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The Question of Inclusion in Cultural Events: Detty December and Managing Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria's Festive Season

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Article Info	Abstract	
Received: 2025-05-17	December is a period of fun and excitement so much so that many people look forward to it. However, are these excitements and fun inclusive of every member of society? This study investigates the inclusivity of Detty December festivities for people with disabilities in Nigeria, focusing on the practical and legislative aspects of accessibility. Despite the existence of protective legislation like the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (DAPWDA), the experiences of people with disabilities during these celebrations remain largely unexamined. Through a survey of 42 participants with various disabilities, we explore the barriers to participation, the adequacy of current accessibility measures, and the implementation of inclusive practices during Detty December events. Findings reveal a significant gap between legal mandates and actual practice, with many respondents experiencing mediocre to terrible event experiences due to physical inaccessibility, lack of informational accommodations, and insufficient staff training in disability assistance. The study highlights the need for strategic improvements in venue selection, event planning, and staff education to ensure compliance with the law and that Detty December is a celebration accessible to all. Recommendations include improved signage, pre-event distribution of materials in multiple formats, mandatory disability awareness training for staff, and personalised service adjustments to meet individual needs. This study calls for a proactive approach in event management to ensure an inclusive festive environment where everyone can partake in the cultural celebration without barriers.	
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Introduction

In Nigeria, December transforms into a bubbling celebration known as Detty December, particularly in urban hubs like Lagos, where concerts, parties, and cultural events dominate the social calendar. In 2024, the term “Oblee” emerged to encapsulate the joy and communal energy of these festivities, often hosted in outdoor spaces, clubs, and convention centres. While this season unites many Nigerians in celebration, it raises a critical question: Is this festive spirit accessible to all, including persons with disabilities (PWDs)? Cultural events like Detty December act as a litmus test for societal inclusion, exposing whether marginalised groups can fully engage in public life. This paper explores the gap between the inclusive promise of Detty December and the exclusionary realities faced by PWDs due to systemic barriers.

Historical and Legal Context of Disability Rights in Nigeria

The evolution of disability rights in Nigeria reflects a gradual shift from neglect to recognition. The Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1960, 1963, 1979, and 1993) enshrined fundamental rights such as freedom of movement and dignity, theoretically extending these to PWDs. However, enforcement was minimal, leaving PWDs sidelined (Amucheazi & Nwankwo, 2020). Before Nigeria’s democratic transition in 1999, disability was framed through a medical and charity lens, emphasising individual impairments over societal inclusion (Retief & Letsosa, 2018). This approach restricted PWDs’ participation in areas like tourism, festivals, and urban development.

A significant shift occurred with Nigeria’s ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2010, advocating a rights-based framework. Legislative progress followed, though slowly. The Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Bill, proposed in 2011 and 2015, was only enacted in 2019 as the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (DAPWDA). Despite this legal milestone, implementation remains uneven, especially in cultural and recreational settings (Ezeonu et al., 2021). Notable court cases or policy shifts, such as the 2019 Act’s mandate for accessibility in public buildings, have yet to fully transform the reality for PWDs.

Scale and Scope of Accessibility Challenges

Accessibility remains a critical challenge in Nigeria, where over 220 million people reside as of 2023 (World Bank, 2023). Approximately 15%—or more than 33 million individuals—live with disabilities (Anazonwu et al., 2022). Despite constitutional protections, PWDs encounter pervasive barriers, including stigma, discrimination, and inadequate infrastructure. The National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (NIIMP) projects a \$3 trillion investment need over 30 years to address these deficits, including accessible public spaces (Ajimotokan & Orizu, 2019).

Empirical evidence underscores this crisis. Oladokun et al. (2014) found that in Osogbo Metropolis, inaccessible environments, economic limitations, and societal attitudes hinder PWDs' recreational participation. Ten years later, this reality remains the same (Yekeen & Misnan, 2024). In Rivers State, Wachukwu et al. (2024) reported that none of the surveyed recreational centers offered basic accessibility features like ramps or adapted facilities. In Lagos—the epicenter of Detty December—Rowland & Nnamdi (2024) revealed that 80% of public event venues lack accommodations such as sign language interpreters or braille signage. These studies highlight a consistent pattern of exclusion, intensified during large-scale cultural events.

Discrimination and Legal Definitions

The DAPWDA (2019) defines discrimination against PWDs as “differential treatment,” but this lacks specificity. Comparatively, the UK Equality Act 2010 offers a clearer standard, defining discrimination as unfavorable treatment due to disability that cannot be justified as proportionate or legitimate (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2019). Applied to Detty December, discrimination includes physical barriers (e.g., inaccessible venues) and attitudinal obstacles (e.g., untrained staff), both of which curtail PWDs' cultural participation.

This study adopts the social model of disability, which argues that disability arises not from individual impairments but from societal barriers (Ìbírónkẹ́ et al., 2024). Unlike the medical model's focus on personal deficits, the social model highlights how environments and attitudes disable people. During Detty December, this manifests in tangible ways: inaccessible concert venues lacking ramps, event programs without braille or audio options, and staff unprepared to assist PWDs. By applying this model to a festive context, this study extends its relevance beyond traditional settings like workplaces or public infrastructure, offering a fresh lens on cultural exclusion in Nigeria.

International examples provide insights for Nigeria. A 2022 study on Brazil's Carnival showed that accessible transportation and inclusive planning boosted PWD participation by 30% (Snyder, 2022). Similarly, British and American company, Carnival Corporation & plc improved inclusion through the use of lifts with audible signals for the visually impaired, among other measures (Płoska, 2025). These cases suggest practical strategies—adaptable to Nigeria—that could enhance Detty December's accessibility.

While Detty December grows as a cultural phenomenon, no research has systematically examined its inclusivity for PWDs. Existing studies on accessibility in Nigeria (e.g., Wachukwu et al., 2024) focus on general public spaces, not festive environments. This study addresses this gap by analysing how infrastructural, informational, and attitudinal barriers exclude PWDs from Detty December. It

contributes new insights to disability rights discourse, emphasising the need for culturally specific accessibility solutions in leisure contexts.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

Disability in the Contemporary World

The concept of disability in contemporary society is of a different dimension. This time, it includes impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions, as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, n.d). Disability, therefore, goes beyond health issues and mirrors a complex interaction between a person's bodily functions and the societal environment in which they live. This has been explained in fine detail in the Social Model of Disability. Disability in its broadest sense includes anyone with a permanent bodily impairment (Grue, 2019), although defining impairment precisely presents its own challenges. The Americans with Disabilities Act, South African Employment Equity Act, and the Nigerian Discrimination Against Persons with Disability (Prohibition) Act further delineate disability as impairments that significantly limit one or more major life activities or employment prospects, respectively. This is evidence that even the law recognises disability as a barrier to normal functioning and societal participation.

