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**PIETERMARITBURG**

**REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITIES IN ISIZULU LITERARY WORKS**



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**REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITY IN ISIZULU LITERARY WORKS**

**By**

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(i)

**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work in this study is my own and that all sources used have been duly acknowledged and that the study has not been submitted to another institution as requirements for a formal degree.

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**Signature**

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**Date**

(ii)

## **ABSTRACT**

This research seeks to analyse the representation of disability in isiZulu literary works such as novels, drama, short stories, and poems. It identifies the types and causes of disability as portrayed in isiZulu literary works. Since certain types of disability are frequently depicted in isiZulu literature works while others are not, this research then seeks to identify types of disabilities that are most frequently depicted and those that are not frequently depicted in isiZulu literary works. It also identifies the causes of disability in characters.

The research examines the attitudes of characters towards disability in isiZulu literary works. There are diverse attitudes towards disability; this includes the attitudes of the narrators, the attitudes of other characters, and the attitudes of characters living with a disability. Lastly, the research investigates the effects, and coping strategies of characters living with a disability. There are certain effects the characters with disability face, and there are diverse strategies they tend to employ to cope with those effects. The research also investigates those effects, and coping strategies employed by characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works.

This research uses the Qualitative research method. Qualitative research method is a method that is very important if the researcher aims at interpreting, and comprehending the world in which we lived. Qualitative research is a method of analysis used in many different academic disciplines particularly in the social sciences; but all qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the underlying reasons that govern such behaviour.

This research will use a Social Model of Disability theory to provide a proper analysis of aspects of disabilities on which isiZulu literary texts comment.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

People with disabilities are a reality in our country. According to Stats SA (Census, 2011), the national disability prevalence rate is 7, 5% in South Africa. Disability is more prevalent in females than males (8, 3% and 6, 5% respectively). For obvious reasons, the rate of disabilities increases with age, thus resulting in more than half (53, 2%) of persons aged 85 years of age or above, contending with a disability of some nature.

While the Constitution of South Africa stipulates that people with disabilities are entitled to substantive equality; which includes the right to corrective action to overcome the effects of discrimination, there is, at present, no comprehensive legislation for people with disabilities and their rights (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, all new and amended laws should not only aim at ending discrimination faced by many disabled people, but should also promote the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution (Stuart & Tanya, 2001).

Literature, in its role as a mirror of realities in the society, is supposed to portray disabilities as an integral part of the dynamics and diversity that permeates our society. Literature mirrors the community, its great qualities and its ills. In its restorative capacity, literature mirrors the ills of the community to reflect a society that understands its errors and presents appropriate reparations (Blake, 2014). It additionally extends the excellence or high values in the nation for individuals to emulate (Austin, 1998). Literature portrays what individuals think, say and do in the community and is evidently a powerful weapon that can be used to shape society's perceptions and attitudes. By nature, writers are teachers and write because they have something to say to the world and valuable lesson to impart to society. It is then of paramount importance that literature represents, at its best, all aspects of the society, including people with disabilities, in order to have positive impact on people's attitudes towards people living with disabilities.

This research seeks to explore notions of disability and representation thereof in some isiZulu literary works that have been published over the years. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2014: 65) representation is the portrayal of someone or something in a particular way. This study will therefore analyse the manner in which disability features in isiZulu literature and the resultant picture that authors paint with regard to the society's attitudes towards disability.

Cuddigan & Hanson (2001) define disability as an impairment that may be cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical and sensory or some combination of these. It substantially affects a person's life activities and may be present from birth or occur during a person's lifetime. There are diverse types of disabilities which among others, include autism, hearing loss and deafness, intellectual disability, learning disability, memory loss, mental health, physical disability, speech and language disorders and vision loss and blindness (Du Ploy, 1995). This study will be confined to sample forms of disability that are most prevalent in isiZulu literary works.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

This research seeks to comment on the representation of disability in isiZulu literary works such as novels, drama, short stories and poems. This will be done by identifying the types and causes of disability that seem to feature most in isiZulu literary works as well as other forms of disability that authors tend to ignore in their writings. It is hoped that analysis will shed some light on reasons behind the overlaps in the distribution of the types and causes of disability as evident in isiZulu literary works.

The research also intends to examine prevailing attitudes towards disability which manifest themselves in the form of the narrator's tone and choice of words in depicting events and characters in a literary work. Characters, who represent people in real life, can also display society's attitudes and perceptions towards disability. The researcher will therefore consider the behavioural traits of disabled characters themselves and also how such characters are treated by fellow characters in order to ascertain discernable attitudes that permeate texts that will be the subject of analysis.

Lastly, the research is aimed at evaluating the effects or impact of disability on characters and coping strategies that characters employ in an attempt to face life's challenges. As mentioned earlier, writers convey messages and lessons through their writings and this study hopes to find out the lessons that can be derived from representations of disability in selected literary works.

## **1.3 Research Methodology**

This study will use a qualitative research method which, according to Tesch (2013), is primarily exploratory and is used to comprehend underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Creswell, 1998). While both quantitative and qualitative research

methods might be helpful in executing research (Collins, 2003), the researcher has opted to use a qualitative research method since the study will be a textual analysis. Qualitative research method is very important if the research is aimed at interpreting and comprehending the world people live in. A fact that will be valuable in this study's attempt at appreciating and embracing the realities of disability as represented in isiZulu literary works. Qualitative research is a method of analysis that is used in various academic disciplines with a collective aim of gathering an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. This will be very helpful in this study since one of the researcher's objectives is to determine behaviour and attitudes with regard to disability.

### **1.3.1 Research Paradigms**

All research is based on some underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes a 'valid' research and which research methods are appropriate for the development of knowledge in each study. It is therefore important to know what these assumptions are in order to conduct and evaluate any research. According to Hogg & Abrams (1998) a research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that define the nature of inquiry along the three dimensions that are identified by Leedy (2000) as ontology, epistemology and methodology. The nature of this study suggests that the researcher should confine himself to only the methodology part of the three dimensions, particularly because the study is qualitative and aimed at finding truths about disability as represented in isiZulu literary works.

This study will use two research paradigms: positivism / post-positivism and interpretivism.

#### **1.3.1.1 Positivism:**

According to Hogg & Abrams (1998:52), positivism is related to 'scientific method.' Positivists trust that the sociologies can be as thoroughly logical as the common sciences. Theories and 'speculations' can be produced and after that attempt utilizing direct perception or 'observational' research. Positivists are well on the way to utilize 'quantitative' examination utilizing measurable strategies and so forth. Positivism deals with numbers or searches for patterns (Hoepfl, 1997).

#### **1.3.1.2 Interpretivism:**

Interpretive researchers believe that the reality consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world; thus, they may adopt an inter-subjective epistemology and the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed. According to William (2003), interpretivists believe

there is no single correct route or particular method to knowledge. Therefore, the goal of the interpretive research is to understand and interpret meanings in human behavior rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2000). For an interpretive researcher, it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound (Kelly, 1999).

### **1.3.2 Sampling**

A researcher who uses a qualitative research method can use various ways to choose a sampling he/she will use in his/her research. Strauss & Corbin (1990) identify various sampling methods that can be used in a qualitative research such as purposive sampling, quota sampling, snowballing, and convenience sampling.

#### **1.3.2.1 Purposive Sampling**

This study will use a purposive sampling method. Silverman (2000), defines purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, as a type of non-probability sampling technique. “Sampling is used after data collection begins; when you may find that you need to collect additional information to answer your research questions” (Creswell, 1998:24). Patton (1990) states that this method is popular in qualitative studies where researchers identify and select sources that have the required information. Such sources are usually easily accessible to the researcher using limited resources.

Purposive sampling for this study will be on selected isiZulu literature books such as novels, short stories, drama and poetry that comment on disability as part of thematic distribution in literary works. The following texts will be used:

- Novels: Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu (Nyembezi, 1961), Ngiyoze Ngimthole (Ntuli, 1969), Kungavuka Abanguni (Kubheka, 1973), Ifa Ngukufa (Mngadi, 2001), Kuxolelwa Abanjani? (Sibiya, 2002), Bengithi Lizokuna (Sibiya, 2008), Umnyama Ongenafu (Ndlovu, 2009),
- Dramas: Inkinga Yomendo (Dube, 1961), UThemi (Dube, 1968), Izivunguvungu Zempilo (Mbhele, 1973), Aphume Nobomvu (Vilakazi, 1998), Umadakeni (Ngcobo, 2005), Zibambe Ziqine (Qwabe, 2009).
- Short stories: “Izikhwili” (Ntuli, 1969), “Amawisa” (Ntuli, 1982), “Ngamafuphi” (Ntuli, 1985), “Izizenze” (Ntuli, 1986), “Umlabalaba” (Nxumalo, 1991),

“Amalangabi” (Sibiya, 1993), “Amagemfe” (Hlengwa, 1995), “Kuhlwa Ngomnyama” (Sibiya, 2004),

- Poems: As for poetry, the research used the two poems that portray disability, the first one is the poem titled “Isishosha Sakwabo” in the book *Ikhwezi* (Nxumalo, 1965), and the second one titled “Umnkenenezo” in the book *Amehlo KaZulu* (Ntuli, 1993).

#### **1.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods**

There are several data collection methods that researchers and scholars have proposed or implemented over the years in attempt to enhance research feasibility and accessibility. Creswell (1998) suggests that a researcher who uses qualitative research method can choose between narrative inquiry, phenomenology, ethnography, case study and grounded theory. (Groenewald, 1994:47) asserts that “narratives or stories occur when one or more talkers engage in sharing and recounting an involvement or event. Typically, the telling of a story occupies many turns during a conversation and stories or narratives may share common structural features”. Phenomenology is the study of the growth of human consciousness and self-awareness as a preface to or a part of philosophy (Geertz, 1975). A case study is the scientific description of peoples and cultures with their customs, habits, and mutual differences (Greenbaltt, 2001). A grounded theory is a process or record of research into the development of an individual, group, or state over a period of time. Although many call the grounded theory a qualitative method, it is not. It is an overall method. It is a systematic production of theory from systematic research. It is a set of punctilious research procedures leading to the emergence of conceptual categories (Heese, 1979).

This study will use narrative enquiry or narrative analysis. According to Polkinghome (2005), narrative inquiry or narrative analysis emerged as a discipline from within the wider field of qualitative research in the early 20th century. Narrative inquiry utilizes field texts such as stories, autobiography, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos (and other artifacts) and life experience as the units of analysis to research and comprehend the way people create meaning in their lives as narratives. Although there are many different data collection methods, this research will use text analysis/content analyses methods. Kumar (2011) defines this method as the method whereby the researcher reads the literature comprehensively with the aim of collecting data. According to Grace (1965) literature reveals facts, teaches society about life and is important for expressing society’s shared opinions and sentiments.



## **1.5 Research Theories**

Theories assist the researchers in that they know what to look for in their research. Eagleton (2011:23) contends that “theories provide a proper guidance to the researcher.” According to Nkumane (1999), literary theories are not just fashionable ways of analyzing literature but also broaden and develop literary knowledge and thinking. This research will use a Social Model of Disability Theory to provide a proper analysis of representation of disabilities in selected texts.

### **1.5.1 Social Model of Disability**

Individuals with physical and mental disabilities have been depicted in many ways by society over the years – as holy, special and unfortunately, also in many less respectful ways. Several models have characterized the history of disability, particularly in Western societies: the religious model, the medical/genetic model, and more lately the social/human-rights model (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997). These models or constructions of disability have had a profound influence on setting parameters for how society handles people with impairments. The medical model has been the most influential of these models. This model arose alongside what was fully supported by ground-breaking advances in science and medicine. This gave power and influence on the medical professions to dictate the lives of people with disabilities.

According to the medical model, the difficulty of disability is situated within the individual, that is, a person is disabled due to their individual impairments and therefore needs medical interventions to give that person appropriate skills to adapt to society. The model places individuals into medical categories for medical convenience. Doctors distribute categorical labels which carry a social stigma, and these doctors tend to be the adjudicators for resources to aid people with impairments. The medical professions own the knowledge and have the power to oppress people (Turner, 2002).

The Social Model of Disability, theorized principally by the disabled scholar Michael Oliver, is an essential contribution not only to the discussion about the complexity of disability but to our understanding of disability as informed by disabled people’s reflection on their own experience (Thomas, 1999). There are several versions of a social model of disability and there have been disagreements within the disability movement about its precise interpretation (Abberley, 2004). However, there are several central tenets which are common to all versions, and a brief description of these will be given.

According to Grundy (2008), a significant distinction made by all versions of the social model is between impairment and disability. Turner (2002) stipulates that impairment is a condition of the body or mind, such as lacking a limb or being partially sighted; it is an attribute of an individual. Disability is the loss or lack of opportunities to take part in the life of a community on an equal level with others. It arises from the social, economic and physical environment in which people with disabilities find themselves. Burchardt (2004) argues that disability is the outcome of an oppressive relationship between people with disabilities and the rest of society. According to Jaggar & Bordo (2013), the social model is often described in contrast to the individual model, in which limitations in functioning or participation in society are the direct result of a medical condition. The emphasis in the individual model tends to be on curative or rehabilitative strategies—changing the individual to fit society—which implicitly regard the environment as fixed and neutral. In contrast, by drawing attention to economic, social and physical barriers, the social model leads to demands for greater accessibility of buildings, transport and information as well as for measures to counter discrimination in employment and other spheres of activity (Oliver, 1998). The social model of disability will be useful in this research as it provides the researcher a clear understanding of people who live with disability and their representation in literature.

As an expression of disabled people's activism, the social model of disability has influenced the political positions of disability movements all over the world. The social model defines disability as the product of specific social and economic structures aimed at addressing issues of oppression and discrimination of disabled people caused by institutional forms of exclusion and by cultural attitudes rooted in social practices (Terzi, 2004). The social model is a fundamental contribution to our knowledge and understanding of impairment and disability as provided by disabled scholars, disabled people and their movements.

Oliver (2013) stipulates that the social model of disability, however, acts as a powerful and important corrective measure to our understanding of disability, to a simplistic view on the experience of disability and, more importantly, to the oppressive nature of some social arrangements. This is the actual powerful core value of the model, its constant reminder to face issues of inclusion as fundamental moral issues (Stone, 1984). The social model of disability theory correlates with this research as it addresses causes and types of disability, challenges towards people living with disability and causes of disability.

## 1.6 Literature Review

It is essential for a researcher to start by conducting a literature review in order to contextualise his study. Hart (1998) postulates that literature reviews are used to irradiate researchers who have written on a similar subject. This makes it possible to illuminate how much work has been done on the topic and highlights what those who previously researched said and discovered in their research. The goal is not to repeat, but to look at how the study will differ from what others have already expressed and find a gap to fill with regard to aspects that past and contemporary studies have not touched on. Literature review shows a researcher's familiarity and knowledge about a certain topic; it also shows how their research will contribute to existing research (Merriam, 1998).

