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The logo for the International Institute of Social Studies, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

**A means to an end: Promoting sport participation
amongst the disabled in Nigeria as a vehicle to
fostering their inclusion and well being**

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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List of Acronyms

ADA - American with Disability Act

CRPD - Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DPO - Disabled people's organizations

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

ICF - International Classification Functionality

IPC - International Paralympic Committee

JONAPWD - Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities

NWDA - Nigerian with Disability Act

PWD - Persons with Disabilities

QOL – Quality of Life

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

TOC – Theory of Change

UN – United Nations

UNCRPWD - United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

WHO – World Health Organization

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Abstract

As asserted by the World Health Organization (WHO 2002), health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Participation in sport has in many cases and studies have been identified as a tool for promoting health and social benefits. Nevertheless, People with disabilities are not given equal opportunities as their abled bodied counterparts. This study through a qualitative research method explores the benefits and barriers encountered by people with various disabilities. This study was to give an insight of the role of participating in competitive sports plays in the lives of PWDs and the findings reported that as a result of their involvement in sports they had positive perceptions about themselves, they learnt to focus more on their strength and ability, their health improved, they felt empowered and included. There were also stumbling blocks encountered in the process; financial constraints, nonchalant attitude of the Government towards their matters as well as lack of assistive equipment for ease of movement. The essence of embarking on this study is to create an awareness on the benefits and barriers of participating in sports in the lives of PWDs so that the concerned stakeholders can do all in their power to implement appropriate laws and sport policies that will be disability Inclusive. This will improve their participation as well as improve their overall quality of life.

Relevance to Development Studies

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) development is said to occur when a Nation embarks on activities and efforts that aim at transforming society, driving and sustaining the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. Going by that, Development cannot be said to exist in a country where exclusion is on the increase for whatsoever group of individuals that exist in a country, be it the women, the youths, the children or as for the purpose of this research, the disabled. For Development to thrive in a society practicing full inclusion for all and sundry is a necessity. As part of the focus of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the mantra “leave no one behind” has been stressed as the bedrock for sustainable, integrating and developmental projects which is a major source of financial help to low- and middle-income countries (World bank, 2016). This study seeks to contribute to development by explaining why participating in sports should be used to improve the Quality of life of the marginalised group (PWDs) and grant them a voice in their respective communities and in the society at large because by and large, the United Nations and other International bodies have put in place plans to foster the adoption and development of sporting activities for purpose of rehabilitation, training and enhancing the quality of life of PWDs (DePauw and Gavron 2005).

Keywords

Sports participation, disability, inclusion, wellbeing, Nigeria.

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

“Know me for my abilities, not my disability”

(Hensel 2019)¹

A developed and healthy country is one where the integration of people with various backgrounds to achieve a set goal is of utmost importance. Needless to say, achieving this is an uphill task but certain countries have made and are still making efforts to make it a reality by enacting laws that rule against every form of stigmatization on the basis of culture, race, sexual orientation, religion and disabilities to mention but a few. Governmental parastatals are also staged to see to the enforcement and implementation of these laws.

All over the Universe and throughout history, the people with disabilities have continuously suffered a great deal of marginalization and discrimination. They’ve had their fair share of being socially and economically excluded in having active lifestyles. They are denied adequate health care services, educational opportunities, employment opportunities which in turn increases their poverty rate (Bank, 2017). This continued neglect arises not only because of negative reactions gotten from the society due to their perceived inability to be productive or the insufficient facilities to aid them but also from the lack of will and urgency on the side of policy makers to implement laws and policies that address their human rights and needs. When an individual is significantly limited in carrying out a multiple of functions due to being physically or mentally deficient, that individual is said to be disabled.

The World Health Organization report (2016), reports that disability is referred to a general term that incorporates both impairments and constraints in activity participation. The report went further to describe impairment as a body malfunction and constraint in activity participation as limitations faced by persons while involved in diverse life situations. As stated by Nixon et al (2007:419) persons regarded as disabled are termed so because they are unable to physically or mentally partake in certain activities, carry out various tasks, utilize various skills mainly because of their biomedical incapacitation or impairments. The Disabled people’s organizations (DPO’s) in describing disability, proposes that it is when people with impairments are denied their human rights (Harris and Enfield 2003:11). In the past, PWDs

¹ Guinness World Records holder for the longest non-stop wheelie in a wheelchair, on his website <https://roberthensel.webs.com/myquotes.htm>

were associated with evil spirits which had to be driven out in order to be set free and as asserted by Haruna (2017:105), disabilities such as mental disorder, blindness were attributed to punishments by gods for disobedience. He further explained that in some cultures especially in the Nigerian context, the disabled were viewed as results of witchcraft and as such were treated with discord. From the 18th century, societies experienced a bit of a change from superstitious beliefs when hospitals were used to address the challenges of the People with Disabilities and enable them fit into the society (Waughfield and Burckhalter 2002).

According to a joint report by the World health Organization and the World Bank (2015) an estimated 15% of the world's population are living with disabilities and these minority group in addition to their predicaments face diverse social barriers and passive treatments from their immediate surroundings. The vast number of them, about 80%, are found in developing and middle-income countries. In Nigeria as stated by the World health Organization's (WHO) world disability report (2011), the disabled make up approximately 15 percent of its total population. Likewise in Ghana, about 2.5 million which adds up to approximately 10% of the populace with disabilities; In Rwanda, about 5% of its population are disabled,² even with the ratification of the UN Convention on Disability Rights in all these countries, they still face diverse marginalization, discriminations, systematic and environmental barriers that result to low social, economic and financial status.

To live a productive and normal life, the disabled persons require an environment that is socially and physically in tune with their needs, in other words, they need a supportive system, be it from the government or from their families. In the United States, the disabled were predominantly invisible until the year 1970 when a law was passed by the Federal Government making it obligatory that all disabled children and youths be educated in the public schools (Nixon II 2007). In 1990, the American with Disability Act (ADA) came into existence, getting rid of every form of discrimination and exclusion against the PWDs and granting them equal access to employment and public amenities. (United States access board 2004). To further address the segregation and inequalities faced by the disabled in other parts of the world, more especially in developing countries like Nigeria, the UN sought to pass two declarations in respect to the disabled, the year 1981 was first and foremost announced as the "International year of the Disabled persons" and secondly, 1983 to 1992 was declared "The United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons"³. The reason these declarations were

² National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR)2014

³ United Nations, 1983

made was to create a strategy to mobilize International organizations to exert more efforts in raising funds to see to the formulation and implementation of policies that will make life bearable for the disabled. In like manner, on the 13th of December 2006 the UN⁴ adopted the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with the Article 30(5) emphasizing on the freedom of the disabled to participate in sports and recreational activities (Roy 2007). Nigeria in 2007 partook in this welcome development by consenting to the CPRD even though there has been a continued cry out by the disabled groups and activists for the cooperation of the government in enacting the laws.

To terminate the continuous discriminative attitudes towards PWDs, it is essential to create an enabling environment as well as opportunities that foster a change of attitude. According to some studies, Sport participation has been listed as one of the ways to do that. With its inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals, sport has been identified as a tool for disseminating health and human right messages. In the same light as sports for the able bodied, Sports for the disabled has been proved to boost the wellbeing of PWDs. Sports is basically participatory in nature and it centred around inclusion and citizenship. Furthermore, it curbs every form of cultural and ethnic bias (Hartmann and Kwauk 2011). Coakley (2011:307), posits that Participating in Sport activities is of great benefit to the disabled just as it is to those without any disabilities and sport for the disabled in this context will focus on Organized sport competitions. Sport competitions is indeed a means used to achieve inclusion in addition gain self-esteem for marginalized groups like the disabled in various communities (Elling and Knoppers 2005:257). It has been recognized as an avenue for fostering national identity. In a study by Hanson et al (2001), as regards patients with spinal cord defect, taking part in sport activities promoted a societal integration for them. It helps to inculcate valuable life skills

and sociable characters into the lives of the disabled, according to Lerner et al, (2000) participation in developmental sport programs helps to build the following attributes; competence, confidence, character, connections and compassion/ care in the lives of participants, these attributes are referred to as the “Five Cs”. There are many benefits incurred to the PWDs as a result of participating in sports and as such this study is carried out to examine and explore the impact of sport participation on their well-being of the as well as the challenges encountered.

⁴ United Nations, 2006

1.1 Problem Statement

In Nigeria, living as an able-bodied person is hard enough and when it comes to the disabled, it is even harder. Disability in itself may not be considered as an impairment but the environmental forces and human attitudes that give rise to disability. The absence of facilities to accommodate this disadvantaged group as well as the discriminatory attitudes they encounter from their communities makes life difficult for them. Compounding this issue is the disabling environment which gives rise to more cases of functional incapacitations, this would agree with the model of disability which according to Bingham et al as cited in Haegele et al (2016:195) argues that the community plays a major role in inflicting disability on individuals with impairments, this model is otherwise known as the Social model of disability. Furthermore, the context of the social model of disability argues being impaired does not necessarily mean one is disabled, the social model theorists argue that disability comes into play when the individuals that are handicapped in one way or another are not given equal opportunities like their “abled” counterparts and exempted from playing major roles in communities where they reside. In the conventional setting, disability is usually seen in the light of being cursed, a calamity and in most cases, especially in Africa, they are treated with pity (Hughes 1998).

Mainstreaming sports and physical activities especially the competitive sports for the disabled can be used as a context in changing the narratives of the disabled. Furthermore, they are empowered to defend themselves against the conventional narratives. Getting the disabled to participate in sports to a large extent is more crucial to them compared to those without disabilities. As noted by Smith et al (2008:1), participating in sport competitions creates an avenue for turning a blind eye and overcoming the disabled body and it gives the athletes an upper hand in dealing better with societal discriminations. In a study done by Swartz et al (2018:37), the disabled athlete respondents narrated that their participation in sports provided a different narrative about their physical impairment, a positive one, they further expressed that their involvement gave them a sense of belonging, empowerment, pride and an autonomous experience. As a result, they described themselves as “abled” and not “physically challenged”. Another study done by Wilhite et al (2009:123) showed that a young boy who lost a leg to cancer observed that participating in salsa dancing sustained his health.

Despite the sighted benefits gained by the disabled because of their participation in sports and the extraordinary achievements attained by of some of the Nigerian disabled athletes so far, the government has failed in its duties to step up with implementing policies and making available adequate facilities for the disabled.

A lot of well detailed studies have been carried out exploring the experiences of the disabled athletes in sports participation in many developed countries via qualitative interviewing; in the United States, Wilhite et al (2009) conducted a study to examine the experiences of the people with disabilities in sports participation and the findings were such that the benefits accrued to the disabled from participating in sports included and not limited to, a hike in their confidence level, improved potential capacity, sound health and integration life's major roles and activities. In Australia, by Devine et al (2017) admitted in a study that participating in sports improved the self-confidence, entire well-being and supported a great level of inclusion for the participants. Key barriers to the full participation in sports programs were also taken note of, they included, misconceptions and discrimination from the public, lack of adequate transport and sports facilities and lack of assistive mobility devices. There has been little focus placed in exploring the experiences of the people with disabilities who participate in sport competitions as well as the barriers encountered by the sport program organizers in Nigeria where there is a high rate of segregation and discrimination against the disabled. The aim of this research will be to fill the knowledge gap on the perceived impact of sport participation on the lives of the people with disability and note down the stumbling blocks to the inclusion of the disabled within sport programs in Lagos Nigeria, room will be made for suggestions of ways in which the mentioned barriers can be tackled as to grant the people with disabilities unfettered access to participating in recreational and organized sports for their entire wellbeing.

