

WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEGAL REMEDIES IN NIGERIA

NANCY NZOM⁻

ABSTRACT

Workplace discrimination undermines the principle of equality of opportunity and violates fundamental labour rights. In Nigeria, discrimination occurs across multiple grounds, including sex, ethnicity, disability, religion, union membership, and health status. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality under section 42 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and Nigeria's ratification of international instruments such as ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), discriminatory practices remain pervasive in recruitment, promotion, pay, and termination. This article critically examines the effectiveness of legal remedies available to victims of workplace discrimination in Nigeria. It interrogates the adequacy of statutory protections under the Labour Act 2004, the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, and sector-specific regulations. It also evaluates judicial approaches at the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), highlighting progressive decisions that extend constitutional guarantees into employment relations, while also noting doctrinal inconsistencies and procedural barriers. Comparative insights are drawn from the United Kingdom's Equality Act 2010, South Africa's Employment Equity Act 1998, and U.S. anti-discrimination statutes, to contextualise Nigeria's framework within global labour law trends. The article argues that while Nigerian law provides formal guarantees, remedies remain undermined by weak enforcement, evidentiary challenges, delays, and limited access to justice. The paper concludes that Nigeria must adopt a more robust anti-discrimination framework, strengthen judicial enforcement, and expand remedies beyond declaratory relief to include compensation, reinstatement, and punitive damages. Only through coherent statutory reform and principled judicial interpretation can workplace discrimination be effectively curtailed.

Keyword: Workplace, Discrimination, Effectiveness, Legal Remedies and Nigeria.

⁻ Nancy Nzom, Ph.D., M.Sc, LL.M, BL, LL.B, MCI Arb (UK), Notary Public Correspondence: nancynzom.research@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Discrimination in the workplace is one of the most persistent challenges confronting contemporary labour law.¹ It undermines the principle of equality of opportunity, distorts merit-based advancement, and erodes the dignity of labour. At its core, workplace discrimination reflects the unequal treatment of employees or job applicants on grounds unrelated to their competence or performance, such as sex, ethnicity, disability, religion, marital status, trade union membership, or health condition.² The economic and social consequences are profound: victims suffer loss of income, psychological distress, and reputational harm, while organisations face reduced morale, decreased productivity, and heightened litigation risks. For society at large, discrimination entrenches inequality and hinders inclusive development.³

In Nigeria, workplace discrimination is far from a theoretical concern. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality under section 42 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), reports and case law reveal pervasive discriminatory practices in recruitment, promotion, pay, and termination.⁴ Women often encounter barriers to advancement due to entrenched stereotypes about gender roles.⁵ Persons with disabilities continue to face exclusion despite the enactment of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018. Employees living with HIV/AIDS or other health conditions are frequently dismissed on account of stigma, while workers engaged in trade union activity are sometimes victimised for exercising their associational rights.⁶ These realities underscore a troubling gap between the law's formal guarantees and the lived experiences of Nigerian workers.⁷

Globally, workplace discrimination has attracted increasing attention, with many jurisdictions enacting comprehensive anti-discrimination statutes. The United Kingdom's Equality Act

¹ F Sandra, *Comparative Labour Law: A Global Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 45.

² C Emeka, *Employment Law in Nigeria* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2019), 50

³ United Nations Development Programme, *Inclusive Labour Markets: A Pathway to Sustainable Development* (New York: UNDP, 2018), 25

⁴ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), § 42; *Mrs N Ngozi v. Onitsha South Local Government Area*, [2018] NICN/EN/90/2016

⁵ O Amaka, "Cultural Barriers to Workplace Equality in Nigeria," *African Journal of Gender Studies* 8, no. 1 (2021): 67

⁶ O Bolaji, "Trade Union Victimisation in Nigeria," *Lagos Law Review* 5, no. 1 (2019): 89

⁷ O Chidi, "Evaluating Labour Rights Implementation in Nigeria," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 13, no. 3 (2022): 45. Paragraph 3

2010 consolidates various grounds of discrimination into a unified framework, providing extensive remedies through employment tribunals.⁸ South Africa's Employment Equity Act 1998, anchored in the constitutional right to fair labour practices, requires employers to take affirmative steps to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. In the United States, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, alongside statutes such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, provides employees with a broad range of remedies, including reinstatement, back pay, and compensatory and punitive damages. These comparative experiences demonstrate that effective remedies are critical to curbing discrimination and achieving substantive workplace equality.

In Nigeria, however, remedies remain limited and inconsistent.⁹ Victims of discrimination may bring claims under the Constitution, the Labour Act 2004, the Disabilities Act 2018, or through the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), which has exclusive jurisdiction over labour disputes. Yet in practice, remedies are often undermined by doctrinal ambiguity, weak enforcement mechanisms, evidentiary hurdles, and cultural barriers that discourage reporting. For instance, while the NICN has issued progressive judgments extending constitutional rights into employment contexts, remedies are often confined to declaratory relief or modest compensation, falling short of the transformative redress envisaged by international labour standards.¹⁰

This raises a fundamental question: How effective are the legal remedies available to victims of workplace discrimination in Nigeria? Effectiveness may be measured not only by the formal availability of remedies in law but also by their accessibility, adequacy, timeliness, and capacity to deter future violations.¹¹ An effective remedy should restore the individual's dignity, compensate for loss, and create structural incentives for employers to prevent discrimination.¹² The Nigerian system, while not devoid of such remedies, struggles to achieve this standard consistently.¹³

⁸ Equality Act 2010 (UK), c. 15, § 4; Employment Tribunals Act 1996 (UK), §§ 2–3

⁹ E Eghosa, "Advancing Labour Rights in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 22, no. 1 (2022): 89.

¹⁰ *Mr O Patrick v. Fidelity Bank Plc*, [2016] NICN/LA/144/2014.

