in 2017 (National Planning Commission, 2024). This legislation marks a milestone in Nepal's disability rights movement, prohibiting discrimination against PWDs and ensuring equal opportunities across various sectors, including education, employment, and public services. Additionally, the government has implemented social security allowance programs and established disability resource centers to support PWDs, reflecting its commitment to the principles of the SDGs. However, the VNR report also acknowledges that significant work remains to achieve full inclusion of PWDs in Nepal. Challenges identified include limited accessibility to public services, inadequate and inconsistent data on persons with disabilities, and the need for greater societal awareness and attitudinal change. These challenges indicate that while legislative and policy frameworks are in place, there is a critical need for sustained efforts to ensure that these frameworks lead to meaningful improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities.

4.5 Status of Persons with Disabilities in Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal, 2015 assigns the responsibility for the welfare and care of PWDs to all three levels of government: federal, provincial, and local. It enshrines the right of political representation for PWDs, mandating that political parties ensure this right through necessary amendments to electoral laws without any preconditions (Banskota, n.d.). This reflects a significant commitment to protecting and enforcing the rights of PWDs, recognizing their need for representation and inclusion in governance.

However, there is considerable variation in the reported prevalence of disability in Nepal. The Census 2021 reports that 2.2% of the population has some form of disability. In contrast, the Nepal Population and Health Survey 2022 and a survey by Sharecast Initiative Nepal both indicate that 6.7% of the population has disabilities. Officials from the National Statistics Office acknowledge that the actual number of persons with disabilities is likely higher than reported in the census, as targeted surveys often reveal more accurate data. This inconsistency highlights the urgent need for accurate data collection.

Disability prevalence varies across different provinces in Nepal. Bagmati province has the highest number of people with disabilities, accounting for 19% of the total disabled population. Koshi and Lumbini provinces each account for 18%, Gandaki for 12%, Far West for 11%, and Karnali for 8%. Urban areas, particularly in Bagmati, have a higher concentration of people with disabilities due to better access to services compared to rural areas. This urban-rural disparity is confirmed by the National Population and Health Survey, which reports higher disability rates in urban areas due to the availability of education, health, employment, and other services (Sapkota et al., 2023).

The Nepalese government provides social security allowances to persons with disabilities, categorized into four types: total (A), severe (B), moderate (C), and normal (D). However, currently, only those in categories A and B receive allowances, and not all eligible individuals have access to the necessary support and identity cards (Risal et al., 2021). The current classification system is criticized for being unscientific, which has led to calls for a more precise categorization based on the type and degree of disability. This change would ensure that social security allowances, rehabilitation facilities, and auxiliary materials are distributed appropriately.

The literacy rate among persons with disabilities is significantly lower than the national average. While 76% of the general population is literate, only 50% of persons with disabilities can read and write. Gender disparity is evident, with a 60% literacy rate among males and only 38.5% among females. Literacy rates also vary by type of disability: 63.4% of visually impaired individuals are literate, followed by 60% of those with physical disabilities and 20% of those with intellectual disabilities. The primary reason for these low literacy rates is the lack of accessible educational institutions.

There is a strong correlation between disability and poverty. Families with a member who has a severe disability often experience lower income levels and higher poverty

rates. People with severe disabilities face significant barriers to education and employment, which intensifies their economic challenges (Lamichhane & Okubo, 2014). Data from the Nepal Population and Health Survey 2022 shows that 15.1% of people with complete disabilities have no school education, indicating that a lack of education contributes to higher poverty levels (Sapkota et al., 2023). The relationship between disability and poverty is further evidenced by the National Disability Survey 2022, which shows higher disability rates in lower-income categories.

Despite legal provisions and international commitments, Nepal's infrastructure remains largely inaccessible to people with disabilities. Few public buildings, roads, and facilities are designed to accommodate their needs. Although the National Building Construction Code was amended to promote accessible infrastructure, implementation remains inadequate. Accessible infrastructure enables PWDs to live independently and participate fully in society (Adhikari, 2019).

