

The Jordanian Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017: How is Disability Addressed? A Policy Analysis

Shadi A. Alshdaifat, SJD
University of Sharjah – College of Law

salshdaifat@sharjah.ac.ae

Received Date: 5/3/2025. Accepted Date: 8/4/2025. Publication Date: 20/6/2025.



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Abstract

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Jordanian government introduced the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2017, also known as the law. This review examines the law, assessing its alignment with the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), its congruence with international disability policy frameworks, and its local implementation. Using the 18 core concepts of disability policy formulated by Turnbull et al. (2001) as a benchmark, the law's effectiveness was assessed. The analysis confirms that the Jordanian government's initiatives in supporting PWDs align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015). This indicates that the law resonates strongly with the essential concepts outlined. For disability-related policy initiatives to achieve lasting success, they must emphasize autonomy, confidentiality, and a family-centered approach. The study further concludes that inter-agency collaboration and coordination are vital for the effective realization of disability policies. Additional findings highlight the need for

increased funding and the establishment of robust monitoring mechanisms to oversee policy progress. Given the evolving global context, policymakers in Jordan and other low to middle-income countries must ensure that policies are adaptable to cater to the needs of PWDs during emergencies. Engaging PWDs in meaningful discussions is crucial for fostering an inclusive approach.

Keywords: Disability, Policy, PWDs, SDGs, Implementation.

قانون حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة الأردني لسنة 2017: كيفية تعزيز التنفيذ سياسة تحليلية

شادي عدنان الشديفات *
كلية القانون – جامعة الشارقة
salshdaifat@sharjah.ac.ae

تاريخ الاستلام: 2025/3/5. تاريخ القبول: 2025/4/8. تاريخ النشر: 2025/6/20.
المستخلص

تماشياً مع اتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لحقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، أنجزت الحكومة الأردنية قانون حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة لعام 2017، وسيتم استعراض هذا القانون، وفحص مدى توافقه مع احتياجات الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، وتوافقه مع أطر السياسات الدولية للإعاقة، وتنفيذه على الجانب المحلي، سيتم استخدام المفاهيم الأساسية الثمانية عشر لسياسة الإعاقة التي صاغها تور نبول وآخرون (2001) كمعيار ليتم تقييم فعالية القانون. يؤكد البحث على أن مبادرات الحكومة الأردنية في دعم الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة تتوافق مع أهداف التنمية المستدامة للأمم المتحدة لعام (2015). وهذا يشير إلى أن القانون يتردد صداه بقوة مع المفاهيم الأساسية الموضحة في هذا البحث. ولتحقيق نجاح دائم لمبادرات السياسة المتعلقة بالإعاقة، يجب أن تؤكد على الاستقلالية والسرية والنهج الذي يركز على الأسرة. وكذلك يؤكد البحث على أن التعاون والتنسيق بين الوكالات أمر حيوي لتحقيق سياسات الإعاقة بشكل فعال. وتسلط النتائج الإضافية الضوء على الحاجة إلى زيادة التمويل وإنشاء آليات مراقبة للإشراف على تقدم السياسات. ونظراً للسياق العالمي المتطور، يتعين على صناع السياسات في الأردن وغيرها من البلدان ذات الدخل المنخفض والمتوسط ضمان أن تكون هذه السياسات قابلة للتكيف لتلبية احتياجات الأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة أثناء حالات الطوارئ، وإشراكهم في مناقشات هادفة أمر بالغ الأهمية لتعزيز نهج شامل يضمن لهم التمكين اللازم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإعاقة؛ الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة؛ صناعة السياسات؛ أهداف التنمية المستدامة؛ التنفيذ.

* أستاذ دكتور

Introduction

As of September 22, 2023, the population of Jordan is 11,349,082, according to a World Meter analysis of the latest United Nations data.¹ Jordan has a population density of 128 per kilometer (331 people per mile), with a GDP of 48.73 USD billion expected to reach this level by the end of 2023² based on Trading Economics global macro models, as well as the expectations of analysts. Currently, Jordan's GDP represents 0.02 percent of the world's economy.³

In the last two decades, poverty reduction in Jordan has been slow owing to several factors,⁴ including refugees and the instability within the neighboring countries, but some have been more significant than others in terms of progress. All Jordanians are entitled to equal treatment under the law as stipulated in the Jordanian Constitution.⁵ No discrimination shall be committed as to their rights and responsibilities based on race, language, disability, or religion (Article 6.1). Work and education shall be provided to all Jordanians within the limits of their capability, and the government shall ensure a state of tranquility and equal opportunity for all citizens (Article 6.2).

The Jordanian Constitution affirms key principles that support equality and social justice through Article 6: "Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards their rights and duties on grounds of race, language or religion." Thus, any policy to reduce poverty and enhance equality should be rooted in these constitutional rights.

However, the Jordanian government should be directed to reduce poverty through expanding its work on education through access to quality public education in rural and underprivileged areas, and encourage digital literacy and entrepreneurship education. This can be done through achieving equal rights for all Jordanians by

strengthening anti-discrimination laws, especially in employment and public services, and reforming civil status laws to ensure gender equality in practice, not just in text.

In Jordan, the implementation of constitutional guarantees in Practice can be assisted through a technical tool by monitoring the compliance with constitutional rights through independent human rights institutions, and assessments must be made on new legislation and policies to empower people with disabilities to claim their rights, and that must be the standard.

All in all, the fine line between reducing poverty and guaranteeing equal rights, there must be economic and social equity initiatives along with rooting the political will.

As Jordan has made significant progress in achieving such lofty ideals about the accessibility of PWDs, there remain several significant challenges, such as *accessibility and access to education, health, and administration of justice*, before it is possible to fully achieve such noble principles.

Over the years, Jordan has witnessed a paradigm shift in its approach to disability rights. From viewing disabilities as mere medical conditions to recognizing them within a human rights framework, the nation's journey reflects its evolving socio-cultural landscape.