1.2 Justification of the study

The World bank as part of the International communities is making efforts to give a voice to the disabled by fostering disability inclusive developments (DID) and by so doing making them partakers of the investments (Karr et al. 2016). In addition, Karr also argued that in a bid to take global development goals to a higher level, the disabled are to be carried along as active beneficiaries of all social, economic and political life. In many societies, in the developing countries most especially, the disabled are excluded from developmental activities however one of way to grant and create equal opportunities for the people with disabled is through sports. The United Nation has agreed to the finding that Sport activities can foster

a country's development process⁵ and accordingly some studies have shown that participating in physical and sport activities can contribute to the development process and health of person with and without disabilities (Devine, A. et al. 2017:4).

A Research by Richard (2016) showed that disability among other factors contributes to the increase of Non communicable diseases due to the immobile nature of persons with disabilities, in addition, between the year 2008 and 2030, it has been reported that NCD diseases will cost developing economies 21 whopping trillion dollars because of sicknesses and lost produce (Kruk et al. 2015). According to Manson Mandela "Sport is a language everyone can understand" and yes it can be used as an active tool in developing children and adult health thereby alleviating non communicable diseases as well as the occurrence of severe impairment and mortality. This will in in turn save the economy from going bankrupt as well as reduce the burden on their caregivers who have probably abandoned their schools or profitable businesses to carter them. This in turn is a welcome development for the continuous growth of the economy.

1.3 Definition of terms

The following terms as used in this study will be defined for better clarity

- Sport: The utilization of varieties of intense physical skills by persons in an institutionalised competitive event whose involvement is inspired by both intrinsic (For example: self-accomplishment) and extrinsic factors (for example: financial reward and public recognition) (Coakley 2011:307).

According to Comella et al (2019)), sport is a physical activity where an individual or a group of persons participate in accordance with set rules and regulations to achieve a set goal. This study is restricted to organised sports because there maybe results and attributes of competitive sports that may not exist in non-competitive sports.

⁵ United Nations Office for Sport for Development and Peace. Website. Retrieved on May 11, 2015 from <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/sport>

- People with Disability (PWDs) in this study are referred to Persons who have lost all or a part of their limbs, malfunctioning limb, organ or body functionality (Oliver 2009)
- Social Inclusion is understood here to mean the societal acceptance of people with disabilities within school, work, and community settings Walker et al (2011:15).
- Discrimination in this context will imply the extent to which people with disabilities are marginalised and treated prejudicially. (Etieyibo and Omiegbe 2016:2).
- Wellbeing in this context will imply the extent to which resources are available to meet one's social, physical and psychological needs. (Dodge et al. 2012).

1.4 Research objectives and question

Participating in sports has been attributed to contributing immensely to not only enhancing the well-being of individuals but also to development but there's little evidence especially in Nigeria as how sports can be disability inclusive. The aim of this qualitative research is to fill in this knowledge gap by investigating the experiences of the disabled athlete, (negative and positive experiences) regarding their participation in sport competitions, to understand how it gives them a sense of worth, and then the barriers faced by sport bodies in providing the facilities and needed resources to enhance their participation. The other sub-objectives for this research are:

- a) To understand the experiences and views of athletes with disabilities in the context of participating in sports competitions and how it has changed the negative narrative about their identity
- b) To explore the barriers to providing better sport facilities for better participation from the perspective of both the athletes and the sport Organizing representatives.
- c) To proffer feasible solutions to alleviate these barriers to improve sport participation for PWDs.

This research main assumption for this research is that:

Sport participation is a way to curb the discrimination of disabled and to strengthen their inclusion in the society

This assumption was constructed inductively based on an extensive literature review of international literature on sports and disability. The study will argue that participation in sports does not only benefits disabled persons physically but also psychologically, in addition it is important that the role of sports for the disabled and the barriers encountered by them and the sport program planners are made known as a strategy for future policy formation and implementation. Consequently, together with academic researchers, other Nigerian stakeholders like the Paralympic committee, the policy makers and other various sports agencies, this research will prove as an eye opener on the benefits and the barriers to the disabled sports participation and in addition act as a guide to finding solutions to the barriers which will in turn foster the implementation and planning of more disability sport programs and projects for the disabled in Nigeria.

1.4.1 Main research question

- Why should sport participation be used to overcome the negative discriminative attitudes towards the disabled and promote inclusion?

1.4.2 Sub Questions:

- 1) What are the experiences of the disabled towards participation in sports competitions and how has it helped them to see beyond their impairment?
- 2) What are the barriers faced by the sport organization bodies as regards providing better sporting programs and opportunities for the disabled and how can they be alleviated to further promote inclusion and well-being of the disabled?

1.5 Methodology

This study was carried out in order to explore the impact of sport participation on PWDs as well as the barriers encountered. The data was mainly generated via qualitative methods, following this are the techniques and methods that were used for generating data from the field work; the technique for data collection, choice of research location, the description of sample, limitations encountered as well as the ethical considerations

1.5.1 Techniques for data generation

The primary data was generated by adopting an in-depth interview, a semi structured narrative one with the disabled athletes group in Lagos Nigeria to explore their experiences in sport participation, this took a focus on life history approach which enabled me draw out to a greater extent their experiences on how their journey as PWDs has been and to grasp the positive and negative impacts they have heard in their attempts to take part in a sport activity of their choice. The life history approach was essential in that it has a way bringing to light hidden encounters of the marginalized groups and as Atkinson's (1998:7) proposes, through life stories, one can ascertain quality context and meanings and can see the hidden. Furthermore, this approach gave the interviewed enough room to recount as many experiences as they could utter, experiences regarding their inward feelings and intentions. Direct questions such as how they started participating in sports, their experiences before and after their disability were asked. In addition, the sports organizations in charge of planning sport programmes for the disabled were also interviewed.

A Focus group discussion will also be employed. An FGD is a group of individuals chosen and grouped by researchers to discuss and comment on personal experiences about a subject being researched (Powell et al 1996). It is a group interview usually made up of 5-12 persons and it is perceived to be more interactive discuss session other than a question/answer session. With a focus group, you can draw out an in-depth perspective of the matter being researched on, formulate data through the opinions of respondents, spot out differences and commonalities as well as stir up ideas for further investigations. For this research, an FGD is appropriate because it will help the researcher to generate group interaction and contestation over ideas that could not have been readily pointed out in an individual interview (Krueger 1994; 1998).

The interviews with the help of an assistant who took notes, were recorded and transcribed afterwards. This enabled the interviewer to play close attention to the narratives of the respondents, observe body and verbal languages.

The observation method was also employed for this study. It was used to have a first-hand observation as to the manner in which the disabled athletes trained, the facilities that were available or not and the condition of the stadium where they trained because as O'Leary (2014:230) asserts, "the gulf between what people say they do and what they actually do can be far and wide". Furthermore, he argues that data generated via observation gives you a real sense of reality rather than just hear says, in order words, you become the world's eye.

1.5.2 Choice of research location

This study was conducted in Lagos state Nigeria, which supposedly houses two National stadiums in the country, this choice was necessitated because the researcher already had a contact person which addressed protocol matters and because the location is where all the athlete respondents could be found. In addition, a lot of time was conserved since she didn't have to travel around to conduct interviews and because the time assigned for field work was limited. The location also made it possible to observe the athletes while they trained and interacted with one another. The interviews were conducted in the two different National stadiums; Teslim Balogun stadium and National Stadium Surulere Lagos all In the Western part of Nigeria. The interview with the officials were held in their private offices in Lagos state too.

1.5.3 Selection of Respondents

For the selection of respondents, the researcher adopted a non-random technique which included the snowball and purposive sampling technique. This sampling method was employed to provide some flexibility while generating the data since it entails generating a research sample via referrals when a particular group cannot be easily identified (O'Leary 2017:211).

The table below gives a description of the respondents. The study interviewed a small sample of 8 athletes; five (5) females and three (3) males and three (3) male officials. The relevance of the research was not based on the quantity of the participants but on the quality of the life experiences and narratives drawn out from in depth interviews with the disabled Paralympic champions as regards the impact of sport participation in their lives.

Table 1: Names of Respondents (Using Pseudonyms)

NAME	SEX	TYPE & CAUSE OF DISABILITY	CATEGORY OF SPORT PARTICIPATION
Emeka	F	Arm amputation	Athlete/Paralympian

Aunty Dee	F	Polio	Heavy weight champion
Angela	F	Polio	Tennis champion
Ruphos	M	Leg amputation	Athlete/Paralympian
Ifeyinwa	F	Polio	Wheel Chair basketball player
Bose	F	Polio	Shot put Olympic champion
Chioma	M	Birth defect	Athlete
Musa	M	Polio	Heavy weight lifter
Akin	M	Birth defect	Tennis player
Femi	M	Institutional actor 1	
Henry	M	Institutional actor 2	

According to O'Leary (2017), the essence of a qualitative research is not in the weight of the sample but in the richness found in the quality of the data derived from a few participants rather than in the view from a large sample. The selection was based on the experiences of the disabled athletic champions who have been participating in competitive sports for some years to enable the researcher to focus on and understand better how beneficial participating in sports is to them.

1.5.4 Limitations and Scope of Study

Firstly, considering the small sample size of participants, it is difficult to make a generalization about the findings, that is the extent to which it represents the lived and untold experiences of the disabled Paralympic athletes in Nigeria. Nevertheless, from the few cases presented, there are insights and lots of lessons to be learnt from this group in Nigeria where

the issue of disability and sports has not received sufficient attention from scholars. In any case, it serves as a useful contribution to exploring further on the issues being faced by the athletes with disability in low income countries like Nigeria.

On another note, identifying and securing interviews with respondents was quite a challenging task for the researcher. One of the participants was identified on Facebook via referrals but then getting him to give up some information initially was difficult. According to the first identified respondent, he previously had some ugly experiences with the press when he found out that they had misquoted him a newspaper. It was a daunting task trying to get his trust. But on the long run, after seeing that the researcher had some passion for sport from her Facebook pictures and after receiving a letter of consent from the researcher's place of study ISS, he loosened up and a rapport was built until I met him in person. The other respondents too were reluctant because they felt there was always one person or the other coming to interview with no benefits accrued to them at the end, but the researcher assured them that it was for academic purposes.

Accessing basic literature and data relating to my scope and location was also a great challenge. The researcher focused mainly on a small sample of the disabled athletes in Nigeria, future studies can explore benefits of sports both to non-disabled participants for comparative analysis as well as look into the benefits for with disabilities. Furthermore, more research can be done on how PWDs can access better employment opportunities and credit facilities as another way of fostering their inclusion.

1.5.5 Ethical Consideration

This research was carried out in affirmation with the definite ethical obligation. Firstly, the researcher introduced herself and gave a briefing on the reason behind the interview, she also handed a signed letter from her institution granting her an approval for her field work which was for academic requirements. The participants were not in any way forced to take part, they were informed that it was voluntary and could pull out at any time they felt uncomfortable. As it is ethical, Pseudonyms were also used as a guarantee of the confidentiality although they didn't mind me using their names. All these were done to put the participants at ease during the interviews and in accordance with the guidance given by O'Leary (2014), he suggests that it is of utmost importance to give a briefing to participants on the purposes of conducting the research as well as explaining the rules of research ethics to them (O'Leary 2014:64)

1.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has been able to look at an overview of the study which includes, the background, definition of key terms, justification and relevance to development, statement of problem, the research objectives and questions. It has also highlighted the techniques and methods that was employed for generating data and selecting participants, it also gave a brief description of subjects, choice of location, limitations and the ethical obligations that were observed. The following chapter will review literatures on the different perspectives in disability including the models of disability as well as the theoretical frameworks that will be used in interpreting the data.