4.5.1 Media Review of Issues Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Nepal (2014-2024)

Media reviews of the issues faced by persons with disabilities reveal that accessibility remains a significant challenge, with public infrastructure often failing to meet the standards of the RPD Act. According to media reports, the lack of universal design principles in urban planning is a recurrent issue, which calls for urgent government action.

Table 4: Selected News and Opinion-Editorials on Disability Rights in Nepali Newspapers (2015–2025)

News Heading [Source and Date]	Coverage
Nepali Medium	
अपाङ्गताको आधारमा भेदभाव: नेपालमा अपाङ्ग व्यक्तिको अधिकार English translation: Discrimination Based on Disability: Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nepal [Kantipur (2024-08-08)]	Critiques systemic discrimination against persons with disabilities in Nepal, focusing on gaps in education, employment, and healthcare access; highlights lack of policy implementation
अपाङ्गताको अधिकार ऐन: कार्यान्वयनमा चुनौती English translation: Act on Rights of Persons with Disability: Challenges in Implementation [Nagarik (2023-12-03)]	Examines challenges in implementing the 2017 Disability Rights Act, including poor enforcement of accessibility standards and inadequate budget allocation for disability-inclusive programs

News Heading [Source and Date]	Coverage
English Medium	
Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Legislation Needs Amendment The Himalayan Times (2024-12-17) (Galimberti, 2024)	Advocates for amendments to the 2017 Act to adopt a human rights-based approach over the medical model; interviews disability expert Krishna Gahatraj on legislative gaps
Disability-Based Discrimination Rampant in Nepal myRepublica (2024-08-08) (Joshi, 2024)	Highlights systemic exclusion of PWDs, especially women in rural areas; criticizes lack of inclusive education, healthcare, and policymaking representation
International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Upholding Rights of the Marginalized The Annapurna Express (2024-12-02) (Jha & Ranjan, 2024)	Reviews Nepal's progress since the 2017 Act, including legal definitions of disability and the role of local governments in issuing identity cards; notes persistent gaps in implementation
Nepal's Disability Laws Under UN Scrutiny Kathmandu Post (2018-02-20)	Reports on Nepal's review by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; discusses constitutional guarantees and challenges in shifting from welfare-based to rights-based approaches

In education, the struggles faced by children with disabilities are highlighted, as many experience discrimination and bullying in schools. The lack of inclusive practices and resources, including assistive devices, contributes to high dropout rates. Although some progress has been made, the necessity for more robust inclusive education policies is evident. Employment opportunities for PWDs are severely limited due to systemic discrimination in hiring practices. Media reports stress the importance of employers recognizing the capabilities of individuals with disabilities and providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace. Access to health services presents another critical issue, with physical barriers and a lack of specialized services preventing many PWDs from receiving adequate care.

The media has increasingly called for healthcare providers to receive better training on disability issues to improve service delivery. Social inclusion remains a challenge, with stigma and social isolation frequently mentioned in media reports. The importance of community engagement and awareness campaigns is underscored in fostering a more inclusive society. While legislation exists to protect the rights of PWDs, the review highlights significant gaps in implementation. Media reports call for better coordination among government agencies and stronger enforcement of existing laws to ensure that the rights and needs of PWDs are effectively addressed.