The bulk of research on isiZulu literature hardly comments about notions of disability that permeates literary texts. While a lot has been researched about characters in isiZulu literature, nothing much has been said about disability as part of character attributes and traits. The most part of this study focuses on isiZulu fiction; therefore, the study conducts a list of dissertations which examine isiZulu fiction that is more relevant to the study. Ntuli (2009) on his dissertation focuses on M.J. Mngadi ability to describe in his novel, although Ntuli's (2009) approach is on Mngadi M.J. character's description ability, his approach is on character's actions and the way they dress, etc. It relates to this research because it also scrutinizes characters and the way in which the narrator describes them, their actions and the way they dress. Part of the study is based on how narrators describe characters with a disability, which shows types of their disability, the way they dress, etc.

Mdletshe (2003) focuses on the depiction of female characters by male and female characters. Njilo (2014) explores the portrayal of homosexual characters in isiZulu literary texts and on the other side; Thabede (2016) focuses on the portrayal of characters with disability isiZulu literary works. All the above-mentioned dissertations irradiate the representation of characters in isiZulu literature, and they relate to this study, because part of the study deals with the representation of characters with disability in isiZulu literary works by non-disabled authors, this includes attitudes the narrators have towards disabled characters when they are writing their fiction, etc.

Hodges (2016) and Lard (2005) write about the disability and poetry. Hodges (2016) focuses on disability in performance poetry, and another Lard (2005) provides the analysis Owen's poem titled "disabled." Hodges (2016) considers performance poetry as a method to explore

lived experiences of disability. He further asserts “that poetry as a medium has the potential to connect with audiences on an emotional level, and through this connection, it touches hearts and minds in a way that traditional academic dissemination of research fails to reach” (Hodges, 2016: 2). Although Hodges (2016) is based on performance poetry, his paper explores issues associated with identity, stereotypes, and representation of disability in poetry which relates to this study because it also explores the representation of disability in isiZulu poetry. Lard (2005) on the other side, provides a critical analysis of Wilfred Owen’s poem titled “Disabled,” he does this by giving the analysis of each and every stanza in the poem. Lard (2005) paper relates to the study because it will also be providing critical analysis of poems with the disability.

Scholarly studies that have been conducted on the representation of disability in literature, mostly in American or English literature, and they all relate to this study because they also examine the portrayal of disability in literature. This portrayal includes prevalent issues towards disability in literature. Although they are based on American or English literature, writings are all the same and serve the same objective of reflecting society. Therefore, they all relate to this because the study examines the portrayal of disability in isiZulu literary works.

Beauchamp (2009) asserts that in American literature, disabled characters are often portrayed as that other and used to generate fear, pathos or hatred. The way in which disabled individuals have been depicted in modern and contemporary American literature has, for the most part, demonstrated women and men, girls and boys with disabilities as feared, reviled, not understood, or pitied. Disabled characters have been used primarily, if not only, to draw out pathos, fear, or hatred, with the disability eliciting the feeling as much as the character. Beauchamp (2009) study relates to this study, because, it also appears that in some isiZulu literature characters with disabilities are portrayed as other, and they are being pitied and often misunderstood.

Banik (2016) articulates that disability is often equated with evil and portrayed negatively, his paper considers the various aspects of representation of disability in literature. According to Cottrell (1998), literature has the potential to influence the magnitude of readers, it can have a great impact on their emotions, their attitudes and can maximize awareness of and reactivity towards diversity. Therefore, the likely influence of that literature shaping attitudes about disability is phenomenal. Moore (2015) takes a closer look at books where the disabled people are stigmatized or stereotyped and where they are adequately represented.

Scholarly researchers explore the portrayal of disability in children's literature, these include among other things, the impact and attitudes towards disability, issues of disability in children's literature. However, although these studies are based on children's literature, they relate to this research because children with disability are also represented in isiZulu literature. The researcher is adamant that the issues of disability in English children's literature also appear in isiZulu literature. Routel (2009) provides an analysis and discussion on impact and attitudes towards disability. Adomat (2014) explores the issues of disability in children's literature and (Susan, et al., 1984) also focus on children attitudes towards disability.

These studies focus on the influence of living conditions and environment towards disabled people. Loeb & Eide (2005) focuses on the level of living conditions for characterd with disabilities, and also argues that, measures of poverty such as education and unemployment remain a challenge for those with disabilities. Maart (2007) intends to examine the experience of disabled people concerning the environmental fences in an urban as opposed to a countryside setting. This research also examines the lives of characters with disability in isiZulu literary works; this includes the way they live, the work they do. It also examines the geographical location of characters with a disability, because it appears that characters come from diverse backgrounds such as rural and urban areas and this might have a certain impact on their lives.

Plenty of books have been published in South Africa on disability, but the researcher takes a closer look at books that have been published pertaining disability in literature. Among those books, there is a book by Adomat (2014), Ayala (1996), Banik (2014), Dayches (2015), Rubin (2015), and Thompson (2009) and finally, a book by Watermeyer (2010). The above-mentioned books focus on disability in children's literature. All these books relate to the study because it also examines the representation of disability in literature, some in children literature and, some in adult literature.

It is clear that there is an obvious research gap. There is no sign of the study that has been conducted pertaining the representation of disability in isiZulu literary work. The researcher conducted an extensive research in dissertations, article journals, books but nothing is found on the topic. The study seeks to address the existing gap by exploring the representation of disability in isiZulu literary works such as novels, short stories, and poems. People living with disability are previously disadvantaged groups, and it is the researcher's view that it is imperative for literature, dissertations, and articles to be comprehensive of people living with a disability. The researcher is confident that the study has cemented a way of writing about

disability and his research will minimize the existing gap. Margo & Mastropieri (2006) stipulates that the literature review is important because that is where the researcher knows where their research fits in, this study is aimed at filling the existing research gap.

Many books have been published pertaining the Social model of disability, which is a theory that will be employed by this research. Among those books, there is a book by Bailey (2000) titled “Learning more from the Social Model: linking experience, participation and knowledge production.” Barnes (2004) “Implementing the Social Model of Disability. Theory and research”. Barnes (2004) “Theorizing & Researching Disability from a Social Model Perspective.” Beresford (2005) “Madness, Research, and a Social Model.” Oliver (2013) “The Social Model in Action: If I had a hammer.” All the books mentioned above focus on the social model of disability Theory. They differ in that some of them link disability and disability experience, knowledge, etc. They all relate to the study because they reflect on types and causes of disability and social attitudes towards people with disability.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

This chapter provides the research introduction. The introduction of research is important, in that, it provides the summary of what the research will be all about. The objectives of the research are provided and the questions that will be asked by the research. This chapter also provides the research methods and theories of the research. Lastly, it provides a literature review.

## **1.8 Structure of the Study**

The chapters of the study are structured as follows:

### **Chapter 1**

This chapter introduces the study, provides a brief definition of the topic and specifies objectives of the research as well as the questions that will be addressed by the research. This chapter also provides the research methods and theory that will be adopted in this study. Lastly, it provides some background to the study and literature review.

### **Chapter 2**

This chapter examines the types and causes of disability in isiZulu literary works.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter focuses on the attitudes towards characters with a disability. This includes the narrator's attitude, the attitudes of other characters and lastly, the attitudes of characters with disabilities.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter investigates the effects of disability and coping strategies employed by characters living with disability in isiZulu literary works.

### **Chapter 5**

This chapter examines the role and status of characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works.

### **Chapter 6**

This is the last chapter of the research. This chapter summarizes the entire study, and provides findings and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### TYPES AND CAUSES OF DISABILITIES

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the types and causes of disabilities in isiZulu literary works. Emphasis will be on how writers depict various types and causes of disability that are prevalent in society and the researcher will consider if what is found in literary works is a true reflection of real life realities that permeate lives in the society.

#### 2.2 Types of Disabilities

According to Henry (2001), disability is an impairment that might be subjective, formative, intellectual, mental, physical and tactile or some combination of these aspects. Disability, in any form, substantially impacts on a person's life experiences regardless of when the disability occurs. While there are various types and causes of disability across the societal spectrum, this chapter will be confined to disabilities that are discernible in isiZulu literary works.

##### 2.2.1 Physical Disabilities

Many causes and conditions that pertain to disability usually restrict physical development and mobility and may result in conspicuous deviation from the expected normal physical appearance and functioning of limbs and other body parts. Disability is usually marked or characterised by an inability to utilize legs, arms, or the body trunk successfully due to loss of motion and firmness of limbs. Dawkins (1996) asserts that physical disability may in some cases result in additional or secondary disability such as speech, memory and hearing defects.

Inability to walk is usually an obvious sign of physical disability. In some cases one can tell from physical characteristics or structure whether a disabled person was injured or was born with a disability. The texts that were analysed for this project either focus on the manifestation of a disability without divulging causes thereof or in some cases depict a type of disability and its causes. In a poem titled "Isishosha sakwabo" (A crippled fellow) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo emphasis is more on inability to walk than the causes of disability.

*"Yeka lensizwa ephuphuzela  
Uboya, amehlo akhany'uthando,  
Enwele zimpisholo' okwelahle,  
Emashiyakaz'abukek'awadeleki;  
Kepha engesenakusukuma nanini,  
Kwanga kayizange yake yasukuma."*



("Oh but this young hairy man  
    With eyes filled with love,  
    Whose hair is black like coal;  
    Whose eyebrows you cannot get enough of looking at  
    He who will never be able to get up,  
    As if he never stood up.")

(Nxumalo, 1965: 5)

All the poet says is that the young man was once able to stand up and walk and while the present is usually informed and influenced by the past, the poet seems to tell the reader that present realities are more worth pondering than dwelling on a past that may no longer be retrieved.

Physically disabled characters are usually wheelchair bound and this is the case in a short story titled "UNqobile" (Nqobile) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo:

*UNqobile wayegqutshwa ngenqola.*

(Nqobile was wheelchair bound.)

(Nxumalo in Ntuli, 1985:101)

The narrator doesn't say much about Nqobile's disability with regard to the cause thereof, except that she is assisted out of the hall in a wheelchair and has a rug covering her lower limbs. A mere mention of the wheelchair is enough information for the reader to know that Nqobile is disabled as wheelchair is always associated with permanent physical disability. This type of physical disability is frequently portrayed in isiZulu literary works and in most cases the causes of disability are provided, with car accidents proving to be a common feature in most texts. Spinal injuries sustained in a car accident sentence a character to a wheelchair for the rest of their lives as can be seen in a novel titled *Kungavuka Abanguni* (Over my dead body) by I.S Kubheka:

*Kwahlaluka ukuthi ulimale umgogodla kwaze kwalimala nomongo,  
okwakukhomba ukuthi noma uNomusa ephilile sekuyoba ngumuntu  
ohlala embhedeni nje ngoba esangezansi wayengeke esakwazi ukusisebenzisa.*

(It became clear that she her backbone and spinal cord is injured, which indicated that even though Nomusa survived, she would be bedridden since she would no longer be able to use her lower body.)

(Kubheka, 1973: 263)

Nomusa sustains life changing injuries after a car runs over her in town. Although in this case, the narrator mentions a bed instead of a wheelchair to which Nomusa will be confined, the extent and resultant inconvenience of her injuries are obvious.

In a novel titled *Ifa Ngukufa* (An inheritance is death) by M.J Mngadi the narrator states that Themba is physically disabled and is wheelchair bound after a car accident:

*Nakuba kwaba yisikhathi kwembulwa kwembeswa kuThemba esibhedlela, kwagcina kungozimakhaza, welulama. Wakhubazeka. Usehamba ngenqola.*

(Although Themba was in a critical condition for a while in the hospital, he eventually recovered. He became disabled. He now moves around in a wheelchair.)

(Mngadi, 2001: 233)

Physical disability and a wheelchairbound character also feature in a novel titled *Umntanami Ongenafu* (No signs of hope) by M.M Ndlovu:

*“Queen mntanami namuhla ubuya kwenu nge-wheelchair ekubeni waphuma lapha sikwendisa uzihambela ngezinyawo zakho.”*

(“Queen my daughter, today you return home in a wheelchair while you could walk when you left here for your wedding”)

(Ndlovu, 2009: 79)

MaZuma is talking to Queen, her disabled daughter after she has been discharged from the hospital where she spent a very long time after a horrible shooting. Unfortunately, there wasn't much that doctors could do to restore her walking, hence she is now confined to a wheelchair. In the text, Queen's type of physical disability is openly stated, she cannot walk and she is in a wheelchair.

In other cases, car accidents result in amputations as in a radio drama titled *Umadakeni* (A hobo) by M.E Ngcobo (2005) where Jabu survives an accident but her legs have to be amputated, thus confining her to a wheelchair.

Gunshot wounds can result in disability. This happens in a drama titled *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe:

*“Odokotela bacabanga ukuthi angasinda. Basola ukuthi uthinteka umgogodla.”*

(“Doctors think that he might survive. They suspect that his backbone is injured.”)

(Qwabe, 2012: 145)

This a dialogue between MaNdlela and a policeman who informs her that her son spine has been injured in a shooting accident and will now use a wheelchair.

In the various texts that were analysed for this research, characters become wheelchair bound after a car accident or gunshot wounds. While this is common in real life, the texts seem to exclude cases where a person is born with some form of physical disability and has to use a wheelchair.

In some cases, such as in the one-act play titled “Iphupho” (A dream) by P.B Vilakazi, the physical disability is in the form of an injury, usually at a workplace. We get this information from the words that are uttered by MaSokhulu, the mother of Mfaniseni who is physically disabled:

*“Kwake kwangibulala ukulimala kwakho.”*

(“Your injury was a fatal blow to me.”)

(Vilakazi, 1998:3)

It is clear that Mfaniseni is physically disabled after sustaining an injury on duty at a mine in Johannesburg. The nature of the injury is not explicitly stated but the fact that Mfaniseni had to quit working after being involved in an accident and becoming disabled, shows the severity of his physical disability. In the one-act play titled “Aphume Nobomvu” (Good Riddance) by P.B Vilakazi Sizwe, in a conversation with other characters, mentions that he is disabled:

*“Ngalimala kanjalo-ke njengoba sengiwunyonga nje olungasebenzi.”*

(“That is how I was injured and became an unemployed lame.”)

(Vilakazi, 1998: 48)

In the above excerpt, the disabled character Sizwe is telling MaSithole and Mthembu about an injury that he suffered in the past. Although the full details of his injury are not indicated, the fact that he is now an invalid, unemployable lame alludes to the extent of the injury that resulted in physical disability and made it impossible for him to continue working at the mine or finding a job elsewhere. Injury on duty is also to blame for the character’s fate in a novel titled *Kuxolelwa abanjani?* (Who deserves forgiveness?) by N.G Sibiya which portrays a character who becomes physically disabled after an injury at work:

*Lwalusabalandele nalapha usizi ngoba bathi befike ngakho kodwa nje*

*uGumede wawa esikhafuleni emsebenzini eMpangeni, wagogeka.*

(Miseries still followed them because no sooner had they settled than Gumede fell From a scaffolding at work in Mpangeni and became crippled.)

(Sibiya, 2003: 69)

Details about the exact cause of the disability are very scanty in “Luphelile” (It is over), a one-act play by N.F Mbhele, where there is a dialogue between Khethiwe and her daughter, Thandiwe. They are discussing Ndumiso, Thandiwe’s fiancé and mention that he has some physical disability:

*“Muhle uqedile phela loya mntwana. Yikho nje ukuthi uhamba kabuhlungu njengoba ajiyazeka nje.”*

(“The poor soul is extremely handsome. Regretably he walks with difficulty since he is disabled.”)