Chapter 2 - Literature review and Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

In order to better understand how the disabled can be better included through sports, this chapter will firstly review literatures discussing some of the differences/controversies in the disability field (on the definition of disability) by delving into the various models of Disability in order to grasp what disability really means and be informed better on how best to interact with the disabled. It will further explore theories and concepts in the area of social inclusion, the link between sports and inclusion and finally it will highlight the crucial benefits the PWDs derive from participating in sports activities, The theoretical framework used will be the Development through sport Theory of Change and the World health Organization ICF wherein the analysis of participant's views and the use of concepts will be framed.

2.2 Models of disability

For several decades, there has been an uproar of debates of what constitutes a disability and how it can or should be viewed (Brittain 2016). As reported by Retief and Letsosa (2018), understanding the diverse models of disability is of utmost importance as to explore the various perceptions about disability, the causal and responsibility attributions. Furthermore, he also suggests that understanding the various models will assist policy makers in making and implementing policies. In same manner as stated by Haegele et al (2016), it is paramount that disability is well understood as this has a tremendous impact on our expectations and communications with them.

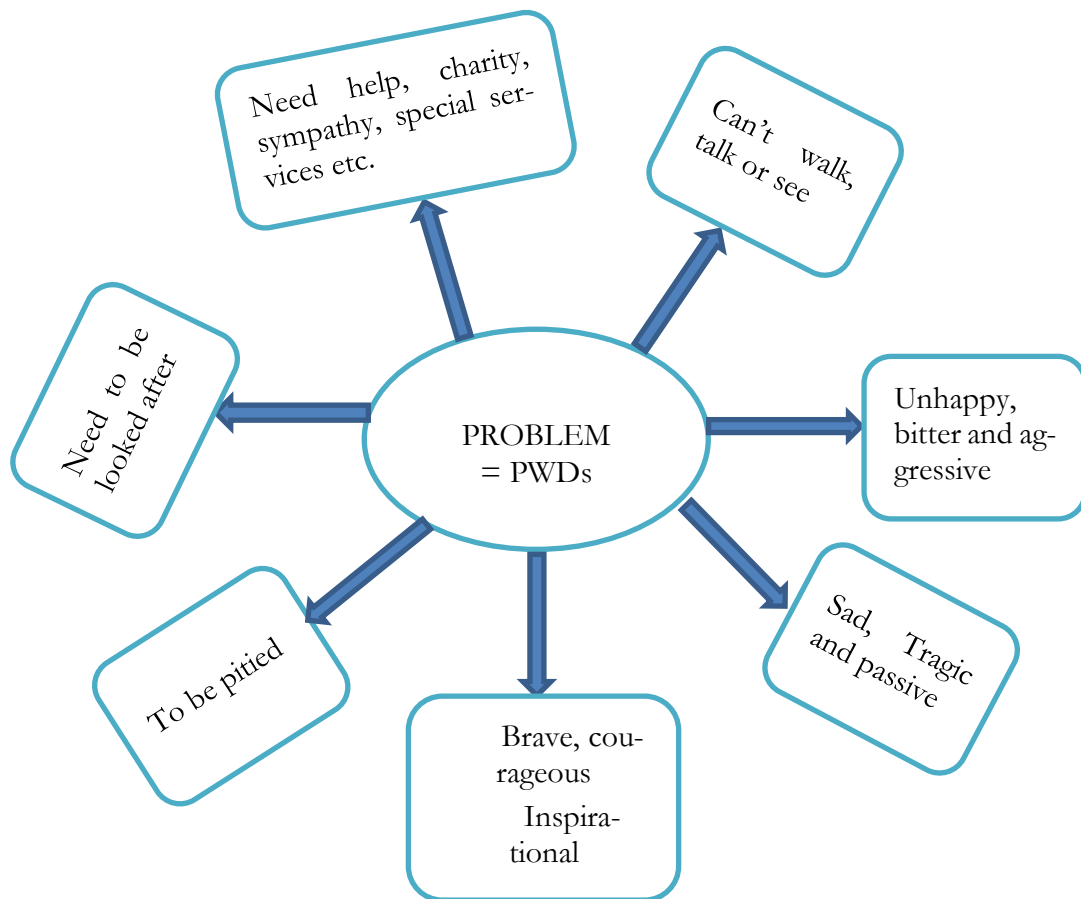
2.2.1 The charity model

The charity model came into existence from the practice of Christianity, people were admonished to assist the PWDs with gifts as performing such acts could grant you entrance into Heaven (Yeo 2001). The charity model proposes that the disabled are unfortunate victims of their predicament and should be shown pity, they are seen to be helpless, in tragic and are to be helped in any way possible (Retief and Letsosa 2018). As a result of their situation, they are to be provided with special care, homes or schools considering they are of a different breed (Harris and Enfield 2003b). Furthermore, Harris et al (2003) asserts that going by this model carers of the disabled might have good intentions by helping and giving

gifts but then they are insensitive to their vital and most pressing needs, an example being the forced sterilization of disabled women in the absence of their consent.

As a result of this model, the level of dependency of the PWDs increased and this in turn resulted to the alms begging that has become the order of the day in many countries like Nigeria. The charity model advocates being sympathetic, understanding and lenient towards disabled people and according to Lang and Upah 2008 Nigeria has chosen to adopt this model instead of enacting laws that will ban every form of discrimination as well as provide them with assistive devices that can foster their living an independent and well-meaning life.

Figure 1: Charity model of disability



Source: Harris & Enfield, 2003, p.172

2.2.2 The human rights model

A variety of studies have shown that the PWDs are often denied their basic human rights and are thus faced with life threatening challenges. Consequently, the human right model offers a framework that stresses/elaborates on the human dignity, the right to fair and equal opportunities for PWDs in various societies. This model in question further argues that these challenges faced by the disabled should be considered while developing vital theories as regards social justice. (Degener 2017:47). In a bid to tackle the concerns of the PWDs and alleviate every possible barriers to their access to various opportunities and services entitled to them as citizens including the opportunities to participate in sports, the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPWD) was established having article 30 emphasizing their right to physical activity, leisure and sport (Smith, B. and Sparkes 2008). The CRPD in recent times is the most popularly used document in disability studies in that It recognizes the equal rights of the PWDs to fully participate in societal activities and gain equal access to opportunities such as health, employment and education opportunities.

According to Misener et al (2014), the CRPD is hinged on eight principles which when put into action reverses the harm done to the disabled. The principles include: Total acceptance of PWDs as part of humanity, equal opportunities and accessibility to services and amenities, active participation and inclusion in all societal activities, gender equality, regards for personal autonomy and the freedom to make life choices, no discriminations and finally the rights of children with disabilities to practice their beliefs and preserve their personalities. When soliciting for the disabled via policies and programmes, the states are compelled to embrace important legislation and vital measures to do so and this as asserted by Magumbate et al. (2007), has made the human right model the most sought after by the disabled activists.

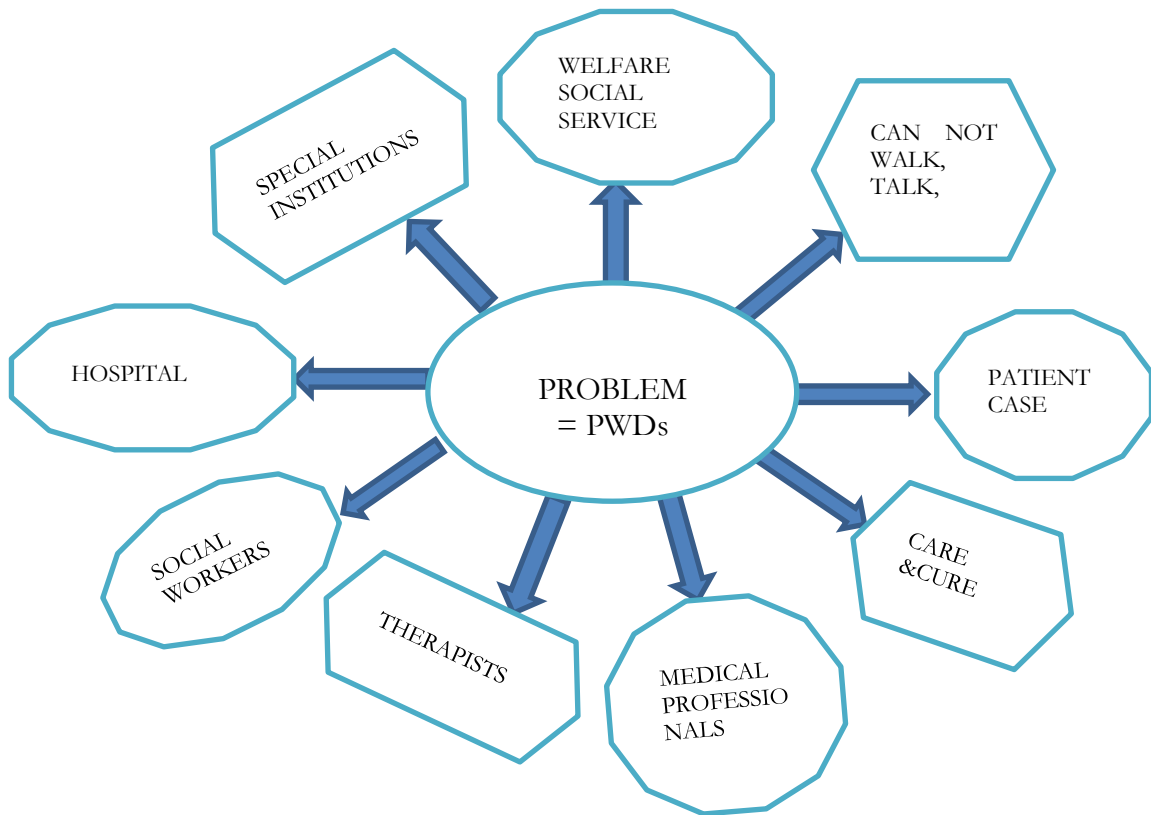
2.2.3 The medical model

This model is popularly used by the health professionals. Disability in this model is referred to an impairment and malfunction that is not only restricted to the body but also of the mind which comes as a result of exposures to various injuries and diseases (Forhan 2009). The theorists of this model argue that the impairment itself is the major issue. As stated by Olkin (2001), Disability from the medical model perspective is seen as an ailment that is harboured in an individual's body and the best way of intervening in such cases is curing or eradicating it with sustained medications, therapies by medical professionals as well as rehabilitations. Retief et al (2018), suggests that this model throws a negative light on disability in that the disabled are seen as people befallen with tragedies and are regarded as burden to their families

and society at large. They are usually assigned the 'sick role' which often takes away their confidence as resourceful members of the community thereby resulting to exclusion in societal obligations. This has a negative impact on both Children and adults because with the label of being sick placed on them, they are not able to mix up with their fellows. They are treated based on their diagnosis as people in deer need of medical care and not as normal humans who have a variety of other needs like affection, education, employment, full participation in community programs.