With these objectives in mind, Jordan passed the law in line with its continued commitment to international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) ratified on 31 March 2008. It is widely considered to be one of the most progressive and developed laws related to disability rights in the MENA. The law is considered a paradigm shift in disability rights in Jordan.⁶

The development of the law grew out of an in-depth examination of legislative reviews and an extensive technical consultation with

stakeholders in the field; individuals, organizations, and families, as well as workers, supporters, and those actively involved with disability issues, all contributed to the final law. This paper focuses on policies about PWDs in Jordan and intends to clarify an important aspect of policies more generally.

This paper delves into the 2017 law,⁷ emphasizing the provisions and support mechanisms for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Throughout our analysis, the term "PWDs" will be used to represent all individuals addressed by the law, including Children with Disabilities (CWDs). Our objective is to critically assess Jordan's disability policy. We will first present the current status of PWDs in Jordan, followed by an examination of their rights and the governmental entities responsible for the law's execution and budgeting.

Our goal is to illuminate the intricacies of Jordan's approach to PWDs, centering on the 2017 law, and to evaluate its alignment with international disability standards.

PWDs in Jordan: Situation and Prospects

In 2011, the Jordanian Constitution underwent amendments to address the rights of persons with disabilities more comprehensively, emphasizing a human rights approach and explicitly prohibiting discrimination against them. However, obtaining accurate data on disability prevalence in Jordan remains a challenge. Estimates suggest that 15% of the population, or over 1.2 million individuals, live with a disability. This figure contrasts with the 1.2% reported by the 2022 Jordan Department of Statistics census. Notably, disability prevalence figures in the Arab region have historically been lower than the global rate of 15% as estimated by the World Health Organization.

The prevalence of disability is not accurately recorded in Jordan.⁸ A report by the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with

Disabilities in Jordan estimates that between 11% and 15% of Jordan's population suffers from disabilities, which represents more than 1,200,000 individuals.⁹

It is widely accepted that the amount of data available is limited due to a variety of cultural and technical factors, including society's perception of disability as well as data collection methodologies. Article 3 of the law defined a person with disability as: "a person who has long-term physical, sensory, intellectual, mental, psychological or neurological impairment, which, as a result of interaction with other physical and behavioral barriers, may hinder performance by such person of one of the major life activities or hinder the exercise by such person of any right or basic freedom independently".

It is important to clarify the conditions that qualify a person as having a disability. The most notable types include **physical impairments** such as mobility limitations, **intellectual disabilities** such as developmental disorders, **mental or psychological conditions** such as bipolar disorder, and **sensory impairments**, including visual and hearing loss.

Jordan's efforts in championing the rights of PWDs resonate with global movements advocating for inclusivity and equality. By aligning its policies with international standards, Jordan positions itself as a frontrunner in the MENA region's disability rights advocacy.

As part of this paper, data were collected from the Jordanian Department of Statistics,¹⁰ national censuses, partial surveys, as well as reports from diagnosis centers and service institutions.¹¹

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Jordan, as in many societies, often find themselves marginalized. The challenges they face are further underscored by the fact that many children with disabilities are deprived of their basic human rights, such as access to health

and education.¹² The Department of Statistics' 2021 report highlighted that 79% of school-aged persons with disabilities (PWDs) are not attending school.¹³ Furthermore, in the academic year 2018/2019, data from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development indicated that of 1.4 million children, only 27,694 children with disabilities were enrolled in primary education.¹⁴

Despite Article 20 of the Jordanian Constitution, which guarantees free and compulsory primary education for all children, numerous barriers still exist. These range from the physical inaccessibility of school buildings to a lack of educational resources tailored for disabilities. The outcome is a high dropout rate among students with disabilities.

Societal discrimination and stigmas associated with disabilities further compound these challenges. Some societal segments view disabilities as a form of divine retribution for parental sins.¹⁵

Jordan's commitment to the rights of PWDs is evident in its ratification of the UNCRPD in 2008 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. Following these international commitments, Jordan introduced several national legal measures. These include, (e.g., the National Disability Strategy of 2007, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017), the National Agenda (2006-2015),¹⁶ the Executive Programme for the National Agenda (2007-2009);¹⁷ the National Youth Strategy for Jordan (2005-2009);¹⁸ the National Strategy for the Jordanian Family (2019-2025);¹⁹ the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2019-2024);²⁰ the National Jordanian Strategy for Senior Citizens; and the National Mine Action Plan (2005-2009).²¹

While some policy documents, like the National Agenda or the National Strategy for Women, mention PWDs sporadically, others, such as the National Youth Strategy (2019-2025), view them as a

central concern. These strategies and policies collectively highlight Jordan's dedication to integrating PWDs into its broader social policy framework.

While international and national policies make commitments to PWDs, evidence suggests that they face challenges in obtaining the support they need (for instance, health, education, and other resources).²² Researchers have demonstrated that an end to PWDs' exclusion cannot be achieved without addressing exclusion in policy.²³²⁴

According to McColl et al.,²⁵ enforcing non-discrimination legislation is critical to the promotion of equity between citizens in access to goods, services, and opportunities. PWDs can benefit from the implementation of an anti-discrimination policy by advancing their rights and holding governments more accountable for the services provided to them.²⁶²⁷ As a consequence, the United Nations Sustainable Development (SDG) Goal No. 10,²⁸ which aims to reduce inequality by empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, has become increasingly important.

To evaluate how the Jordanian government is supporting PWDs within its disability policy framework, as well as how this policy is aligned with international disability policy frameworks, this paper examines the Jordanian Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017. As part of our research, we sought to address the following questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How does the Jordanian government's "Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017" provide support to PWDs?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How does the Jordanian disability policy align with international disability policy frameworks?

To address these questions, our analysis draws upon the 18 foundational principles of U.S. disability policy as delineated by Turnbull et al. These principles, crafted with the concerns of PWDs at the forefront, serve as a robust framework for policy evaluation. They have been recognized not only for their utility in understanding family support within public policies,²⁹ but also for their alignment with the UNCRPD. Their application in various international studies further underscores their relevance.³⁰ Thus, these principles provide a comprehensive lens for our examination of the 2017 Jordanian Law.