(Mbhele, 1995: 27)

It transpires that Ndumiso lost his legs and uses artificial ones, hence there is a difficulty in walking. Walking with difficulty due to physical disability also features in a novel by C.L.S Nyembezi titled *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon from Pietermaritzburg) in which the narrator describes Diliza, who limps. What is more noticeable in this novel is that other characters describe Diliza exclusively by the way he walks. With regard to this tendency, Gale (2009: 1) observes that “in texts where disabled characters are prominently featured, many are defined almost exclusively by their impairments; with few other resonating characteristics offered.” (Gale, 2009:1). In this novel, MaNtuli describes Diliza to Mkhwanazi, her husband:

*“....indodana kaKheswa ilapha ekhaya. Isabuyile. Yiyo kanye...ilunyonga.”*

(“...Kheswa’s son is here at home. He is back at the moment. Undoubtedly, that is him...he is lame.”)

(Nyembezi, 1961: 107)

Seemingly, as far as MaNtuli is concerned, the most accurate way of describing Diliza in a vivid way for Mkhwanazi is to identify him by specifying his physical attributes; such as the fact that he walks with a limp and is lame. Unlike characters that have been mentioned above, Diliza was born with a disability and has been lame since birth. As alluded to earlier in this discussion, authors seem to shy away from portraying characters who are born with disabilities. While this can be regarded as some bias and stereotyping, it can also be attributed to the didactic

nature of most of isiZulu literary texts. Characters usually become physically disabled as a punishment or retribution of some sort and are deliberately portrayed as such by authors in an effort to convey some lessons about unacceptable behaviour that may result in tragedy in the form of a disability.

### 2.2.2 Mental and Intellectual Disability

Mental disability is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, or mood. Such condition may affect someone's ability to connect with others and function each day. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis (Klein, 2001). Furthermore, intellectual disability (ID), also known as a general learning disability, and mental retardation (MR), is a generalized neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by generalized impaired intellectual and adaptive functioning. It is described by an IQ score under 70 in addition to deficits in two or more adaptive behaviors that affect every day, general living (Porter & Wright, 2003).

IsiZulu authors depict incidences of mental and intellectually disabilities in their various forms. In some cases, this is reflected in the title of a literary work such as in "Isiphukuphuku" (The fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli. While the story is merely about inability to meet acceptable academic performance standards, the title shows that people with such challenges are generally categorised as people with mental defects or retardations. The victim in this story admits and owns up to learning disability but complains that he is regarded as mentally inferior by his peers:

*"Zithi phela ngiyisiduphunga, nakhu mina ngiyehluleka ezifundweni"*

(“They say after all I am a fool, since I underperform in my studies).

(Ntuli, 1969: 70)

Vusumuzi, who is intellectually disabled is discussing the matter with his class teacher, Mr Mgoza. He always gives incorrect answers in class to the amusement of fellow, albeit younger learners who call him dull-witted. His learning disability has resulted in him repeating classes and becoming the eldest in class. In some cases, characters's behaviour is weird and somewhat seems to border on mental disorder of some sorts. This can be seen in "Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo" (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli:

*NguMbuthuma-ke lowo. Awusoze wakwazi asehllose ukukwenza.  
Uqhamuka nokwakhe nje okuxakile.*

(That is Mbuthuma for you. You will never know what he intends to do. He always comes up with something strange).

(Ntuli, 1982: 73)

While the text doesn't indicate that Mbuthuma is mentally disabled, his actions leave much to be desired and the weirdness of his behaviour suggests that there is something wrong with his mental faculty. His wives are always victims of this weird behaviour. In this case, their collective negligence in taking care of household utensils results in him punishing them. While the last punishment was tying them with ropes and forcing them to run around the kraal, today he decides to punish them by milking them in turns, in broad daylight. This is unheard of and can only be attributed to a mental disorder on his part.

Weird behaviour is also a feature in "Ucu" (Love necklace) by N.G Sibiya. In this case, the author alludes to mental retardation to explain why Sicathulo may appear normal but there is something to his behaviour that signifies mental problems:

*Kubuye kuhluphe khona-ke nje ukuthi sengathi zagoloza ukwehla  
zonke emthini.*

(Sometimes there are indications that unfortunately, he seems mentally retarded).

(Sibiya, 1993: 48)

Sicathulo's is able to interact fairly well with other people and even courts local ladies but still there is strangeness or weirdness to his behaviour such as in the way he grooms himself or take care of his clothings. With regard to the latter, he would for instance take his new shirt and resew it, resulting it in having unsightly threads all over. Sicathulo's behaviour and disability, particular with regard to obsession with courting women is similar to Mhlupheki's in *Inkinga Yomendo* (Marriage dilemma) by B.J Dube:

*"Kunalokho mina ngingaxola insizwa ingithumele ngesilima  
esinjengoMhlupheki Ndlovu nje."*

("Instead I would be okay if a guy sends me a fool like Mhlupheki Ndlovu.")

(Dube, 1961: 23)

The above is a dialogue between Tozi and her friend, Gezepi. They mention that Mhlupheki is a mentally retarded, a view that is held by every character in the story. Obviously, his preoccupation with courting all and sundry is evidence that confirms his mental disability although he generally appears normal. Of course, courting or fondness for women on its own

can not be regarded as a sign of mental disability, but the behaviour of the characters mentioned here attest to their mental retardness.

Failure to understand or identify with a person's odd behaviour result in labelling that person as mentally disabled. This is evident in "USofasonke" (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli:

*"Ngamafuphi nje, angikwazanga ukumqonda kahle uSofasonke."*

("In short, I could not understand Sofasonke well.")

(Ntuli in Ntuli & Ntuli, 1986: 11)

This is mentioned by a speaker during Sofasonke's funeral service. Sofasonke has come across as a relatively acceptable member of the community. However, he is an unmarried loner despite his advanced age and his tendency to isolate himself from communal activities and festivities cast some doubts on his mental normalness. For instance, he burns his cat to death after it stole his meat, an action which stable-minded person would not do. The last straw is when he commits suicide by setting himself alight, a fact that confirms that there is something wrong with him, mentally.

Some texts show examples of full blown lunacy where there are no doubts in other characters minds that a certain character is mentally disabled. This can be seen in "Ukunqamuka Konyaka" (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa in which a character with a mental illness or disability is portrayed: (1995:55) portrays a character with mental disability, Mcuphi:

*UMcuphi lo waziwa njengesilima, uhlanya nje endaweni*

(Mcuphi is known as a fool, a random community madman.)

(Hlengwa, 1995: 55)

Mcuphi's mental disability is severe and he is not taken seriously by the community to such an extent that nobody believes what he says no matter how truthful or objective his utterances are. There is a similar case in *Bengithi Lizokuna* (I thought it was going to rain) by N.G Sibiya where we find Nyambose, a mentally retarded character whose condition is discernible from a distance:

*Nebala wayingenisa imoto uNontobeko, wamamatheka ebuka le nsizwa okwase kumcacele ukuthi iphazamisekile ekhanda.*

(Nontobeko drove the car in, she smiled looking at this young man whom it had become clear to her that he is mentally disturbed.)

(Sibiya, 2008: 62)

As in other examples, it is Nyambose's behaviour that betrays his disability. Whenever he sees a car arriving or leaving Ngidi's (a neighbour) homestead, he rushes to open and close the gate. He mumbles inaudibly in attempt to make a conversation. This is why Nontobeko is convinced that he is mentally retarded on the very first encounter with him.

One may mention that most texts seem to suggest that mental disability is a male thing as most characters who suffer from this are male. The only exception is *UThemi* (Themi) by B.J Dube which has Themi, a female character with a mental disability after a tragic train crash:

*“Lezi zingozi, hhayi amanxeba enyama zaguqula sonke isimo sakhe: ingqondo yakhe yonke yagudluka endaweni yayo- ngakho-ke ekwazini kwayo...uThemi akabe esazazi.”*

(“These injuries, not the physical wounds completely transformed her psychological state and Themi could no longer recognize herself.”)

(Dube, 1968: 127)

At first, everyone thought that Themi had perished in the train crash, and it has been seven years since she has been missing. When she surfaces, she doesn't have any recollection of events and details before the crash.

With the exception of Mazwe in *Umadakeni* (A vibrant) by M.E. Ngcobo, characters don't admit that they have a mental disability. In this play, Mazwe seems comfortable with sharing this information, perhaps because it is now a thing of the past and no longer carries the usual stigma attached to mental illness or disturbance:

*“Yindaba ende, Tom, mfowethu. Ngingathi nje bengigula ngekhandu.”*

(“It's a long story, Tom, my brother, I can just say that I have been suffering from a mental disorder.”)

(Ngcobo, 2005: 7)

This is a dialogue between Mazwe and his friend, Thomas. Mazwe was hitchhiking on the highway from Johannesburg to Durban when fortunately, his old friend spots him and give him a lift. During their journey to Durban, Mazwe informs him about the tragedy that has befallen him, resulting in his admission to a psychiatric hospital to get medical treatment for his condition.



From the foregoing, it is quite clear that there is evidence of a variety of scenarios in which we find characters faced with challenges of mental disturbance or disability. In most cases the character may seem normal but their odd behaviour may indicate that they are mentally disabled and other characters or the narrator will comment on this. In all the texts that were analysed for this research, mentally disabled characters are not confined to a psychiatric institution for rehabilitation, but instead roam about and mingle with the community. Their condition doesn't make the community shun or ostracise them, instead they are welcomed to be part of the community.

### 2.2.3 Visual Impairment and Blindness

"Blindness is the incapacity to see anything, even light. If you are partially blind, you have restricted vision. For example, you may have a blurry observation or the inability to differentiate the shapes of objects. Complete blindness means that you cannot see at all and are in total darkness. Legal blindness refers to vision that's highly compromised" (Koester, 1976:54). What a person with flourishing eyes can see from 200 feet away a legally blind person can see only from 20 feet away (De Leo et al., 1999). Some individuals have trouble seeing and visual problems can range from unclear vision to total blindness. Persons with visual difficulties vary widely in their needs, skills, personalities and attitudes.

IsiZulu literary texts abound with examples of characters with visual challenges; ranging from partial to total blindness. In *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli we find Gwaqaza, a character who has one eye or suffers from monocular vision:

*"Elokugcina alikhuluma kimina emva kwecala lakhe elokuthi nje kuyothi  
esephuma ejele angithungathe aziphindisele ngoba ngimkhiphe iso futhi  
ngamehluhanisa nomkakhe uMaZungu"*

("The last word he said to me after his trial is that once he is release from prison, he will search me for revenge, because it is through me that he lost his eye and separated with his wife, MaZungu.")

(Ntuli, 1969: 5)

Dube is talking to his son, Bhakubha and his son's wife, MaZikode. He is informing them about a terrifying dream he has just had. Visual challenges in one eye is also mentioned in "Umnkenenezo" (A melody) by D.B.Z Ntuli:

*"Seziphelile yini iziphalaphala  
Ezizokugaxa ucu nawe uqholoshe  
Ungaze usukele usolinye  
Nalo linomthuqu"*

“Are there no more young beautiful women  
Who will give you a love necklace and make you proud  
That you pursue a one-eyed one,  
And a blurry one for that”

(Ntuli in Ntuli & Ntuli, 1974: 30)

While the lady in this poem is not totally blind, she has a visual challenge in one eye, she may not be perceived as having absolute disability in the strict sense of the world, but this poses some challenges on her ability to see and on her self confidence. She perceived herself as disabled person and she suffers from a low self-esteem. She questions the young man who is pursuing her as to why he would pursue the one-eyed like her. This shows that she does not perceive herself as ordinary young woman, who can be pursued by the young man for love.

A character in “Igebe” (A chasm) by N.G Sibiya is totally blind and needs assistance from a friend to help her walk around:

*“Yelule isandla le ntokazi esanda kungena. Imhole uDudu. A vele ankeme uXolani. Kusho ukuthi uyimpumpu the uDudu”*

(The young woman who has just arrived stretches her hand to lead Dudu.  
Xolani is agaped in amazement .This means that Dudu is a blind person.)

(Sibiya, 1991:35)

The lady in the short story is totally blind, this is explicitly displayed when Xolani, the guy who is fascinated by Dudu’s gorgeousness writes a letter to Dudu to express his feelings about her. When he is about to give to letter to Dudu, the young woman arrives and Xolani become hesitant, and he is astonished when he realizes that Dudu is blind person. This is after this other lady lead Dudu’s out as they are leaving the cafeteria.

#### **2.2.4 Hearing Impairment and Deafness**

“Hearing loss is generally described as slight, mild, moderate, severe or profound, depending on how well a person can hear strengthens or frequencies most strongly associated with speech. Impairments in hearing occur in either or both ears and may be found in only one ear or both ears” Foster (1996:56). This type of disability is very rare in isiZulu literary works, thus giving a false impression that hearing challenges and disabilities rarely exist in our communities. A rare example of hearing impairment is found in “Igebe”, a short story mentioned in the preceding discussion. It is interesting that in this story the author addresses two types of disabilities in one story; blindness and deafness. Xolani, who is deaf, has fallen in love with

Dudu, a beautiful lady he meets in a restaurant. The challenge is that he is too shy and self-conscious to approach the lady and declare his love, so he writes her a note, but when he is about to give her the note, he realises that she is blind and therefore can't communicate with him.

### 2.2.5 Speech and Language Disorders

Palmer & Yantis (1990) assert that speech and language disorders are diverse and can happen at any age. Regardless of the seriousness of speech and language, a person's ability to communicate or speak with others will be affected. "Speech and language disorders can meddle with a person's capacity to comprehend, express his or her considerations or to be understood. Speech and language disorder causes are wide-ranging, they may be present from birth, or they can occur at a young age or later in life due to accident or illness" (Batshaw, 2002:224). *UThemi* (Themi) by B.J Dube portrays a character with speech and language disorder:

*"Cha, Baba, sengidelile. Lo muntu uyagula, mhlawumbe uyahlanya enjalo nje. Yisithulu sesimungulu lesi"*

("Father, I have given up. This person is sick, perhaps she is mentally ill. This is a poor mute and deaf person.")

(Dube, 1968: 59)

Nomasonto was fetching water from a nearby river when a mute young woman followed her all the way home. The woman cannot speak and only nods her head and smiles when they talk to her. This is however a temporary muteness and as events later unfold the woman regains her ability to speak.

There are some texts that mention speech impairments such as stuttering. While this condition cannot be regarded as a disability in the strict sense of the word, it poses challenges in one's ability to speak. In "Amalimi" (Stammers) by N.G Sibiya the author indicates that one is born with a stutter and this can be attributed to genetic traits within one's family:

*"Kwakuze kube ngcono uma ngivakashela ekhayakomame. Yayingexwayekile khona indaba yamalimi ngoba babebaningi abebengingiza njengami, ikakhulukazi umkhulu.*

("It would be much better when I visited my mother's family. They would not mind stammers because most family members stuttered like me; especially my grandfather.")