Table 5: Summary of the Media Coverage: Challenges and Barriers in Disability Rights Implementation in Nepal

Factors	Reviewed conditions
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant barriers remain in public infrastructure, including transportation and buildings, which are often not designed with universal access in mind. • Reports highlight the urgent need for compliance with the RPD Act in urban planning.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment rates for children with disabilities remain low, with many facing discrimination and bullying in schools. • Teachers often lack training in inclusive education practices, leading to high dropout rates. • Limited availability of assistive devices and learning materials hampers educational progress.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities for PWDs are severely restricted, with many facing systemic discrimination in hiring practices. • Reports indicate a lack of reasonable accommodations in workplaces, contributing to high unemployment rates.
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to healthcare is often impeded by physical barriers, lack of specialized services, and inadequate training for healthcare providers on disability issues. • Reports emphasize the need for more inclusive health policies and better access to rehabilitation services.
Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWDs frequently experience stigma and social isolation, which affects their mental health and community participation. • Media signifies the importance of awareness campaigns to promote positive societal attitudes towards disability.
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although laws exist to protect the rights of PWDs, reports indicate significant gaps in implementation and enforcement. • A lack of coordination among government agencies hinders effective service delivery and policy execution.

4.5.2 Services and Benefits Received by Persons with Disabilities in Nepal

In Nepal, persons with disabilities face challenges in education, health, employment, political representation, and the justice sector. Table 6 highlights the major issues that the government has addressed through various legislative provisions and their implementation.

Table 6: Addressed Issues and Benefiting Population Related to Disability in Nepal

Issues	Benefiting Population
Education Challenges	Children with disabilities who receive inclusive education in accessible schools.
Employment Barriers	PWDs accessing reserved quotas in civil service and employment programs.
Institutionalization and Deinstitutionalization	PWDs transitioning to independent living arrangements supported by community services.
Climate Change Vulnerability	PWDs affected by climate-induced disasters receiving disability-targeted humanitarian aid.
COVID-19 Impacts	PWDs benefiting from food security programs and income support during the pandemic.
Social Protection System	Marginalized PWDs accessing social security allowances and benefit packages.

Only 53% of children with disabilities attend school, which is far below their peers, due to inaccessible infrastructure, a lack of trained teachers, and stigma (NSO, 2023). Healthcare services remain limited, facing physical barriers, transportation issues, and insufficient specialized care that persist despite awareness programs (DHS, 2022). Employment opportunities are constrained by a 5% civil service quota (Public Service Commission, 2023), achieving limited impact due to systemic discrimination and a lack of inclusive hiring practices (National Federation of Disabled Nepal, 2018). Politically, participation remains low despite constitutional guarantees because inaccessible polling stations and low awareness hinder engagement (Election Commission of Nepal, 2018; Nepal Disabled Women Organization, 2024). Access to justice is similarly hindered by physical barriers and limited legal awareness (National Human Rights Commission, 2022). While progress has been made, stronger implementation, resource allocation, and inclusive policies are essential for meaningful change.

4.6 Challenges in Implementing Disability Rights in Nepal

Implementation of disability rights faces significant challenges in Nepal, including infrastructural inadequacies, resource constraints, societal stigma, and gaps in policy enforcement. One of the most pressing challenges is the lack of infrastructure and resources. Despite legislative provisions, many public buildings, transportation systems, and other facilities remain inaccessible to persons with disabilities. The National Building Construction Code, amended to ensure accessibility, is poorly enforced, leaving public places such as schools, hospitals, and government offices without essential features like ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms (Thakur, 2005; Adhikari, 2019). Additionally, resource allocation for disability-inclusive

programs is inadequate, hampering the construction of accessible infrastructure, provision of assistive devices, and development of specialized educational and healthcare services. Although the government provides social security allowances to persons with severe disabilities, these funds are limited and often fail to reach all eligible individuals due to bureaucratic inefficiencies (Lamichhane & Okubo, 2014).

Societal attitudes toward disability in Nepal present another significant barrier to the implementation of disability rights. Deep-seated cultural beliefs and stigmas often marginalize persons with disabilities, viewing them as incapable or burdensome. This societal discrimination is reflected in various aspects of life, including employment, education, and social integration (Lamichhane, 2013). Cultural barriers also hinder access to education for children with disabilities, as many families prioritize the education of non-disabled children, regarding investment in the education of disabled children as less beneficial. Schools are often ill-equipped to accommodate students with disabilities, lacking trained teachers and necessary resources, which results in high dropout rates and limits future opportunities for employment and social participation (Risal et al., 2021).