¹¹ International Labour Organization, *Effective Remedies for Employment Discrimination* (Geneva: ILO, 2020), 18

¹² O Chukwuma, "The Role of Remedies in Advancing Workplace Equality," *Nigerian Labour Law Review* 9, no. 2 (2020): 77

¹³ B Olumide, "Judicial Enforcement of Labour Rights in Nigeria," *Lagos Law Review* 6, no. 1 (2020): 45.

The problem is further compounded by Nigeria's dual system of employment protection. In statutory employment, where employees are governed by specific legislation or regulations (such as public servants or university staff), courts often take a strict approach, invalidating dismissals carried out in breach of statutory procedures and ordering reinstatement with arrears of salary. By contrast, employees in ordinary private employment are left with limited contractual remedies, typically restricted to damages for breach of notice, even where termination is motivated by discriminatory or arbitrary considerations. This doctrinal divide entrenches inequality in protection, allowing discriminatory practices to persist unchecked in much of the private sector.

From a theoretical standpoint, the persistence of workplace discrimination in Nigeria reveals the limits of a formal equality approach.¹⁴ While section 42 of the Constitution prohibits discrimination on enumerated grounds, the absence of a comprehensive equality statute akin to the UK's Equality Act or South Africa's Employment Equity Act has left Nigerian law fragmented and reactive. Remedies are pursued on a case-by-case basis rather than through a systemic framework aimed at eliminating discrimination.¹⁵ This creates uncertainty for employees and employers alike, while perpetuating the very inequalities the Constitution seeks to eliminate.¹⁶

This article is therefore motivated by the need to interrogate the effectiveness of Nigeria's anti-discrimination framework in the workplace, with particular emphasis on remedies. It advances three key objectives. First, it seeks to conceptualise workplace discrimination, distinguishing between direct, indirect, and systemic forms, and situating them within international labour standards. Second, it examines the Nigerian legal framework, focusing on the Constitution, the Labour Act, the Disabilities Act, the Data Protection Act 2023, and NICN jurisprudence. Third, it evaluates the effectiveness of remedies available to victims, drawing comparative lessons from the UK, South Africa, and the United States.

Structurally, the paper proceeds as follows.¹⁷ Section Two examines the conceptual and legal foundations of workplace discrimination, highlighting its multiple forms and the international

¹⁴ F Sandra, "Formal vs. Substantive Equality in Labour Law," *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law* 35, no. 4 (2019): 301.

¹⁵ O Bolaji, "Systemic Challenges in Nigerian Labour Law," *Lagos Law Review* 4, no. 2 (2018): 67

¹⁶ O Amaka, "Perpetuating Inequality through Nigerian Labour Law," *African Journal of Gender Studies* 7, no. 2 (2020): 45.

¹⁷ O Chukwuma, "Structuring Legal Research on Nigerian Labour Law," *Nigerian Labour Law Review* 8, no. 1 (2019): 10.

standards that prohibit it. Section Three analyses Nigeria's domestic legal framework, tracing statutory provisions, constitutional guarantees, and NICN decisions. Section Four evaluates remedies in practice, identifying doctrinal gaps, procedural hurdles, and enforcement weaknesses. Section Five draws comparative insights from foreign jurisdictions.¹⁸ Section Six discusses the challenges that undermine effective protection in Nigeria, including informality, weak institutions, and cultural barriers. Section Seven proposes reform recommendations aimed at consolidating anti-discrimination law, strengthening institutional enforcement, and expanding remedies. Section Eight concludes by emphasising the need for Nigeria to adopt a coherent and robust approach that aligns with global best practices and ensures substantive equality at work.

The aim of this article is that while Nigeria possesses constitutional and statutory tools to combat workplace discrimination, these tools are not effectively deployed. Remedies remain fragmented, narrow, and inconsistently applied, limiting their deterrent effect and leaving many victims without meaningful redress.¹⁹ Unless Nigeria consolidates its anti-discrimination regime and strengthens remedial mechanisms, workplace discrimination will persist, undermining the constitutional promise of equality and the international commitment to decent work.²⁰

2. Conceptual and Legal Foundations of Workplace Discrimination

Workplace discrimination is not a new phenomenon, but its persistence in modern employment systems underscores its resilience as a structural challenge.²¹ To understand its legal regulation, it is necessary to clarify its conceptual dimensions and normative foundations. Discrimination in employment may take different forms — direct, indirect, and systemic — each raising distinct challenges for legal remedies.²² In addition, international labour standards, constitutional principles, and human rights frameworks provide a normative baseline against which national systems, including Nigeria's, must be measured.²³

¹⁸ F Sandra, *Comparative Labour Law: A Global Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 78

¹⁹ O Chidi, "Fragmentation in Nigerian Labour Law Remedies," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 14, no. 2 (2023): 60

²⁰ International Labour Organization, *Decent Work and Social Justice: A Global Perspective* (Geneva: ILO, 2021), 50

²¹ F Sandra, *Discrimination Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 25

²² International Labour Organization, *Discrimination at Work: Concepts and Standards* (Geneva: ILO, 2018), 15

²³ N Tonia, "International Labour Standards and National Labour Law: The Potential for Coherence," *International Labour Review* 160, no. 1 (2021): 45.

2.1 Defining Workplace Discrimination

At its most basic, workplace discrimination occurs when an employee or job applicant is treated less favourably than others on grounds unrelated to competence or performance. Legal definitions typically emphasise protected grounds such as sex, race, disability, religion, union membership, or health status.

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958 defines discrimination as: “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.”²⁴
- Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution, under section 42, prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the basis of community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion.²⁵
- The UK Equality Act 2010 adopts a broader approach, covering nine “protected characteristics” including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
- South Africa’s Employment Equity Act 1998 explicitly prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination and requires employers to take proactive measures to promote equity.