(Sibiya, 1993:1)

The author indicates in the above text that most of his mother's family members suffered from stammers, which can be ascribed to genetic traits within his mother's family. He also mentions that he would feel more comfortable when he is around his mother's family members with his stutters, than when he was around his father's family where everyone would laugh at his stammering. Although this condition can not be considered as disability, but firstly, it poses challenges in one's ability to speak and secondly, people with stutters suffer from the same stigmatization as people with other disability types.

### 2.2.6 Perceived Disabilities

Perceived disability is where the person does not have a disability meeting the Equality Act definition, yet the other people view him/her as having a disability (Ndagijimanga, 2011). Perceived disabilities in isiZulu literary works is in the form of perceived mental disabilities and perceived physical disabilities. In "Ibhanoyi" (An aeroplane) by N.S Ntuli the author portrays a character with a perceived mental disability:

*"Lisho uliphinde lelo mnewethu. Yikhanda lethu phela leli eligulayo, futhi ligula kabi ngoba ligula ngekhandu."*

("You can say that again my brother. This is our head that is ill, and it is bad because his illness is in the head.")

(Ntuli in Nxumalo, 1991: 21)

This is said by Bhekuyise in response to his brother, Thembitshe. They believe that their brother Zitha has become mentally ill. It is because of the things their brother has said and done. He has told them that he is planning to buy an aeroplane. They now believe that he has become mentally ill because he sold his car to save money to buy a plane. A plane is very expensive, so if someone says that they will buy a plane it becomes obvious that they are mentally disturbed. So, that is why Thembitshe and Bhekuyise assume that their brother Zitha has become mentally disabled.

We find another example of perceived mental disability in "Kuhlwa Ngomnyama" (It is getting late) by N.G Sibiya in which Zakhele arrives at hospital distraught that his brother has suddenly become mentally ill:

*"Eyi, sigulelwa ingane yakwethu lapha."*

("A sibling of ours is ill")

(Sibiya, 2004: 21)

Nduduzo is a character with a perceived mental disability and his brother Zakhele has brought him to the hospital to receive immediate psychiatric attention. Interestingly, it is Zakhele instead of Nduduzo who is mentally disabled. Earlier in the day he received a call from Zakhele's wife to the effect that Zakhele is behaving suspiciously. Unfortunately for Nduduzo, as he arrives to take Zakhele to hospital, the latter insists that Nduduzo is mentally deranged and should be taken to hospital immediately.

Another example of perceived disability is found in "Umdwebi" (The painter) by N.G Sibiya in which MaZikode is worried that her husband, Magendane has become mentally disturbed:

*"Uzimizele impela bhuti. Sengathi futhi kwedlulele kulezi zinsuku.  
Sengithanda nokusola ukuthi ekhanda kakusahambi kahle."*

("He is really determined, my brother. And it seems worse these days. I am beginning to suspect that he has become mentally ill.")

(Sibiya, 1993: 55)

Magendane is not mentally disabled, but his recent actions have left his wife believing that he has become mentally ill. He resigned from work to become a painter. His family is suffering from poverty because he is no longer employed and even whenever he gets money he just uses it to buy painting material. It is only later when tourists come to buy his paintings that his wife realises that he means business and is not mentally disturbed as perceived.

Feigned disability is closely related to the perceived disability since a person may pretend to be disabled and convince or make others assume or perceive him as disabled. "Abanesihawu" (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli portrays a character who feigns disability:

*Ekusondeleni, athole ukuthi yisishosha.*

(As he draws closer, he realizes that it is a cripple.)

(Ntuli, 1969:54)

Pastor Ngwenya is walking to a shop when he sees Shobede sitting on the other side of the road, asking for the money from people. Shobede pretends to be physically disabled and tells pastor Ngwenya a sorrowful story that makes it easier for him to be believed. Shobede mentions that he has been surviving by asking from people, and he has been sleeping under the bridges. Shobede is living with a perceived physical disability, because he is pretending to be physically disabled and other characters believe him. Other characters give him money out of pity and pastor Ngwenya even goes as far as offering Shobede some help him by taking him in his home.

## 2.3. Causes of Disabilities

A cause is “something or someone that produces an effect, results, or condition: something or someone that makes something exist or happen” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2014:5). According to Hahn (1985), there are different causes of disabilities such as those that are environmentally determined, those that are genetically determined and lastly, the unknown causes. With age, the severity of the disability can change.

### 2.3.1 Environmentally Determined Causes

“Environmentally determined causes of disabilities result from an accident, injury, disease or infection, examples include acquired a brain injury, spinal cord injury and diabetes” (Hahn, 1985:22). Environmentally determined causes of disabilities are frequently portrayed in isiZulu literary works. For instance, in “Iphupho” (A dream) by P.B Vilakazi we find the following:

*“Kwake kwangibulala ukulimala kwakho mntanami ezimayini.”*

(“I was saddened by the fact that you were disabled.”)

(Vilakazi, 1998: 3)

This a dialogue between MaSokhulu and her physically disabled son, Mfaniseni. She is lamenting that Mfaniseni’s disability has brought them into poverty. Mfaniseni’s cause of disability is environmentally determined because he was involved in an accident. Mfaniseni was working in a Johannesburg mine when was involved in a mining accident and became physically disabled. This cause of disability where a character becomes disabled after an accident at work and have to quit their job is frequently portrayed in isiZulu literary works. In “Aphume Nobovu” (Good riddance) by P.B Vilakazi, Sizwe elaborates on the cause of his disability:

*“Kulowo mzuzu lo mfokazi okuhanjwa naye akhwele adilike kimina ngomummese. Ngalimala kanjalo-ke njengoba sengiwnyonga nje olungasebenzi.”*

(“At that moment, the man she was walking with stabbed me with a knife. That is how I was impaired as I have become an unemployed lame.”)

(Vilakazi, 1998:48)

The above text is a dialogue between Sizwe, Mthembu and MaSithole. Sizwe is telling them the story of how he became physically disabled. Sizwe was walking in Durban and he met Mavis who was in the company of a man and Sizwe then confronted Mavis to ask her about the stuff she had stolen from his room while they were staying together. The man Mavis was

walking with pulled out a knife and stabbed Sizwe. In *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli portrays the injury as the cause of disability.

*“Nakho-ke ekulweni kwethu ngize ngikwazi ukumuthi xhifi kakhulu esweni ngesidunu sewisa lami. Ngibuye ngiphinde khona futhi”.*

(“In our fight, I was able to pinch him very hard in the eye with the back of my knobkerrie. I pinched him again in the very same spot.”)

(Ntuli, 1969:4)

In the above literary text, Dube is telling the story of the fight that happened between him and Gwaqaza to his son, Bhakubha and his wife, MaZikode. He tells them how he injured Gwaqaza’s eye as he is afraid that Gwaqaza might come after him. Dube pinched Gwaqaza with the back of his knobkerrie in the eye and Gwaqaza was injured, and the injured eye became blind. Gwaqaza is currently one-eye blinded. This cause of disability is part of the environmentally determined because the cause of disability is an injury. Accidents are also a major cause of disability as is the case in *Kungavuka Abanguni* (Over my dead body) by I.S Kubheka where a characters meets with a tragic accident:

*Akaphume-ke uNomusa ebhasini ajikele ngaphambi kwalo angabe esama anqamule umgwaqo engasaqalazanga ukuthi kakukho ngozi yini. Bathi beklewula abantu yabe isimthathile.*

(Nomusa gets off the bus, she turns around in front of it, and she crosses the road without looking if there is any danger. By the time people start screaming the car has already crashed her.)

(Kubheka, 1973: 263)

This accident results in Nomusa becoming wheelchair bound. The wheelchair also features in *Ifa ngukufa* (Inheritance is death) by M.J Mngadi where a car accident is a cause of disability:

*Iza kuye indiza. Uthi uyabaleka, ibe naye shaqa. Kuba ukuphazima kweso, akhubeke, bese iphezu kwakhe.*

(The car approaches him at a high speed. While he is trying the run, it draws near him. In a blink of an eye, he stumbles and the car crashes him.)

(Mngadi, 2001:22)

This is one of the rare cases where a car is used intentionally to kill a person; unlike other cases where a car hits a person by accident or negligence. Themba is a victim of a robbery at his shop and as if that was not unfortunate enough, the criminals decide to run him over with their car. Themba miraculously survives and becomes wheelchair bound. In *Umnyama ongenafu* (No

sign of hope) by M.M Ndlovu a nurse reveals the cause of Queen's disability and why she has to be wheelchairbound:

*"Kunezinhlamvu eziningi impela ezabhajwa emgogodleni ngenkathi edutshulwa".*  
(“Several bullets were stuck in her spine when she was shot.”)

(Ndlovu, 2009:78)

In the above literary text, a nurse is talking to Queen mother telling her that Queen will never be able to walk again. Her mother has come to fetch her after she has been discharged from the hospital. Queen has been shot, and there are several bullets stuck to her spine. The cause of her disability is environmentally determined, because it is an accident that caused her disability. *Kuxolelwa abanjani?* (Who deserve forgiveness?) by N.G Sibiya the narrator unambiguously mentions the cause of Gumede's disability:

*Lwalusabalandele nalapha usizi ngoba bathi befika ngakho kodwa nje uGumede wawa esikhafuleni emsebenzini eMpangeni, wagokeka.*

(They were also suffering from extreme poverty because after they have just moved Gumede fell from the scaffolding from work at Mpangeni, and he was disabled.)

(Sibiya, 2003: 69)

In the above literary text, the narrator describes the physically disabled character, Gumede. Gumede was injured at work, and he became permanently disabled. He fell from the scaffolding at work, he was working as a general construction worker at Mpangeni, and he is now lame and can no longer work. This cause of disability is under the environmentally determined causes of disability because the cause of character's injury was an accident. In *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe (2012:144) there is an environmentally determined cause of disability depicted:

*"Simthole edubuleke kabana kubo kaNkinga"*

(“We found him shot badly at Nkinga's home.”)

(Qwabe, 2012: 144)

The above literary text, is a dialogue between a policeman and MaNdlela. MaNdlela is the mother of a physically disabled character, Themba. A policeman is informing MaNdlela that her son Themba has been admitted to hospital after being shot. Themba is critically injured after being shot, and nurses have indicated that there is a bullet stuck to his spine, and that becomes the cause of his disability. He cannot walk anymore. This cause of disability is an



environmentally determined cause, because Themba becomes physically disabled in the shooting range accident. In *Umadakeni* (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo there is an environmentally determined cause of disability:

*Ukukhala kwamabhuleki kubamba ezinye izimoto. Umsindo wokushayisana kwezimoto.*

(Brake sounds as cars suddenly stop. Collision sounds.)

(Ngcobo, 2005:223)

This car accident is the cause of Jabu's physical disability. She is admitted to hospital after she has been critically injured and has to spend rest of her life in a wheelchair. In *Isishosha sakwabo* (A crippled fellow) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo a mining accident is a cause of injury and disability:

*“Wo! woz’ eKimberley,  
Mfowethu woz’ eKimberly,  
Mus’ukumangala, mus  
Ukungabaza, woza phakathi,  
Kungaphansi komhlaba lapho  
Ufuneka khona, woza, woza.”*

(“Come to Kimberley  
My brother come to Kimberley  
Don’t be surprised, don’t  
hesitate, come inside,  
it is under the earth where  
you are wanted, come, come.”)

(Nxumalo, 1965: 6)

The above stanza alludes to the dangers that face miners underground and how the character in this poem met with an injury that resulted in him using crutches for walking.

### **2.3.2 Unidentified causes**

Danek (2009) suggests that sometimes disability is of unknown origin. The case is the same with many physical and intellectual disabilities. “Mental health problems such as dejection account for almost half of all disabled youth, according to a new study by World Health Organization (WHO)” (Gazzaniga & Heatherton, 2006:87). There are many characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works that their cause of disability is an unknown cause.

The short story titled “Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo” (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1982) depicts the intellectually disabled character whose cause of disability is not identified

in the story. Mbuthuma is an intellectually disabled character, and his disability is only implicitly displayed by his actions in the short story. This is shown when Mbuthuma is abusive to his three wives. The way he abuses them makes it clear to the readers that he is intellectually disabled. Narrators tend not to identify the causes of intellectually disabled characters in the Zulu short stories.

The short story titled “Ucu” (Love necklace) by N.G Sibiya (1993) portrays the character with intellectual disability, Sicathulo. The cause of his disability in the short story is not identified he is just portrayed as the intellectually disabled character. The way the narrator describes him makes it clear to the readers that he is not mentally stable; although his disability is not severe. The way he dresses and his actions show that he is intellectually disabled.

The short story titled “USofasonke” (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1986) portrays the character with mental disability, Sofasonke. In the short story it is not stated how Sofasonke became mentally disabled, it is also not overtly stated that Sofasonke is mentally disabled. His actions make it clear that he is mentally disabled. He starts by burning his cat after it has eaten his meat, and then he set himself on fire, his neighbors’ try to rescue him from the burning house, but they fail, and he ends up burnt by fire. The cause is not identified, and that is common in the short stories with mentally disabled characters.

The short story titled “Umdwebi” (The painter) by N.G Sibiya (1993) portrays the character with a perceived mental disability, Magendane. The cause of his disability is not identified in the short story. There are no many Zulu short stories that portray perceived mental disabilities, and in those that do portray mental disabilities, the causes of character’s disabilities are of an unknown origin.

The short story titled “Ukunqamuka Konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa (1995) portrays the character with a mental disability, and the cause of his disability is not identified in the short story. This short story is different from other short stories with mentally disabled characters; because it explicitly mentions that the character is mentally disabled, it is not displayed only by his actions. It is similar to other short stories, because the cause of character’s disability is also not mentioned in the short story.

The novel titled *Bengithi Lizokuna* (I thought it was going to rain) by N.G Sibiya (2008) depicts the character with an intellectual disability, and the cause of his disability is not identified in the story. Nyambose is an intellectually disabled character; his disability is shown by his actions in the novel. It is not explicitly stated in the novel that he is an intellectually disabled.

The Zulu novels with intellectually disabled characters tend not to identify the causes of character's disabilities.

The Zulu drama titled *Inkinga Yomendo* (Marriage dilemma) by B.J Dube (1961) portrays the intellectually disabled character, Mhlupheki. The cause of his disability is also unknown. It is unequivocally stated by other characters that Mhlupheki is an intellectually disabled character; they tend to refer to him as a fool. It is not identified as to how he became intellectually disabled, and that is common in the Zulu drama with intellectually disabled characters.

The Zulu novel titled *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi (1961) depicts the character with a physical disability, Diliza. The narrator mentions in the novel that the character is disabled, but it is not mentioned how he became physically disabled. The cause of disability is not identified. In the Zulu novels with physically disabled characters, the causes of disabilities are not frequently depicted, because disability is often portrayed as the consequences of character's wrongdoings.