While Nepal has enacted comprehensive disability rights legislation, significant gaps remain in policy and legal enforcement. The Constitution of Nepal, 2015 and subsequent laws provide a robust framework for disability rights; however, the translation of these laws into practice is inconsistent and often inadequate. Lack of a centralized, empowered body to oversee the implementation and coordination of disability-related initiatives represents a critical weakness. The enforcement of disability rights laws is hindered by bureaucratic inertia and a lack of accountability. For instance, despite the provision for a 5% employment quota for persons with disabilities in the civil service, actual employment rates remain low due to poor enforcement and monitoring (Lamichhane & Okubo, 2014). Additionally, the classification system for disabilities is outdated and unscientific, resulting in the inappropriate distribution of resources and services (Eide et al., 2016).

Despite these challenges, progress in some areas remains unclear. For instance, the extent to which local governments are equipped to implement disability-inclusive policies is ambiguous. The long-term impact of societal stigma on the mental health and social inclusion of persons with disabilities has not been thoroughly researched. Furthermore, the effectiveness of international aid and donor-funded programs in addressing disability-related challenges in Nepal needs further investigation.

Nepal must enhance enforcement of accessibility standards in public spaces and allocate dedicated budgets for disability-inclusive infrastructure projects. Nationwide awareness campaigns should be initiated to challenge cultural stereotypes and promote inclusive attitudes toward persons with disabilities. A centralized, empowered body should be formed to oversee the implementation of disability rights laws and ensure accountability. Lastly, the classification system for disabilities should be revised to reflect contemporary scientific understanding and guarantee equitable distribution of resources. By addressing these challenges and implementing the recommendations, Nepal can move closer to achieving full inclusion and equality for individuals with disabilities.

4.7 Way forward

Enhancing infrastructure and resource allocation is of paramount necessity. The government must prioritize funding for accessible infrastructure and expand social security schemes to adequately cover all PWDs. This includes investing in assistive technologies and making public spaces universally accessible. Changing societal attitudes requires sustained awareness campaigns and educational programs to combat stigma and discrimination. Community-based initiatives can significantly promote the inclusion of PWDs in all aspects of life. Schools and workplaces should have the necessary resources and training to support the inclusion of PWDs. Policy and legal enforcement involves establishing a high-level, empowered body to oversee the implementation of disability rights. This body should coordinate national and local efforts, monitor compliance, and address grievances related to disability rights. Updating the disability classification system to reflect contemporary understanding and needs is essential for ensuring appropriate resource distribution and service provision. By addressing these infrastructural, societal, and legal challenges, Nepal can achieve significant progress in realizing the rights of PWDs, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of disability rights in Nepal faces intertwined challenges, with societal attitudes and cultural barriers arguably forming the root of the problem. While infrastructural and resource constraints are significant, the deep-rooted stigmas, misconceptions, and lack of motivation among policymakers and the public fundamentally hinder progress. Discriminatory beliefs diminish the urgency to prioritize investments related to disability, perpetuating exclusion and marginalization. This fundamental issue leads to a lack of accessible public

infrastructure, insufficient financing for assistive technologies, and poor policy implementation.

Addressing these attitudes is critical to fostering a supportive environment for effective policy execution and resource allocation. Awareness campaigns, inclusive education, and targeted advocacy programs are essential for shifting perceptions and motivating stakeholders to act. At the same time, strengthened policy enforcement mechanisms and dedicated oversight bodies must ensure accountability and equitable resource distribution. By tackling societal attitudes alongside infrastructural and resource limitations, Nepal can make significant progress toward creating an inclusive society where PWDs can fully realize their rights and opportunities.