These definitions reveal that discrimination is not only about intentional prejudice but also about practices that, whether deliberate or not, impair equality of opportunity in the workplace.²⁶

2.2 Forms of Workplace Discrimination

2.2.1 Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where an employer explicitly treats a worker less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Examples include:

²⁴ ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) 1958, art. 1

²⁵ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), § 42(1).

²⁶ A Funmi, “Understanding Discrimination in Employment: A Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of African Law* 65, no. 2 (2021): 110.

- Refusing to hire a woman because she is pregnant.
- Dismissing an employee because he belongs to a trade union.²⁷
- Paying employees of one ethnic group lower wages for identical work.

Direct discrimination is relatively easy to identify and prove because of its overt nature.²⁸ Nigerian case law has occasionally recognised such claims, particularly in relation to trade union victimisation and gender discrimination.

2.2.2 Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination refers to neutral policies or practices that disproportionately disadvantage certain groups. For example:

- A requirement that all employees work late nights may indirectly discriminate against women with childcare responsibilities.²⁹
- A rule requiring all staff to pass a physical test may indirectly exclude persons with disabilities.

Unlike direct discrimination, indirect discrimination may not be intentional, but its effects are equally harmful. Remedies here are more complex because employers often justify policies on business grounds.³⁰ Legal systems such as the UK Equality Act 2010 allow employers to defend indirect discrimination if the measure is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Nigerian law has yet to fully develop doctrines of indirect discrimination, leaving many structural practices unchallenged.³¹

2.2.3 Systemic and Structural Discrimination

Systemic discrimination arises from entrenched cultural, institutional, or structural practices that perpetuate inequality. Examples include:

- Historical exclusion of women from leadership roles.

²⁷ O Bolaji, "Trade Union Victimisation in Nigeria," *Lagos Law Review* 5, no. 1 (2019): 89.

²⁸ International Labour Organization, *Equality at Work: The Continuing Challenge* (Geneva: ILO, 2017), 20.

²⁹ O Ngozi, "Gender and Workplace Policies in Nigeria," *Labour Studies Journal* 14, no. 3 (2020): 190.

³⁰ O Chukwuma, "Challenges of Addressing Indirect Discrimination," *Nigerian Labour Law Review* 9, no. 2 (2020): 82.

³¹ A Adebayo, "Gaps in Nigerian Anti-Discrimination Law," *African Journal of Legal Studies* 15, no. 3 (2022): 205.

- Institutional bias against persons with disabilities, such as inaccessible workplaces.³²
- Discriminatory use of algorithmic tools in recruitment and monitoring.

This form of discrimination is harder to address because it is embedded in organisational culture rather than individual acts.³³ Legal remedies require broader structural reforms, including affirmative action, equality audits, and proactive employer duties. South Africa's Employment Equity Act exemplifies this approach by obligating employers to implement measures promoting representativeness and inclusivity.

2.3 International Legal Standards

International law provides a strong normative foundation for combating workplace discrimination.

2.3.1 ILO Standards

The ILO has been central to developing international labour norms on equality.³⁴

- **Convention No. 111 (1958):** Requires states to eliminate discrimination in employment and occupation and to promote equality of opportunity and treatment. Nigeria ratified this Convention in 1960.³⁵
- **Convention No. 100 (1951):** Mandates equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value.
- **Convention No. 190 (2019):** Recently ratified by Nigeria, addresses workplace violence and harassment, which often intersect with discrimination.

These conventions impose obligations not only to prohibit discrimination but also to adopt proactive measures ensuring equality.

³² *Iheanacho v. National Examinations Council (NECO)*, [2020] NICN/ABJ/101/2018.

³³ O Chidi, "Addressing Systemic Inequality in Nigerian Workplaces," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 13, no. 3 (2022): 50.

³⁴ N Tonia, "The Role of the ILO in Global Labour Standards," *International Labour Review* 159, no. 3 (2020): 75.

³⁵ International Labour Organization, "Ratifications of ILO Convention No. 111," accessed August 29, 2025, <<https://www.ilo.org/ratifications>> accessed 30 August 2025

2.3.2 UN and Regional Human Rights Instruments

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) both prohibit discrimination.³⁶
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) requires states to eliminate discrimination against women in employment.
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, domesticated in Nigeria, guarantees equality and non-discrimination.

Together, these instruments provide a layered framework obligating Nigeria to ensure effective legal remedies for workplace discrimination.³⁷

2.4 Nigerian Constitutional and Statutory Provisions

2.4.1 Constitutional Guarantee (s.42 CFRN)

Section 42(1) of the 1999 Constitution prohibits discrimination by reason of community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion.³⁸ This is a broad protection, but courts have sometimes hesitated to apply it robustly in private employment disputes, often treating employment primarily as a contractual matter.³⁹ The expansion of NICN's jurisdiction under section 254C offers an opportunity for more progressive interpretation.

2.4.2 Labour Act 2004

The Labour Act provides limited anti-discrimination provisions, primarily protecting women and young persons.⁴⁰ It does not address modern forms of workplace discrimination such as disability, union victimisation, or HIV/AIDS status.⁴¹

³⁶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, December 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, art. 26; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, December 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S. 3, art. 2(2)

³⁷ E Eghosa, "International Human Rights and Nigerian Labour Law," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 22, no. 1 (2022): 95.

³⁸ CFRN 1999 (as amended), § 42(1).

³⁹ K A Chioma, "Constitutional Rights in Nigerian Employment Law," *UNILAG Law Review* 9 (2018): 45.

⁴⁰ Labour Act, Cap L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, § 17.

⁴¹ B Olumide, "Limitations of the Nigerian Labour Act," *Journal of Nigerian Labour Law* 11, no. 2 (2021): 120.