The terms 'disabled' and 'physically challenged' are often used interchangeably, and they both refer to difficulties in performing tasks that are routine for able-bodied people. While 'physically challenged' implies difficulty in task execution, 'disabled' might suggest an outright inability to perform certain activities. Definitions from sources like the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* highlight these nuances. It describes a physically challenged person as someone with bodily problems that hinder normal activities. Despite some terminological debates, both terms essentially convey the shared experience of facing societal and physical barriers due to impairments.

The discourse on disability is fraught with contention, particularly in the field of justice. Social contractarian theories of justice, which hinge on mutual agreement and reciprocity, struggle to accommodate the unique needs of disabled people in a framework designed predominantly for the able-bodied. This complexity is compounded by the need to identify who qualifies as 'disabled' to ensure equitable application of justice principles, making it a key topic in philosophical discussions about identity and rights.

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discussions about identity and rights (Sasan, 2021). One of the fundamental issues is that traditional social contract theories, like those proposed by John Rawls and other philosophers, often assume a society composed of individuals with similar capabilities and needs. Disabled individuals, however, may require different resources, accommodations, and supports that are not adequately addressed by these theories. This inadequacy raises questions about the fairness and inclusivity of justice systems that do not fully consider the diverse experiences of all members of society. Furthermore, the definition of disability is not always clear-cut. Disabilities can be visible or invisible, permanent or temporary, and vary widely in their impact on individuals' lives. This variation complicates the task of creating policies and principles that apply universally. The need to define and recognise the spectrum of disabilities is important for ensuring that justice principles are applied equitably and inclusively. Philosophical discussions around disability and justice also digress into the concept of rights. Disabled persons often face systemic barriers that hinder their ability to participate fully in society. Addressing these barriers requires a re-examination of what it means to have rights and how those rights are protected and promoted. This re-examination involves considering not just the letter of the law but also the societal attitudes and structures that perpetuate inequality. This is especially professed in the Social Model of Disability as conceptualised by Michael Oliver in *The Politics of Disablement* (1990), is reflected in human rights law like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which follows the argument that PWDs are disadvantaged by social and environmental factors, rather than solely physiological or biological ones (Article 1, CRPD). This shifts the focus from the individual's impairments to the societal structures that create barriers. This perspective contrasts with medical or individualistic views that label and attribute all challenges to the person's condition without considering societal responsibilities.

This understanding necessitates a re-evaluation of managerial practices for people with disabilities. It emphasises the need for societal adjustments to promote equality. As posited by Anita Silvers, there is a moral or political duty to mitigate the disadvantages faced by PWDs.

Conceptualising Leisure as Key to Wellbeing

A way to mitigate the disadvantages faced by PWDs is by ensuring their well-being and inclusion in facilities for leisure, as facilities used during the Detty December season. Leisure has been defined as uncoerced activity undertaken during free time where such activity is something people want to do and, at a personally satisfying level using their abilities and resources, they succeed in doing (Stebbins 2005). The study of well-being through the lens of leisure has been extensively explored in psychological literature. Newman, Tay, and Diener (2014) provide a comprehensive review of how leisure activities contribute to subjective well-being. Their analysis involved screening 3,620 peer-reviewed articles where leisure was linked to aspects of well-being like life satisfaction, quality of life, emotions, or

happiness. From this extensive review, they identified 16 theories frequently cited, with the most prominent being the flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), activity theory by Havighurst (1961), and self-determination theory by Ryan et al. (2000).

Newman et al. (2014) distilled these theories into five core psychological processes that explain how leisure impacts well-being:

1. **Mastery-** Mastery is characterised by the experience of overcoming challenges and learning from opportunities, as seen in the acquisition of higher skill levels. According to Newman et al. (2014), mastery involves the effort exerted to achieve success through skill application. This concept aligns with Self-Determination Theory, where competence is defined as a fundamental need reflecting the efficacy an individual feels in managing both internal and external environments (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 45). The flow state, as described by Csikszentmihalyi, is a prime example where a balance of skill and challenge leads to absorption in an activity, and this promotes well-being. The Serious Leisure model by Stebbins (1997) further elucidates the role of mastery in well-being. It states that engaging in serious leisure, defined as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 3), promotes subjective well-being through feelings of accomplishment, meaning, and psychological growth.
2. **Autonomy -** Autonomy refers to self-governance and the experience of making choices based on personal volition rather than external pressures. Self-determination theory positions autonomy as a fundamental need alongside competence and relatedness. Autonomous activities are inherently satisfying, contrasting with extrinsically motivated behaviours driven by external rewards or punishments. This concept is supported by several theories like continuity theory, innovation theory, and the leisure and well-being model. It emphasises control over one’s choices as vital for well-being.
3. **Affiliation -** This mechanism focuses on social connections, belonging, and emotionally rewarding relationships. It is perhaps the most universally acknowledged aspect of well-being across various theories. It is the third on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs - a feeling of love and belonging. Though formulated in different ways, theories like activity theory (Havighurst, 1961), disengagement theory (Cumming & Henry, 1961) and socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1992) all suggest that affiliation is a mediator of wellbeing. Social leisure activities can therefore be seen as pathways to build meaningful relationships, thereby enhancing life quality and emotional health.

4. Detachment-Recovery - Specifically tied to the leisure context, this process involves the mental and physical disengagement from work to restore resources depleted during work hours. Theories like the effort-recovery model, attention-restoration theory, and conservation of resources theory suggest that leisure activities that differ from work demands facilitate better recovery, thus enhancing well-being by compensating for the stress of work.
5. Meaning - This involves finding significance, purpose, and a sense of direction through activities, whether in leisure or work. Both the flow model and serious leisure model advocate for activities that contribute to personal growth and self-actualisation. Meaning in life has been described as having goals, a sense of direction, and beliefs that give life purpose, all of which can be nurtured through engaging leisure activities (Ryff, 2013, p. 12).

These five mechanisms collectively illustrate how leisure can be structured to improve psychological well-being. This provides a framework for both researchers and practitioners to understand and apply in various contexts, this time in the context of analysing Detty December. Each component not only supports well-being individually but also interacts with others in complex ways, suggesting that a holistic approach to leisure might yield the most beneficial outcomes for personal development and happiness.