6. Policy Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following policy recommendations are outlined:

- Nepal must allocate specific budget exclusively for disability rights and services to address the inadequacy of resources for accessible infrastructure, assistive devices, and specialized education and healthcare services, as Thakur (2005) and Adhikari (2019) highlighted. Establishing a Disability Inclusion Fund with contributions from public budgets, the private sector, and international aid will bridge resource gaps and ensure targeted support to address the insufficient funding as identified by Lamichhane and Okubo (2014).
- Empowering local governments to conduct surveys and map populations with disabilities is essential to address the lack of reliable data, as noted by Risal et al. (2021). This will enable equitable resource distribution and effective program design. Additionally, local governments should ensure the regular distribution of assistive devices, such as mobility aids and hearing aids, to combat accessibility barriers, as emphasized by Eide and his colleagues (2016).
- Regular awareness campaigns and sensitivity training at the local level are essential to challenging cultural stigmas and promoting social inclusion, addressing the societal attitudes identified by Lamichhane (2013). Mandating the construction of accessible public buildings, roads, and transportation systems while enforcing compliance with building codes will resolve infrastructural inadequacies highlighted by Thakur (2005) and Adhikari (2019).

- Develop vocational training programs tailored for PWDs and establish disability-friendly workplaces to address the employment barriers identified by Lamichhane & Okubo (2014). Encourage public-private partnerships through tax benefits and recognition programs to promote inclusive employment practices.
- Deploying mobile health units in rural areas will ensure access to essential healthcare services for PWDs, addressing the geographical barriers noted in the National Guidelines for Disability Inclusive Health Services (2019). Additionally, encouraging positive representation of PWDs in media will foster a more inclusive society by combating stigma and promoting awareness, as supported by Lamichhane (2013).

7. Suggested Course of Action

I propose the following course of action to implement the recommendations made in the earlier chapter. These have not been validated through a systematic validation workshop with the stakeholder agencies and should therefore be treated as inceptive suggestions for consideration by policymakers and policy implementers.

S.N.	Recommendation	Responsible Agencies	Suggested Action
1.	Allocate specific budget exclusively for disability rights and services to ensure sustainable and effective implementation, including funding for accessible infrastructure, comprehensive healthcare, education, and social security schemes	Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Allocate and monitor a dedicated budget for disability rights and services across various government sectors
		Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC)	Coordinate with MoF to ensure proper utilization and disbursement of funds
		Local Governments	Implement and oversee projects funded by the allocated budget, ensuring accessibility and inclusiveness
2.	Increase financial resources and prioritize budget allocations to improve the living standards and integration of persons with disabilities, ensuring all government sectors include their needs in financial planning	National Planning Commission (NPC)	Integrate disability needs into national and sectoral financial planning and budgeting processes

S.N.	Recommendation	Responsible Agencies	Suggested Action
		Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Increase and prioritize budget allocations for disability-related projects and programs
		Local Governments	Ensure local budgets reflect the prioritized needs of persons with disabilities
3.	Mandate the construction of accessible public buildings, roads, and transportation, and enforce compliance with building codes that require accessibility features	Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD)	Update and enforce building codes to include accessibility requirements
		Local Governments	Ensure compliance with updated building codes in all construction projects
		Private Sector (Construction Companies)	Adhere to accessibility standards in all new construction projects
4.	Update and enforce disability rights legislation to close gaps and ensure robust protections, including the effective implementation of the UNCRPD	Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA)	Review and update existing disability rights legislation to align with UNCRPD
		National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)	Monitor and report on the implementation of updated legislation
		Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	Advocate for the enforcement of disability rights and provide feedback on legislative gaps
5.	Develop and fund vocational training programs tailored for persons with disabilities, and promote employment opportunities through incentives for businesses that hire persons with disabilities	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)	Develop vocational training curricula tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities
		Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS)	Provide incentives to businesses that hire persons with disabilities
		Private Sector (Businesses)	Collaborate with government agencies to provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest. The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not represent the perspectives of any organization with which she is associated.