The short story titled "UNqobile" (Nqobile) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo (1985) portrays a character with a physical disability whose cause of disability is not identified on the story. Nqobile is a physically disabled character, and the cause of her disability is not identified, surprisingly her disability is only mentioned at the end of the story when she is driven by her assistant in a wheelchair. It is common for narrators to reveal character's disabilities at the end of the story.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the types and causes of disabilities in isiZulu literary works. There are many types of disabilities which are represented by isiZulu literary works such as physical disability, mental and intellectual disability, blindness, speech and language disorders and lastly, perceived mental and physical disability. Among all other types, physical and mental disabilities are the widely portrayed in isiZulu literary works. There are different causes of disabilities portrayed in isiZulu literary works such as environmentally determined causes, genetically determined causes and lastly, unidentified causes. The environmentally determined causes are the most common in isiZulu literary works while the genetically determined are the least portrayed causes.

## CHAPTER 3

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHARACTERS WITH DISABILITIES

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the social model of disability assertions on attitudes towards disabilities. “People with disabilities are treated as second-class citizens and as enemies of the corporal norm; simply by virtue of their impairments, they are inherently inferior to the able-bodied community” (Higgins, 1992:14). This chapter comments on attitudes towards characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works and its focus will be on aspects such as narrator’s attitudes, other characters’ attitudes and finally, attitudes that are displayed by disabled characters towards their own disabilities.

#### 3.2 Narrator’s Attitudes

Gartner & Tom (1987) assert that narrators are essential in the portrayal of events and depiction of characters in a story. Narrator’s attitudes towards disabilities are multifarious and disparate. They have specific diverse ways of calling characters with disabilities; others call them with their disabilities, and others do not. Narrators tend to portray the characters with disabilities for the sake of their artistic interests; they portray characters with disabilities as dependent characters, and they sometimes use their physical appearances when they refer to them (Stephanie, 1998).

##### 3.2.1 Physical Appearances

The way narrators introduce the characters with disabilities creates specific images to the readers about people with disabilities. When narrators introduce characters with disabilities, sometimes they use their physical appearances to describe them. In that way, the characters impairments become their defining feature. The narrators sometimes do not intentionally mean to suggest inferiority or discriminate upon characters with disabilities, but this just reflects their societal backgrounds. People in society use specific names to refer to people with disabilities, and their disabilities inherently become their defining feature; this is perceivable in the novel titled *Bengithi Lizokuna* (I thought it was going to rain) by N.G Sibiya when the narrator describes the intellectually disabled character, Nyambose:

*Yayiyisigemfunga, ekhanda igunde kahle yase ishiya isiqhova, isho ngamehlo angaka, nomlomo owawusho ngamathe ayelokhu elunguza sengathi nawo afuna ukubingelela kule ntokazi enhle kangaka esesangweni.*

(He had a big body; a nice haircut with some bunch of hair in front, big eyes, and peeping saliva in his mouth, as if it wanted to also greet the beautiful young woman standing at the gate.)

(Sibiya, 2008: 62)

The narrator seems to dwell on features that indicate Nyambose's disability. The attitude of the narrator is obviously negative and he seems to find it amusing that Nyambose has saliva dripping from his mouth. One may argue that the significance of this encounter is that Nyambose, out of the goodness of his heart, offers help by opening the gate for Nontobeko and that is what the narrator should emphasise and focus less on Nyambose's physical appearance. The fact that the narrator uses Nyambose's physical appearance as his defining feature is against social model of disability assertions. A similar attitude is also perceptible in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi where the narrator uses disability as a defining feature when describing the physically disabled character, Diliza:

*Kwangena futhi elinye idlanzana labantu. Phakathi kwabo kukhona insizwa nje elihwanqa, ethi ayibe unyonga. Ithi laphe ihamba ikhenyeze.*

(Then a group of men entered the classroom, among them there is a bearded young man who walks with a pronounced limp.)

(Nyembezi, 1961: 80)

The way the narrator describes Diliza is discourteous. Diliza has come to attend the meeting called by Ndebenkulu and Mkhwanazi. Diliza and other group of men enter the classroom when the meeting has already started. That does not mean the narrator should describe him this way; he could have used a polite way to describe him without using his disability. This is also an indication that disability becomes a defining feature, narrators use character's types of disability to describe them, worse this is done in a discourteous way. The social model of disability asserts that such negative attitudes towards people with disabilities should be eliminated because they are responsible for widespread discrimination against them (Wang, 1992).

### 3.2.2 Character's Behavior

The way narrators portray the behaviour of disabled characters is usually contentious because they hardly focus on the positive and acceptable behaviour, instead they use the negatives as what defines a disabled person. Sometimes they are depicted as characters who lack common sense. In the short story titled “Umdwebi” (The painter) by N.G Sibiya, the narrator portrays Magendane, a character with perceived mental disability as someone who lacks common sense and someone who only considers his own needs:

*Eze-ke nezimpahla uMagendane. Zehle kakhulu izihlathi uma uMazikode esebona izimpahla ezithengwe uMagendane.*

(Magendane comes with a plastic bag. Mazikode is deeply disappointed when she sees the things bought by Magendane.)

(Sibiya, 1993:56)

The narrator in this text portrays Magendane as someone who does not care about his family. His family is suffering from poverty, they don't have food to eat. When Magendane's brother Mbhekeleni gives him some money to buy food for the family Magendane just uses money to buy his painting material. He is portrayed by the narrator as someone who does not care about his wife and son; he resigned from his job to become an artist, and his wife MaZikode suspects that her husband has become mentally disabled. In “Isiphukuphuku” (The fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli the narrator demonstrates a bad attitude towards Vusumuzi, an intellectually disabled character:

*Kulapho-ke lapha esikoleni akuhambi ngabo ubuncwancwasi nokugqoka izinto zemali ephakeme. Kuya ngekhandla lakho. Nakho ukuba aze akhule ukuthi kade ehlale ephinda.*

(Whereas at school, you do not proceed because of your dapperness and wearing expensive clothes. You pass because of your intelligence. He became this old because he has been failing grades.)

(Ntuli, 1969: 69)

The narrator seems to suggest that a person with a learning disability is not supposed to look smartly dressed and well groomed because at the end of the day it is marks and intelligence that count. This is undoubtedly discriminatory and perpetuates the rife attitudes in the society regarding people with disabilities. Narrators also tend to portray disabilities in a way that involves the loss of one's moral resolve, and capacity for mercy and compassion (Salt, 1997). Some disabled characters are portrayed as abusive to their families as can be seen in “NguMbuthuma ke Lowo” (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli:

*Wathatha intambo ende ebeyelukelwe ukufulela wababophela emaqakaleni nguMaKheswa, nguMaMfeka, nguMaHlengwa. Ubabophele maqede wathi abagijime bazungeze isibaya kathathu. Baqale bathi uyadlala, kwaze kwakhala uswazi ezithweni kuMaKheswa, wagijima umtwana wabantu.*

(He takes a long rope that was initially made to thatch roof, and he ties them around ankles- MaKheswa, MaMfeka, and MaHlengwa. He ties them and tells them to run around the cattle kraal thrice. At first, they think he is joking, until he hits MaKheswa in the leg with a small stick and she starts running.)

(Ntuli in Ntuli and Ntuli, 1982: 73)

The narrator portrays Mbuthuma as abusive to his three wives by tying them and making them run around the kraal. In another scene, he milks them like cows, and that is emotional abuse which is different from the physical abuse quoted in the above literary text. This way of portraying the disabled character as an abusive husband by the narrator, perpetuates a negative image of the characters with disabilities on the reader's mind. The same abusive behaviour is found in *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli in which the narrator portrays Gwaqaza as an abusive character:

*Kuvame ukuba kuthule, ngaphandle kwamalanga athile lapho uke uzwe umnumzane esebhavumula, esesho ukubadubula bonke lapha ekhaya.*

(It is usually quiet, expect on certain days where you would hear the head of the family barking and threatening to shoot everyone in the family.)

(Ntuli, 1969:13)

The narrator portrays Gwaqaza, who is blind in one eye, as abusive husband to his wife and his family. He always insists that he is a man, and he will do whatever he wants. Her wife fears him. She cannot disagree with him, because she knows that she will be brutally assaulted. Even when Gwaqaza wants to avenge himself on Dube his wife tries to stop him, but she is almost deliberately shot by Gwaqaza. In another scene she is assaulted when he tries to stop Gwaqaza.

With regard to how disabled characters are portrayed, Priestley (1998: 56) says: "The authors sometimes use the characters with disabilities to portray the dark side of humanity. They portray characters with disabilities as disrespectful, heartless killers who can do anything to awful." This is the case in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon from Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi where Diliza is portrayed by the narrator as a disrespectful character who disturbs the meeting by giggling at Ndebenkulu. He is the youngest person attending the meeting, and what he is doing shows a sign of disrespect to elders who have come to attend the

important meeting. The narrator portrays Diliza as the disrespectful character who giggles at the important meeting attended by elders:

*Lwezwakala futhi lolo hleko, kanti kuseyiyo insizwa yehwanqa. Iphume yabanda ngodonga yalalela ngefasitele. Yathi lacu enye indoda iphethe ongakanani umshiza! Kodwa yathi iqambe iphumela phandle insizwa yehwanqa yabe isiphuma ngesango lesikole. Yanxapha kanye indoda, yabuya yazohlala phansi. Wake wathula noNdebenkulu elinde ukuba le ndoda ihlale phansi. Ithe ingahlala phansi waqhuba.*

(There was laughter again and the culprit was the same bearded young man. He had left the hall and leaned against the wall and eavesdropped through an open window. One man went outside hurriedly, brandishing a stout stick, but the young man was already on his way out of the school gate. The man cursed and returned to his seat. For a while Ndebenkulu remained silent while he waited for the man to settle on his seat and continued as soon as the man was seated.)

(Nyembezi, 1961:148)

The narrator portrays the physically disabled Diliza as a disrespectful person who sees nothing wrong with laughing at a serious gathering. The narrator even refers to Diliza as a culprit; a term which is defined as “a person who is responsible for a crime or other misdeed” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2014:36). The resultant impression is that disabled people are disrespectful. Gwaqaza in *Ngizoze ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli is portrayed as mean and heartless killer who is out for revenge:

*Yaqhuma inhlamvu. Bha! Futhi, yahlala enyameni kuDube wagoqongana. Bha! laphe ethi gingqi kakhulu phansi uDube egoqongana inkashana, ahlekele nxanye uGwaqaza. Wafaka ivolovolo lakhe esikhwameni sejazi.*

(The gun explodes. Boom! Again, it hits Dube, and he coils himself up, Gwaqaza laughs mockingly. He put the gun back in his overcoat.)

(Ntuli, 1969: 37)

The narrator depicts Gwaqaza as a heartless killer who holds grudges. This again perpetuates a negative perspective of disabled people. The social model of disability as the theory of disability urges that people with disabilities must be positively portrayed, because that will build a good image about them, and that will minimize the stigmatizations and discrimination they are constantly facing (Wang, 1992).



### 3.2.3 Characters' Helplessness

Narrators tend to portray characters with disabilities as characters who is dependent on other characters for survival. They tend to put more emphasis on things that disabled characters fail to do or are incapable of achieving. They are portrayed as individuals who are inherently dependent on family members, friends and the community members at large. In “UNqobile” (Nqobile) by D.B.Z Ntuli, the wheelchair bound is helpless and dependent on somebody to push the wheelchair so that she can move around.

The same helplessness of disabled people is depicted in *Umnyama Ongenafu* (Sign of no hope) by M.M Ndlovu:

*Nebala wagcina ngokuvuma, wagitsheliswa esihlalweni esinamasondo.  
UShesha wasiqhuba isihlalo, uMumsie wagaxa isikhwama ngokudabuka....  
Wasiphusha uSimanga isihlalo ezabalaza, uMumsie elandela egaxe  
isikhwama. Wangena endlini uMumsie wabeka isikhwama, wabuya  
lapho wafola ebeletha umngani wakhe. Wangena naye wamhlalisa  
endlini yokuphumula.*

(Indeed she eventually relents and they put her in the wheelchair.  
Shesha pushes the wheelchair, Mumsie pathetically hangs on the bag...  
Simanga struggles with the wheelchair while Mumsie follows, bag strapped on  
her shoulder. Mumsie enters the house, puts the bag down, comes back and  
bends over to carry her friend on the back. She enters with her in the house and  
sits her on the couch.)

(Ndlovu, 2009: 79)

Queen seems hopelessly dependent on everybody around her: her son, her boyfriend and her friend. She has been discharged from the hospital where she has been recovering from an injury that left her wheelchair bound. In “Ukunqamuka Konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa a mentally disabled character is also portrayed by the narrator as a character who is dependent on Mfekayi, a local businessman:

*Yena uqobo uMcuphi ngaleyo nyanga wayengalitholi ngisho isenti leli  
ngokushanela egcekeni.*

(Mcuphi himself in that month was not paid even a cent for sweeping the yard.)

(Hlengwa, 1995: 56)

Mcuphi is disabled and makes a living by working in Mfekayi's store. Mfekayi is a well-known, affluent businessman. Even though he is not paid in that month, he continues to work

at Mfekayi store; this arguably shows that Mcuphi is dependent on Mfekayi for basic essentials such as food. In *Kuxolelwa Abanjani?* (Who deserve forgiveness?) by N.G Sibiya (2003), the narrator portrays the physically disabled Gumede as dependent on the support of his wife, MaZungu. The fact that Gumede had to quit working because of his disability and his wife had to go and look for the job to support the family including Gumede, means that Gumede ends up depending on his wife for basic survival. This portrayal of dependency and helplessness of characters with disabilities by the narrators creates a negative image about people with disabilities in general, that they are not capable of doing the things themselves, but they are dependent on others. The social model of disability theory argues that people with disabilities must be taught ways which they can use to be independent. One may argue that not every disabled person is helplessly independent and narrators should show a balanced picture regarding disabled characters. It would not hurt to find characters moving around independently in battery operated wheelchairs or driving cars that have been modified to suit disability needs.

### 3.2.4 Names for disabled characters

Narrators use specific names to refer to characters with disabilities and in most cases such names are impolite and derogatory. In “Ukunqamuka Konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa the narrator uses unacceptable names when referring to the mentally disabled character named Mcuphi:

*UMcuphi lo waziwa njengesilima, uhlanya nje endaweni. Abantu bagila imikhuba phambi kwakhe besho nokusho ukuthi yini uMcuphi, azikhalanga kahle lapha.*

(Mcuphi is commonly known as fool, community madman. People do all sorts of things in his presence, and they say that he is a lunatic.)

(Hlengwa, 1995: 55)

The narrator uses offensive names such as fool and madman when referring to the mentally disabled character, Mcuphi. He suffers a severe mental illness, but that does not mean his condition should become his defining feature. The narrator could have used another referential. Mcuphi is not taken seriously by the community he lives in, even though he has valuable information that can lead to Mfekayi’s arrest. Unfortunately the narrator seems to echo sentiments that are shared by the society at large where derogatory names are used to refer to people with disability. The same can be said of “Uhlanya” (The lunatic) by N.G Sibiya (2004) where the title of the short story uses an offensive name to refer to a person who is mentally

disturbed. There are many polite and palatable words that the narrator could have used as title of the story. This offensive word features again in “Umdwebi” (The painter) by N.G Sibiya:

*Sithi kasifane ncamashi nalesi sithombe ebesidwetshwa uMagendane kulezi zinsuku njengoba kumvukile nje ukuhlanya.*

(It looks exactly like the picture that has been painted by Magendane these days since his mental illness has reverted.)