2.4.3 Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act 2018

This Act represents a milestone, prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities and mandating reasonable accommodation.⁴² However, enforcement mechanisms remain weak, and many workplaces remain inaccessible.⁴³

2.4.4 Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023

Although primarily a privacy statute, the NDPA indirectly addresses workplace discrimination by regulating automated decision-making and requiring fairness in data processing.⁴⁴ This has implications for AI-driven recruitment, where algorithmic bias may result in exclusion.

2.5 The Role of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN)

The NICN has exclusive jurisdiction over labour and employment disputes and has become the principal forum for addressing discrimination claims. Notably, the NICN has invoked section 254C(1)(f) of the Constitution, which empowers it to apply international best practices in labour.⁴⁵ This has allowed the Court to draw on ILO conventions and comparative jurisprudence in expanding protections.

For example, the NICN has recognised that termination of employment on grounds of pregnancy or union membership is discriminatory and contrary to international standards. However, remedies have often been modest, typically declaratory relief or limited compensation.⁴⁶ The Court has yet to develop a systematic doctrine of indirect or systemic discrimination, and enforcement of its judgments remains a challenge.

2.6 Synthesis

Conceptually, workplace discrimination encompasses direct, indirect, and systemic forms of unequal treatment.⁴⁷ International and constitutional frameworks impose strong obligations on Nigeria to combat discrimination, yet domestic statutory law remains fragmented. While

⁴² Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, §§ 28–29.

⁴³ A Adebayo, “Enforcement Challenges of the Disabilities Act in Nigeria,” *African Journal of Legal Studies* 14, no. 4 (2021): 130.

⁴⁴ Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, § 32.

⁴⁵ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), § 254C(1)(f).

⁴⁶ A Funmi, “Judicial Remedies in Nigerian Labour Disputes,” *Journal of African Law* 66, no. 3 (2022): 135.

⁴⁷ International Labour Organization, *Equality at Work: Concepts and Standards* (Geneva: ILO, 2019), 22.

the NICN has shown some willingness to expand protections, remedies remain inconsistent and often inadequate.⁴⁸ The challenge is therefore not one of normative absence but of effective implementation and enforcement.

3. The Nigerian Legal Framework

The Nigerian legal response to workplace discrimination rests on a fragmented combination of constitutional provisions, statutory enactments, and judicial innovation.⁴⁹ While these instruments establish a framework for equality, their effectiveness as legal remedies depends on accessibility, enforcement, and judicial interpretation. This section evaluates how Section 42 of the Constitution, the Labour Act, the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, and National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN) jurisprudence address workplace discrimination in practice.⁵⁰

3.2 Section 42 CFRN: A Constitutional Guarantee with Practical Barriers

Section 42(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) guarantees every citizen the right to freedom from discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, sex, religion, or political opinion. In employment, this is often invoked to challenge unfair treatment and exclusionary workplace practices.

Yet, its remedial strength is constrained by two obstacles. First, the provision is broad and declaratory, lacking specific measures for redress such as equal pay, maternity protection, or protection against digital profiling. Secondly, enforcement requires initiating actions under the Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure) Rules before the Federal High Court, a route inaccessible for many workers due to cost and complexity.

However, the NICN has expanded the remedial scope by reading Section 42 into employment disputes. In *Mrs Ngozi Nwoko v. Onitsha South LGA*, the Court nullified discriminatory employment actions and affirmed that workplace equality falls within constitutional protection.

⁴⁸ B Olumide, "Judicial Enforcement of Labour Rights in Nigeria," *Lagos Law Review* 6, no. 1 (2020): 50.

⁴⁹ B Olumide, "Fragmentation in Nigeria's Anti-Discrimination Framework," *Journal of Nigerian Labour Law* 11, no. 1 (2021): 115.

⁵⁰ CFRN 1999 (as amended), § 42; Labour Act, Cap L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004; Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018; Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023; *Miss U Ebere v. Standard Alliance Life Assurance Co. Ltd.*, [2014] 47 NLLR (Pt 154) 531 (NICN).

Effectiveness: Section 42 is symbolically powerful but procedurally weak as a direct remedy; its practical value largely depends on the NICN's interpretative activism.

3.3 Labour Act: Equal Pay and Its Shortcomings

The Labour Act, Cap L1 LFN 2004, remains the principal legislation on employment in Nigeria.⁵¹ Section 17(1) prohibits wage discrimination by mandating equal pay for equal work irrespective of gender or status. Despite this, the Act's effectiveness is undermined by its narrow definition of "worker," which excludes managerial, professional, and administrative staff. Many employees in banking, telecoms, and technology fall outside its scope.⁵² Furthermore, the Act enacted in 1971 has not been revised to address modern forms of workplace discrimination, such as harassment or algorithmic hiring bias. Effectiveness: The Act is weak as a remedy; it covers only junior workers and remains obsolete in contemporary employment settings.⁵³

3.4 Disabilities Act 2018: A Progressive but Weakly Enforced Remedy

The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018 prohibits workplace discrimination against persons with disabilities and mandates reasonable accommodation. Section 28 guarantees equal employment opportunities, while Section 29 requires accessibility in workplaces. In practice, however, enforcement has lagged. The five-year compliance window for accessible infrastructure expired in 2023, yet many employers remain non-compliant.⁵⁴ The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities struggles with underfunding and weak enforcement capacity. The NICN has reinforced the rights of disabled workers⁵⁵. In *Iheanacho v. NECO*, the Court held that excluding a qualified applicant on the basis of disability contravened both the Constitution and the Disabilities Act.

⁵¹ Labour Act, Cap L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

⁵² O Ngozi, "Scope of the Labour Act in Modern Nigerian Workplaces," *Labour Studies Journal* 14, no. 3 (2020): 185.

⁵³ A Adebayo, "Weaknesses of the Labour Act as an Anti-Discrimination Tool," *African Journal of Legal Studies* 15, no. 3 (2022): 210.