Overview of the Jordanian Rights of Persons with Disability Law of 2017

Passed on May 9, 2017, the Jordanian "Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law" marked a significant shift from viewing disability through a welfare lens to a rights-based perspective. This transition, echoing the global disability rights movement's emphasis on freedom and participation, was catalyzed by persistent advocacy from PWDs, civil society, and non-profit organizations. As a UNCRPD signatory, Jordan's commitment to fortifying the rights of PWDs is evident in the law's provisions, which encompass inclusive education, healthcare, developmental treatments, and employment opportunities.

Governing Body for the Implementation of the Law

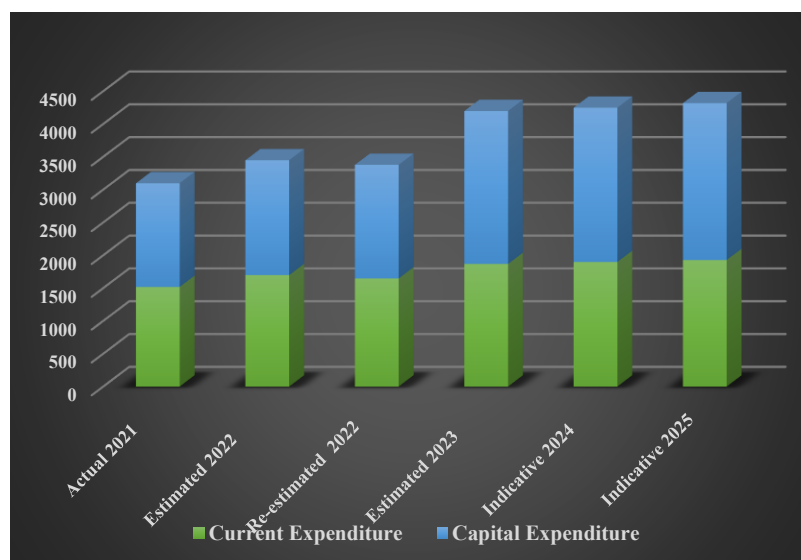
The onus of coordinating and executing the law lies with the Ministry of Social Development, bolstered by specialized committees dedicated to the rights of PWDs. These include the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017), the Equal Opportunities Committee (2017), the Ten-year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2020), the Rehabilitation Strategy (2020), and the Jordan National Rehabilitation Strategic Plan (2020-2024).

However, a notable gap remains: Jordan has yet to establish a framework, as mandated by Article 33 (2) of the CRPD, to monitor its adherence to the Convention—a concern also highlighted by the CRPD Committee.

Budgetary Provisions and Allocations

A systematic overview of budget allocations is essential for the law's effective implementation and to expedite relief to PWDs. The law, in Article 4 (e), mandates the integration of PWDs' rights and concerns into national fiscal strategies and plans. Furthermore, Article 13 (4) stipulates that the Board of Trustees must finalize the annual draft budget at least two months before the fiscal year's commencement. In line with Article 47 (C. 1), the Council of Ministers holds the exclusive authority to approve the annual budget for the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Graph 1: Current and Capital Expenditure for the Years 2021-2025.



In the national budget of the 2022–2023 fiscal year, the Jordanian government allocates an amount of 1,863,000.0 to the budget for

PWDs. A total of 1,887,000.0 is expected to be reached in the fiscal year 2023-2024.³¹ These numbers are intended to reduce poverty among PWDs, and they are in line with SDG 1 (i.e., poverty reduction). Women and children with disabilities, for example, are allocated funds by the government.

Additionally, the budget allocation allows the Council to support existing and new initiatives, computerization and automation operations, sports activities, and speech training, as well as support the implementation of strategic plans.

The amount of disability allowances may vary from year to year, according to evidence, taking into account the conditions of refugees in the country. A majority of the Fund's expenditure on PWDs was allocated to cash assistance programs. In particular, the budget for Handicapped Care Aid was approximately 3 million Jordanian dinars, while the budget for Vocational Rehabilitation Training was approximately 15,000 Jordanian dinars.³² Thus, it appears that the Fund favors assistance to PWDs over empowerment in the budget distribution.

Based on the literature reviewed above, it appears that the law has potential weaknesses, and questions arise regarding its suitability and its implementation. Consequently, this paper seeks to fill these gaps by reviewing the content of the law and responding to RQ1 and RQ2.

Following the discussion of the findings, the paper concludes with a discussion of its potential contribution to the literature.

Method

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the Jordanian Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017, a structured framework analysis was employed. This methodological approach was chosen to ensure a systematic and in-depth exploration of the law's provisions and their implications for PWDs in Jordan.

The framework analysis conducted in this paper focuses on the Jordanian Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017. In addition to being written in Arabic, the law has been translated into English. In advancing Jordan's progress and commitment to the development of an appropriate legal infrastructure to protect the rights and interests of PWD, the changes made in the law are significant. Jordan is expected to make greater strides in its continued pursuit of improving the quality of life of all Jordanians living with disabilities if the appropriate levels of political and financial support remain steadfast.

Using Turnbull et al. (18 core concepts of disability policy) as a framework, a deductive analysis was conducted.³³ According to the guidelines provided in this paper, the process of deductive framework analysis involves five steps: familiarization, identification of a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping, and interpreting.³⁴

Specifically, the data analyzed is derived from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF),³⁵ in addition to the Jordanian Department of Statistics and other government authorities. This paper illustrates the plethora of issues that must be addressed to ensure that PWDs are not left behind. Instead, they are provided with the support they need to reach their full potential. Having conducted in-depth research and consultations, the recommendations identify areas for further research and potential steps forward.

Through this structured analysis, the study aims to provide a holistic view of the Jordanian Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017, highlighting its strengths, areas of improvement, and alignment with international standards.

Results

The analysis of the Jordanian Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017 yielded significant insights into the support mechanisms for PWDs and the alignment of Jordanian disability policy with international frameworks. The results are organized around the two primary research questions, as detailed below:

RQ1: How does the Jordanian government's "Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017" provide support to PWDs??

The law has many provisions that seek to provide individualized and appropriate services (e.g., education, health, transportation, and other services) to PWDs, considering their needs and capacity.