(Sibiya, 1993: 53)

The social model of disability as theory of disability argues that offensive names should not be used to refer to characters with disabilities. The narrator uses the offensive words “uhlanya” which can be translated as lunatic in English, to refer to a character with perceived mental disability, Magendane. In the poem titled “Isishosha sakwabo” (A crippled fellow) by OEHM Nxumalo (1965) the narrator uses the name “cripple” as the title of the poem, and in the poem, the narrator is pitiful towards the character with a physical disability:

*Lantongoloz’ izwi lathubeleza  
Ezibilini zami, ngezwa umthombo  
Wamanz’ uvuleka, ngabona  
Luvindi, intshoshozelo yemicabango  
Yafakazelwa ukuhlengazela engehluleka  
Ukukubamba, zagcina zigelezile.*

(The voice sings with melanchony,  
And reverberates deep inside me, opening  
A fountain of waters and I could see dimly  
a multitude of thoughts that were affirmed  
by a welling of tears that I couldn’t suppress  
And let them fall freely.)

(Nxumalo, 1965:5)

Besides the fact that the title of this poem uses an offensive word, the tone of the poem itself is also unacceptable. The poem suggests that disabled people are pathetic and should be pitied instead of being accepted as a reality and normal part of our society. One must mention however, that narrators do not always use characters’ disabilities as their defining feature, and they are not always discourteous towards characters with disabilities. Sometimes they use a polite and somewhat condescending words to describe characters with disabilities. For instance, in “UNqobile” (Nqobile) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo, the narrator courteously describes the physically disabled character Nqobile:

*UNqobile wayegqutshwa ngenqola. Sonke esingezanzi sasembeswe  
ngetshalo elihle.*

(Nqobile was driven in the wheelchair. Her lower body covered with a nice shawl.)

(Nxumalo in Ntuli, 1985: 101)

In the above literary text, the narrator informs readers about the physically disabled character Nqobile who uses a wheelchair. It is noticeable that the narrator describes Nqobile in a different way; it is very courteous, it is different from the way other narrators use when referring to characters with disabilities. He does not use offensive words to refer to him, the way he describes her is enough to make a clear image in the reader's mind about her condition and it is in favour of the social model of disability. In *Kuxolelwa Abanjani?* (Who deserve forgiveness?) by N.G Sibiya the narrator describes the physically disabled character Gumede in a very polite and acceptable manner:

*Lwalusabalele nalapha usizi ngoba bathi befike ngakho kodwa nje  
uGumede wawa esikhafuleni emsebenzini eMpangeni, wagogeka.*

They were also suffering from extreme poverty, because after they have just moved Gumede fell from the scaffolding at work at Mpangeni and he was disabled.)

(Sibiya, 2003: 69)

The narrator uses the courteous way to describe Gumede's condition by using the word "wagogeka". Gumede became physically disabled after he fell from the scaffolding at work. The narrator would have opted to improperly describe Gumede as other narrators do, but this is a good indication that some narrators are polite towards characters with a disability. The way of courteously describing the character is also employed by the narrator in the novel titled *Ifa Ngukufa* (Inheritance is death) by M.J Mngadi when the narrator describes Themba who has become physically disabled:

*Nakuba kwaba yisikhathi kwembulwa kwembeswa kuThemba  
esibhedlela, kwagcina kungozimakhaza, welulama. Wakhubazeka.  
Usehamba ngenqola.*

(Although Themba was in a critical condition for a while in the hospital, he recovered. He became disabled. He is now using the wheelchair.)

(Mngadi, 2001: 223)

In the above text, the narrator describes Themba's condition who has been hospitalized for a long time after being critically injured. The narrator courteously describes Themba condition without using any offensive words. The social model of disability asserts that the people's disability should not be used as their symbol or defining a feature (Wang, 1992).

### 3.2.5 Demonstration of Narrators' Artistic Interests

Narrators tend to portray characters with disabilities for the sake of their artistic interests. Narrators do that by blending the character's disabilities with their personalities. For individuals with disabilities, this artistic fusion of body and soul has lasting and, in most instances detrimental social repercussions (Thompson, 1996). In isiZulu literary works, although there are not plenty of examples whereby the narrators portray the characters with disabilities for the sake of their artistic interests, but there are few examples. In the novel titled *Inkinsela yaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi the narrator portrays physically disabled character Diliza for the sake of his artistic interests:

*Athula amadoda aphefumula, kubonakala ukuthi umfana udiliza amathemba awo.*

(For a while, in their silence, the men were clearly disappointed at the young man's attempt to destroy their hopes that had begun to simmer deep within them.)

(Nyembezi, 1961:104)

On the other literary texts, from the novel titled *Inkinsela yaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi (1961) the narrator also portrays the physically disabled character for the sake of his artistic interests:

*Wawashiya ewadunge umqondo amadoda umfana. Ambuka ekhenyeza waye wayochusha ocingweni ngezansi kwesikole. Abhekana amadoda ekhohliwe ukuthi azothini.*

(He left the men awfully confused. They watched him walking away, until he jumped over the school fence. Then, dumbfounded, they simply looked at each other.)

(Nyembezi, 1961:105)

The narrator relates how Diliza addresses a group of men after the meeting. Diliza left the meeting early, now he has come to hear from the group how the meeting unfolded. They inform him about what has been discussed in the meeting. The narrator uses Diliza as a disabled character to portray deviation from the norm. Almost every man in the group is willing to sell their cattle after Ndebenkulu promises them huge amounts of money. When Diliza arrives, he argues with them that it is ridiculous to expect such a lot of money for their cattle. The narrator also mentions that Diliza destroys the men's hopes. Interestingly, the character's name is Diliza which translates as "the one who demolishes" or "the one who causes things to tumble", which

shows clearly that the narrator deliberately uses Diliza as a disabled character for the sake of his artistic interests. The narrator also mentions that he left them awfully confused, he is just there as a character who deviates from other characters collective decisions.

Diliza's disability is blended with his personality by the narrator. He is the only disabled character in the novel, and his way of walking is different from the other characters. He is the only character who attended the meeting and deviated from others; all others are convinced that Ndebenkulu is not a crook, and they are willing to give their cattles to him. "This artistic fusion of body and soul has a lasting, and in most instances detrimental social repercussion. When the external corporeal form becomes a symbol of one's internal dynamics, the assumption that follows is that impairments signaled an individual's deviation from the 'normal' able-bodied population - are transparent and true indicators of one's insufficient and inferior persona" (Squire, 1994:24). Diliza then suffers various forms of discrimination, and stigmatization from the able-bodied characters, such as, when Shandu complains that Diliza thinks he knows everything just because he has spent some time in the city (Nyembezi, 1961:106).

### **3.3 Other Characters' Attitudes**

Characters are significant in plot development and creation of suspense in a story and it is usually through their actions and behaviour towards fellow characters that the story becomes dramatic, enjoyable and memorable. In the hands of a creative writer, characters become real to life and leave a lasting impression on the readers' minds. Characters are introduced to the readers by their actions, the things they say and the things that are being said about them (Mkhize, 2012:25). Characters may have attitudes towards fellow characters who happen to have disabilities and this can be manifested in many ways in a literary work.

#### **3.3.1 Using of Despicable Names**

Some characters tend to use despicable names when referring to characters with disabilities. In "Ukunqamuka Konyaka" (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa Mfekayi uses despicable names when referring to Mcuphi who is mentally disabled:

*"Ngibulele uhlanya luzohlanyela emzini wami."*

("I murdered a lunatic who has been behaving insanely in my home.")

(Hlengwa, 1995:57)

Mfekayi who is the owner of the shop murders the mentally disabled character, Mcuphi who has exposed the involvement of Mfekayi in the disappearance of Dr. Nhlapo, who has been missing for several days. The doctor's car has been found abandoned in the wilderness. The police are interrogating Mfekayi after he tried to stop Mcuphi from digging where he buried Dr. Nhlapo. Mfekayi's response suggests that as far as he is concerned, there is nothing wrong in killing Mcuphi since he is merely a lunatic who has been behaving insanely in his home. This shows that Mfekayi perceives Mcuphi as the worthless person who can just be killed without suffering any consequences. In "Luphelile" (It is over) by N.F Mbhele the character uses the uncourteous words to refer to the condition of a character with physical disability, Ndumiso:

*"UNdumiso-ke ungomunye walabo abalimala, bajiyazeka"*

("Ndumiso is one of those who were injured and became disabled")

(Mbhele, 2005:31)

The above literary text, is a dialogue between Thandiwe and her mother Khethiwe. They are discussing the preparations for Thandiwe and Ndumiso's wedding. Ndumiso is a physically disabled character and the word that Thandiwe uses to refer to Ndumiso's condition is uncourteous and it does not reflect that Ndumiso is her fiancé or that she is sensitive to his condition and chooses here words carefully. In the novel titled *Nginyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli the other characters demonstrate a very bad attitude by laughing at the disabled character, Gwaqaza:

*Omunye umfana useshaya ibhola ngamawala liqonda ebusweni bukaGwaqaza. Athi uyalivika ziwe izibuko. Lapho eziphuthuma, kanti sebonile abafana ukuthi akanalo iso elinye. Wabona ababili befakana imilomo bekhombisana ngaye. Uthe ebona babethintana bekhombisana ngaye. Uthe ebona babethintana beba baningana nabanye abangaphandle ababukelayo. Ezwe kancane omunye ekhuluma ngokuhleka ethi: "indlobho."*

(One of the boys kicks the ball, it goes straight to Gwaqaza's face. While he is trying to stop it, his glasses fall. When he tries to pick up his glasses, the boys have already noticed that he has one eye. He sees the boys talking pointing at him. He sees a handful of other spectators communicating saying, "he is one-eyed.")

(Ntuli, 1969:14)

This is one of the examples that show how cruel people can be towards fellow human beings who happen to be disabled. In this case, this is a continuation of insults that have been thrown

at Gwaqaza. Earlier in the afternoon he had gone to attend a wedding but had to leave early when people started poking fun at him and singing about his condition. He decides to calm his emotions by watching a soccer match, not knowing that even young children will not be merciful towards his disability. This attitude of characters towards Gwaqaza has reignited his anger towards Dube, and when he gets home, he tells his wife that he will hunt Dube down to avenge himself. This attitude of characters towards Gwaqaza is discriminatory because now he does not feel comfortable when surrounded by many people, because he knows that he will turn into a laughing stock. In *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi, Mkhwanazi uses a derogatory “it” to refer to the disabled character, Diliza:

*“Ngikwazi ngani ukuthi ngokwaphi?” Esho esula umlomo ngesandla.  
“Kulihwanqa nje, kuhamba sengathi kulunyonga.”*

(“I have no idea where it comes from.” Mkhwanazi wiping his mouth with one hand. It is bewhiskered, it walks like a lame person.”

(Nyembezi, 1961:107)

MaNtuli responds to what her husband Mkhwanazi has just said about Diliza:

*“Cha Baba, indodana kaKheswa ilapha ekhaya. Isabuyile. Yiyo kanye.  
Ilihwanqa nje, ilunyonga, impofu.”*

(You’re mistaken. Kheswa’s son is at home. He’s back. I’m sure that was him, he is bewhiskered, is light in complexion and he limps”)

(Nyembezi, 1961:107)

Mkhwanazi and his wife MaNtuli are discussing about a meeting that took place earlier in the day and end up talking about Diliza who is disabled and had left the meeting early, because he had not been behaving properly. When Mkhwanazi is referring to Diliza he uses “it” instead of “he” and this is offensive if used to refer to a human being. This way of referring to Diliza shows that Mkhwanazi has an unacceptable attitude towards physically disabled people. Mkhwanazi also mentions Diliza’s disability features when he describes him. This means that other characters are using Diliza’s disability as his defining feature, because; even when MaNtuli responds to Mkhwanazi she also applies the same attitude of using a disability to describe Diliza. The Social model of disability asserts that disabilities should not be used as a defining feature when referring to characters with disabilities (Stone, 1984). In the novel titled *Umnyama Ongenafu* (No sign of hope) by M.M Ndlovu the other character use indecorous words when talking about the disabled character Queen:

*“Awu unesibindi nsizwa yakithi, mina angisoze ngathandana nesidakwa;*



*nokwenza sikhubazekile. Sorry kabi nje la kumina.”*

(“You have audacity my brother, I would never date a drunkard; especially the one that is crippled. Sorry, I would never do that.”)

(Ndlovu, 2009:80)

Queen and her friend Zama are coming from the tavern, they are drunk, and Zama is unable to push Queen’s wheelchair. When her fiancé Shesha arrives she tries to run away so that he can’t see how drunk she is and the wheelchair rolls over. The other man who is standing in the crowd shows bad attitude by talking rudely about Queen to Shesha and says he will never date a disabled drunkard. This shows an awful attitude towards Queen and taints the image of characters with disabilities and suggests that they don’t deserve to have fun by drinking, to be loved and to be in a relationship. This man emphasizes that he will never date the disabled drunkard. In *Inkinga Yomendo* (A marriage dilemma) by B.J Dube the other character uses a discourteous word to refer to the character with intellectual disability, Mhlupheki:

*“Ingabe izilima zabanjani?”*

(“With fools, you may never know.”)

(Dube, 1961:24)

This is a dialogue between Tozi and her friend Gezepi who are talking about the intellectually disabled character, Mhlupheki. Tozi uses the word fool to refer to Mhlupheki which is a very discourteous word to use to refer to someone. This creates a bad image about people with disabilities in general that any word can be used to refer to them, regardless of how impolite it is. In *UThemi* (Themi) by B.J Dube, Vusi uses despicable name to refer to a character with speech and language disorder:

*“Yisithulu sesimungulu nje lesi.”*

(“This is a deaf-mute person”)

(Dube, 1968:59)

This is a dialogue between Vusi and his family. They are discussing the matter of a young woman who cannot speak who has just arrived at their home. They are all shocked by her arrival and what shocks them the most is that she cannot speak and so they don’t know who she is, and where she comes from. Vusi uses the word mute and deaf to refer to the disabled character and according to social model of disability those words are both impolite and should not be used to refer to characters with disabilities.

### 3.3.2 Other Characters' Reactions

Other characters show certain behaviour and reactions towards characters with disabilities. In the short story titled “Isiphukuphuku” (The fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli, other characters laugh at the intellectually disabled character Vusumuzi when he gives incorrect answers in class:

*Ajabule uthisha uMgoza ngokuphakamisa kukaVusumuzi. Amkhombe. Asuke abhede uVusumuzi. Wo, kuthi ngoklo uhleko lapha ezinganeni. Kuthi akavele asukume abone indlela uVusumuzi.*

(Teacher Mgoza becomes excited when Vusumuzi raises his hand. He points at him, and Vusumuzi gives an incorrect answer, then laughter breaks out among the children. Vusumuzi then thinks of leaving the classroom.)