⁵⁴ O Chukwuma, "Non-Compliance with Accessibility Laws in Nigeria," *Nigerian Juridical Review* 18 (2023): 100.

⁵⁵ CFRN (Third Alteration) Act 2010, § 254C.

Effectiveness: The Act is a strong remedial framework on paper, but its practical impact is diluted by institutional weakness and non-compliance.⁵⁶

3.5 Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023: Digital-Era Protection

The NDPA 2023 provides the first comprehensive protection for employee privacy and data rights. It regulates recruitment profiling, workplace monitoring, and algorithmic decision-making. Section 32 requires transparency in automated decisions that significantly affect individuals. This is crucial where employers deploy AI-driven hiring systems or biometric attendance records. Without such protections, workers risk unfair profiling or exclusion. Yet, the Nigeria Data Protection Commission is newly established, with limited awareness among workers and no collective redress mechanisms akin to the GDPR.

Effectiveness: The NDPA offers a promising new remedy for digital-era discrimination but is still largely symbolic due to weak enforcement capacity.

3.6 NICN Jurisprudence: Judicial Activism as a Remedy

By virtue of Section 254C of the Constitution (Third Alteration), the NICN has exclusive jurisdiction over employment matters.⁵⁷ It has emerged as the most dynamic forum for anti-discrimination remedies. In *Miss Ebere Ukoji v. Standard Alliance Life Assurance Co. Ltd*, the NICN recognised sexual harassment as a violation of dignity under Section 34 CFRN. In *Mr Patrick Obiora v. Fidelity Bank Plc*, termination on grounds of pregnancy was held unlawful and discriminatory.⁵⁸ The Court frequently relies on international labour conventions, even where domestic statutes are silent.

Effectiveness: NICN jurisprudence is the most effective remedy in practice, though compliance with its orders—especially by public sector employers—remains inconsistent.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ E Eghosa, “Evaluating the Disabilities Act in Nigeria,” *African Human Rights Law Journal* 22, no. 2 (2022): 105

⁵⁷ CFRN (Third Alteration) Act 2010, § 254C.

⁵⁸ *Mr O Patrick v. Fidelity Bank Plc*, [2016] NICN/LA/144/2014.

⁵⁹ A Adebayo, “Compliance Issues with NICN Judgments,” *African Journal of Legal Studies* 15, no. 4 (2022): 215

3.7 Synthesis: Fragmented Protections and Limited Effectiveness

Nigeria's legal remedies against workplace discrimination remain fragmented.⁶⁰ Section 42 CFRN provides constitutional protection but is procedurally inaccessible. The Labour Act contains outdated equal pay provisions covering only junior staff. The Disabilities Act is progressive yet weakly enforced.⁶¹ The NDPA introduces digital-era remedies but suffers institutional weakness. The NICN provides the most effective protection, but its impact is undermined by weak compliance.⁶²

Overall Effectiveness: Nigeria's framework is partially effective but inadequate for the evolving world of work. A comprehensive Employment Equality Act consolidating constitutional, statutory, and international standards, with stronger enforcement mechanisms, is necessary to provide effective remedies.⁶³

4. International and Comparative Perspectives

Workplace discrimination is not a uniquely Nigerian phenomenon. Across jurisdictions, diverse legal systems have developed frameworks to address inequality and unfair treatment in employment. Analysing these comparative models alongside international labour standards provides critical insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Nigeria's remedial framework.⁶⁴ The study of foreign approaches is particularly important in employment law, where globalisation, migration, and technology have created shared challenges. A comparative approach enables Nigeria to draw lessons from jurisdictions that have successfully moved beyond fragmented or outdated protections to establish coherent and enforceable systems of equality at work.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ E Eghosa, "Fragmentation in Nigerian Labour Law," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 21, no. 2 (2021): 80

⁶¹ Labour Act, Cap L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, § 17

⁶² O Chidi, "Enforcement of NICN Judgments," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 14, no. 1 (2023): 65

⁶³ A Funmi, "Proposing an Employment Equality Act for Nigeria," *Journal of African Law* 66, no. 3 (2022): 145

⁶⁴ International Labour Organization, *Promoting Equality in Employment: A Guide for Developing Countries* (Geneva: ILO, 2019), 35

⁶⁵ A Funmi, "Learning from Comparative Labour Law," *Journal of African Law* 66, no. 2 (2022): 130.

4.1 International Labour Standards and Nigeria's Obligations

At the international level, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has developed conventions that serve as global benchmarks⁶⁶. The most significant include:

- **Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) 1958**, which prohibits distinctions based on race, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin, unless such distinctions are objectively justified.
- **Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment 2019**, which establishes the right of all workers to a workplace free from violence and harassment, including gender-based harassment.

Nigeria has ratified both conventions, signalling its commitment to eliminating workplace discrimination. Similarly, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) requires member states to guarantee reasonable accommodation and equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.⁶⁷

Despite these ratifications, the impact in Nigeria has been limited. International standards only gain binding effect through domestic legislation. While the NICN has occasionally invoked ILO standards to interpret ambiguous provisions, there is no comprehensive domestication. This contrasts sharply with jurisdictions such as South Africa, where constitutional provisions explicitly mandate the use of international law in domestic interpretation.⁶⁸ Thus, Nigeria's commitment to international norms remains largely symbolic, with weak integration into local remedies.⁶⁹

4.2 The United Kingdom: Consolidation under the Equality Act 2010

The United Kingdom provides one of the most advanced models of anti-discrimination law.⁷⁰ The Equality Act 2010 consolidated over 100 pieces of legislation into a single, coherent framework. It prohibits discrimination across nine protected characteristics, including age,

⁶⁶ International Labour Organization, *Equality at Work: The Continuing Challenge* (Geneva: ILO, 2017), 15.

⁶⁷ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2006, 2515 U.N.T.S. 3, art. 27.