Acknowledgement

The paper has significantly benefited from the pre-review and post-review manuscript development support provided by the editorial team of the Nepal Public Policy Review in accordance with the journal's policy. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Deepak Kumar Khadka, Soniya Bashyal, and Aashish Bhandari, who provided editorial and supplemental research assistance for the manuscript. I would also like to thank Avinav Acharya for assisting me in organizing data for the paper and Karna Bahadur Thapa for his helpful suggestions during the paper's preparation. Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments that contributed to revising the paper.

References

- Acharya, S. (2016). Disability law implementation: The role of NGOs and INGOs in Nepal. *National Judicial Academy, Law Journal* [Full text is available at the Social Science Research Network (SSRN)]. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2831810>
- Acharya, T. (2021). *Sex, gender and disability in Nepal: Marginalized narratives and policy reform*. Routledge.
- Adhikari, K. P. (2019). Realising the rights of persons with disability in Nepal: Policy addresses from the health, education and livelihoods perspectives. *Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies*, 16, 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.3126/njdrs.v16i0.31532>
- Banskota, M. (n.d.). *Nepal Disability Policy Review*. School of Arts, Kathmandu University, Disability Research Center. <https://drc.edu.np/storage/publications/Kele3p6ZwOcvDK2D885O7Rz04F9z2OraQrJgmozx.pdf>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167.
- Degener, T. (2016). Disability in a Human Rights Context. *Laws*, 5(3), Article 35. <https://doi.org/10.3390/laws5030035>

- Department of Health Services. (2019). *National Guidelines for Inclusive Health Services*. Ministry of Health and Population. <https://www.pahunchforsrhr.org/media/platform-resources/December2023/MZmaorcWSvMVBD3KaDY6.pdf>
- Department of Health Services. (2022). Annual Report 2021/2022. Government of Nepal. Ministry of Health and Population. https://giwmscdnone.gov.np/media/pdf_upload/DoHS_Annual_Report%20_FY%202078-79_bpk2vma.pdf
- Devkota, H. R., Sharma, M., & Sharma, C. (2023). Analysis of health, disability, gender and disaster risk reduction policies in Nepal using a human rights-based approach. *Disability, CBR & Inclusive Development*, 34(3), 11–29. <https://doi.org/10.20372/dcidj.577>
- Eide, A. H., Neupane, S., & Hem, K. (2016). Living conditions among people with disability in Nepal. SINTEF Technology and Society. <https://www.sintef.no/globalassets/sintef-teknologi-og-samfunn/rapporter-sintef-ts/sintef-a27656-nepalwebversion.pdf>
- Election Commission of Nepal. (2018, February). *Election of the Members of the House of Representatives* (प्रतिनिधिसभा सदस्य निर्वाचन २०७४). <https://election.gov.np/ecn/uploads/userfiles/ElectionResultBook/HoR2074.pdf>
- Galimberti, S. (2024, December 17). Act relating to rights of persons with disabilities: Legislation needs amendment. *The Himalayan Times*. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/act-relating-to-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-legislation-needs-amendment>
- Goodley, D. (2024). *Disability studies: An interdisciplinary introduction* (3rd ed.). Sage. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/disability-studies/book286769>
- Government of Nepal. (2017a). अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिका लागि समावेशी शिक्षा नीति [Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities]. Government of Nepal. https://www.opmcm.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/npolicy/Education/Inclusive_Education.pdf
- Government of Nepal. (2017b). अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको अधिकारसम्बन्धी ऐन [The Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities]. Government of Nepal. <https://lawcommission.gov.np/content/12931/12931-the-act-relating-to-rights-of/>
- Government of Nepal. (2017c). राष्ट्रिय समावेशी आयोग ऐन [National Inclusion Commission Act]. Government of Nepal. <https://lawcommission.gov.np/content/12873/12873-nation-inclusion-commission-ac/>