Methodology

This study adopted a non-experimental, descriptive survey methodology to investigate the inclusivity of Detty December festivities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria. This approach aligns with Stantcheva's (2023) assertion that surveys are effective for assessing attitudes, opinions, preferences, demographics, practices, and procedures, making it suitable for exploring under-researched contexts like accessibility during cultural events. Notably, this study is among the first to examine accessibility through the lens of the social model within the specific context of Detty December, a culturally significant event in Nigeria, thereby offering a novel perspective on disability inclusion in festive environments.

Given the challenges of recruiting large numbers of participants with disabilities, as highlighted by Shariq et al. (2023), the sample size was relatively small but deliberately targeted. Data collection occurred during two disability-focused events: the World Disability Day celebrations organized by the Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs/Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board on December 3, 2023, and by Kwara State University's Disability Support Office on December 3, 2024. These events provided a concentrated gathering of PWDs, offering a strategic opportunity to capture relevant insights. Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to representatives from disability organizations, including

the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) in Niger State and the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), ensuring input from key stakeholders.

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire designed to explore experiences with accessibility and inclusivity during Detty December. It included:

- Two demographic questions: (1) Do you have any impairment? (2) Do you consider yourself disabled?
- Experience-based questions: Tailored to reflect participants' encounters with accessibility when attending meetings, events, conferences, and conventions, specifically during Detty December festivities.

Participants could optionally provide their names and contact information for follow-up, though this was not required. To ensure confidentiality, participants were informed of their right to refuse participation, and no personal identifying information was collected or analysed. They could choose between completing a physical form, an electronic version, or a Braille version. Physical forms were distributed at the event sites, collected by the distributor upon completion, while electronic copies were emailed upon request. Of the 55 paper surveys distributed, 42 were returned and usable, yielding a response rate of approximately 76%. The non-response rate of 15% is consistent with expectations for this demographic, as supported by Shariq et al. (2023).

Responses were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarise the data and illustrate the extent of inclusivity during Detty December. To provide deeper insights beyond surface-level description, thematic analysis was conducted on open-ended responses, identifying recurring themes related to participants' personal experiences and suggestions for improving accessibility. This qualitative approach complements the quantitative findings, offering a richer understanding of the barriers faced by PWDs.

Ethical considerations included voluntary participation, anonymity of responses, and the option to withdraw at any time without consequence. Only form distributors had access to any contact information provided for follow-up, and all data were anonymised. While the small sample size may limit generalisability to the broader population of PWDs in Nigeria, the targeted sampling strategy ensured that insights were drawn from individuals most directly impacted by accessibility challenges during Detty December.

Results

Profile of the Respondents

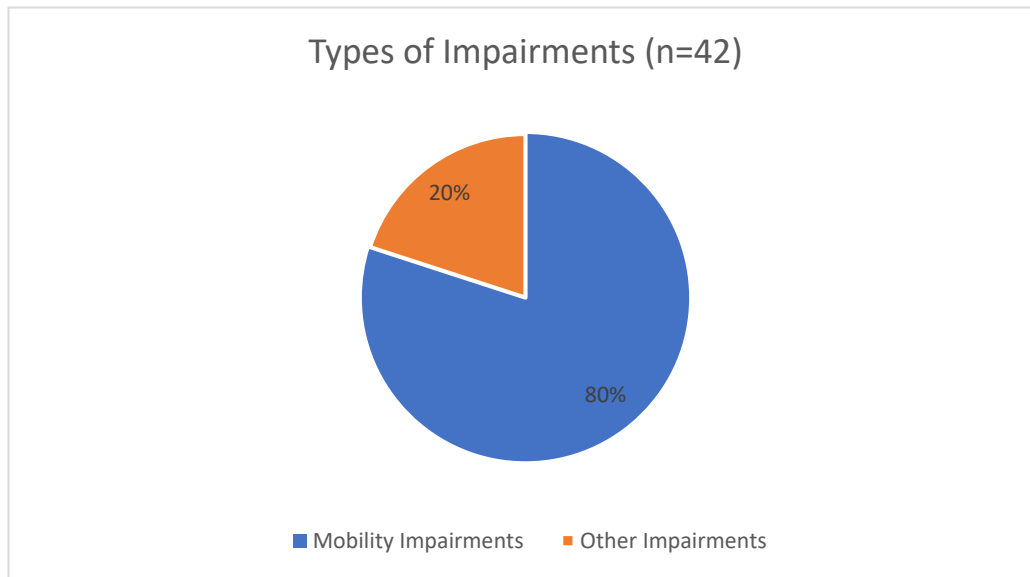


Figure 1a. Distribution of primary impairments among respondents

All the respondents (n=42) identified as having some form of impairment. This is in line with the focus of this study on people navigating disabilities in their daily lives and during Detty December. Among these, a significant majority (80%; n=34) reported living with mobility impairments. Interestingly, 20% (n=8) of respondents did not consider themselves “disabled,” despite meeting the criteria for being with a disability. This subtlety highlights a nuanced perspective on self-identification within the PWD community. It suggests that perceptions of disability can vary, even among those who meet formal definitions.