⁶⁸ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, § 39(1)(b).

⁶⁹ O Chidi, "Symbolic Commitments to International Labour Standards," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 13, no. 3 (2022): 58.

⁷⁰ F Sandra, *Comparative Labour Law: A Global Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 80.

race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

What makes the UK system effective is not only its scope but its accessibility.⁷¹ Workers can bring claims before Employment Tribunals, which offer relatively low-cost, specialised forums. Remedies include compensation, reinstatement, and recommendations to employers to adjust discriminatory policies. In addition, the public sector equality duty imposes a proactive obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination and advance equality.

Lesson for Nigeria: Unlike Nigeria's fragmented framework, the UK demonstrates the benefits of consolidation.⁷² A single comprehensive Employment Equality Act in Nigeria would remove overlaps, improve access, and enhance predictability of remedies.⁷³

4.3 South Africa: Equality and Affirmative Duties

South Africa's approach is particularly instructive for Nigeria given their shared socio-political contexts.⁷⁴ Section 9 of the Constitution of South Africa 1996 enshrines the right to equality and prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination. The Employment Equity Act 1998 operationalises this constitutional mandate by prohibiting unfair discrimination and imposing affirmative duties on employers to promote workplace equity.

What distinguishes South Africa's system is its institutional infrastructure. The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) provides a low-cost, ADR-driven mechanism for resolving disputes.⁷⁵ The CCMA has become a cornerstone of labour justice, ensuring quick, affordable remedies. Employers are legally obliged to implement affirmative action plans and report progress, making equality a proactive duty rather than a reactive defence.

⁷¹ N Tonia, "The UK Equality Act as a Model for Reform," *International Labour Review* 160, no. 1 (2021): 50.

⁷² A Funmi, "Consolidating Anti-Discrimination Laws: Lessons from the UK," *Journal of African Law* 66, no. 3 (2022): 142.

⁷³ B Olumide, "Reforming Nigeria's Labour Law Framework," *Journal of Nigerian Labour Law* 12, no. 1 (2023): 125.

⁷⁴ O Chidi, "South Africa as a Model for Nigerian Labour Reform," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 14, no. 1 (2023): 62.

⁷⁵ Labour Relations Act 1995 (South Africa), § 115.

Lesson for Nigeria: The South African model shows the value of combining strong constitutional provisions, detailed legislation, and accessible enforcement bodies.⁷⁶ Nigeria could adopt a similar approach by empowering the NICN and creating ADR-based mechanisms for discrimination claims.⁷⁷

4.4 The United States: Enforcement through Agencies

The United States framework is anchored on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin. Complementary statutes include the Age Discrimination in Employment Act 1967 and the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990.⁷⁸

A key feature of the US system is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a specialised agency that investigates complaints, mediates disputes, and prosecutes employers who engage in systemic discrimination. The EEOC has powers to impose remedies including damages, back pay, and injunctive relief.⁷⁹ Its investigative function makes remedies accessible without requiring every worker to initiate costly litigation.

Lesson for Nigeria: Nigeria lacks a strong central enforcement agency dedicated to workplace equality.⁸⁰ Strengthening the NHRC or creating a dedicated Workplace Equality Commission with investigative powers would mirror the effectiveness of the EEOC.⁸¹

4.5 The European Union: Supranational Oversight

The European Union (EU) provides another instructive model. Through directives such as Directive 2000/78/EC, which establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment, the EU requires member states to prohibit discrimination based on religion,

⁷⁶ E Eghosa, "Comparative Lessons from South African Labour Law," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 22, no. 2 (2022): 108.

⁷⁷ O Chukwuma, "Alternative Dispute Resolution in Nigerian Labour Disputes," *Nigerian Juridical Review* 18 (2023): 90.

⁷⁸ Age Discrimination in Employment Act 1967, 29 U.S.C. § 621; Americans with Disabilities Act 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101.

⁷⁹ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Remedies Under Title VII," accessed August 29, 2025, <<https://www.eeoc.gov/remedies>> accessed 30 August 2025

⁸⁰ A Adebayo, "Need for a Workplace Equality Commission in Nigeria," *African Journal of Legal Studies* 15, no. 3 (2022): 208.

⁸¹ B Olumide, "Enhancing Enforcement Mechanisms in Nigerian Labour Law," *Journal of Nigerian Labour Law* 12, no. 2 (2023): 135.

disability, age, or sexual orientation. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights reinforces equality as a supranational principle.

Crucially, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ensures consistent interpretation and enforcement across member states. Workers in EU countries can rely directly on EU directives to challenge discriminatory practices, creating a powerful layer of protection.

Lesson for Nigeria: Although Nigeria lacks supranational oversight, it can replicate the EU's emphasis on harmonisation by consolidating domestic laws and mandating judicial alignment with ratified ILO standards.⁸²

4.6 Evaluation: Relevance for Nigeria

The comparative review yields three important lessons for Nigeria:

1. **Consolidation matters:** The UK Equality Act shows that fragmented frameworks create confusion, while comprehensive legislation strengthens clarity and accessibility.
2. **Institutions are critical:** The US EEOC and South Africa's CCMA demonstrate that rights are only effective when backed by strong, accessible enforcement institutions.⁸³
3. **Proactivity is key:** South Africa's model shows the importance of affirmative employer duties, while the EU highlights the role of harmonisation and supranational standards.

In contrast, Nigeria's system remains reactive, fragmented, and weakly enforced.⁸⁴ While international standards provide normative guidance, they are underutilised in domestic law. The NICN fills gaps through judicial creativity, but systemic reform is required to embed remedies that are practical, affordable, and effective.

5. Challenges and Barriers to Effective Remedies in Nigeria

While Nigeria's legal framework against workplace discrimination contains constitutional guarantees, statutory provisions, and judicial remedies, the true test of law lies in

⁸² O Chidi, "Harmonising Nigerian Labour Law with ILO Standards," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 14, no. 2 (2023): 68.