Education:

The Jordanian "Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017" places a strong emphasis on the educational rights of PWDs. Key provisions include:

Inclusive Education: The law mandates access to inclusive and special education for PWDs, ensuring they are not excluded from any educational institution due to their disability (Articles 8, 14 (Clause C. 2), 17 (Clause B), 14 (Clause C), 20 (Clause A. 1), 28 (Clause B), and 46 (Clause A. 2))

Modern Educational Methodologies: The law calls for the implementation of modern educational methodologies, including special educational programs tailored for students with intellectual or multiple disabilities, across schools and universities (Article 28 B. 1).

Special Education System: The law also highlights that in a special education system, special care and services, as well as measures guaranteeing access for PWDs to benefit from these services. The law, however, does provide details on how the educational system should be operated for the government and non-government institutions according to the provisions of the

Jordanian Education Law, No. 3 of 1994,³⁶ special education centers, and societies that provide educational services or programs to PWDs regardless of their authority of licensing or registration.

Reasonable Accommodation: The law also enjoins reasonable accommodation and accessible formats within the government educational institutions (Article 18, C). Furthermore, the law recognizes the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities' responsibility in terms of offering the necessary support to PWDs in mainstream schools. Finally, the content of the law demonstrates a commitment to respect for the inherent rights and dignity, individual autonomy, and freedom of choice of persons with disabilities (Article 4. A). Also, Article 2 mentions reasonable accommodation through the alteration of the environment or time-related conditions within a specific context of time or place to enable the person with a disability to practice a right and freedom, or to gain access to services on an equal basis with others.

The Jordanian Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20 of 2017 addresses reasonable accommodation as a central element of achieving inclusion and equality for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The law reflects a progressive shift toward a human rights-based approach consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).³⁷

As per Article 2 of the Jordanian Law, the reasonable accommodation refers to:

“Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure persons with disabilities can enjoy or exercise, on an equal basis with others, all human rights and fundamental freedoms.” This mirrors Article 2 of the Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ensuring Jordanian law is aligned with international standards.

The 2017 Law is one of the most CRPD-compliant national disability laws in the Arab region, which reflects the CRPD's emphasis on autonomy, non-discrimination, and inclusive participation. The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) plays an active role in monitoring compliance and promoting awareness. The law requires reasonable accommodation to be provided across all sectors of public and private life, also through the following:

Health:

Access to Health Services: The law commits to ensuring PWDs have access to health programs, services, and information related to food and drugs (Article 23, A).

Hospital Accessibility: In particular, the law commits the government to provide reasonable accommodation, and accessible formats along with accessibility to hospitals and affiliated medical centers and obliges non-governmental hospitals and medical centers to provide the same standards because such accommodation and accessibility constitute one of the conditions for granting and renewing the license (Article 23. B).

Other Services

National Inclusion: The law emphasizes the integration of the rights and issues of PWDs into national policies, strategies, plans, programs, and the state budget (Article 4. E).

Transportation: The law outlines measures to ensure reasonable accommodation and accessibility for PWDs within land, marine, and air transport facilities and services (Article 36, A).

Identification for PWDs: The law mandates the issuance of an identification card for PWDs, detailing personal information, a

photograph, and specifics about the nature and degree of disability, provided the applicant is a Jordanian national (Article 16, A).

The law's provisions underscore Jordan's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment for PWDs, ensuring they have equal access to education, health, and other essential services. The emphasis on both rights and practical measures demonstrates a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of PWDs in the country.

RQ2: How does the Jordanian disability policy align with international disability policy frameworks?

Jordan's shift from a welfare-centric to a rights-centric approach to disability, marked by its ratification of the CRPD, signifies a pivotal evolution in its disability policy landscape. While the nation has made commendable strides in aligning with the international disability policy framework, challenges persist, including the need for centralized coordination, addressing overlapping strategies, and refining disability models. To holistically cater to the needs of PWDs, Jordan requires a more adaptive policy and legal framework.

Predominantly, the law draws inspiration from the core concepts of disability policy as outlined by Turnbull et al.³⁸ A notable alignment is observed with 15 out of the 18 core concepts. Table 1 offers a comprehensive comparison of the law's sections with these core concepts. A striking congruence is evident in the law's emphasis on core concepts, including:

Table 1 summarizes the alignment of various sections of the law with the core concepts. It was striking to find that the law's core concepts are remarkably congruent: (a) Individualized and Appropriate Services; (b) Empowerment; (c) Capacity; (d) Antidiscrimination; and (f) Integrity. Therefore, we will elaborate on these core concepts in the following section.

Table 1. Comparison of the Core Concepts with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Prevention | Article 29 (Clause J) |
| | Article 5 (Clause C) |
| Professional and capacity | Article 41 (Clause D) |
| | Article 29 (Clause E) |
| | Article 28 (Clause B) |
| | Article 7 (Clause A) |
| Accountability | None |
| Diversity of culture | Article 27 (Clause E) |
| Family centeredness | Article 27 (Clause E) |
| Integrity | Article 30 (Clause A) |
| Productivity | Article 29 (Clause B) |
| | Article 23 (Clause H) |
| Integration | None |
| Privacy and confidentiality | Article 45 (Clause C) |
| | Article 43 (Clause B. 1) |
| Autonomy | None |
| Freedoms | Articles 4, 5, 6, 30 (Clause A) |
| | Articles 2. 3 (Clause A) |
| Protection from harm | Article 30 (Clause A) |
| | Articles 23, 29, 34 45 |
| Service coordination and collaboration | Article 20 (Clause A. 1 & B. 1) |
| | Article 18 (Clause E) |
| | Articles 15 (Clause B & C) |
| Empowerment/participatory decision-making | Article 42 (Clause B. 3) |
| | Article 4 (Clause B. 4) |
| Capacity-based service | Article 41 (Clause D) |
| | Article 29 (Clause E) |
| | Article 28 (Clause B) |
| | Article 7 (Clause A) |
| Classification | Article 3 (Clause A - D). |
| | Article 40 (Clause A) |
| Individualized and appropriate services | Article 30 (Clause C. 3) |
| | Article 21 (Clause C) |
| | Article 14 (Clause C. 1) |
| | Article 8 (F) |
| | Article 6 (Clause B) |
| | Article 40 (Clause A) |
| | Article 30 (Clause C. 3) |
| | Article 21 (Clause C) |
| Antidiscrimination | Article 8 (F), 14 (Clause C. 1) |
| | Article 6 (Clause B) |

Figure 1. Distribution of Disabled People in Jordanian Governorates. (UNICEF, Country Office Annual Report of 2024).