- Government of India. (2016). The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/15939/1/the_rights_of_persons_with_disabilities_act%2C_2016.pdf
- Government of Nepal. (2015). नेपालको संविधान [Constitution of Nepal]. <https://lawcommission.gov.np/content/13437/nepal-s-constitution/>
- Harpur, P. (2012). Embracing the new disability rights paradigm: The importance of the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. *Disability & Society*, 27(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.631794>
- Imrie, R. (1997). Rethinking the relationships between disability, rehabilitation, and society. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 19(7), 263–271. <https://doi.org/10.3109/09638289709166537>
- Joshi, D.D. (2024, August 8). Disability-based discrimination rampant in Nepal. *myRepublica*. <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/disability-based-discrimination-rampant-in-nepal-6759b26fdf922.html>
- Jha, J. & Ranjan, R. (2024 December 2). International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Upholding rights of the marginalized. *The Annapurna Express*. <https://theannapurnaexpress.com/story/51437/>
- Jung, D. Y., & Shiwakoti, R. (2017). Special education policy in Nepal: A critical review from policy theory. *Journal of Educational Innovation Research*, 27(4), 219–240. <https://doi.org/10.21024/pnuedi.27.4.201712.219>
- Kantipur. (2024, August 8). अपाङ्गताको आधारमा भेदभाव: नेपालमा अपाङ्ग व्यक्तिको अधिकार [Discrimination based on disability: Rights for Persons with Disability in Nepal].
- Kathmandu Post. (2018, February 20). Nepal's disability laws under UN scrutiny. *Kathmandu Post*.
- Lamichhane, K. (2013). Disability and barriers to education: Evidence from Nepal. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 15(4), 311–324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2012.703969>
- Lamichhane, K., & Okubo, T. (2014). The Nexus between Disability, Education, and Employment: Evidence from Nepal. *Oxford Development Studies*, 42(3), 439–453. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2014.927843>
- Megret, F. (2007). The Disabilities Convention: Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities or Disability Rights? (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 1267723). *Social Science Research Network*. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1267723>

- Ministry of Finance. (2018). *Budget Speech of Fiscal Year 2018/19*. Government of Nepal. <https://mof.gov.np/content/172/budget-statement-2075-76/>
- Ministry of Finance. (2019). *Budget Speech of Fiscal Year 2019/20*. Government of Nepal. <https://mof.gov.np/content/395/budget-speech-2019-20/>
- Ministry of Finance. (2020). *Budget Speech of Fiscal Year 2020/21*. Government of Nepal. <https://mof.gov.np/content/394/budget-speech-2020-21/>
- Ministry of Finance. (2021). *Budget Speech of Fiscal Year 2021/22*. Government of Nepal. <https://mof.gov.np/content/393/budget-speech-2021-22/>
- Ministry of Finance. (2022). *Budget Speech of Fiscal Year 2022/23*. Government of Nepal. <https://mof.gov.np/content/391/q2/>
- Mitra, S. (2018). *Disability, Health and Human Development*. Palgrave Macmillan US. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53638-9>
- Nagarik. (2023, December 3). अपाङ्गताको अधिकार ऐन: कार्यान्वयनमा चुनौती [Act on Rights of Persons with Disability: Challenges in implementation]. Nagarik News.
- National Federation of Disabled Nepal. (2018). अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिको रोजगारीको अधिकार अनुगमन [Monitoring employment rights of persons with disabilities]. Kathmandu: National Federation of Disabled Nepal; Disability Rights Promotion International. https://ia801000.us.archive.org/15/items/MonitoringEmploymentRightsNep/Monitoring_Employment_Rights_Nep.pdf
- National Human Rights Commission. (2022). अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको न्यायमा पहुँचका अवरोध पहिचानसम्बन्धी अध्ययन [Study on identification of barriers for access to justice for persons with disabilities]. Lalitpur, Nepal: National Human Rights Commission; National Federation of Disabled Nepal; Global Disability Inclusion. https://nfdn.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Research_Report_PDF_Nepali.pdf
- National Planning Commission. (2024). *Nepal Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal. <https://nepalsdgforum.org/uploads/attachments/cqcvxyd8msowlpij.pdf>
- National Statistics Office. (2021). *National Population and Housing Census*. National Statistics Office, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers. <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/downloads/national?type=report>
- National Statistics Office. (2023). *अपाङ्गतासम्बन्धी तथ्याङ्कीय प्रतिवेदन [Disability Statistical Report]*. National Statistics Office, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Government of Nepal. <https://>

- censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/files/result-folder/Final_Disability_Statistical_Report_12_02.pdf
- Nepal Disabled Women Organization. (2024, January 31). *Follow-up interaction with policymakers*. <https://ndwa.org.np/news/follow-up-interaction-with-policymakers>
- Nganga, L., Thapa, S., Kambutu, J., & Akpovo, S. M. (2021). Inclusive special needs and disability education: History, policies, practice and challenges in Kenya and Nepal. In *Policy, Provision and Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disability*. Routledge.
- Paudel, Y. R., Dariang, M., Keeling, S. J., & Mehata, S. (2016). Addressing the needs of people with disability in Nepal: The urgent need. *Disability and Health Journal*, 9(2), 186–188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2016.01.004>
- Public Service Commission. (2023). पैसट्टीऔँ वार्षिक प्रतिवेदन २०८१/८२ (65th Annual Report 2022/23). <https://psc.gov.np/category/annual-report.html>
- Quinn, G. (2009, April 17). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Toward a new international politics of disability. *Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium*. https://sites.utexas.edu/tjclcr/files/2022/11/Quinn_The-United-Nations-Convention-on-the-Rights-of-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf
- Risal, A., Kunwar, D., Karki, E., Adhikari, S. P., Bimali, I., Shrestha, B., Khadka, S., & Holen, A. (2021). Adapting World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 for Nepal. *BMC Psychology*, 9(1), 45. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-021-00550-5>
- Sapkota, K. P., Shibanuma, A., Ong, K. I. C., Kiriya, J., & Jimba, M. (2023). Accommodation and disability-specific differences in nutritional status of children with disabilities in Kathmandu, Nepal: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), 315. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-14999-z>
- Schedin, H. (2016). Disabled human rights?: A critical study of the implementation of disability rights in a globalized Nepal [Student essay, Gothenburg University]. <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/48264>
- Schedin, H. (2017). Accessibility to power: Framing of the disability rights movements in India and Nepal. *Disability CBR & Inclusive Development*, 28(3). <https://doi.org/10.5463/dcid.v28i3.642>
- Shakespeare, T. (2013). *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. <https://www.routledge.com/Disability-Rights-and-Wrongs-Revisited/Shakespeare/p/book/9780415527613>

- Thakur, S. C. (2005). A situation analysis of disability in Nepal. *Tribhuvan University Journal*, 25(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.3126/tuj.v25i1.3742>
- Thapaliya, M. P. (2016). A Report on Disability in Nepal. *Australian Himalayan Foundation*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303756141_A_Report_on_Disability_in_Nepal
- Thapaliya, M. P. (2024). Inclusive and special education policy in Nepal: Reality, rhetoric and contradiction. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 72(2), 374–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2024.2337167>
- United Nations (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convention_accessible_pdf.pdf
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015, December). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Sustainable Development*: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
- World Health Organization. (2001, December). International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/>

Author's Bio

Kamala Oli

She earned her Master of Laws from Purbanchal University and a Master of Political Science from Tribhuvan University. She previously served as the Information Commissioner at Nepal's National Information Commission. With 20 years of professional experience in legal practice, legal service, media, and management, she brings a wealth of expertise to her roles.