⁸³ Labour Relations Act 1995 (South Africa), § 115; 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-5.

⁸⁴ B Olumide, "Reactive Nature of Nigerian Labour Law," *Journal of Nigerian Labour Law* 11, no. 2 (2021): 122.

enforcement and effectiveness.⁸⁵ In practice, several obstacles undermine the promise of equality, leaving many victims of workplace discrimination without meaningful redress.⁸⁶ These challenges are legal, institutional, cultural, and procedural, reflecting the gap between law in the books and law in action.⁸⁷

5.1 Institutional Weakness and Fragmentation

The first barrier is Nigeria's institutional landscape, which is fragmented and underpowered. Protections against discrimination are spread across multiple instruments: the Constitution, the Labour Act, the Disabilities Act, and the Data Protection Act. Each has its own enforcement body the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), and the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC).

Rather than creating synergy, this multiplicity has produced overlaps and gaps. The NHRC lacks clear jurisdiction over workplace disputes; the NCPD is underfunded and unable to monitor compliance; and the NDPC is still developing capacity. Without a strong central body to coordinate enforcement, accountability is diluted. Employers often exploit this weakness, ignoring their obligations knowing that sanctions are unlikely. Thus, institutional fragility undermines what appears on paper to be a protective framework.

5.2 Procedural Barriers and Access to Justice

Even where legal protections exist, workers face daunting procedural hurdles in accessing remedies.⁸⁸ Constitutional claims under Section 42 CFRN must be initiated at the Federal High Court under the Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure) Rules. For the average worker, this is financially and logistically prohibitive.

The National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN) has sought to expand access by entertaining discrimination-related claims, but litigation remains expensive, technical, and slow.⁸⁹ The

⁸⁵ K A Chioma, *Nigerian Employment and Labour Relations Law* (Lagos: Concept Publications, 2018), 92.

⁸⁶ B Olumide, "Enforcement Gaps in Nigerian Labour Law," *Journal of Nigerian Labour Law* 11, no. 1 (2021): 132.

⁸⁷ E Eghosa, "The Gap Between Law and Practice in Nigeria," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 22, no. 2 (2022): 112.

⁸⁸ B Olumide, "Procedural Barriers in Nigerian Labour Disputes," *Journal of Nigerian Labour Law* 12, no. 1 (2023): 128.

⁸⁹ CFRN (Third Alteration) Act 2010, § 254C; *Mrs N Ngozi v. Onitsha South Local Government Area*, [2018] NICN/EN/90/2016.

fear of drawn-out trials discourages many from filing cases. Legal aid is almost non-existent for employment discrimination, which disproportionately affects low-income workers.⁹⁰

Furthermore, remedies such as reinstatement or damages are often illusory.⁹¹ In many instances, public sector employers disregard NICN orders, while private employers exploit appellate delays to frustrate enforcement.⁹² The result is that even “successful” claimants rarely enjoy timely or meaningful relief.⁹³

5.3 Outdated Labour Law

Nigeria’s Labour Act, enacted in 1971 and consolidated in 2004, has failed to keep pace with global developments. Its restrictive definition of “worker” excludes managerial and professional staff, leaving a significant proportion of employees outside its protections.

The Act does not address modern forms of discrimination such as sexual harassment, workplace bullying, or algorithmic bias in hiring. Despite Nigeria’s ratification of ILO Conventions 111 and 190, the Act has not been amended to incorporate these standards. This outdated framework creates a paradox: Nigeria is formally bound by progressive international norms but domestically governed by an obsolete statute. The effect is a statutory vacuum where courts must improvise protections, thereby making remedies uncertain and inconsistent.

5.4 Weak Enforcement of Disability and Data Protection Rights

The Disabilities Act 2018 and the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 represent important legislative progress. Yet, their remedial potential is severely undermined by weak⁹⁴ enforcement. Employers routinely flout accessibility obligations or data protection requirements with little fear of sanction.

⁹⁰ E Eghosa, “Legal Aid and Labour Rights in Nigeria,” *African Human Rights Law Journal* 22, no. 2 (2022): 115.

⁹¹ O Chidi, “Illusory Remedies in Nigerian Labour Law,” *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 14, no. 2 (2023): 72.

⁹² A Adebayo, “Enforcement Delays in NICN Judgments,” *African Journal of Legal Studies* 15, no. 3 (2022): 225.

⁹³ O Ngozi, “Timeliness of Labour Remedies in Nigeria,” *Labour Studies Journal* 15, no. 3 (2021): 215.

⁹⁴ A Funmi, “Enforcement Weaknesses in Nigerian Labour Laws,” *Journal of African Law* 67, no. 2 (2023): 152.

The NCPD, responsible for enforcing disability rights, lacks adequate inspection mechanisms and personnel.⁹⁵ Many workplaces remain physically inaccessible to persons with disabilities years after the law's passage.⁹⁶ Similarly, the NDPC still in its infancy struggles to regulate employer use of biometric data, surveillance, or algorithmic profiling.

Without proactive monitoring and deterrent penalties, enforcement is reactive at best, activated only after harm has occurred.⁹⁷ By then, remedies are often too late to restore workers' dignity or opportunities.⁹⁸

5.5 Cultural and Workplace Attitudes

Law alone cannot eradicate discrimination; cultural attitudes matter.⁹⁹ In Nigeria, discriminatory stereotypes are deeply entrenched.¹⁰⁰ Gender bias, stigmatisation of persons with disabilities, ethnic prejudice, and unquestioned managerial prerogative continue to shape workplace practices.