(Ntuli, 1969:69)

In the above example, other characters show a bad attitude towards character with an intellectual disability. Vusumuzi is older than all other learners in his class because he has been repeating classes. They are always laughing at him when he gives incorrect answers in class, and he is even thinking of quitting school because of other learners' attitudes towards him. In “USofasonke” (Sofasonke) by N.S Ntuli, the other character is scared of intellectually disabled character Sofasonke:

*“Ngithi-ke bakwethu angisiphawule nje lesi sigameko ngoba angaba khona omunye osihumusha ngendlela ethile ngoba sekwenzeke lokhu nje. Ngemva kwaso bekuba lukhuni ukuba ngisondele kuSofasonke. Angivume nje bakwethu ukuthi ngiyigwala mina.”*

(“I think I should mention this incident because someone else might interpret it in another way. After that incident, it was not easy for me to spend time with Sofasonke. I should admit that I am a coward.”)

(Ntuli in Ntuli and Ntuli, 1986:13)

The character mentions that he became scared of Sofasonke after the incident where Sofasonke burnt his cat, which creates an impression to the readers that people in society should fear people with disabilities. In “Uhlanya” (A lutanic) by N.G Sibiya other characters demonstrate negative reactions towards a character with perceived mental disability:

*Nampo nebala sebelula izintamo onogada. Nampo behwaqa, benikina amakhanda. Idlula lapha esangweni nje imoto ilokhu ibukwe njalo.*

(Security guards stretch their necks, frown and shake their heads. They stare at the car as it passes through the gate.)

(Sibiya, 2004:24)

Nduduzo has been brought to hospital by his brother who has tied him up with a rope to restrain him since he suspects that he is mentally disturbed. The reaction of the security guards expresses displeasure or disapproval of Nduduzo. This displeasure and disapproval will have a negative effect on the readers and lead to the discrimination of people with disabilities. In “UNqobile” (Nqobile) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo, Mvuseni is shocked when he sees that Nqobile is physically disabled:

*Wanqikaza uMvuseni. Waluthatha kancane unyawo. Amehlo akhe  
acweba umlomo wakhe wehlukana kodwa akwaphuma lizwi.*

(Mvuseni hesitated. He slowly took a footstep. His eyes were filled with tears. His lips parted, but did not utter any words.)

(Nxumalo in Ntuli, 1985:101)

Mvuseni has been waiting for Nqobile outside the hall after a meeting during which he had fallen in love with Nqobile at first sight, not aware that she is in a wheelchair. Mvuseni’s reaction when he sees that Nqobile is in a wheelchair is showing displeasure and disapproval. He even hesitates to continue speaking to her. This reaction is a negative attitude towards disability, because if Nqobile was not disabled Mvuseni would not have reacted the way he does. In *Bengithi Lizokuna* (I thought it was going to rain) by N.G Sibiya, Nontobeko is slightly frightened by Nyambose, who is mentally retarded:

*“Yebo,” ephendula esadidekile, kukhona novadlwana.*

(“Yes,” she responds in confusion, slightly frightened.)

(Sibiya, 2008:62)

Nyambose has come to open the gate for Nontobeko’s car to enter Ngidi’s farm, a thing that he usually does for cars that are coming in and out of Ngidi’s farm. While Nyambose is friendly towards Nontobeko, she responds in fright which makes Nyambose feel uncomfortable. The most terrible reaction, however, is found in *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli where participants in a wedding ceremony sing an impromptu song that hurls insult at Gwaqaza who has one eye:

*Uthe enganakile nje wezwa sekuhlatshelelwa kuthintwa igama lakhe.  
Wethuka. Walalelisisa. Usewezwa kahle amazwi aleligama “weGwaqaza,  
weGwaqaza, ulifihlephi iso?” Idume lengoma kukhala nezigubhu kunjeya.*

(Gwaqaza was not paying much attention to the proceeding when he suddenly hears his name mentioned in the lyrics. Shocked, he listens attentively and can

clearly hear the words of the song: “Gwaqaza, Gwaqaza,  
where did you hide the eye?” They sing it loudly, beating the drums.)

(Ntuli, 1969:06)

While it is common during traditional weddings to have singers poking fun at members of the audience, Gwaqaza is offended that they won't stop singing about him and they seem to single him in the audience. This draws unwanted attention to him and people standing near him also start laughing at him which makes him decide to leave. Unfortunately this results in him committing murder; something he would not have done if people had not made fun of him. In *Kungavuka AbaNguni* (Ove my dead body) by I.S Kubheka, disability is regarded as a punishment from the ancestors:

*“Nabo-ke abaNguni bakho ndodana sebevukile.”*

(“There you go my son, your Nguni ancestors by which you swore have arise”)

(Kubheka, 1973:264)

The above is uttered by Themba's father after Themba has been insistent that the Ngunis would rather arise than her daughter marry Thamsanqa, which means that it is something that will never happen. Themba's father now believes that Nomusa, who becomes paralysed and wheelchair-bound after an accident, suffered that as ancestors' punishment for Themba for refusing his daughter to marry Thamsanqa. In *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe, Senzo believes that Themba has become physically disabled because of his past sins:

*(Esekhala.) “Ingabe uyokwazi yini ukumelana nejele uma kwenzeka bekugweba? Ubani nje ozoba nesineke sokuphiphana nawe mihla namalanga? Ukuba undlebekazizwa akunayo imiphumela emihle.”*

(Crying.) “(I wonder if you will be able to survive in jail if you're sentenced. Who will be able to nurse you? Being stubborn has bad consequences.”)

(Qwabe, 2012:163)

Senzo is talking to Themba who has become physically disabled and may possibly be imprisoned as soon as he is discharged from hospital. Senzo believes that Themba has been punished for his past sins. *Umadakeni* (The vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo portrays Seth's attitude towards Jabu's disability when she is talking to MaVezi:

*“Mina ngithi kubuya izinduku. Okubi okwenza komunye kuyokwenzeka nakuwe. (Sakudinwa.) Uphi uMazwe njengoba sikhuluma nje? Angithi*

*konke lokho kungenxa yakhe uJabu.*

(“I think she is getting the taste of her own medicine. The sad things you do to others will eventually get back to you. (In anger) Where is Mazwe as we speak? Isn’t it all Jabu’s fault?”)

(Ngcobo, 2005:288)

This is a dialogue between MaVezi and Seth about the accident that Jabu has been involved in. She mentions that Jabu is being punished for hurting Mazwe. This belief that disability is a punishment for one’s past sins is harmful and discriminatory towards people with disabilities. According to Finkelstein (1980), the social model of disability asserts that myths towards disability have a negative impact on people with disabilities, and the society should be educated about the adverse effects it causes.

### **3.3. Attitude of Characters with Disabilities**

Olive (1983) postulates that characters with disabilities have attitudes towards their disabilities, this includes the things they say about their disabilities, and their reactions towards their disabilities. It is easier for the readers to make assumptions about people with disabilities based on the attitudes of people with disabilities. Therefore, the writers must ensure that characters with disabilities have positive attitudes.

Characters with disabilities have specific attitudes towards themselves; this includes the things they say about their disabilities, the things they think people think about them, while they sometimes don’t (Marinelli, 1991). In “Ukunqamuka Konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa, Mcuphi assumes that people would not believe him when he tells them about the involvement of Mfekayi in Dr. Nhlapho’s disappearance. He does not even believe the police will take him seriously. He ends up doing something that puts his life in danger:

*Wayezibuza eziphendula ukuthi kufanele enzenjani. Wayengathembi ukuthi amaphoyisa ayezomlalela. Wayebona sengathi ayezovele amxoshe ambuze ukuthi kusezinhlangeni yini esiteshini.*

(Mcuphi didn’t know what to do. He did not trust that police will give attention to his story. He thought the police would just chase him away, and ask him if the police station is a place for lunatics)

(Hlengwa, 1995:52)

Mcuphi has valuable information with regard to Dr. Nhlapho's disappearance. Mcuphi is the only one who suspects that Mfekayi is behind Dr. Nhlapho's disappearance, but he underestimates himself and thinks people would not believe him. He ends up endangering himself when he just digs a hole in Mfekayi's yard. Mfekayi tries to stop him, but he continues until he gets the attention and Dr. Nhlapho is found, and Mfekayi is arrested. In "Isiphukuphuku" (The fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli, Vusumuzi who has a learning disability, considers giving up on his dreams because he has been failing at school:

*"Ngiye ngibe nenhliziyo ebuhlungu uma ngicabanga ukuthi umame njengoba engumfelokazi nje uhlupheka kanjani ngenxa yokufundisa mina. Okuba buhlungu ukuthi ngiyabona nje nanonyaka ngeke ngiphumelele."*

("My heart hurts when I think that my mother is a widow, she is suffering because she wants me to be educated. What is more hurting is that I can see that I will fail this year.")

(Ntuli, 1969:72)

Vusumuzi says this to his class teacher Mgoza during lunchtime. Mgoza notices that Vusumuzi is sitting alone while other learners are playing and he then calls Vusumuzi to ask him if he is well. Vusumuzi mentions that he thinks he will also fail this year. Vusumuzi has a very low self-esteem and undermines himself. Mgoza tries to motivate Vusumuzi that he should not give up on his dream although it is difficult. This attitude of characters with disabilities of undermining themselves may be one of the reasons the society at large underestimates them; the other learners laugh at Vusumuzi, and he allows their criticism to get the better of him. Low self-esteem is also evident in *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli where Gwaqaza displays negative attitude towards his disability:

*"Bangihleka ubundlobho. Bayangihleka! Nomaphi lapho ngihamba khona ngiyahlekwa mina. Ngiyinhlekisa. Ngiyisilima!" Usebhavumula ngolaka."*

("They laugh at my one eye. I'm a laughing stock, they laugh at me everywhere I go. I'm a laughing stock. I'm being taken for a fool." He is raging with anger.)

(Ntuli, 1969:16)

Gwaqaza is talking to his wife, MaZungu. He is furious that people always laugh at him because of his disability. He tells MaZungu that he has decided to hunt Dube down, because it is his fault that he has one eye. One may argue that Gwaqaza's attitude towards his disability is the main reason why he goes to avenge himself to Dube; although people laugh at him and criticize him, he should try to control his emotion and his attitude towards his disability. In "Aphume

Nobomvu” (Good riddance) by P.B Vilakazi, a physically disabled character uses words which are not approved by social model of disability to refer to his disability:

“Ngithi lapho ngifuna izimpahla zami kanye nemali leyo, ivele ibe luqanduqandu. Kulowo mnyama lo mfokazi okuhanjwa naye akhwele adilike kimina ngomumese. (Ngomunyu.) Ngalimala kanjalo-ke njengoba sengiwunyonga nje olungasebenzi.”

(“When I confronted her for my clothes and money, she became furious. The man she was going with stabbed me. That’s how I was impaired as I have become an unemployed lame”)

(Vilakazi, 1998:48)

Sizwe, mentions that he is a disabled lame; which shows the negative attitude towards his disability as he is using the disability as his defining feature. This negative attitude by the disabled characters towards their disabilities creates a bad image to the readers about people with disabilities. Society at large will think there is nothing wrong with using discourteous names when referring to people with disabilities; most importantly, the social model of disability is against it. In “Isishosha sakwabo” (A crippled fellow) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo the physically disabled character has negative attitude towards their disability:

*Keph’ amehlo asesiphongweni  
Ukubheka phambili, phinde  
Emuva, ngaphandl’ uma  
Imuva likuqhubela phambili;  
Kangiselutho, sengadl’ imbuya ngothi,  
Ngilindel’ ukulandela izinyawo zami.”*

(“But eyes are aimed ahead  
I’ll only look forward  
I’ll never look back  
Unless the past pushes me forward  
I’m worthless, I have become poor  
I’m waiting to die

(Nxumalo, 1965:7)

The character in this narrative poem no longer identifies any positive or worthy attributes in him, which is indicative of a very low self-esteem indeed. This in turn results in the public at large sharing the same sentiments about disabled people if they themselves have a rather dim view of themselves. Another example of a deflated self-esteem is found in *Umnyama Ongenafu* (No sign for hope) by M.M Ndlovu where Queen thinks his fiancé is deserting her just because she has become physically disabled:

*“Shesha nguwe lona osungilahla kanjena ngoba nakhu senginjena?  
Mina ngifuna ukuhamba nawe, ngiyesaba ukuyobhekana nomama.”*

“Shesha are you really disserting me because I’m now disabled?  
I want to go with you, I’m scared of facing my mother.”)

(Ndlovu, 2009:79)

Queen is whining that Shesha is deserting him just because she is disabled, a statement that shows that she feels very sorry for herself and is dependent on his boyfriend for emotional support. She is afraid to face her mother after she has just been released from the hospital. Queen has been acting up and in the process, she got shot, and she has become disabled. She mentions that Shesha wants to desert her because she is disabled, she shows the negative attitude towards her disability. For people with disabilities to be not pitied upon, characters with disabilities need not pity themselves. In *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe, the physically disabled character Themba thinks his disability is a punishment for his past sins:

*“Nize ningixolele bakwethu ngokunithela ngehlazo. Ukuba ngangazi  
ngabe nganilalela ngesikhathi nisangeluleka. Ngeke ngize ngisole muntu  
igodi ngizimbele mina ngokwami.”*

“Please forgive me for embarrassing you. If I knew I would have taken your  
advices seriously, I would not blame this on anyone, I dug my own grave.”)

(Qwabe, 2009:163)

Themba believes that he is disabled because of his past sins and feels very sorry for himself. This myth that disability is the punishment for one’s past sins creates a negative image about disability. It is even worse if it is an attitude by people with disability themselves as it will perpetuate the myth that disability is the punishment for one’s past sins. In *Umadakeni* (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo, the disabled character Jabu asserts that she deserves what she has been through, because she believes she is punished for her past:

*“Angazi ukuth ngasindelani. Kwakufanele kufe mina. Kwafa umuntu  
ongenacala.”*

“I don’t know why I survived, I’m the one who should have died. An innocent  
person died.)

(Ngcobo, 2005: 231)

Jabu believes that she has become disabled because she hurt her ex-husband, Mazwe. She believes she is the one who should have died instead of her boyfriend, Raymond who died



instantly at the accident scene. The social model of disability asserts all the attitudes towards people with disabilities must be positive, because that will build a good image about them (Oliver, 1996).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

There is a wide range of attitudes towards disabilities and this chapter was aimed at showing those that are rife in literary texts and seem to feature the most. The most disturbing in most cases is the narrator's attitude which seems to be a reflection of views that are held by the society at large and can be seen in the narrator's choice of words when referring to disabilities with regard to appearances and behaviours. Attitudes of other characters towards characters with disabilities include the use of vile names and negative reactions. Characters with disabilities fail to handle the negative attitudes towards them and they end up doing regrettable things. Most characters with disabilities are inclined to believe that their disabilities are the punishment of their past sins and that they deserve to be punished.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EFFECTS OF DISABILITIES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF DISABLED CHARACTERS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the effects of disabilities and the coping strategies employed by characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works. “Obtaining disability through sickness or misfortune affects the individuals with disabilities as well as family and community members’ companions. It becomes a dividing line between before and after, and requires any number of adjustments physically, emotionally and psychologically” (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970:12). According to Marinelli (1991), the effects of disabilities incorporate economic, political, psychological and social factors. In particular; social effects are those consequences of disability that are experienced at the individual, family and community level. These include destitution, issues of access and social prohibition. These social impacts further affect how individuals and communities cope with disability.