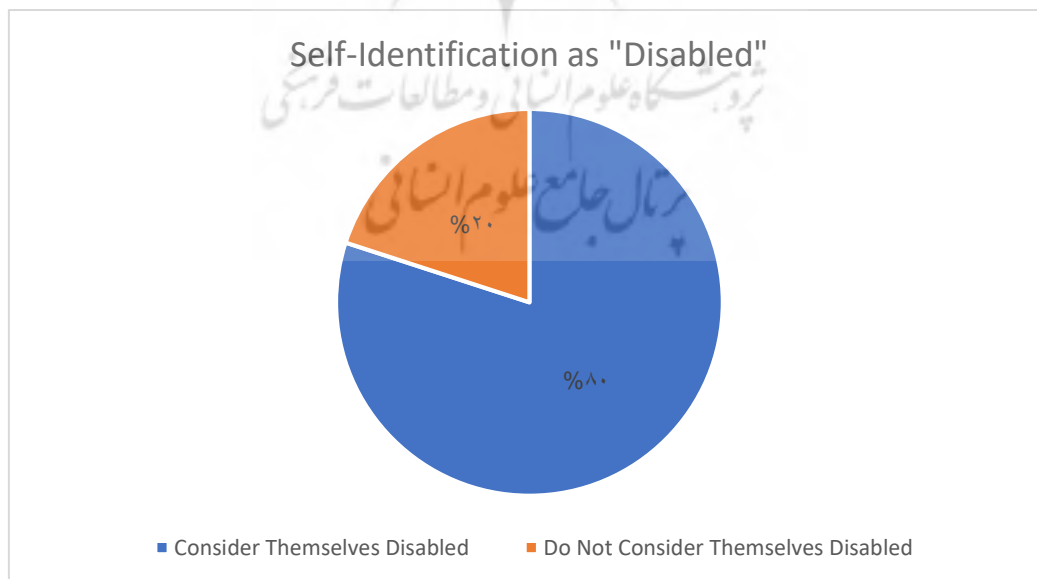


Figure 1b. Self-identification patterns within the PWD community

Regarding travel frequency, a notable majority of respondents (76%; $n=32$) were frequent travelers, travelling more than three times annually. The remaining 24% ($n=10$) traveled less often, typically limiting their trips to once or twice per year. When it came to traveling companions, most respondents (83%; $n=35$) preferred to travel alone. However, 17% ($n=7$) of respondents chose to travel with a companion, often a spouse. This highlights the role of close personal relationships in facilitating mobility for some people with disabilities.

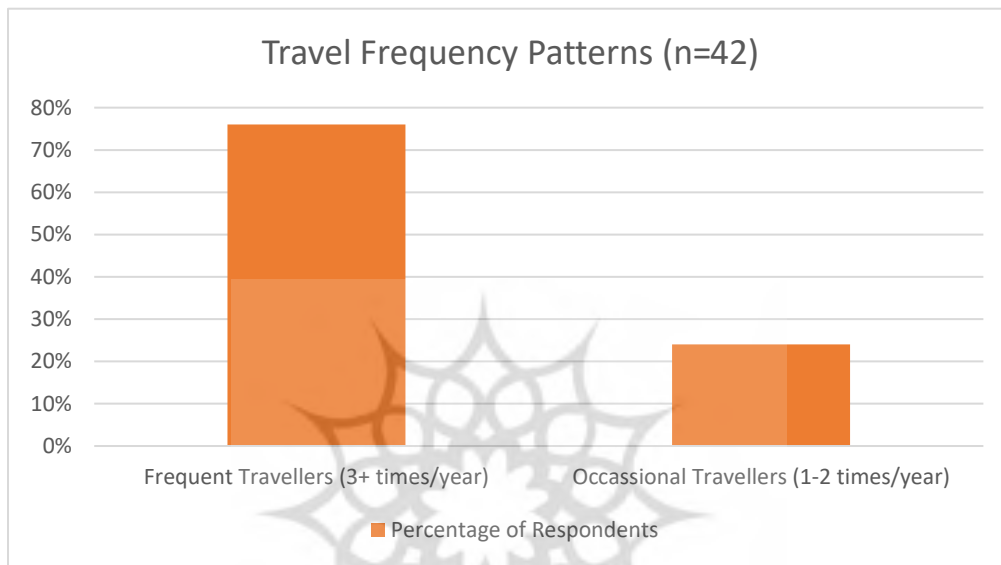


Figure 1c. Annual travel frequency among respondents

Among those who travelled with companions, the majority (57%) indicated that their travel partners were not disabled. This suggests that their companions might primarily serve as support rather than mutual dependents. Conversely, 33% reported travelling with companions who also had impairments. This however suggests that shared experiences lead to potential camaraderie. A smaller subset (10%) alternated between companions who were non-disabled and those who were visually impaired.

In terms of co-occurring disabilities, most respondents (88%; $n=37$) reported no additional impairments beyond their primary condition, indicating a relatively focused set of challenges for this group. However, 12% ($n=5$) disclosed the presence of additional disabilities, such as epilepsy and hearing loss, which compound the complexities of daily life and travel for these people and leave activities typical of Detty December as an avenue for relaxation, leisure, and fun.

Meeting Logistics

Respondents attended events in diverse venues, including hotels (57%, $n = 24$), convention centres (20%, $n = 8$), religious spaces like churches and mosques (14%, $n = 6$), and other facilities such as office buildings (9%, $n = 4$). Less common venues included public spaces, verandas, community halls, private

homes, and university campuses. Orientation at meeting locations was uncommon, with 68% ($n = 37$) reporting they did not receive any upon arrival. Only 12% ($n = 6$) had some form of orientation, and this was divided between brief (6%, $n = 3$) and detailed guidance (6%, $n = 3$). Orientation providers varied, with hotel staff being the most frequent (44%, $n = 19$), followed by event coordinators (28%, $n = 12$), family or friends (8%, $n = 3$), and volunteers (4%, $n = 2$). Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the orientations provided, with one noting that many people “do not know how to give proper directions to disabled persons.”

