



Double Marginalization: A Chronological Systematic Literature Review on Gender and Disability

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ABSTRACT

Women with disabilities occupy a social position shaped by the simultaneous and interacting effects of gender inequality and disability-based exclusion. Although scholarly engagement with gender and disability has expanded over the past two decades, the development of this literature has been uneven across time, regions, and methodological approaches. This paper presents a chronological (year-wise) systematic literature review of peer-reviewed studies published between 2002 and 2022 to examine how academic understandings of women with disabilities have evolved. Using an intersectional and feminist disability studies framework, 45 articles were systematically identified from major academic databases and analyzed through temporal mapping rather than thematic aggregation. The review reveals a progression from early theoretical and conceptual debates to later empirical, policy-oriented, and rights-based scholarship. However, significant gaps persist, including delayed empirical engagement, limited longitudinal research, and the continued marginalization of women with disabilities' own voices within knowledge production. By foregrounding time as an analytical dimension, this review demonstrates how scholarly attention itself reflects broader structures of marginalization and calls for temporally sensitive, participatory, and intersectionality-informed future research.

KEY WORDS

Intersectionality, Chronological Review, Women, Disabilities, Double Marginalization.

INTRODUCTION

Women with disabilities experience social exclusion in ways that differ substantially from both men with disabilities and women without disabilities. These differences arise not merely from the coexistence of gender and disability, but from their interaction within social, cultural, economic, and institutional power structures. Early research frequently addressed gender and disability as separate analytical categories, resulting in fragmented understandings of disadvantage. More recent scholarship, however, recognizes that women with disabilities encounter distinct and compounded forms of marginalization that cannot be adequately captured through single-axis frameworks.

The period between 2006 and 2010 marked a significant shift in global attention to the rights of persons with disabilities, most notably through the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Article 6 of the CRPD explicitly acknowledges that women and girls with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination and obliges States Parties to take measures to ensure their full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Despite this normative recognition, academic engagement with the lived realities of women with disabilities has developed unevenly.

Understanding how scholarship on women with disabilities has evolved over time is essential for identifying not only dominant themes but also silences, delays, and exclusions within knowledge production. This study addresses this need by conducting a chronological systematic literature review of research published between 2002 and 2022. Rather than organizing findings thematically, the paper adopts a year-wise structure to trace shifts in theoretical orientations, methodological approaches, and policy engagement across distinct periods.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a systematic literature review design to ensure transparency, replicability, and analytical rigor. A chronological (year-wise) analytical framework was selected to examine how scholarly engagement with women with disabilities has changed over time. This approach enables the identification of temporal patterns, delayed research responses, and evolving academic priorities that are often obscured in thematic reviews.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across five major academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Search strings combined keywords such as “women with disabilities,” “gender and disability,” “intersectionality,” and “double discrimination.” Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2002 and 2022 were considered.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they explicitly addressed women with disabilities and engaged with gender as an analytical category. Articles focusing exclusively on men, children, or disability without gender analysis were excluded, as were non-peer-reviewed sources such as editorials and opinion pieces.

Screening and Selection

Following the removal of duplicates, titles and abstracts were screened for relevance. Full-text reviews were then conducted to assess eligibility based on the inclusion criteria. A total of 45 articles met the criteria and were included in the final review.

Analytical Strategy

Selected studies were organized chronologically by year of publication and analyzed within defined time periods. Analysis focused on shifts in theoretical frameworks, research methods, geographical focus, and the extent to which women with disabilities were positioned as active subjects rather than passive objects of study.

Chronological Review of Literature

2002–2005: Establishing Conceptual Foundations

Research during this period was predominantly theoretical, with feminist scholars critiquing the absence of disability within feminist discourse and disability studies scholars challenging the gender-neutral framing of impairment. Foundational contributions emphasized the invisibility of women with disabilities within both movements. Early work highlighted how disabled women occupied a marginal position within national feminist agendas, particularly in the Global South, thereby laying the conceptual groundwork for later intersectional analyses.

2006–2010: Articulation of Double Marginalization

Between 2006 and 2010, the notion of double or multiple marginalization gained clearer articulation. International reports documented how women with disabilities experienced compounded disadvantages across education, employment, health, and social participation. Scholarship increasingly acknowledged heightened vulnerability to poverty, violence, and dependency, although much of the literature remained descriptive and relied heavily on secondary data.

2011–2015: Expansion of Empirical Inquiry

This period marked a gradual shift toward empirical research. Quantitative and mixed-methods studies examined poverty, employment, health outcomes, and access to services, particularly in developing-country contexts. While empirical engagement increased, research largely prioritized measurable outcomes over lived experiences, and women with disabilities continued to be underrepresented as narrators of their own realities.

2016–2020: Rights-Based and Policy-Oriented Approaches

From 2016 onward, scholarship increasingly reflected rights-based frameworks aligned with national and international policy developments. Research examined gaps between legislative commitments and everyday experiences in areas such as education, employment, and mobility. Studies critiqued the persistence of exclusionary practices despite inclusive policy rhetoric, highlighting structural barriers embedded within institutions.

2021–2022: Participation, Activism, and Intersectional Futures

Recent literature emphasizes participation, activism, and the centering of disabled women's voices. Scholars increasingly advocate for intersectionality-informed and participatory research methods, focusing on health equity, bodily autonomy, and representation. Despite these advances, research remains geographically concentrated, and women with disabilities continue to be underrepresented in decision-making and knowledge production.

Discussion: Temporal Patterns and Persistent Silences

The chronological analysis reveals that scholarly engagement with women with disabilities has progressed unevenly. Early theoretical insights were not immediately followed by sustained empirical research, and rights-based recognition often preceded meaningful methodological innovation. Persistent gaps include limited longitudinal studies, insufficient attention to political participation, and the marginalization of lived experience narratives. These temporal silences suggest that marginalization operates not only within social structures but also within academic timelines.

CONCLUSION

By organizing the literature chronologically, this review demonstrates how academic understandings of women with disabilities have evolved over the past two decades. While important advances have been made in recognizing intersectionality and structural exclusion, progress remains incomplete. Future research must adopt temporally sensitive, participatory, and intersectionality-informed approaches that position women with disabilities as producers of knowledge rather than merely subjects of analysis.

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