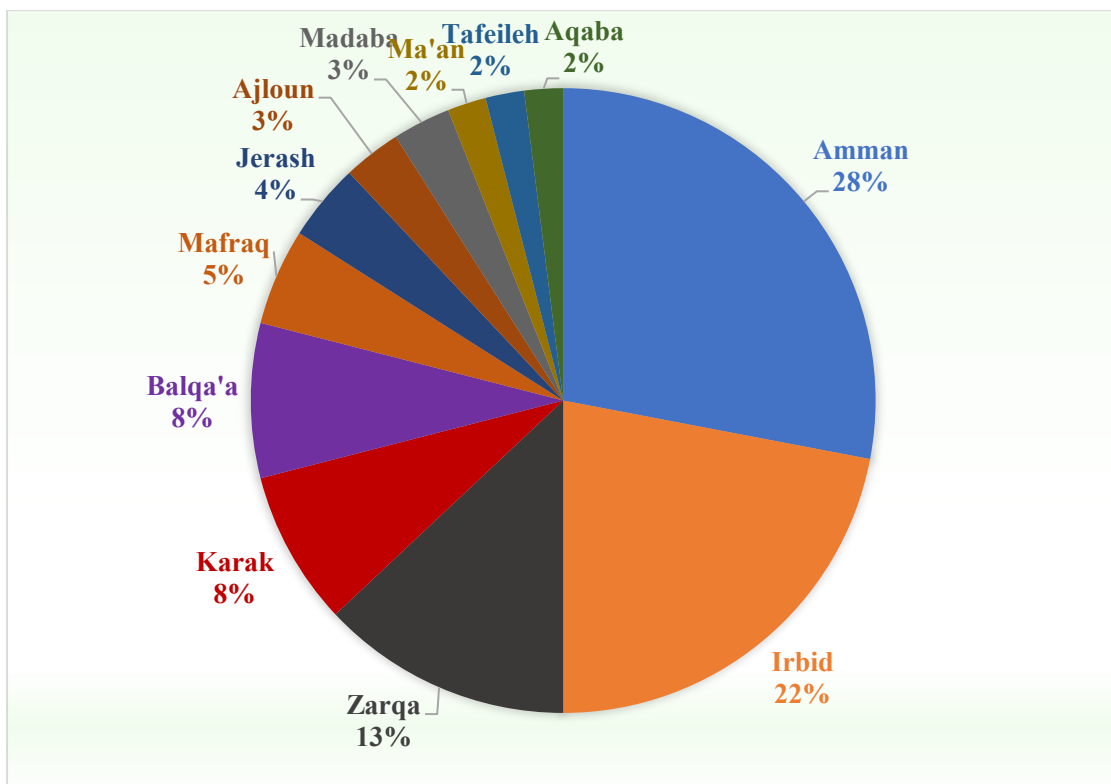
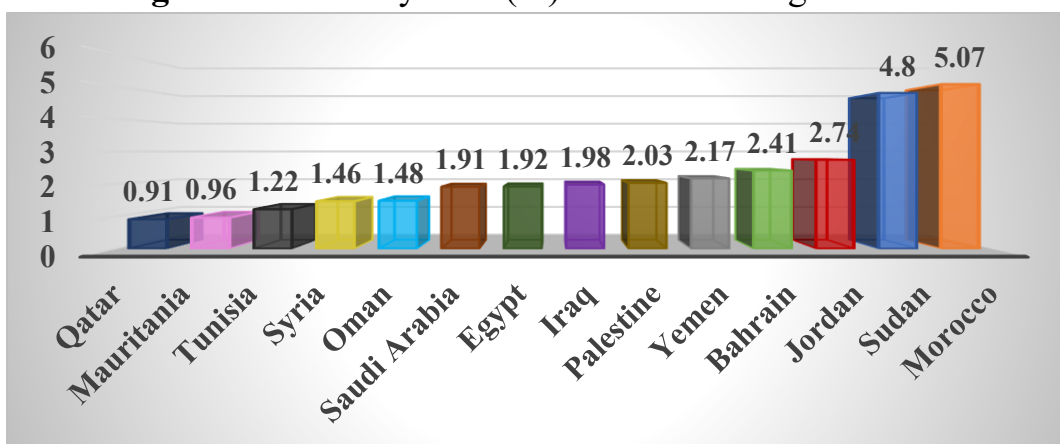


Figure 2. Disability Rate (%) in the Arab Region.³⁹



Individualized and Appropriate Services

In response to Question 1, there are a number of provisions in the laws that are aligned with the concept of Individualized and Appropriate Services.

PWDs require individualized services to meet their needs. The following methods must be taken into consideration to achieve these individualized services, according to Turnbull et al. (a) classification; (b) capacity-based services; (c) empowerment and participatory decision-making; and (d) coordination and collaboration of services. There is a clear classification of PWDs who qualify for these services in Article 3 (A, B, C, and D) of the law. Articles 7 (Clause A), 28 (Clause B), 29 (Clause E), and 41 (Clause D) of the law emphasize a person's capacity-based service as well as productivity in Articles 23 (Clause H) and 29 (Clause B).

Integration

Accessibility is a major focus of the law, which is defined as: “The construction of buildings, roads, facilities... that is accessible to all the public, and making adjustments by the Building Code Requirements for Persons with Disabilities ...” (Article 2, Clause 9). Therefore, accessibility encompasses both the built environment (e.g., buildings, transportation, and roads that are accessible to persons with disabilities) and equal opportunity in receiving services, “... and may also benefit from reasonable accommodation, accessibility, accessible formats, and rehabilitation services to the extent that they can practice one of the basic life activities...” (Article 6. B).