Furthermore, Johnstone (2012:16) avers, 'The medical model of interpretation of disability projects a dualism which tends to categorise the able-bodied as somewhat better or superior to people with disabilities (Johnstone 2012). Furthermore, the medical model devalues PWDs from leading independent lives and this negates the esteem and dignity of PWD as humans resulting to discrimination (Farkas et al. 2012). Notwithstanding, the medical model plays a vital role for PWD in that to perform certain community obligations, they may require to go for surgeries to resuscitate some functions but then the disabled are of the opinion that it will benefit them better if they are helped to manage their lives other than going on a quest for cures that take forever (Harris and Enfield 2003). Due to the alienation imposed on the PWDs by the medical model the social model came into existence via protests. Figure 2 below illustrates the medical model and what it entails

Figure 2: The medical model and its attributes



Source: Adapted from Harris & Enfield, 2003, p.172

2.2.4 The social model

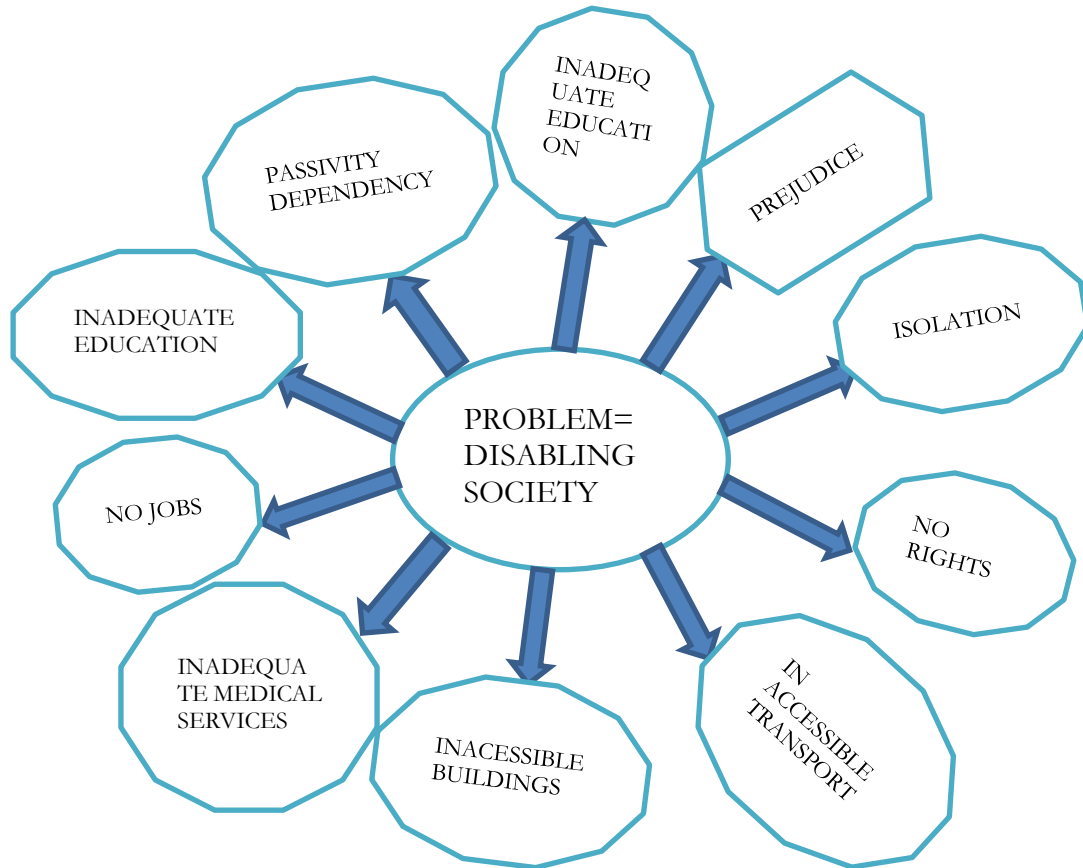
In contrast to the medical model, the Social model theorists propose that the impairment is not the main problem but the unfriendly society where the disabled reside. Since most societies are made up of a predominantly large number of non-disabled people, the problem of disability therein lies in the limiting and negative responses given to the impaired individuals which can be classified isolation and exclusion (Harris and Enfield 2003) . The Social model acknowledges disability as a disorder created by the society and an issue that calls for a total incorporation of individuals into society⁶. As stated by Bingham et al (2013), the social model suggests that disability is inflicted unto persons with impairments by the society and thus require political responses and societal changes instead of a cure for their physical bodies. It

⁶ World, D. (2010). Retrieved November 9, 2018, from Definitions of The Models of Disability: <https://www.disabled-world.com/definitions/disability-models.php>

averts that the possible solutions should be centred on society not the individual (Haegele and Hodge 2016). As maintained by Brittain (2004), if policies are implemented to eliminate environmental barriers such as lack of employment opportunities, lack of assistive devices, inaccessibility to proper education and many other prejudices, this will go a long way in solving the problems associated with being disabled.

The social model redefines the way services are rendered by putting the disabled into high consideration, going by it, the disabled people have unfettered access to living a well-meaning and worthwhile life. Although the social model is considered a better alternative to the medical model, it fails to highlight various kinds of impairments most especially the severe cases and the capacity to deal with them. It describes the PWDs as a homogenous set. In addition, because it focuses majorly on the environment, it fails to take cognizance of other key issues as regards the differences in gender, age, sexual orientation of the individuals with disabilities. Although the various models are portrayed to be in conflict with each other, in the truest sense, they complement each other and just like the International Classification of Functionality (ICF) suggests, when implementing policies and designing strategies for improving the well-being of the PWDs, there is need to adopt both the medical and the social models of disability. Despite the shortcomings, the social model was found appropriate for this study in addressing some of the relatable issues that were raised by the participants, it came into play when one of the participants concurred with another at the fact that the Government's unwillingness to implement policies concerning the disabled are bringing more harm than good to the PWDs. Below is a Figure 3 portraying the social model version of disability.

Figure 3: Social model of disability



Source: Harris & Enfield, 2003, p.172

2.3 Linking sports and social inclusion

Sport has been recognized worldwide as a resourceful tool that can be used to foster social change in the lives of individuals both at the local and international levels. Engaging in sport activities is an utmost human right and the impact it has on the disabled is invaluable (Kay and Dudfield 2013a). Inclusion implies offering equal opportunities for all and sundry not withstanding their physical or mental abilities. As defined by Walker et al(2011) , Social inclusion is the “societal acceptance of people with disabilities within school, work and community setting”. Attitudes displayed by the societal forces towards the disabled aid in influencing Social inclusion and the general wellbeing of the disabled is dependent on it (Simplican et al. 2015).

As asserted by Howard Nixon (2007), Inclusion of people with disabilities means they are integrated enough to compete in sports within their communities without having to go through any form of discrimination or having the fear of their impairment status strongly highlighted. He further argues that when the abilities and strengths of the disabled are juxtaposed with appropriate disability assisted facilities and resources then inclusion flourishes. By granting members of the marginalized groups into sports clubs, their chances of inclusion into the society is increased. With its nature of cutting across diverse cultures and languages, sport is considered an effective instrument that can be used to raise an awareness, rewrite the narrative and alleviate the exclusion of the disabled in the society(Farkas et al. 2012). Sports its indeed a means of engaging people with various abilities on an equal basis which in turn promotes social recognition.

2.4 Sport as an instrument for physical and social well being

In the words of Nelson Mandela “Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand” (Moss et al. 2017). Not only are sport and recreational activities used as a tool for social inclusion for the disabled, they also serve health and social benefits just like the ICF frameworks portrays. The challenge here is that the opportunities that arise are often of no benefit to the disabled. There is need to explore the benefits and barriers of participating in sports for the persons with disabilities in order to raise the awareness on the relevance of participating sports as a tool for promoting health, self-efficiency and societal inclusion (Moss et al. 2017)

In the summer of 1998, in Southern US, an in-depth interview was conducted with 15 disabled campers and the study found that participating in sports served as a tool for transforming and liberalizing people with disabilities. Furthermore, the participants expressed how sports gave them the resistance will to fight every surveillance(Autry and Hanson 2001). In same manner, a research study by Devine (2017) in the Pacific Australia showed that participation in sports clearly gave the interviewed (disabled athletes) a boost in their sense of worth and empowerment. In another study in Jordan, results showed that the basketball wheel chair players had an increased physical self-esteem and self domains(Qasim et al. 2019). A study in South Africa concurred to this too, the interviewed counted their experience in the participation of sports a positive one as it contributed to making them feel empowered and autonomous, furthermore, it helped them turn a blind eye to their impairments and have a sense of belonging (Swartz et al. 2018). Having to be associated with an achievement,

making friends and possessing the will for competency were the highlights for the disabled participants in Malaysia (Wilson and Khoo 2013).

People with disabilities are often discriminated against because they are perceived to be suffering from an ailment or having a poor health because being in good health is often centred on the absence of diseases. This further implies that having a deformity in the case of the disabled may be considered as being unhealthy based on the medical model. However, participating in sport activities has been shown to improve the health and quality of life of PWDs; it boosts their cardiovascular and mental health as well as their abilities to be flexible while carrying out various tasks making them more independent (Dixon-Ibarra and Driver 2013). A study by Wilhite et al (2009) in the US confirmed that participation in sports is an important tool in fostering the physical and emotional wellbeing of the disabled, furthermore, it strengthens social relationships. These positive experiences were not without barriers or challenges, a great number of studies highlighted similar difficulties faced by the disabled some of which were: lack of finances, adequate facilities, support, coaching from certified coaches, accessible transport and aided devices, there were still some participants who showed concern as regards the lackadaisical attitudes they got from the government authorities. Evidently, it can be shown that participating in sport activities can subject an individual to health and wellness.

Despite the majority of literatures reporting the positive impacts of participating in sports for the disabled, there exist negative impacts as well, participating in sports comes with a risk of multiple injuries, In (2017), Sgro et al suggested that taking part in sport and physical activities can have an adverse effect on the functioning abilities of the hypothalamic pituitary testicular axis of the male folks which can in turn lead to the dysfunction of the participant's sexual tract or reproductive organs. This he states can be dependent on peculiar genetic and epigenetic factors and the characteristics of the various sports activities being involved in. However, these complications can be avoided when sport activities are well conducted (Sgrò and Di Luigi 2017).

In a bid to rise to the spot light or fame, there exist another negative side to participating in Disabled sports. The disabled athletes are prone to falling into the trap of "Doping" which entails taking illegal substances to enhance their performance, this has been proved to be hazardous to the health of the athletes, resulting to strokes, haemorrhage and in worse cases death (Mauerberg-deCastro et al. 2016). However, amongst the disabled, the doping occurrences has been recorded to be just 1%...the risks involved should not be a barrier to participating provided that participation evaluations are appropriately implemented. In addition,

evidence from the literatures above has shown that sports have the ability to improve health, build confidence, promote social inclusion, self-efficacy and the quality of life in general for the disabled and this proves to outweigh the disadvantages. However, to make these benefits accrue to a larger number, there is need for more accessible and accommodating sport opportunities (Guthrie and Castelnovo 2001).

