

## **Gender, disability and empowerment in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines how gender relates to disability and empowerment. Throughout the world regardless of culture, disabled people have generally been seen as incapable of taking control of their own lives. There are three broad attitudes towards them among able bodied people, they may be regarded as lesser beings to be rejected, may be seen as objects of charity and they can be viewed with benevolent neutrality .This has led to a crude and overt rejection of disabled people. It is even worse for disabled women who face double discrimination, as women and as disabled women. In institutions of higher learning students with disabilities face challenges in their academic, welfare and financial matters. The argument in this paper is that every person operates more effectively when he/she feels valued and is able to value others. In the effort of society and individuals to empower people there is need to see themselves and the roles of disabled people positively so that disabled people can be given power to do so if other people relate to them positively .The paper puts more emphasis on the interrelationship of the law, gender and disability in all empowerment endeavors by governments and institutions of higher learning. Institutions need to ensure maximum responsiveness to gender and disability for the empowerment of all. The study concludes by recommending a social and political will to change negative attitudes to disability through a comprehensive gender analysis of various disability laws.