To ensure equality of opportunities, the law made it mandatory for PWDs to have access to information to ensure equality of opportunity and the availability of all publicly available information in a variety of formats, depending on the type of disability. Moreover, the law affirms the rights of PWDs to receive,

without undermining the provisions of both clauses (c) and (d) of Article 27 of the law, the government and non-government authorities that provide residential care and rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities (Article 28. A).

These specialized services can facilitate PWDs to acquire the necessary skills and subsequently enable them to integrate into society. Finally, the law mandates the provision of necessary support to PWDs to join sports federations and clubs, or restrict his/her right to the exercise of sports, based on, or because of, disability (Article 42. A).

Professional and Capacity Development

Building System Capacities: The law demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the overall system capacities to cater to the needs of PWDs. It emphasizes the importance of developing infrastructure and services that are both accessible and proximate to where PWDs reside. By mandating the provision of physical, psychological, social, and vocational rehabilitation services in accessible locations, the law ensures that PWDs do not face undue hardships in accessing essential services (Article 29, F).

Support for Victims of Violence and Exploitation: Recognizing the vulnerabilities that PWDs might face, especially in situations of violence and exploitation, the law mandates the provision of comprehensive support services. These services encompass psychological, social, and health support, including specialized rehabilitation and therapy. Such provisions underscore the law's commitment to ensuring the well-being and recovery of PWDs who have faced traumatic experiences (Article 29, I).

Training for Effective Communication: Effective communication is pivotal in ensuring that PWDs can navigate society without hindrance. The law acknowledges this by emphasizing the training of working personnel, including traffic

police, in methods tailored for effective communication with PWDs. This provision ensures that key public-facing personnel are equipped with the skills and knowledge to interact with PWDs in a manner that respects their dignity and rights (Article 35, C).

Antidiscrimination Measures

Protection against Discrimination: The law firmly establishes a framework that seeks to protect PWDs from discrimination, violence, and exploitation. This commitment is evident in the law's emphasis on specific protective measures (Article B).

Prohibitive Measures: The law delineates a series of strategies aimed at prohibiting any form of discrimination against PWDs. Several articles within the law, such as Articles 6 (Clause B), 8 (F), 14 (Clause C. 1), 21 (Clause C), 30 (Clause C. 3), and 40 (Clause A), lay out these prohibitive measures. One of the most significant provisions in this context is the assurance that PWDs will not face discrimination when seeking admission to educational institutions. Article 18 (Clause B) unambiguously states the commitment to “Guarantee the admission and enrollment of children with disabilities into educational institutions.”

Mechanism for Addressing Discrimination: Recognizing that laws alone might not suffice, the law also provides a robust mechanism for PWDs to voice their grievances in cases of discrimination. Article 33 elucidates the procedures for submitting complaints if a PWD faces discrimination. Furthermore, Article 14 (Clause C) establishes the "Equal Opportunities Committee" as the primary body responsible for receiving and addressing complaints related to discrimination in the workplace based on disability. The Secretary-General, acting as the rapporteur for the Equal Opportunities Committee, plays a pivotal role in this mechanism. Their responsibilities include preparing for Committee meetings, documenting session minutes, overseeing the complaints received,

and disseminating notifications regarding the Committee's decisions (Article 14, G).

Accountability Measures

General Provisions: While the law does not explicitly outline strategies to ensure accountability, it does provide mechanisms for individuals to voice their grievances, especially in cases of discrimination. This provision, as previously discussed, offers a channel for PWDs to seek redress when their rights, as stipulated in the law, are infringed upon.

Lack of Direct Accountability for Policymakers: Notably, the law does not hold policymakers or implementers directly accountable for the outcomes or consequences of their actions. This omission might be seen as a gap in the legislation, as direct accountability measures could further strengthen the law's effectiveness and ensure that its provisions are not just theoretical but are actively implemented and enforced.

Penal Provisions for Public Violations: However, the law does emphasize the importance of public adherence to its provisions. It introduces penal measures to deter and punish violations. Specifically, Article 48 (Clause B) stipulates a monetary penalty for those who contravene certain provisions of the law. The article states: "Anyone who violates the provisions of (Clause E) of Article (25) of this law shall pay a fine of not less than Three Thousand Dinars and no more than Five Thousand Dinars." Furthermore, the same punitive measures apply to employers who discriminate against potential employees based on their disability.

Discussion

This policy analysis was two-fold: (a) to understand the assistance the Jordanian government provides to PWDs under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017, and (b) to determine whether the law is aligned with the international disability policy

analysis framework in addressing the needs of PWDs. There was a strong correlation between the results and the fact that the Jordanian government provides a number of services and benefits to PWDs through the law, such as access to education, health, transportation, justice, and social assistance.

Many tangible benefits are also available to PWDs showing financial need, e.g., disability allowances, social protection, and accommodation care.⁴⁰

It is therefore necessary for the government to work on accountability and demonstrate actual plans and actions to improve the conditions of PWDs.

In taking such initiatives, the government will be able to take one more step towards achieving the SDGs that mandate the state to enhance support to meet the particular needs of PWDs, including children. The SDGs also explicitly include disability and persons with disabilities 11 times.⁴¹ As a matter of particular importance, the initiative to ensure equal access to health care is aligned with the principle of "leaving no one behind" contained in the SDGs.

It is important, however, to set aside adequate budgets and implement mechanisms to monitor the progress of the law to fully support the implementation of the policy commitments. It is difficult to determine the overall budget that the Jordanian government allocates for the development of PWDs since disability is a cross-cutting issue. Despite increases in the budget for disability allowances since 2019, evidence suggests that the number of beneficiaries remains below the estimated total number of PWDs living in Jordan.⁴²

Accordingly, an average monthly budget of 129,747. JD (\$183.000) is allocated to the disability allowance in the 2020-2021 budget for CWDs in schools. Funds allocated by ministries for disability-related projects appeared to be insufficient to address

disability rights issues. For example, the Public Works and Housing Ministry allocated only 100,000. JD (\$141,045), or 0.05 percent of its 2019 budget, to improve accessibility of buildings for the entire country. The Vocational Training Corporation allocated just 15,000 JD (\$21,157), or 1 percent of its 2019 budget, to increase the participation of women and PWDs in training programs. The proposed government budget for 2020 raised the council's budget to around US\$ 5 million, up from US\$ 2 million in 2019.⁴³ This number represents an exceedingly small proportion of the estimated number of PWDs in Jordan, which is 11.01%.⁴⁴

There is an urgent need to ensure that PWDs receive more than just a disability allowance and are provided with an environment that facilitates their participation in society. A key component of this law is the provision of accessible built environments in public buildings, by the SDGs (Goal 4) (building inclusive learning environments).