2.5 Conceptualising disability

As a social issue with so much complexity, disability cannot be understood from one angle but can be conceptualized using different frameworks. An eclectic method will be adopted in order to cover the major constructions of disability in this study which deals with the Inclusion and wellbeing of the disabled through participation in sports. ‘The Development through sport Theory of Change’ and the International Classification Functioning (ICF) framework formed the background of discussion in the whole study. These concepts serve as tools that will help answer the research questions.

The choice of the TOC is because it encompasses the benefits accrued to PWDs while participating in sports and it identifies possible solutions for tackling barriers encountered and the ICF was chosen as a result of its dominance in both the health and sport sectors as a framework that play a significant role in buttressing meanings and practices in the disability field, it will be used in this study to describe and analyse the impact of sport participation on the health condition of participants as well as to inform policy formations. Following this, is a brief discussion of these concepts with the aim of making In-depth discoveries as regards the research topic.

2.6 The ‘Development through Sports’ Theory of Change

Framework

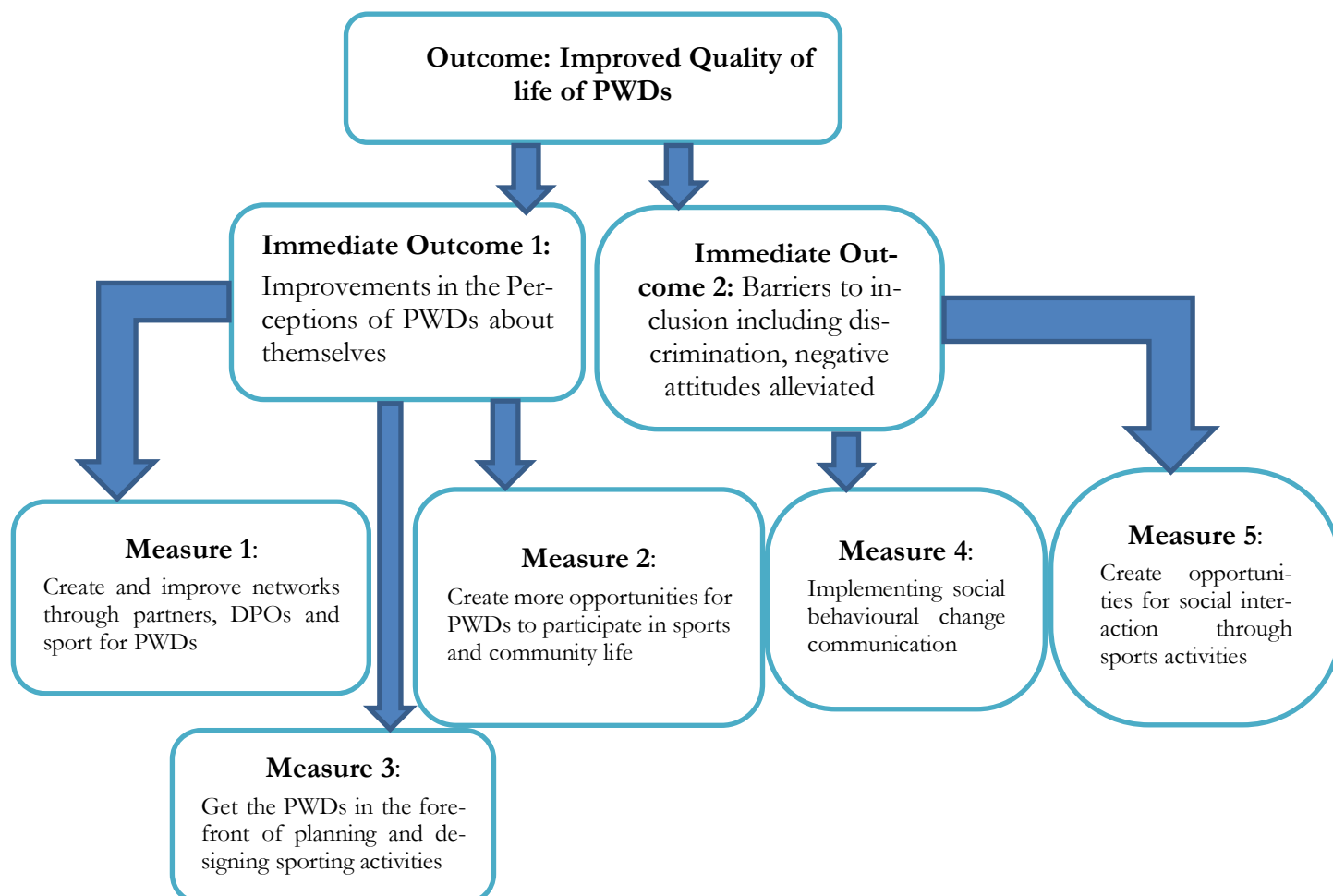
Sports has been recognized globally as having the potential for fostering social change, it has the following attributes: It builds up life core principles; tolerance, respect, leadership skills, it strengthens inclusion for groups that are marginalized as a result of religion or cultural barriers and it grants all and sundry to experience some form of equality and empowerment (Kay and Dudfield 2013b). In respect to these attributes and in correspondence with UN

CRPD, the Australian Government's Programme and the Australian sports commission (ASC) resorted to creating a joint 'Development through sport' strategy as a performance guide for a successful execution of the Australian Sports Outreach Programme (ASOP) (Devine, Alexandra et al. 2018). The reason behind this was to improve on social and developmental yields via the use of sports.

The DTS strategy consisted of two major goals; Optimum health as regards alleviating non-communicable diseases and Enhanced quality of life for PWDs. To achieve these goals, a Theory of change framework was introduced (Devine, A. et al. 2017). As stated in the United nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) companion guidance (2017), A theory of change is a framework that seeks to interpret how given interventions are expected to yield specific goals or outcomes in conformity with development in tandem with visible evidences. Furthermore, the TOC framework highlights possible solutions to tackle problems and challenges that pose as setbacks to progress. A TOC was developed for the two expected goals and the TOC for the second goal had two other expected outcomes of which are very relevant to this study; 1) Improving PWDs perceptions about themselves and 2) Alleviating barriers to inclusion. These goals collaborate with a number of measures to monitor implementations like putting PWDs in the forefront of planning and designing sport activities. See Figure 4 below.

This study will be using this framework to fill in the knowledge gap whether participating in sports fosters inclusion and improves the quality of life of PWDs in the Nigerian context as well as explore the challenges encountered while participating and planning sports competitions.

Figure 4: Development through sport Theory of Change framework



Source: Devine, A. et al. 2017

2.7 The International Classification of functioning (ICF) Framework

The United Nations Inter-Agency on Sport for Development and Peace maintains that the positive relationship existing between sport and health suggests that boosting sport participation should become a priority in government policies in addition to concerned stakeholders in both sport and health sectors⁷. Furthermore, the Agency together with other international bodies like the International Paralympic Committee has called together all concerned

⁷ United Nations Inter-Agency on sports and development 2009

partners for the establishment and implementation of sport-oriented opportunities and activities. The ICF happened to be one of such frameworks (Wilhite and Shank 2009). The ICF is a versatile attribute of disability that measures the functional, political and highlights health as an element when describing the relationship that exist between the person and the environment (Scherer et al. 2006).

For people with disabilities, the ICF was designed to serve as a platform upon which support systems and services are set up for their benefits ⁸. Furthermore, the ICF seeks to provide a common ground as touching health related issues and enhancing the communication level amongst the disabled, health care givers and policy makers. It is a framework that can be used as a tool for rehabilitation purposes, policy formations, circulating information pertaining health boosting activities and the importance of environmental factors, both social and physical in enhancing or deteriorating the health of people with disabilities. The ICF is of utmost importance to the sport sector in its entirety whether in recreational activities, elite or competitive sport or in administering therapies. As stated by Schere et al(2006), the ICF framework views inclusion, performance and participating as the main objective and not just the amplification of functional capacities.

This framework is centred on the relationship that exist between the bodily structure of an individual and the social activities they partake in. PWDs access to sporting activities entails grasping how sport activities affect the body through personal and environmental factors and how this in turn influences their social participation (Misener and Darcy 2014). The purpose of using this framework is to understand how participants seek and maintain their health through sport.

⁸ World Health Organization. ICF: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. Geneva: WHO; 2001

2.8 Chapter Summary

This Chapter explored various literatures and theories on which the argument for this study was made. It discussed the different models of Disability as to understand better what disability is all about from different perspectives. It also discussed the link between participating in sports and inclusion and other social and physical benefits accrued to participants from previous studies. The TOC and ICF frameworks were useful analytical frameworks that were used to throw more light on the perceived benefits of participating in sports for PWDs in this study and feasible ways of tackling the challenges they face.

Chapter 3: Disability in Nigeria

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss disability in the Nigerian context. It will review the historical background, cultural practices and perceptions as well as the institutional legal provisions and policies in place. A brief history of the Paralympic games will be delved into, in addition the success and downside story of the Paralympics in the Nigerian context will be explored.

3.2 Cultural practices and perceptions of PWDs

Nigeria is rich in various resources as well as in cultures and traditions. For the PWDs, they are sometimes supported by their immediate and extended family members but in some cases, these support systems encounter a lot of difficulties while catering for their needs all due to discriminatory practices inherent in customs and tradition. Some individuals portray positive attitudes but oftentimes, the contrary is the case because they are viewed from the point of the charity model. This is not only peculiar in Nigeria, going down memory lane, in the old cities of Athens and Spartan, children with disabilities were treated with so much disdain all because the ruling class wanted to get their cities to be free from supposed “defective children” who were referred to as half-human. Likewise, in the city of Rome, PWDs were used as a form of entertainment for the guests of the elites and in the case of the mentally disabled children who did not meet up with set requirements, there were cages made just for them and in other cases, they were abandoned to roam about Haruna (2017). In addition to this practice, Aristotle had deafness grouped in the same category as mental impairment and Spencer made life unbearable for the disabled by initiating the survival of the strongest (Kanner 1964).

In the Nigerian context, disability can be culturally interpreted through several lenses such as via the religious lens (as a curse from a supernatural being), witchcraft and these beliefs are suggested to be the causes of disabilities and thus a family with a disabled member in a bid to address the situation goes ahead to seek divine help by making diabolical offerings and prayers to supposed gods of the land. In addition to offered prayers, a typical Nigerian family will make efforts to keep the affected member away from the public eye to avoid being discriminated against and made jest of (Akhidenor 2007). Another belief as identified by

Okafor (2003) as seen in Etieyibo (2016) portrays PWDs as outcasts supposedly serving punishments for the offences committed by their forefather. They are also viewed as being hopeless and worthless and since they lack the complete components of a human they are used as sacrificial lambs to some deity in order to become wealthier (Abang 1988). Disabled persons with angular kyphosis and albinism are often killed with the belief that their remains can be used as rituals for political purposes to influence their wins during elections or as a means to prolong their lives Anumihe (2008). As stated by Nkanga (2002), sometime in the year 2002, a man from the southern part of the country, Akwa-Ibom was arrested, he laid claims that he was in the business of kidnapping and trading the human parts of people with angular kyphosis for rituals. Another practice that is prevalent in Nigeria is that of employing disabled children for alms, using them to beg on streets as to attract the sympathy of passer byes. As it is in Nigeria, parents are highly respected and it is a child's obligation in most cases to obey every order from them irrespective of the motive and a failure of a child to do so, he or she faces severe punishments like being wipped or denied food and in the case of a disabled child, can be sent away (Etieyibo and Omiegbe 2016). With this scenario in mind, some parents of the disabled take advantage of this and send their children out to streets and high roads where they can be seen by road users to beg for alms Omiegbe (1995). In all these, the family fails to put into consideration the economic, social and developmental needs of the affected member.