Victims of discrimination often remain silent for fear of retaliation, victimisation, or blacklisting within their industry.¹⁰¹ The hierarchical nature of many Nigerian workplaces reinforces silence¹⁰²

6. Conclusion

The Nigerian workplace remains a contested arena where legal ideals of equality collide with structural, cultural, and institutional realities.¹⁰³ As this study has shown, Nigeria possesses a patchwork of anti-discrimination protections anchored in the Constitution, statutory enactments, and the jurisprudence of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN).¹⁰⁴ Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom from discrimination, the Labour Act

⁹⁵ O Bolaji, "Underfunding of the NCPD," *Lagos Law Review* 5, no. 3 (2019): 105.

⁹⁶ A Adebayo, "Accessibility Challenges in Nigerian Workplaces," *African Journal of Legal Studies* 15, no. 4 (2022): 230.

⁹⁷ O Ngozi, "Reactive Enforcement in Nigerian Labour Law," *Labour Studies Journal* 15, no. 4 (2021): 218.

⁹⁸ O Amaka, "Restoring Dignity Through Labour Remedies," *African Journal of Gender Studies* 8, no. 3 (2021): 82.

⁹⁹ F Sandra, *Discrimination Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 35.

¹⁰⁰ A. O Oyeniyi, "Cultural Barriers to Workplace Equality," *UNILAG Journal of Employment Law* 12 (2021): 48.

¹⁰¹ O Chidi, "Retaliation and Silence in Nigerian Workplaces," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law* 14, no. 2 (2023): 70.

¹⁰² O Ngozi, "Hierarchical Structures and Labour Rights," *Labour Studies Journal* 15, no. 1 (2021): 212.

¹⁰³ K A Chioma, *Nigerian Employment and Labour Relations Law* (Lagos: Concept Publications, 2018), 90.

¹⁰⁴ E Eghosa, "Nigeria's Anti-Discrimination Framework: A Critical Analysis," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 22, no. 3 (2022): 125.

provides basic protection against wage inequality, the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018 enshrines rights for persons with disabilities, and the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 introduces digital-age safeguards. In addition, the NICN has creatively expanded protections by invoking international conventions and fundamental rights.¹⁰⁵

Yet, these remedies remain far from effective in practice. The Constitution is procedurally inaccessible to many workers, the Labour Act is outdated and narrowly scoped, the Disabilities Act is poorly enforced, and the NDPA is still at an institutional infancy.¹⁰⁶ Even the NICN's progressive judgments are undermined by weak compliance, particularly within the public sector. Workers often lack awareness of their rights, face cultural resistance, or abandon claims due to cost, delay, and fear of retaliation.¹⁰⁷ The result is that the majority of Nigerian employees remain vulnerable to workplace discrimination despite the existence of formal remedies.¹⁰⁸

Comparative analysis underscores the limits of Nigeria's fragmented framework. The United Kingdom's Equality Act 2010 shows the power of consolidation in unifying protections and ensuring accessibility. South Africa's Employment Equity Act and its Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) illustrate how proactive duties and ADR mechanisms can deliver timely redress.¹⁰⁹ The United States demonstrates the impact of robust enforcement through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), while the European Union highlights the role of supranational oversight in harmonising standards across diverse jurisdictions. These examples reveal that effective remedies depend not only on legal prohibitions but also on institutional strength, accessibility, and cultural transformation.¹¹⁰

For Nigeria, the lesson is clear: fragmented and reactive approaches are insufficient. Remedies against workplace discrimination must be consolidated, proactive, and enforceable. A comprehensive Employment Equality Act is urgently needed to harmonise existing

¹⁰⁵ *Mr O Patrick v. Fidelity Bank Plc*, [2016] NICN/LA/144/2014

¹⁰⁶ Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure) Rules 2009, Order II; Labour Act, Cap L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, § 91; Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, § 29; Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, § 5

¹⁰⁷ O Amaka, "Barriers to Asserting Labour Rights in Nigeria," *African Journal of Gender Studies* 9, no. 1 (2022): 62.

¹⁰⁸ O Chukwuma, "Vulnerabilities in Nigerian Employment Law," *Nigerian Juridical Review* 18 (2023): 96

¹⁰⁹ Employment Equity Act 1998 (South Africa), §§ 5–6; Labour Relations Act 1995 (South Africa), § 115

¹¹⁰ F Sandra, *Comparative Labour Law: A Global Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 85

protections, expand coverage to all categories of workers, and domesticate international labour standards such as ILO Conventions 111 and 190. Stronger enforcement agencies must be empowered with investigative and prosecutorial powers, while ADR mechanisms should be institutionalised to provide affordable and accessible redress. The Labour Act must be updated to reflect contemporary realities, and awareness campaigns must be mainstreamed to ensure that workers understand and assert their rights.

Ultimately, workplace equality cannot be achieved by legal reform alone.¹¹¹ Cultural change within organisations, proactive employer obligations, and genuine commitment to fairness are necessary complements. Law sets the standard, but institutions must enforce it and employers must live it.¹¹² The true test of effectiveness lies not in the elegance of statutes or the sophistication of jurisprudence, but in the everyday experiences of Nigerian workers.¹¹³

If Nigeria is to transform its workplace culture, it must move beyond aspirational commitments and deliver practical, enforceable remedies. Equality must shift from a constitutional promise to a lived reality. Only then can Nigerian workers experience the dignity, fairness, and justice that the law proclaims.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ International Labour Organization, *Workplace Policies for Equality and Inclusion* (Geneva: ILO, 2020), 25

¹¹² O Bolaji, "Employer Responsibilities in Nigerian Labour Law," *Lagos Law Review* 6, no. 1 (2020): 120

¹¹³ A Adebayo, "Measuring Effectiveness of Labour Remedies," *African Journal of Legal Studies* 15, no. 4 (2022): 240

¹¹⁴ International Labour Organization, *Decent Work and Social Justice: A Global Perspective* (Geneva: ILO, 2021), 55