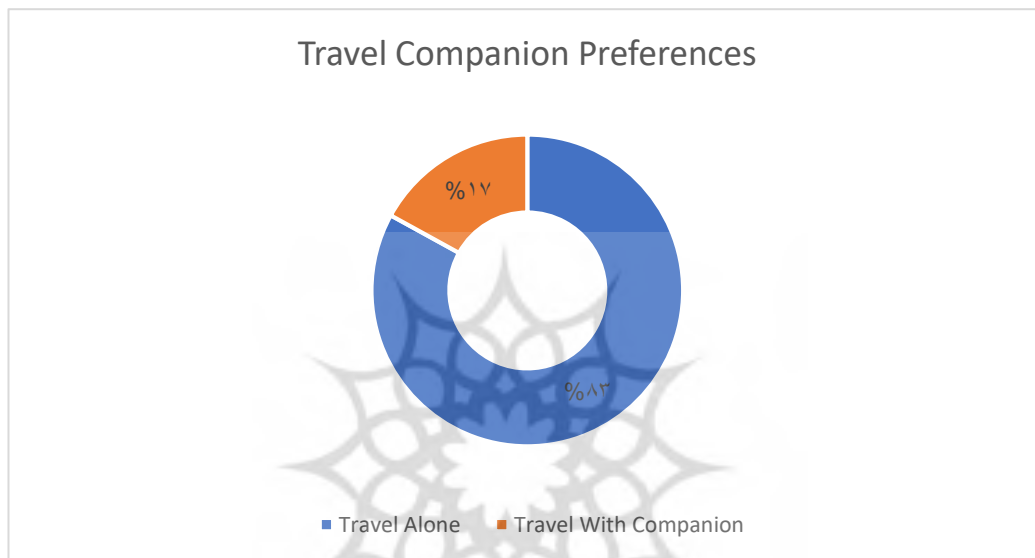


Figure 1d. Traveling alone vs. with companions

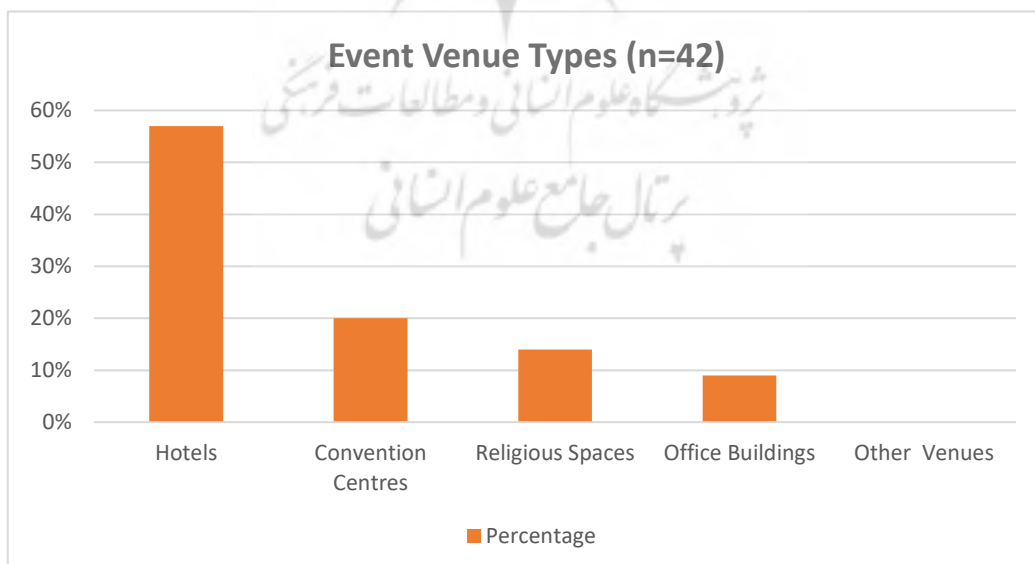


Figure 2a. Distribution of event venues attended

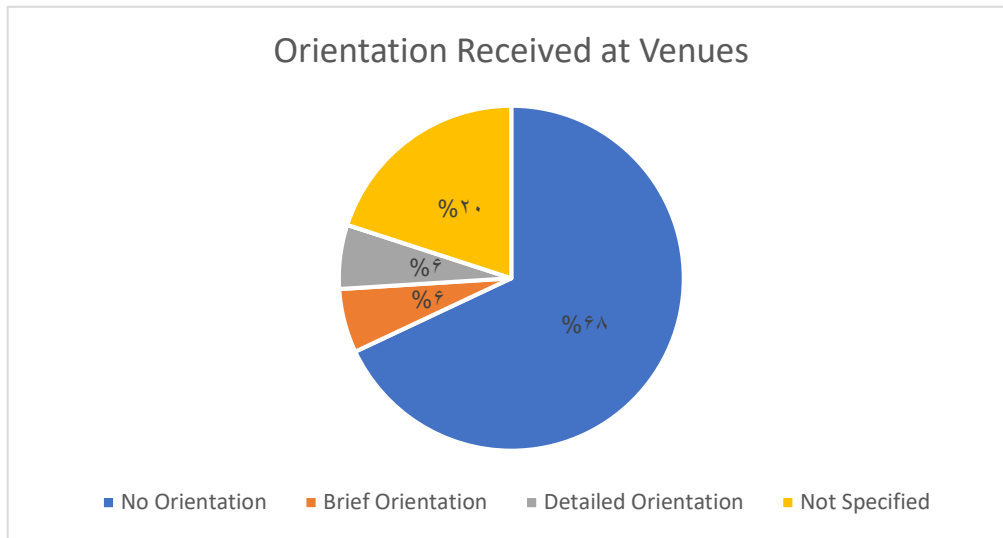


Figure 2b. Availability and quality of venue orientation

Accessibility to Event Facilities

Navigating event venues posed significant challenges, as all respondents (100%, $n = 42$) reported great difficulty in locating restrooms, meeting rooms, and amenities. This difficulty was attributed to the lack of clear signage or layout maps provided by event managers. Dining accessibility was equally problematic. Most respondents (86%, $n = 36$) experienced great difficulty finding accessible eateries, and only 14% ($n = 6$) reported ease in doing so. These exceptions were primarily high-income individuals or participants at events organised by disability-focused organisations like the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) or the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD).