Yet another practice, this time in the South Eastern part of Nigeria, as deduced by a study by Nwokorie et al. (2019), In the past, anyone with a disability is not allowed to offer prayers, for instance prayer for progress to a supreme being because they are seen as being incomplete or unclean and with that their prayers will not get to the ears of their god. He further gave an insight on how the disabled are used as political campaign tools during election periods. The programs are usually termed "empowerment programs" when politicians console the disabled community by telling them "the government has not forgotten you", afterwards some household essentials are shared amongst them and that is it for another 4years. Another commonly practiced stigmatization act is the change of the identity of PWDs. Once a person has been identified with an impairment, the individual's identity changes, the public make derogatory statement for instance the PWD is no longer referred to as Mr. C. but Mr C. the one hand man or Mr C. the deaf and dumb, this practice spells exclusion in every sense. Worthy to note, Fathers from the North western part of Nigeria who had children with disabilities were found to have more tolerance and affection towards their children compared to the mothers (Omoniyi 2014). This was assumed to be as a result

of the burden of “motherly duties” which rested on the mothers that could eventually lead to a burn out. Furthermore, the mother’s unfavourable attitude was also linked to the disappointment of not having a normal child, this weighs them down and since it is in line with the Nigerian culture for children spend more time with their mothers, their emotions often play out negatively without them knowing. The parents indeed suffer a lot of exhaustion and despair. Having looked at the precarious positions that most PWDs in Nigeria find themselves in, they are forced into living in fear (Odejobi 2010).

The discriminatory practices against the disabled have been discovered to be attitudinal, environmental and institutional (Harris and Enfield 2003:11). All three sadly resides in the Nigerian context. The PWDs are discriminated against attitudinal as seen above when the non-disabled community who sometimes use derogatory statements or exclude them from social activities because of they are perceived as useless. Environmental based discrimination exists when public buildings like hospitals and schools, transport systems are not made disability friendly. In a study done by Bombom et al (2016) in Jos Nigeria, he stated that societal injustice and exclusion against the disabled is manifested in the inaccessible nature of the transport facilities. In some cases, even when they can afford to their transport fare, they are ignored by commercial buses and taxi drivers. Institutional discrimination is made manifest on the side of the Government heads when they fail to enact laws in favour of the disabled and in Nigeria, the failure of the Government legislation to prioritize implementing the UN CRPD rights is a good example.

These practices ought to be terminated because it tarnishes the images of the PWDs and stripes them off every form of dignity. Furthermore, it counteracts their rights as stated in the United Nations CRPD as well as in the Nigerian constitution which guarantees them the rights to freedom of discrimination. In order to cub these discriminatory practices, stereotypes and ensure the inclusion of the PWDs, the Nigerian Government need to be proactive through legislations should pass laws to redress the wrong socio-cultural perceptions and stereotypes. Efficient measures should also be utilized in line of enlightening the public on the need to treat the disabled equally and integrate them into societal activities (Etieyibo and Omiegbe 2016).

3.3 Historical Background/Institutional Actors

Nigeria is a country in West Africa, the 14th largest country in Africa housing a population of over 140million⁹ with one of the most rapidly growing population of about 371 ethnic groups with the three most populous being the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. ¹⁰ Since she gained her independence in 1960, the various ethnic groups in existence have pointed accusing fingers to the Nigerian Government of practicing marginalisation to the extent that in between 1967-1970, the Eastern ethnic group (the Igbos) threatened to break out and form its own boundaries (Akhidenor 2007). Furthermore, the Hausa group accused the then President, Olusengun Obasanjo of side-lining the Northerners by not giving them seats in political positions (Ukiwo 2003). In spite of all the marginalisation protests, the PWDs are the most marginalised with the least legal covering (Mitra et al. 2011). This is sadly the case despite their large population numbering 14million in Nigeria with all ethnic and religious groups duly represented.

Haruna (2017) pointed out that as asserted by the United Nations, one person out of every ten in Nigeria has a form of disability and there has been a salient cry by this marginalised group of people to the Nigerian government concerning the continuous exclusion from social, education and economic activities, they lament that matters concerning them are not mainstreamed in the affairs of the country and as asserted by the Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child by Nigeria(2005), the disabled suffer a lot of stigmatization and discrimination from both families and the society at large. However, disability as some studies have shown, roots up as a result of poverty and this in turn inhibits victims from accessing general amenities and resources like education, employment opportunities, medical care and the likes (NILS 2010, Haruna et al 2017 and Mitra et al (2011).

A study done by the Leprosy Mission Nigeria reported that 84% of the disabled participants were surviving on an income of less than \$1 a day (Smith, N. 2011). Living in poverty in the absence of any form of disability can lead to one developing a disability because of the lack of adequate food and nutrition, poor medical and infrastructural services, unsafe environments and these are all prevalent in developing countries, Nigeria inclusive which gives rise to Functional and physical disability (Smith, N. 2011). As asserted by Amusat (2009) mainstreaming the concerns of the disabled into development agendas will further foster poverty alleviation in developing countries since disability has a formidable influence on both

⁹ UNPD. World Population Prospects: the 2004 revision. New York: UN Population Division. 2005.

¹⁰ Nigeria Country Report June 2018

the individual and the community at large. However, over the years the plight for equal rights seem to have been adhered to, in 1993 the Nigerian with Disability Act (NWDA) was birthed but with no policies backing its implementation (Ofuani 2011). The act asserts that PWDs should always be given equal privileges and opportunities with other Nigerians in every activity, its enactment was to foster the economic empowerment of the disabled but in actual sense, nothing in relation to that law was implemented.

Section 42 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution¹¹ provides that every citizen has the right to the freedom of any form of discrimination, this implies that PWDs ought not to be stigmatized in their bid to live a well-meaning life. The political will for enacting these laws are still lacking. In 2000, two bills were passed; one for the provision of assisted facilities in public buildings for the handicapped and the other for the establishment of a national commission for the disabled to take up the responsibility of fostering their inclusion in education and social development but all was fruitless (Ofuani 2011). The Nigerian government on the 24th of September ratified the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and still in the absence of declarations and reservations. Notwithstanding the ratification of the CRPD, a National disability bill is yet to be enacted into law in Nigeria. Several bills to ensure the inclusion of PWDs were passed under the leadership of both President Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan and as at November 2017, the bill was yet to be signed.¹²

The affairs of the disabled in Nigeria are foreseen by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social development, this involves formulating policies in favour of PWDs. In reality, the allocation of budgets and funds are quite low and because of this, the attention given to disability matters by the Ministry is very insufficient. On the other hand, the Legislators made up of the Senate and House of Representatives are also involved in disability related issues. In recent times, the Senate President called for a meeting with the DPOs to address the reason behind the unsigned bills and as it is their habit to make promises, he made a promise to follow up on the matter.¹³ Another body that's in charge of disability matters in Nigeria is the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD), this association came into existence in 1992 at a conference in the University of Jos. It was established as a voice for the PWDs as regards advocating for the rights and privileges due to them.

¹¹ Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria 1999

¹² "National Assembly urged to fast track Disability Bill for assent", PM News, January 2018, <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2017/12/12/national-assembly-urged-fast-track-disability-bill-assent>

¹³ Nigeria country report, June 2018

According to the Nigerian country report (2018), the Organization of recent have kicked off some form of advocacy for the Nigerians with disabilities addressing mainly their involvement in electoral processes and due access to education. Clearly, efforts to put the PWDs in the forefront of the country's development agenda has yielded no progress. Judging by a study conducted by Ibekwe et al. (2018), majority of the respondents reported that the reason for the slow progress of inclusion is because of the ignorance on the part of the policy makers to see the abilities imbedded in the disabled which agrees with the study done by (Lang and Upah 2008). According to their findings, Nigeria has chosen to adopt the charity model approach of assistance and pity instead of implementing laws that foster social inclusion and address the many issues against the disabled; the discriminations, lack of assistive devices and social protection, ignorance and the likes.

Until there is a reorientation of the perceived negative perceptions about the disabled and implementation of laws guaranteeing total inclusion, policies and efforts aimed at empowering the PWDs will continuously yield no results. Many of PWDs have got the potentials and ability to be gainfully employed as a way of raising their self-worth and provide for their families but they lack worthy assistance from the Government, this sometimes forces them into roaming on the streets and begging alms for survival. In other that their voices may be heard they proceeded to forming associations to speak up for their rights (Haruna 2017).

Concerning the Disability bill, advocates of the disabled believe if it is signed in it will pit a lot of mishap in the past, it is believed that the bill will firstly, set Nigeria in alignment with the UN CRPD, which will in turn make them more committed and responsive to obligations set in the bill. Secondly, the bill in line with article 4 of the CRPD kicks against every form of discrimination against the disabled and approves that all disabled be treated and served their equal human rights. Thirdly, in the 33rd section of the bill, it provides that challenges facing children with disabilities be handled with utmost care and urgency, lastly the bill supports the creation of a body that will head the task of formulating and executing government policies that govern the educational, health, social and developmental aspects of disability (Asiwe and Omiegbe 2014). Nigeria for some reason has still not adhered to the lamentations of the disabled in spite of the efforts made by the United Nations and other International organizations, sadly excuses like lack of funds are what you hear from authorities who earn outrageous salaries and for that to be said of a country so richly endowed does not add up (Haruna 2017).

To foster the well-being and integration of PWDs in Nigeria will mean creating framework that ensures their functioning and full participation in their immediate community and society at large. Promoting their sport participation has been found to be an important factor that can contribute to the reduction of stigmatization and discrimination against the disabled as well as facilitate their full inclusion and contribution to economic, social and political matters of their society.

3.4 Paralympic sport

The convergence of disability and sports took place in the 20th century and since then it's a movement that has opted to pitch its tent worldwide. As the movement grows so has the disability sport organizations grown too. The hidden talents of people with disabilities have come to light, they are duly recognized, this time not because of their disability but because of their inbuilt ability and their accomplishments have expanded as well (DePauw and Gavron 2005). The area of sports that are attributed to the people with disabilities is known as "Disability sport" and as asserted by DePauw et al (2015), it is a sport that is set out and practiced primarily by athletes with different forms of impairments (Physical, intellectual and sensory).

Disability sport is a platform for a recognized sport competition for PWDs, this is made possible via utilizing the grouping system in a bid to validate the eligibility of participants in accordance with the severity of impairments and their limitations (Howe and Parker 2012). There are two common types of Disability sports; the special Olympics and the Paralympics according to Brittain (2016), but for the sake of this study my focus will be on the Paralympics. Elite sport competitions are usually organized by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) for people with various variations of impairments. The Paralympic sport started from a humble beginning in 1948 in the heart of England, was first seen in the same light as an Olympic competition in Rome about 1960 and since then has emerged all over the world as one of the biggest sport competitions, in 2004, it had well over 4000 athletes from more than 120 countries in attendance for the Paralympic games in Athens, Greece (Nixon II 2007).