In Jordan, however, evidence suggests that many public facilities, such as roads, schools, and public transportation, are inaccessible to PWDs, which can reduce their ability to participate in mainstream society. In the last annual budget, it is noted that there is no specific budget allocation for making the built environment accessible. In other words, the government's policy commitments have not yet reached the intended beneficiaries in practice, a problem that is common in many low- and middle-income countries such as Mongolia.⁴⁵

Despite the government's strong commitment to ensuring PWDs' rights, the policy must be translated into action from aspiration. The built environment must be made accessible to PWDs through specific budgetary allocations and an effective accountability mechanism.

The implementation of the provisions of the law to create accessible environments within public facilities requires the commitment and collaboration of relevant ministries, including provincial councils, municipal councils, and local councils.

Strong commitment to accountability mechanisms must be demonstrated by the establishment of national committees and the provision for bringing cases against discriminators. Despite all of these commitments, PWDs still face a lack of physical access and adaptability for many reasons, such as the negative attitudes of service providers.

Nondiscriminatory legislation and policies must be enforced by the government. This is especially true when it comes to the establishment of an independent monitoring agency with experts that can coordinate with other committees and monitor the implementation of the law "on the ground" as well as hold the government accountable in terms of its implementation. Disability disaggregated data must be utilized to inform public policy decisions. According to data from the World Bank in the 2021 round of censuses, disability rates range from 15% in Argentina to 15% in Bolivia, while the proportion varies between 4.7% in Uruguay. In total, almost 12% of the Latin American and Caribbean population is thought to live with at least one disability.⁴⁶ A comprehensive study may be necessary for Jordan to assess if meaningful improvements have occurred in the situation of PWDs since the enactment of the law.

It is nonetheless noteworthy that the government's commitment to inclusive education is consistent with international frameworks such as the SDG (Goal 4), the UNCRPD, and the Salamanca Statement of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]. To achieve "Education for All," the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special

Needs Education highlight the importance of inclusive education. As UNESCO points out, inclusive education plays a critical role in combating discrimination and building an inclusive society.⁴⁷

The implementation of inclusive education, however, has proven to be challenging for many low and middle-income countries. The findings of a recent study conducted in Ethiopia indicated that many schools are inaccessible to students with disabilities.⁴⁸ This contradicts the Sub-Education Policy Review Report on Inclusive Education by UNESCO in 2006.⁴⁹ Accessibility should go beyond passageways, stairs, and ramps to recreational areas, paved pathways, and door handles.⁵⁰

Consequently, the Jordanian government must invest significant resources in learning materials, transportation, and teacher training. A multisectoral approach is also necessary to ensure inclusion, including collaboration between relevant administrations.

Gaps in the Law and the Way Forward

In our analysis of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017, we identified several gaps when juxtaposed against the 18 core concepts. The absence of concepts such as autonomy, accountability, and integration in the law is particularly noticeable. Additionally, the law's treatment of protection from harm and family violence is somewhat cursory. In this section, we delve deeper into these gaps, offering explanations rooted in the Jordanian context and suggesting potential remedies.

1- Autonomy

In the Jordanian context, this concept is likely to be inapplicable because it is rooted in Western perspectives (e.g., European policies). Particularly, the law does not place sufficient emphasis on autonomy due to the cultural reverence and trust accorded to the expertise and skills of PWDs.⁵¹ As well as the community's interference in the lives of PWDs, also, patriarchy is intrinsically

ingrained in Jordanian society. As a consequence, males are more likely to serve as the heads of their families and make decisions regarding family matters, including healthcare.⁵²

By international treaties, the failure of PWDs or their primary caregivers (mostly females) to participate in decision-making constitutes a violation of their rights to autonomy.⁵³ It is therefore essential that autonomy be incorporated into the law. In this manner, they will have an effective means of advocating for their rights. As a result of recent changes in healthcare and social support systems in countries such as the USA, families are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process.

For PWDs to be able to make informed decisions about any program that may affect them, they must have full access to information. It is possible, however, to make informed decisions in situations where the individual is not able to do so. Other policy procedures adopted in high-income countries, such as the UAE,⁵⁴ may be of assistance in such instances. PWDs may also be appointed guardians to make decisions on their behalf. A qualified individual may also be considered to assist in making informed decisions regarding access to support services, or a statutory decision-maker may be requested to serve as a decision-maker.

2-Privacy and confidentiality

It is critically important to protect the privacy and confidentiality of PWDs, given that such individuals are at high risk of being exploited by third parties, as well as society's dependence on one another. Because of this, the lack of protection of the privacy and confidentiality of PWDs' records could constitute a violation of their rights (CRPD, Articles 22 and 31). Due to this, the Jordanian government is mandated to take further steps to protect the privacy of PWDs, particularly those who benefit from their services. Four areas may contribute to the protection of the privacy and

confidentiality of PWDs in Jordan. First, raising awareness of PWDs' privacy rights among various key stakeholders (e.g., family members and service providers).

Second, responsibility among all education stakeholders. Third, society must not base disability as shameful, but rather, disability pride and contribution must be directed to assisting disabled people.

Fourth, it is also essential that the government implement existing legislation to allow PWDs to exercise their right to privacy of information. The findings of our analysis support these recommendations, which are essential in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of PWDs.

3- Family-centeredness

A similar issue arises concerning the provision of family-centered support and services for PWDs, as that concept is not explicitly described in the law. As well as being a philosophy, family-centered service is an approach to providing services to persons with disabilities. According to Rosenbaum,⁵⁵ the family collaborates with service providers to offer culturally sensitive services and support to PWDs. A number of studies indicate that family-centered health care can contribute to positive outcomes, particularly when family and professional interactions are positive. The family-centered concept should therefore be emphasized both in theory (The law) and in practice.