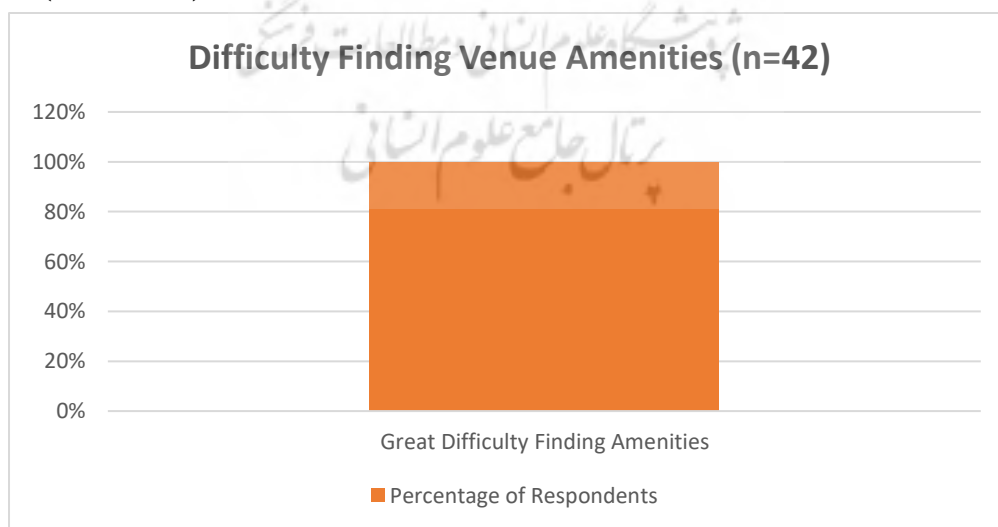


Figure 3a. Navigation challenges within event venues

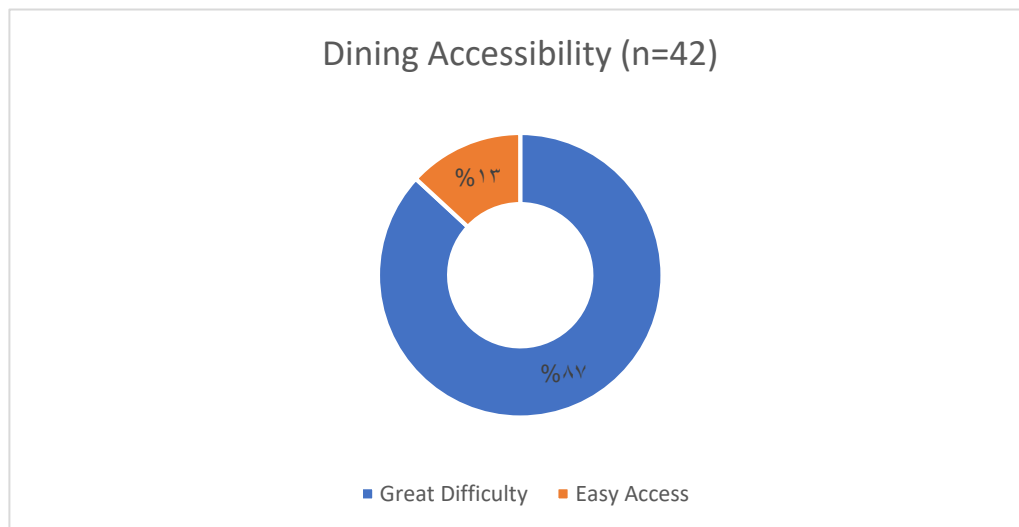


Figure 3b. Accessibility of dining facilities

When asked about accessibility features like Braille menus or adapted restrooms, all respondents (100%, $n = 42$) agreed that restaurants were “not at all accessible.” Only 12% ($n = 5$) reported identifying eateries accessible to individuals with mobility impairments. One visually impaired respondent expressed the desire for audio menus, as not all visually impaired individuals read Braille. Others noted that while Braille menus were occasionally available, they were cumbersome and often lacked organisation, making it time-consuming to navigate a 20-30 page menu. Braille menus with a clear table of contents were highlighted as the most user-friendly.

Accessibility to Event Staff

The ease of finding assistance at events varied. While 54% ($n = 23$) found help easily, 25% ($n = 11$) rated it as moderately difficult, and 21% ($n = 9$) reported significant difficulty. Comfort levels in requesting assistance influenced these outcomes, with event staff (36%, $n = 15$) being the primary source of help, followed by attendees (19%, $n = 8$), host organisation members (24%, $n = 10$), volunteers (9%, $n = 4$), family and friends (7%, $n = 3$), and the general public (5%, $n = 2$).

Knowledge of Event Staff About Disabilities

When asked to evaluate the knowledge of individuals providing assistance, 92% ($n = 39$) indicated that staff had minimal understanding of how to assist disabled attendees. Respondents noted a general lack of awareness in the wider community about accommodating people with disabilities. Only 8% ($n = 3$) felt the assistance they received was informed and adequate. Similarly, 75% ($n = 32$) of respondents observed that those offering help were uncomfortable interacting with disabled persons. While 25% ($n=11$) described these interactions as comfortable, respondents appreciated the willingness to assist, even when the quality of help fell short of their needs.