Globally, PWDs continue to encounter hinderances in the aspect of gaining equal rights and full integration into the society. As a result of these hinderances, disability sport is used in changing the narratives of disability amongst the able-bodied individuals. Therefore, recent studies, (this thesis inclusive) seek to highlight the empowerment ability inherent in sport

competitions and the role it plays in enabling PWDs gain control over their body, conquer stigmas and stereotypes as well as mentally change their identities. Over the years, disability sports have grown from a rehabilitative procedure and has an ever-increasing focus in empowering disabled athletes. With its popularity and ability to cut across diverse language and cultures, sport is seen as the most appropriate instrument for reframing narratives about the disabled and in addition fostering their inclusion (Farkas et al. 2012).

In Nigeria, some sport organizations for the disabled have also been formed, we have the Paralympic athletic/sport federation, Special Olympics Nigeria and the Amputee National football team. The Nigeria disabled had their first performance at the Summer Paralympics in 1992 where they grabbed 3 gold medals, likewise at the Summer Paralympics in Sydney 2000, they walked away with 7 gold medals and in the Summer Paralympics 2016 that took place in Brazil, they also claimed 36 gold medals, 18 silver medals and 16 bronze medals and many triumphs that have been made. The wide spread of the Paralympic Special sports is an evidence that people with disabilities can be proficient in the area of sports. For the disabled, participating in sports has been reported as “Life saver”, in that it increases their self-worth and esteem, grants them a sense of achievement, improves their health and increases their rate of independence as well as mobility and many more.

Given the right opportunities, in the absence of obstacles in public spaces, offices, transport systems, sport arena, the disabled persons can be very resourceful and productive thereby integrating well enough into the social life. Mainstreaming their needs by getting policies to work on their behalf will go a long in informing the societies and making them more people centred. With the empowerment potentiality of sports competition being questioned, the International Paralympic Sport Science Committee has enlisted it as a major topic to be researched (Nixon II 2007).

Chapter 4: Presentation of findings and analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter present the research findings from the observation and interviews conducted during the field study. In discussing and analysing the findings, I will use the concepts outlined in previous chapters for my analysis. I will explore the research question from the experience of 11 individuals interviewed (6 males, 5 female). Among the 11 respondents, 3 are officials of the Paralympic sport committee.

This chapter is made up of four main sections. The first section (3.2) presents some of the experts from the interview on the narrow path they had to walk through while growing up which centres a whole lot on the concept of the Medical, Charity and the Social model of disability. Following are three sections which discusses the findings based on the impact of sport participation and barriers in four themes; 1) Inclusion and a sense of community 2) Enhanced health 3) A sense of accomplishment and pride 4) The hurdles and then the last session gives a summary.

4.2 Having to walk the narrow path

Disability has become a universal issue. The affected number of persons who are disabled are increasing globally on a daily as a result of accidents, hereditary conditions which all contribute to physical and psychological limitations. This lead Smart (2016) to posit that PWDs go through a lot of exclusions in the society and are not allowed freedom of expressions due to them as citizens and as such represent a minority group, these can be attributed to the Social model of Disability that suggests that the society should be blamed for the continued existence of disability and as posits by (Moss et al. 2017:1), socio-cultural challenges in the likes of stereotypes, stigma, discrimination towards people with disabilities both by the public and the exclusive disability laws exist and this originates from the Medical and Social model of disability which narrows down to the bodily structure and the environment.

Majority of the participants that were interviewed had the same story of being shunned, treated prejudicially and looked down on by members of the society and this sometimes made them feel less of humans. During the interviews, it was discovered that experiences of PWDs were different in accordance to age, gender, the type of disability as well as the family one was born into. Five (5) of my respondents acquired their disability at an early age due to

polio and three (3) others acquired theirs later in their life via accidents and injuries, worthy of note is that different stories and narratives were peculiar to different individuals. Below are excerpts from the participants about the stigmas and discriminations they had to put up with as PWDs and how they resorted to keeping their heads up. Emeka is one of the participants, 23 years old and a Paralympic athlete champion

“I was only Ten years old when it happened, I woke up on my hospital bed and it was like I was having a nightmare” ...seeing my left hand wrapped up half way and I could only but think that my whole world had ended. I went back to school the next year with a lot of stares as expected, pity parties here and there, some teachers being typical Nigerians were of the opinion that there was no need for me to still be in school, making me feel like a burden but then I had my Father (of blessed memories) who stood by me and turned deaf ears to their ill talks and instead enrolled me in another school after many trials. I must say, it was quite a tough journey for me accepting my fate of being a “one hand man”. The first time I went with my parents back to the village after my accident, again mouths wagged that the sins of my father had visited me; some others said maybe he had used my hand for rituals considering things were pretty rough for us that period...it went on and on”. My Father before he passed on, will us tell me, “my son, you can do absolutely anything.... he was indeed my ROCK!”. (Emeka, Paralympian, in an interview on the 12th of August in National stadium Surulere, Lagos.)

Among the causes of disability, Poliomyelitis was the most reported cause by participants. Poliomyelitis is also known as polio or infantile paralysis and it is highly infectious viral disease caused by a poliovirus. It affects mostly the muscles which leads to a paralytic impairment (Gargoles, 2012). The polio can be prevented using polio vaccines but has no cure. One of the victims, Aunty Dee, a world heavy weight champion had this experience to share

“Growing up wasn’t easy at all, from what I heard from my aunty, my mum couldn’t stand the sight of me, so she fled leaving me in her care. Fast-forward to some years ago when I had suitors coming my way, you know how it is in Nija (Nigeria) naa, no mother wants her son to bring back a handicap as a wife, I was seen as half a woman, one of my supposed mother in-law unknown to her, ease dropping on one of her phone calls she told the person at the other end of the call how her son brought home an “osu” (meaning a cursed person) to marry, tufiakwa!!! (translated God forbid!!) She exclaimed. I had this sort of experiences times without number till my darling Oga finally came my way and yes, I met him when I came over to Lagos to participate in sports. Honestly, if not for God’s mercies I would have been dead” (Aunty Dee, heavy weight champion in an interview on the 19th of August 2019 in National stadium Surulere, Lagos.)

Another polio victim Musa pointed out

“Hmmm.... In my own case I was used to beg for alms in the Northern part of Nigeria where I grew up, it was against my will but then I had no say, remembering it now, it is funny but then it wasn't” (Musa, Heavy weight lifter in an interview on the 19th of August in National stadium Surulere, Lagos).

The Charity model of disability comes to play here where the disabled are belittled to the mere level of being pitied and cared for, they are seen to be of no good. Aunty Dee's story shows that she was not deemed fit to be a spouse talk more of being able to mother a child. As well as in the case of Musa, he was used as a tool for begging for alms. In addition, some cultures till date, are not well informed about disabilities, their causes and the solutions that can be proffered and this lack of knowledge results to Stigma which is a great barrier to social inclusion, and it needs to be addressed in every way possible as to let the people with disability live fulfilled lives (Abang 1988 and Tebbutt et al (2016).

4.3 Inclusion and a sense of community

In correspondence to the Development through sports TOC Framework and as the interviewees attested to, participating in sports improves the quality of life of the participants and according to Fleming et al (2013:21), QOL can be interpreted as a mix of functioning, daily living activities, community participation and environmental boost. Using the sport for development theory framework, Lyras also attested to the fact that Sports has the potential to improve on social and personal developmental outcomes, can guarantee strong commitments of lasting friendship as well as enhance ethnic cooperation (Lyras and Peachey 2011:318).

Going by the ICF framework definitions, Activities includes participating in activities and participation on the other hand entails inclusion, being accepted in a group and having unhindered access to required resources. This also supports a study by Milner et al (2009) where one of the participants narrated that finding a meaningful relationship required that one migrated from the known people and places to shared or public spaces (Milner and Kelly 2009). Instead of staying in isolation, coming together with people of same identity, like minds and experiences, disability takes on a new look of “ability”, it not only paves way for international outings it also provides an opportunity where others are motivated and educated; disabled or not (Forber-Pratt 2015:11).

Furthermore, it gives them a sense of not being “In” the society but being “part of” the society. Sports has the unique ability of integrating PWDs by providing an avenue for oneness amongst members of the group and positive social connections in the absence of every form of prejudice (United Nations. Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace 2003). After the interviews, one major theme emerged as one of the benefits of participating in sports was having to belong to a ‘Family’ and having a sense of inclusion, they participants spoke about meeting people and belonging to a larger group. One of the athletes with a birth defect, Chioma went on to say;

“aah, my dear, one thing that joining this sport competition did for me was bringing me together with this wonderful people you see here, you know how they say that your brothers and sisters are not the only ones connected to you by blood abi? These ones here eeh, they’ve been like brothers and sisters to me. Before I came here, I always spent time in my shop where I sold provisions to help myself, I hardly had any friends to talk with. You can’t imagine how happy I was when I came here and saw people like me, some even had worse cases than myself but then the way they cheered each other while training or even made jokes made me forget I have any issues” (Chioma, Athlete with a birth defect in an interview on the 13th of August at Teslim Balogun stadium Lagos).

Angela, one of the polio infected Tennis champion expressed that she always felt at home with her team members and always looks forward to coming for trainings, her spirituality also formed part of her experience

“I am always very relaxed and comfortable here, I am myself and that’s one of the important things in our lives, being in places and with people that we feel comfortable with and in places where we can add value like every normal person. There was a time I even thought of committing suicide, hmm...nne you won’t understand. When I was little, people will imitate my movement and all, but since I started coming out to play with the rest of my fellow disabled, knowing our predicaments, we encourage each another and that goes a long and you know what bible says ‘Iron sharpens Iron’ that is really true my sister”

(Angela, Tennis Player with a Polio defect, in an interview on the 13th of August at Teslim Balogun stadium Lagos).

Emeka being the only child of his parents, referred to his team players and coach as ‘Family’ “These people here are one of the best things that ever happened to me in my life” (Akin, Tennis player, in an interview 13th August 2019 at Teslim Balogun stadium, Lagos).

4.4 A sense of Accomplishment and Pride

“Beyond limitations, all I want to do is Win”

(Emeka, Paralympian in an interview on the 12th of August in National Stadium Surulere, Lagos)

According to Lyras (2007), Sports for Development TOC is defined as the use of sports to effect a positive change on health, integration of children and youths and then social inclusion of the marginalised and this has proven to be true by the sense of accomplishment experienced by the participants above and as illustrated in fig 2.4. the TOC framework shows that immediate result of participating in causes a change in the way the PWDs view themselves; they are no more moved by the many discriminative stares but by their achievements.

As stated by Martin (2013), the vital psychological benefits of participating in sport activities are improved self-perceptions ranging from global self-esteem to greater specific competence and self-efficacy judgments. Furthermore, Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as a trust in one’s ability to execute an action that will yield a certain outcome. Any person with a high self-efficacy will go extra miles to achieve greater heights, this is solely true in the participant’s (Emeka) case. Participants were emphatic in applauding competitive sport as a positive and constructive pursuit. Sport was described as a context within which one’s world expands, and transformations occur. Emeka, after winning 3 gold medals in the 2017 Paralympic Athletic Competition in Tunisia expressed this by saying

“I don’t focus on my disability; my eyes are on the goal. All I want to do is win. I run with able bodied and sometimes I beat them it can only be God! If you had told me few years ago that I’ll be at this level, I won’t believe you, I am getting better and preparing for the Paralympic games in Dubai, I am hopeful I’ll emerge a winner and In the nearest future, I’ll like to finish go back to school and get a degree and become a competent sport director”. (Emeka, Paralympian, in an interview on the 12th August 2019 at National stadium, Surulere Lagos).