Special consideration should be given to the essential role played by family caregivers and the principles designed to assist families in balancing work and care for their dependents. Policy action is also required to promote the provision of services that address the physical and mental health of family members. There is an opportunity to improve Jordan's disability policy by incorporating

issues related to respite care for working individuals and a flexible work schedule for those employed.

4- Collaboration

A multidimensional concept such as disability requires collaboration between a number of governmental sectors. This is an essential component of providing services to PWDs. However, the services available to PWDs are often fragmented across the globe, and families may encounter difficulties in navigating complex systems promptly. To achieve harmonization of existing programs and resources, researchers have suggested establishing principles and operational guidelines.⁵⁶

Also, making services available at one point can better meet the needs of PWDs. To improve the coordination of services, Jordanian policymakers may consider including provisions in the law. The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008⁵⁷ provides for the designation of an employee to direct or coordinate services for PWDs.

Ultimately, policy capacity is essential for the achievement of the law's objectives. The concept of policy capacity refers to an organization's and management's capability to make informed policy decisions based on evidence and to implement them efficiently. Evidence-based policy formulation requires resources, as it is often regarded as a leading practice in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. A crucial element of formulating policies that meet the needs of PWDs is to engage them in the process.

5- Limitations

Several limitations have been identified in this paper. First, we analyzed only one policy document—the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017. Providing a deeper understanding of the

subject might require the inclusion of other policies related to health, education, and social support. Second, we focused solely on paper-to-paper analyses without conducting any empirical research with stakeholders. It may be possible to obtain a more relevant image of disability policy reality by examining stakeholders' perceptions of policy problems. An understanding of the phenomenon requires the participation of policymakers, in particular.

Following the enactment of the law, consideration of their perceptions is crucial for identifying future legislative measures and budget allocations for PWDs. Another limitation relates to families' cooperation in reporting disabilities within the direct authority.

Families will likely report a disability if influential community members engage in the process. Despite these limitations, the paper provides a general overview of policy environments about how the law addresses PWDs' needs. This paper also discussed how the law adheres to international policy analysis frameworks. This understanding provides useful perspectives on the evolution of disability rights and policies in Jordan, which may also be useful in other low- and middle-income countries.

Conclusion

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017 is a testament to the Jordanian government's dedication to the welfare and rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). This commitment is in line with global initiatives, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasize inclusivity and equity.

This analysis offers several key insights:

Contribution to Global Discourse: This paper provides a nuanced understanding of Jordan's disability policy, shedding light on the challenges and gaps in policy implementation in low- and middle-income countries. As highlighted by Nuri et al. 2021, the challenge often lies in translating policy aspirations into actionable steps.

Budgetary and Monitoring Needs: The findings underscore the importance of robust budgetary allocations and stringent monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of policies. Without these, even well-intentioned policies might not achieve their intended impact.

Research Gaps: While this study offers a comprehensive analysis of Jordan's disability policy, it also points to gaps in the global literature. Future research could delve deeper into the tangible impacts of such policies, examining their real-world effects on beneficiaries. Such an approach would provide a more holistic understanding of the policy landscape and its implications.

Jordan's Unique Position: As of 2023, Jordan hosts the second-largest number of refugees per capita worldwide. This unique position presents both challenges and opportunities. The country's commitment to inclusiveness, based on rights rather than charity, is commendable. However, the actual implementation of these policies remains a challenge, necessitating continued efforts and international support.

Institutional Framework: The establishment of the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities indicates strong institutional backing for change. This body, among others, plays a crucial role in driving the country's disability rights agenda.

Learning from Others: As Jordan continues its journey towards inclusivity, there's value in observing and learning from other countries with similar challenges. Such exchanges can offer fresh perspectives and innovative solutions.

In conclusion, while Jordan has made commendable strides in framing policies for PWDs, the journey from policy to practice is intricate. With continued efforts, collaboration, and a focus on rights over charity, Jordan can pave the way for a more inclusive future.

Recommendations

To enhance the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017, a primary focus should be on recognizing the autonomy of PWDs. Drawing inspiration from the best international practices, such as those observed in the UAE, the law should be amended to ensure that PWDs have a voice in decisions that directly impact their lives. Data protection is another crucial area of concern. The law should introduce stringent data protection regulations, emphasizing the legal protection of PWDs' personal data and records. This would safeguard their privacy and ensure that their personal information is not misused or exploited.

The role of families in the support and care of PWDs cannot be understood. The law should legally recognize this role, emphasizing the importance of involving families in the decision-making processes. This would ensure that the care and support provided to PWDs is holistic and in their best interest. Inter-departmental and inter-agency collaboration is essential for a comprehensive approach to disability care.

The establishment of a centralized coordination body could facilitate this collaboration, ensuring that all departments and agencies work in tandem to support PWDs.

Budgetary allocations play a pivotal role in supporting the needs of PWDs. The law should mandate specific allocations, especially focusing on areas like accessibility, education, and healthcare. This would ensure that PWDs have access to the resources and support they need.

Monitoring the implementation of the law is crucial. The establishment of an independent monitoring agency would ensure that the law's provisions are followed and that PWDs' rights are upheld. This agency would play a pivotal role in ensuring compliance and addressing any shortcomings.

Education is a fundamental right. The law should ensure that PWDs have equal access to quality education. This would involve amending educational laws to include provisions that mandate accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that PWDs can learn in an environment that caters to their needs.

The law, while comprehensive, has certain missing core concepts. A thorough review, in collaboration with legal experts, stakeholders, and PWDs, would help identify these gaps. The law should then be amended to address these missing concepts, ensuring that it provides a comprehensive framework for supporting PWDs.

Public awareness is essential for changing societal perceptions. The law should mandate regular public awareness campaigns, educating the public about the rights and needs of PWDs. This would play a crucial role in changing societal attitudes and ensuring that PWDs are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Lastly, infrastructure plays a crucial role in the lives of PWDs. The law should mandate the accessibility of public spaces and facilities, ensuring that PWDs can navigate their environment without any hindrances. This would involve amending infrastructure and urban planning laws, ensuring that public spaces are designed with the needs of PWDs in mind.

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