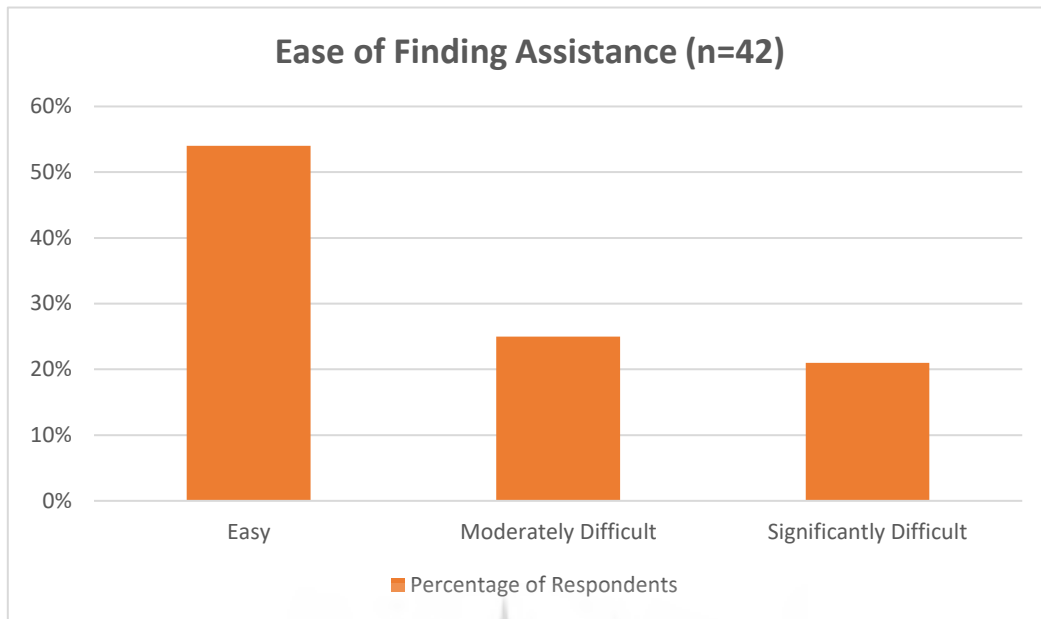


Figure 4a. Difficulty levels in obtaining help at events



Figure 4b. Perceived staff competency in disability assistance

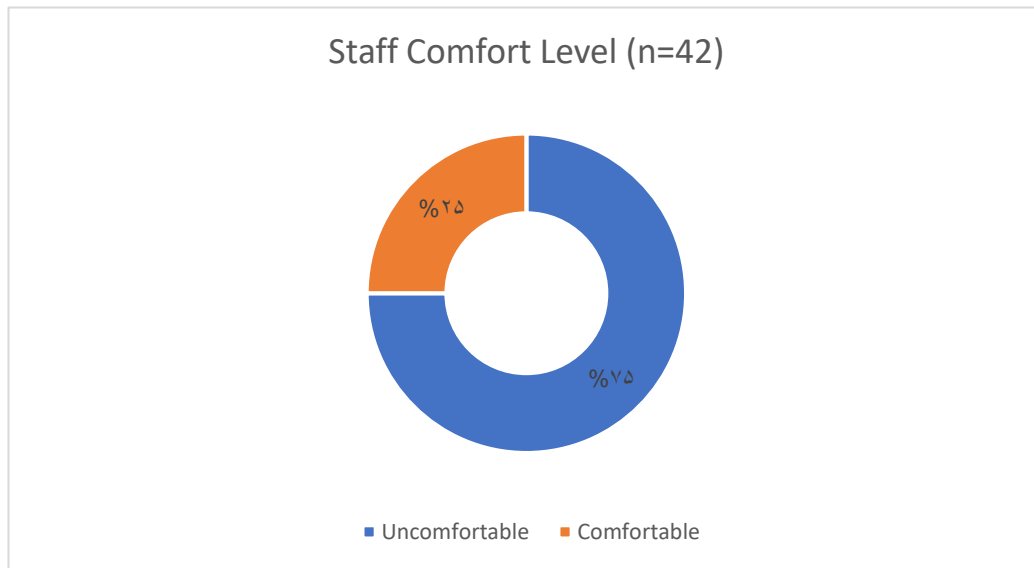


Figure 4c. Staff comfort when interacting with disabled persons

Overall Event Experience During Detty December

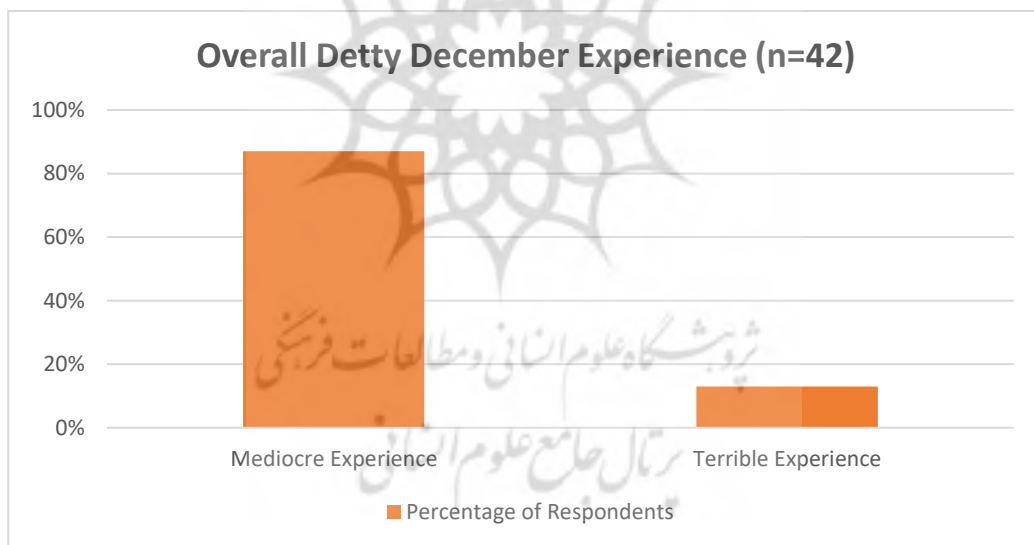


Figure 5. Quality of overall event experience during Detty December

An overwhelming 87% (n=37) of respondents described their overall experience at Detty December events as mediocre, while 13% (n=5) reported their experiences as outright terrible. Some respondents had positive experiences when event managers, attendees, and venue staff were proactive in offering assistance. Events specifically tailored for or by disability organisations, like conferences focused on disability issues, tended to yield more positive outcomes. Having a sighted companion also significantly

improved the event experience for people with disabilities, as they provided both physical and social support. They could help those with wheelchairs move around and could be a kind of talking partner. Advance notification of one's disability to event managers enabled better accommodations through connections with accessibility departments or specific disability coordinators. Maintaining a positive attitude, where respondents humorously managed any mishaps or disability-related challenges, helped in alleviating stress and creating a better event experience. On the contrary, some respondents indicated that they were the subject of cruel creative expressions. A respondent became the butt of jokes at a Stand-Up comedy show in Lagos and felt uncomfortable throughout his stay till he had to leave. Another respondent became the subject of praise and worship, where a singer had to ask people to thank God for not making them as unfortunate as a person with disability even while a person with disability was right there in the audience.

The primary source of negative feedback was, however, centred around inaccessibility and instances of discrimination. Discrimination here refers to treating individuals differently or less favourably due to their disability, which was often manifested through physical barriers such as inaccessible doorways, poor lighting in venues, lack of adapted restrooms, or lack of appropriate signage. Despite legal requirements like those in the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (DAWPDA), few venues provided braille signs. It is, however, important to mention that braille signs are not universally beneficial since not all visually impaired individuals read braille.

Additionally, accessibility often catered more to those with mobility impairments (e.g., wheelchair users) than to those with visual impairments. This highlights a gap in understanding and addressing diverse disability needs. For example, meeting materials like name tags were seldom accessible, and presentations were not provided in formats like large print (minimum font size of 16-18 in sans-serif typefaces such as Arial, Helvetica, or Verdana), audio (clear, without background noise, in formats like CD, MP3, WAV), or braille when needed. When assistance was offered, it was frequently from people not trained in the proper techniques for guiding those with visual or mobility impairments, leading to inefficiencies or discomfort.

Discussion

The Dettys December festivities in Nigeria, characterised by high-energy concerts, bustling parties, and colourful cultural events, have cemented their place as a cornerstone of the nation's cultural calendar. Yet, the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs)—who constitute approximately 15% of Nigeria's population, or 29 million individuals (Arimoro, 2019)—remains a significant oversight. Despite the legal framework established by the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibitions) Act (DAPWDA, 2018), this study reveals a persistent gap between policy and practice, with PWDs facing

substantial barriers to participation in mainstream Detty December events. While some respondents reported positive experiences at events organised by disability-focused groups such as the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) and the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), the majority encountered exclusionary challenges at larger, mainstream celebrations. These findings highlight the urgent need for targeted, systemic changes to ensure accessibility and align with both legal mandates and the ethical imperative of fostering an equitable society.

Barriers to Accessibility During Detty December

The survey conducted for this study illuminated the scale of exclusion faced by PWDs, with 87% of respondents rating their overall experience at Detty December events as mediocre and 13% describing it as terrible. Specific barriers included physical inaccessibility (e.g., lack of ramps, inaccessible restrooms, and crowded layouts), inadequate signage, and a lack of trained staff. For example, one respondent with a mobility impairment stated, “I wanted to enjoy the concert, but there was no way to get past the crowd in my wheelchair—it felt like I didn’t belong.” Similarly, individuals with visual impairments cited the absence of diverse signage options beyond braille, while those with hearing impairments struggled to engage with performances lacking captions or interpreters.