Ifeyinwa, also concurred:

“Seeing myself on Television and newspapers makes me feel so cool, having to go to schools and talk to young girls and boys about believing in themselves, motivating them makes me feel accomplished. If I hadn’t been disabled maybe I wouldn’t have been able to make these positive impacts ‘. Angela also echoed “travelling to Tunisia was the first time I travelled abroad, aaahh aaahh!! who am I? I felt like a champ already even before the competition, hearing that I had qualified for the finals, I trained even more. (Ifeyinwa, wheelchair Basketball player, in an interview 12th August 2019 at National stadium Surulere, Lagos).

Sport has been found to empower people especially the marginalised groups both in developing and developed countries in that it gives the feeling that they are good at something, a feeling of having some value and being able to contribute to their society at large (Forber-Pratt 2015:9). Indeed, for the disabled, it is no different and perhaps even more meaningful because of the powerful stigmas that get debunked through sport. Angela also echoed

“for me more competitions equal more money, I am really looking forward to more!” (Angela, Tennis champion, in an interview on the 13th August 2019 at Teslim Balogun stadium, Lagos).

4.5 Enhanced health

The ICF posits that the body functions are the physiological and psychological functions of the body (e.g., mental, sensory, neuromusculoskeletal), while body structures refer to the anatomical parts (e.g., organs, limbs) and their components. Impairments are limitations in body function or structure that result in a significant loss or abnormality. Participation in sport can tackle progressively specific body function and impairments, helping to enhance functional and structural health (Wilhite and Shank 2009:125). Some other studies have concurred that participating in sports can be a resourceful tool for conveying positive messages about PWDs in order that they may be seen in the light of being fit and healthy. It has the potential to dispel negative perceptions as regards the abilities and health of PWDs and even perceptions held by the PWDs themselves (Wilhite and Shank 2009). Seemingly, Akin expressed that since he started playing tennis, he feels stronger and has a better stamina.

“In the mornings I can play for six hours at a stretch, and no time for any emotional nonsense, and any week I don’t train or exercise, I drag a lot, I feel good about my spotting ability and even though I haven’t worn any medals yet, seeing the performances of my other colleagues and adding to my hard work and continuous training, I know I will someday” (Akin, Tennis player, in an interview 13th August 2019 at Teslim Balogun stadium, Lagos).

Musa added

“I wish I had one of my old pictures, I would have shown it to you, I was becoming really big since I was always sitting in my wheel chair, I wasn’t happy most of the time so I was always eating and earned the title of ‘Biggie’, I also had a bad drinking habit, only me all these things, it was double wahala (problem) for me, until when my friend told me about joining the team, I was reluctant at first but then I thought to myself, what do I have to lose and so I came around and the rest is history. See now, my pot belly has disappeared

and of course I no longer feel dizzy and with the trainings, I am happy I get to do some good to my heart and my liver too because these days I drink occasionally”. (Musa, Heavy weight lifter, in an interview 13th August 2019 at Teslim Balogun stadium, Lagos).

He says participating in sports has helped him achieve an ultimate physical and psychological health.

4.6 The barriers and feasible solutions

Disability is relatable to a complex social construct and in a sporting context, PWDs often face a lot of barriers while participating in sport. They encounter challenges in all facets of citizenship through the lack of policy implementation, discriminatory attitudes, lack of assistive facilities, low budgets and funding, limited access to technologies, and lack of participation in the decision making especially the ones touching their social participation (World Health Organization, 2013). Marginalized populations in some Western countries have received and are still receiving attention in the field of disability sports, there’s still a big gap to be filled in developing countries like Nigeria as regards improving the welfare of PWDs engaged in sports (Misener 2013). Three themes were identified as the Challenges namely; Limited Funding, lackadaisical attitude by the Government towards Disability matters, Exclusion of disabled in leadership positions. For example, Emeka narrated having the challenge of late payment;

“We suffer from what I call the ‘we will pay later syndrome’ which is a general sickness in Nigeria not just concerning the Paralympics. After this last tournament I went for last year, I’m still owed 50% of my allowance. This really discourages athletes and that’s why everybody wants to move out from this country and play for other countries, me inclusive. Imagine that I won gold medals, and the reception from the Government was cold compared to the other countries I competed with, for example, the Iranian athlete that I competed with came out in 3rd position and I later learnt from him that he had a massive reception and his pay too was over \$300” (Emeka, Paralympian, in an interview on 12th August 2019 at National stadium Surulere, Lagos).

Akin expressed his disapproval towards the government;

“The government seems not to care. If they can sign and approve the disability bill, it will go a long way. The disability bill is all inclusive of all physically challenged (within and beyond the sports world). It covers monthly stipends/allowances, full access to all public hospitals and transport systems...and this bill has been around (yet to be completely

implemented) for about 20years (even though it is said to have been signed, it is still yet to be implemented). (even though Lagos state government has already adopted the free transportation aspect of the bill for its disabled using the public transport)” (Akin, Tennis player, in an interview 13th August 2019 at Teslim Balogun stadium, Lagos).

A study done by Forber Prat et al(2015) in Ghana and Bermuda proved that developing countries were not proactive when it came to general matters concerning the disabled, and in sports matter, the case was not different. Emeka narrated he already had plans on ground to leave the country to participate in a European country where he would be valued more and he also showed me pictures of some of his fellow Nigeria athletes who had already changed location and not just, they had also changed their citizenship too. In his words;

“I can’t even commit to participating in this forth coming Paralympic games as a Nigerian, it is not worth it honestly, I would rather port to a place where my value is appreciated, we are also not carried along in leadership positions. If you ask me, fellow disabled will understand better my needs more than an abled bodied and because of this I will like to be a coach in the future. Hopefully I will get the opportunity when I travel out”. (Emeka, Paralympian, in an interview on 12th August 2019 at National stadium Surulere, Lagos).

Sadly, not everyone will have this kind of opportunity that Emeka has and as for the Organizers, they major feedback hinged on Insufficient funding for providing Infrastructures which limits the access of sporting activities to PWDs. They called on both the Nigerian Government and Non-Governmental Organizations to collaborate in order to support the sports for the PWDs. Femi expressed

“The ambitions of the Paralympic sports cannot be achieved without financial support and so the committee is in dire need of support from the government, from corporate bodies/organizations in order to mobilize Paralympic sports participants financially (to competitions), to cater for their daily welfare, to take care of and provide their training gadgets etc.” (Femi, Institutional actor in an interview on the 19th of August in Lagos).

“There is also the question of awareness, a lot of people do not know the sports, even though the PWDs go winning laurels for the country always; Para sports always give the country the name it has in terms of sports”. (Henry, Institutional actor in an interview on the 19th of August in Lagos).

This is true to what Depauw et al (2005:5) asserted; common barriers faced by PWDs while participating in sports include and not limited to lack of awareness on how to get involved into teams, lack of assistive facilities and insufficient information as regards participation available resources. As shown in Moss et al (2017), if these internal and external barriers are

not tackled, it can lead to lack of self-efficacy because they lack the social support and assistive facilities to live a well-meaning life.

Going by the Development through sport Theory of Change framework and the ICF framework, participants were able to share many sides to their own perceptions of disability and sports; through their involvement in teams, their achievements and of course there's always a dark side that comes with progressing. Using the TOC framework, the following can be implemented to tackle some of these dark sides as mentioned by the participants; the first one will be to improve networks through partnering with Disabled people's organizations, since according to Femi

“When the Government says no money, you really cannot blame, they cannot do it alone”
(Femi, Institutional actor in an interview on the 19th of August in Lagos).

As asserted by Khoo (2005) , the increasing challenges facing many developing countries ought to be addressed and this insinuates the collaboration of both Government and non-governmental bodies at different levels. When this is achieved, financial resources are pulled from different sources thereby making desired facilities and sport equipment fostering the participation of sports for PWDs.

Secondly the participant also suggested Including the PWDs in implementation and planning of sports and every other matter related to them. This concurs to the second measure as shown in figure 2.4 and according to a study carried out by Comella et al (2019), giving the PWDs opportunities other than in sporting activities, for instance as coaches or board members will go a long way to foster social inclusion as well as encourage more PWDs to step out and play. Another barrier was that of lack of awareness of the existence of the available sport opportunities (Paralympics) for PWDs, one of the participants complained he was not aware that games for disabled existed until he stumbled onto a random lady who told him about it and that was it (Emeka, Paralympian). Going by the TOC framework, it solicits Implementing some behavioural and social change Communication networks. This will get the word out there; on various social network handles, the radio stations etc. To the PWDs, this will cause them to step out of their homes and participate while for the people without disabilities, it highlights the success of the PWDs, which in turn changes the narrative and perception they have towards the PWDs.

In totality, as it shows in the ICF, Contextual and health factors together with environmental factors such as a supporting social community can foster PWDs participation in sports and this in turn improves physical and psychological wellbeing(Wilhite and Shank

2009). This is proved right by the narratives of the participants and to achieve this, especially the part of enhancing a supporting social environment in Nigeria, there is a need for the government as a signatory to the CRPD, should ensure that enforcement tools are set in place to ensure the effective administration and implementation of the provisions of the CRPD, sanctions should also be put in place for cases of infringement. This will further make the environment a disability friendly one.

4.7 Chapter Summary

From the findings, we were able to see that participation in sports offers not only health benefits and the opportunity for strengthening social networks, this study demonstrates that participating in sports also provides avenue for identity negotiation, resisting the disabilism redundant mentality and forging a stronger sense of worth. These are all all shades of development that are should be emphasized when promoting social inclusion of PWDs. Therefore, a current challenge for sports organizations and disability services is to provide supportive sporting environments that facilitate a variety of possible benefits and individual meanings for people with a wide range of disabilities.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

“We’ve got a special kind of ability...” (Ruphos, Paralympian in an interview on 12th at Teslim Balogun stadium Lagos Nigeria)

This study sought out to answer the main question, why should sports be used as a vehicle to foster inclusion and wellbeing of the disabled in Nigeria, what challenges were being faced and how the existing barriers can be tackled as to enable better participation. In an attempt to answer this question, this study from the voices and experiences of the participants have shown why the government of Nigeria and sport providers should pay more attention to the matters concerning PWDs by expanding sport opportunities for the disabled as a means of resisting the negative traditional stereotype, increasing their self-worth, having better health and self-efficacy. I started out by exploring the experiences of the athletes of various sports using the Development through sports Theory of Change and the ICF framework and with no doubts they proved relevant for this research. The TOC framework helped in framing the benefits accrued to PWDs while participating in sports in line with the participant’s responses, it also identified potential solutions that can be implemented to alleviate barriers. This study proved beyond doubts why participating in sports should be promoted because I can improve the perceptions of the PWDs about themselves, they no longer dwell on their inabilities or disabilities but have learnt through sport to focus on their strengths, and not only that, they see themselves as bonafide and resourceful citizens as well. This is inclusion and development in every sense. Their health too was not left out, the ICF was used for conceptualising health related benefits accrued to PWDs as a result of their involvement in sports and the role environmental factors play in enhancing or depleting the health of PWDs. While Nigeria has made a good move as regards being a signatory to CRPD Act 2008, there is need for further action by implementing this act to increase awareness on the inherent ability of the disabled, to ensure that more sporting facilities and opportunities are made available and that organizational structures and the entire environment is Disability friendly.

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