These findings resonate with the social model of disability, which argues that disability arises not from individual impairments but from societal barriers (Ìbíróńkẹ́ et al., 2024). During Detty December, the exclusion of PWDs stems from environmental and attitudinal failures rather than their disabilities, highlighting the need for structural reform over individual accommodation. This theoretical lens situates the study within broader disability scholarship and emphasises the systemic nature of the accessibility challenges observed.

Recommendations for Inclusive Event Planning

To dismantle these barriers, this study proposes a comprehensive strategy for inclusive event management during Detty December:

- **Enhanced Signage and Wayfinding:** DAPWDA mandates accessible signage, yet its implementation often prioritises braille, which serves only a minority of visually impaired individuals. Effective signage for Detty December venues—such as concert arenas and street carnivals—should integrate braille, large sans-serif fonts, high-contrast designs, and audio cues. Motion-triggered audio signs, for instance, could guide attendees to restrooms or exits, improving navigation for those with visual impairments.
- **Accessible Information and Communication:** Distributing event details (e.g., schedules, ticketing, and seating arrangements) in accessible formats, such as screen-reader-optimised PDFs

or Word documents, empowers PWDs to plan their participation. For live performances, real-time captions or sign language interpreters ensure that attendees with hearing impairments can engage fully, as demonstrated by inclusive practices at international music festivals (Lister et al., 2021).

- **Mandatory Staff Training:** Event staff are critical to creating inclusion. Mandatory disability awareness training, potentially overseen by the Federal Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy should cover guiding techniques, basic sign language, and respectful communication. Role-playing preparatory exercises can enhance staff empathy and skills, ensuring dignified interactions with PWDs.
- **Universal Design in Venue Selection:** Venues must incorporate universal design features—ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and clear pathways—to comply with Section 6 of DAPWDA, which mandates reasonable modifications. During high-traffic periods, trained staff should assist PWDs in navigating crowds or accessing services, addressing the dynamic challenges of festive environments.

While these recommendations are actionable, their implementation faces challenges. Financial constraints in Nigeria may limit investments in retrofitting venues or training staff, and cultural attitudes—often marked by stigma—can impede progress. Overcoming these hurdles requires collaboration among government agencies, disability organisations, and event planners, alongside campaigns to shift public perceptions of disability.

Broader Implications for Cultural Inclusion

This study advances the discourse on disability inclusion in cultural events, particularly in the Global South, by applying the social model to a high-profile celebration like *Detty December*. It demonstrates how festive contexts can either perpetuate or dismantle societal barriers, positioning inclusion as a cultural imperative that reflects the communal ethos of the season. Beyond Nigeria, the findings offer a framework for enhancing accessibility in similar cultural events across resource-constrained settings, contributing to global conversations on equity in recreation and leisure.

Nevertheless, the study has limitations. Its small sample size and urban focus may not fully represent the experiences of PWDs in rural Nigeria, where infrastructure deficits could exacerbate accessibility challenges. Future research should employ larger, more diverse samples and examine other cultural events, such as Eid or Easter celebrations, to broaden the evidence base. Additionally, exploring the economic benefits of inclusive event planning—such as increased attendance or sponsorship—could incentivise organisers to prioritise accessibility.

Inclusion in *Detty December* activities requires not only structural and procedural changes but also a cultural shift in attitudes toward disability. Event organisers must recognise the diverse needs of

disabled attendees and actively seek their input during the planning stages. Asking people about their preferences for assistance or accommodations empowers them and ensures that their needs are met in a manner that respects their autonomy. This approach aligns with the spirit of Detty December as a celebration of community, connection, and shared joy.

Conclusion

Across the globe, from Africa to countries like the United States, laws such as the Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (DAPWDA) in Nigeria, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and various disability discrimination acts in nations like South Africa, Ghana, the UK, Australia, Canada, and India, aim to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability. These legislations ensure that individuals with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities in multiple aspects of public life, including public accommodations, employment, transportation, and telecommunications. They apply to those whose impairments significantly impact major life activities such as seeing, hearing, or mobility.

For seasons filled with events like Detty December, compliance with these accessibility laws directly influences how events are planned and executed, particularly in site selection, development, and the provision of auxiliary aids. The legislation mandates that both event facilities and the organising entities must ensure compliance. This makes accessibility a shared responsibility. For instance, major hotel chains like Hilton Worldwide Inc. must be committed to ensuring their properties meet accessibility standards and provide rooms designed for various disability needs.

During Detty December, event coordinators must select venues that are not only architecturally compliant but also ensure that all communications are accessible. This includes employing supplementary aids like qualified interpreters, assistive listening devices, braille materials, and large-print documents to facilitate effective communication for those with visual impairments. Moreover, physical elements of the venue must be barrier-free, including everything from parking to emergency evacuation areas, ensuring that all attendees, whether guests, staff, or performers, can use and move around the space independently.

Inclusivity in Detty December celebrations is more important even beyond merely complying with the law, but is essentially about actively removing obstacles to participation. Neglecting the needs of people with disabilities can be seen as discrimination by omission. Therefore, event managers must actively engage with attendees to understand and cater to special needs. They must recognise that each person might require unique accommodations. This approach not only aligns with the spirit of DAPWDA but also enriches the event by ensuring it is truly accessible to all.

The event coordinator for a Detty December event must ensure that the event site provides adequate ingress, egress, and access, specifically considering the needs of those with visual or other disabilities. This involves a sensitive and proactive approach, where common sense and empathy guide the planning process. Event professionals should integrate accessibility into every aspect of event planning, from informing speakers, organisers, and exhibitors about the need for special accommodations to ensuring staff are trained and prepared to assist attendees with disabilities.

In conclusion, as Detty December grows in popularity, the metrics for success will also change. Oblee for some and not for all will be recorded as a failure, and only when the joy and excitement of the season inclusively embraces all participants, including people with disabilities, will it be graded a success. Detty December events and activities managers can transform Detty December into a celebration where everyone, regardless of ability, can partake in the festivities with dignity and enjoyment by adhering to and going beyond what is demanded by law. This commitment to inclusivity not only honours the legal obligations but could also result in a shift in our culture from one of ruthless competition to one more humane, where people genuinely respect and accommodate diversity in all its forms.



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