#### **4.2 Effects of Disability**

Forbidank (1986) argues that while the degree and kind of disability differ with individual circumstances, it has been reported that individuals with disabilities encounter disparate difficulties. The particular effect of a disability on the life of an individual diverges according to some factors. It covers the particular nature and seriousness of disability; the individual's quality, stamina, size, weight and age; the individual's ability to cope; and the physical, social and economic environment (Mogniler, 2009). The following are examples of effects of disabilities that are found in isiZulu literary texts.

##### **4.2.1 Job Loss and Reduced Earnings**

“Disability can lead to some job loss and reduced earnings, barriers to education and skills development, significant additional expenses, and many challenges that can lead to economic hardship” (Conelly, 2006:24). The loss of a job or reduced earning are the most frequently cited effects of disability in isiZulu literary works. This happens mostly when a character becomes disabled after he or she has been working and must quit their job; this affects their lives and that of their close relatives. In some instances, when a disabled character has been a breadwinner, and when they become disabled, the whole family suffers. For instance in

“UMhlengikazi” (The nurse) by D.B.Z Ntuli the character loses a job because it is believed that she is mentally disabled:

*“Yasuke yadumazeka kanti beyethembe ukuthi izothola umsebenzi  
osandakuvulwa womhlengikazi ozohambela imizi, anike izeluleko  
nosizo olunjalo.”*

(“She was disappointed because she had hoped to be employed as a caregiver nurse who visits households and render health services.”)

(Ntuli, 1969: 81)

In “Umdwebi” (The painter) by N.G Sibiya, the family of a character with perceived mental disability, Magendane have to contend with poverty when he suddenly he quits his job due to perceived mental disorder:

*“Pho kudliwani lapha ekhaya? Uthi nizodlani uma engasasebenzi?”*

(“So, what are you eating? How does he think you will survive when he is not working?”)

(Sibiya, 1993: 53)

Mbhekeni, whose brother is perceived to have a mental disability, is discussing the matter with his sister-in-law, MaZikode. MaZikode is informing him that they are faced with poverty because Mbhekeni’s brother has stopped working. This is an effect of disability because they would not be suffering from poverty if Magendane was still working. “Ibhanoyi” (An aeroplane) by N.S Ntuli portrays the character with perceived mental disability whose family is worried that he will lose his job because of his disability:

*“Sizoba ngondingasithebeni phela uma sesigulelwa yinhloko yethu.”*

(“We will be destitute if our breadwinner becomes mentally ill.”)

(Ntuli in Nxumalo, 1991:21)

Thembitshe is talking to his brother Bhokuyise and others who are in the car with them. They are worried about their brother Zitha whom they think has become mentally disabled. Their brother’s recent behaviour has left them believing that he is mentally disabled. They are now heading to Pietermaritzburg after they received a phone call that their brother’s condition has worsened and they have to rush to Pietermaritzburg to see him. They are now worried that if their brother becomes disabled, they will suffer because he is the only one who has been financially supporting their family. This shows the job loss as the effect of disability; the disabled character Zitha, is the only employed person in his family and if he has become

disabled as they think, his entire family will suffer. In “Iphupho” (The dream) by P.B Vilakazi the family of a physically disabled character suffers because of job loss:

*“Ngabe asihlupheki kanje ukuba kusasebenza wena ngoba wawunawo umqondo, ungafani neze nalo doti onguMaqhinga.”*

(“If you were still employed, we would not be suffering like this, because you were more responsible, you were not like your brother Maqhinga.”)

(Vilakazi, 1998: 3)

MaSokhulu is lamenting that they are suffering because Mfaniseni lost his job. Mfaniseni became physically disabled while working at a mine in Johannesburg. He was severely impaired, and had to quit his job. Mfaniseni is the only person who has been supporting his family and now that he is physically disabled and cannot work his family suffers. In “Aphume Nobomvu” (Good riddance) by P.B Vilakazi, a character suffers job loss because he is physically disabled:

*“Ngalimala kanjalo-ke njengoba sengiwunyonga nje olungasebenzi.”*

(“That is how I was injured as I have now become unemployed lame.”)

(Vilakazi, 1998: 48)

The above is a dialogue between the physically disabled character Sizwe, Mthembu, and MaSithole. He is telling them the story of how he became disabled. Sizwe has come to see his nephew’s bride, and he is surprised when he sees that Bhekithemba bride is Mavis. Mavis and Sizwe met a long time ago when Sizwe was still working in Durban and Mavis is the main cause of Sizwe’s disability. Apparently, Sizwe and Mavis were dating, and they were sharing a room and one day when Sizwe came back from work, Mavis had stolen all the valuable items in the room, and she was nowhere to be found. One day Sizwe and Mavis met when Mavis was in the company of a man. When Sizwe tried to confront Mavis, the man stabbed Sizwe and that is how he became disabled. He then left Durban because he could not continue working. The effects of Sizwe’s disability is a job loss. In the novel titled *Kuxolelwa abanjani?* (Who deserves forgiveness) by N.G Sibiya the family of a physically disabled character suffer the same fate:

*Pho-ke usizi lokusebenza ezinkontilekeni, akaze athola ngisho indibilishi yodwa lena yesinxephezelo. Kwaphoqeleka ukuthi kube uMaZungu ophumayo aqalaze amatoho.*

(With the misery of working at construction sites, he didn't receive even a cent as compensation. MaZungu was forced to look for the job so that she could support her family.)

(Sibiya, 2003: 69)

Gumede became physically disabled and he lost his job. He quit the construction job in Empangeni because he became disabled and since he was not compensated, the family now suffers. MaZungu is the one who is working to support the family. This effect of disability is common in isiZulu literary works where the head of the family becomes disabled and loses their job and then the entire family suffers. In isiZulu poem titled "Isishosha sakwabo" (A crippled fellow) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo (1965). In this poem, the effect of disability is not explicitly stated, but it is evident that the character lost his job because of disability. The character was working in the mines in Kimberly, and he was involved in a mining accident. This effect of disability where characters quit their job because of disability is frequently portrayed in isiZulu literary works. The social model of disability asserts that although occupation should not be the merely feasible way to citizenship in the twenty-first century, access to reassuring and bearable employment surroundings must be the shared goal of people with disabilities and those who are paid to enhance such opportunities (Roulestone, 2004).

#### **4.2.2 Physical and Financial Dependency of Characters with Disabilities**

Frequently when individuals encounter the term "disability," they think of only physical disabilities. Many people are born with physical disabilities and grow up dealing with the boundaries dwelling on their activities and life choices (Kittay, 2011). Physical disabilities vary widely, but all have the effect of putting limitations on the person with the disability. The dependence of people with disabilities is one of the most prevalent effects of disability in isiZulu literary works. In "UNqobile" (Nqobile) O.E.H.M Nxumalo (1985), the physically disabled character Nqobile is physically dependent on another character to push her wheelchair. This clearly shows that she is dependent on the help of another character, she cannot walk on her own. In "Abanesihawu" (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli, Shobede is dependent on his neighbors after his parent has deserted him:

*"Ngalindela kwaphela isonto, kwaphela inyanga. Sengiphila ngokusizwa ngomakhelwane. Zaphela zambili izinyanga ngingezwa lutho ngomama."*

("I waited for a week, then a month lapsed. I depended on my neighbours. For over two months I did not hear anything from my mother.")

(Ntuli, 1969: 56)

Apparently, Shobede was abandoned by his parents; first, it was his father who left him because Shobede lost his temper and had a fight with him. After his father had left, his mother went to look for the job so that she could support the family, because Shobede could not work due to his disability. The job her mother was working at was not sufficient to support the family, she then decided to go and look for Shobede's father. The months passed with his mother not returning and the neighbors then started supporting him. In the novel titled *Kungavuka Abanguni* (Over my dead body) by I.S Kubheka, Nomusa will be dependent on others after suffering a tragic car accident and becoming disabled:

*Kwahlaluka ukuthi ulimale umgogodla kwaze kwalimala nomongo  
okwakukhomba ukuthi noma uNomusa ephilile sekuyoba ngumuntu  
ohlala embhedeni nje ngoba esangezansi wayengeke esakwazi  
ukusisebenzisa.*

(It was evident that her backbone and spinal cord was injured, which meant that even though Nomusa survives, she would always be in bed because she would not be able to use her lower body.)

(Kubheka, 1973: 263)

Although the text does not explicitly state that Nomusa will be dependent, it is evident that she will be dependent on other characters to cope. The effect of Nomusa's disability is that she will not be able to walk as the narrator mentions that she will always be in bed because of her disability. In *Umnyama Ongenafu* (Sign of no hope) by MM Ndlovu (2009), Queen is dependent on others to push her around in a wheelchair after an injury that left her disabled. If Queen were not physically disabled, she would not have been dependent on anyone. This shows that disability has effects on her independence. In isiZulu literary works, it is prevalent that when the character is physically disabled especially in a wheelchair, they become dependent on other characters.

In isiZulu drama titled *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe (2012), the physically disabled character's brother, Senzo is worried that his brother Themba would not be able to cope if he is incarcerated, because no one will support him at prison since he is wheelchair bound. Themba is still in hospital, and it has been confirmed that he will never be able to walk again. Themba is facing several charges, and it seems likely that he will be sentenced, his brother Senzo is worried that if it happens that he is sentenced, he will not be able to cope in prison. This is because Themba is physically disabled and he cannot cope on

his own; he will need someone's help, he is dependent on the help of other people. This is the effect of Themba's disability that he is now dependent on other people's help for survival. In isiZulu radio drama titled "Umadakeni" (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo (2005) the physically disabled character Jabu asks her mother to assist her by pushing her wheelchair:

*"Ngicela ungiphushhe isihlalo mama. Ngiphushise ngiyocasha ekamelweni."*

("Mother would you please push my wheelchair. Help me push, I want hide in my room.")

(Ngcobo, 2005: 263)

Jabu is now dependent on her family; especially her mother to push her wheelchair, because she has just become disabled and she will need the assistance. This is the effect of her disability because if she were not disabled, she would not have been dependent on her family to push her wheelchair. This type of effect is prevalent in isiZulu literary works, where the character becomes dependent on other characters after they have become physically disabled. A social model of disability asserts that when obstacles are detached, people with disabilities can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their personal lives.

#### **4.2.3 Discrimination**

Discrimination towards people with disability is one of the most prevalent effects of disabilities. "Disability discrimination is when a person with the disability is treated less favorably than a person who does not have the disability in the same or similar circumstances" (Sartorius & Schulze, 2005:32). Discrimination towards characters with disabilities is observable in isiZulu literary works. It appears in various features and it appears on characters with diverse types of disabilities. In "Ukunqamuka Konyaka" (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa, a mentally disabled character hesitates to come out with crucial information because he thinks that he might be discriminated against:

*Inkinga enkulu ayebhekene nayo uMcuphi ukuthi wayengathenjwa. Ngakhoke yayingekho into ayengayitshela abantu bayizwe. Yamhlupha kakhulu le nto uMcuphi, imshuka enhliziyweni. Wayezibuza eziphendula ukuthi kufanele enzenjani. Wayengathembi ukuthi amaphoyisa ayezomlalela wayebona sengathi ayezovele amxoshe, ambuze ukuthi kusezinhlangeni yini esiteshini.*

(The major problem that Mcuphi was faced with was the fact that people did not trust him and there was nothing he could tell people and make them listen. That bothered him a lot and he did not know what to do.

He did not trust that the police would listen to him and he thought they would just chase him out of the police station and probably ask him if the police station is a place for lunatics?)

(Hlengwa, 1995: 56)

Mcuphi has valuable information that might lead to the discovery of Dr. Nhlapho who disappeared on New Year's Day. Mcuphi has strong suspicion that Mfekayi is involved in Dr. Nhlapho's disappearance, but no one would listen to his story, because he is mentally disabled. He has even thought of reporting this issue to the police officers, but he is hesitant because he thinks he might not be taken seriously. Mcuphi is discriminated against, because he is mentally disabled. This can be viewed as the effect of his mental disability because if he were not mentally disabled, everyone would have listened to his story. In "Isiphukuphuku" (A fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli, the intellectually disabled character Vusumuzi feels isolated as other learners always laugh at him:

*Uma ebukisisa ngaphansi komunye umuthi, abone uVusumuzi ehlezi yedwa. Aqhwebe ingane athi ayiyombiza. Uma efika, awabone amehlo achemomvu. Ubekade ekhala.*

(If he looks thoroughly under one of the trees he sees Vusumuzi sitting alone. He then asks a learner to go and call him. When Vusumuzi arrives he sees it in his eyes that he has been crying.)

(Ntuli, 1969: 70)

Vusumuzi feels isolated as he sits alone and not playing with other learners. Vusumuzi is discriminated against because of his disability. When other learners give incorrect answers, the other learners do not laugh at them, but they laugh at Vusumuzi when he gives incorrect answers. Other learners even use specific names which are discriminatory towards Vusumuzi. This discrimination towards Vusumuzi is the effect of his intellectual disability, because if he was not disabled other learners would not have laughed at him. "Indeed, one of the most current disability issues is discrimination towards disabled people; whether a short-term or persistent problem, the effects of discrimination towards people with disability extend beyond the disability itself", Finkelstein (1998:85). In "Abanesihawu" (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli, there is discrimination against a character with perceived physical disability:

*"Ngumama owayekhuthalele ukuba ngihambe ngiye esikoleni. Ngokufisa kukababa ngabe ngaba yinto eqedelwayo nje. Kwakuthi noma ngifika ngiphuma esikoleni kade sengilandiwe, ubaba ngimuzwe ekhuluma yedwa ethi akazi ukuthi ngifundiselwani ngoba akukho muntu ozosizakala ngami, akukho nandawo lapho kuqashwa khona abantu*



*abangakwazi ukuhamba njengami.”*

(“It is my mother who wanted me to go to school. My father just wished that I could be finished off. When I came back from school he would complain that I should not get educated because I will not be of any assistance and there is no place which would employ people who cannot walk like me.”)

(Ntuli, 1969: 53)

Shobede, who is physically disabled tells his sad story to pastor Ngwenya. Ngwenya is heading for the store, and then he sees Shobede sitting asking for money from people passing by, he then goes to him to give him some money, and he ends up asking about his background. Shobede reveals that he was discriminated against by his father when he was still growing up; he mentions that his father did not want him to go to school because he did not see the need for him to study because he is disabled. He believed that he would not be employed simply because he is disabled and cannot walk. Shobede eventually dropped out of school, because his father refused to continue paying his school fees. His mother wanted him to continue going to school but she was not working, so she could not afford to pay his school fees. This discrimination against Shobede by his father is the effect of his disability, because if he were not disabled, he would not have discriminated against. In the novel titled *Umnyama Ongenafu* (No sign of hope) by M.M Ndlovu the other character is talking about the physically disabled character and his speech is discriminatory:

*“Awu unesibindi nsizwa yakithi, mina angisoze ngathandana nesidakwa; nokwenza sikhubazekile.”*

(“You have audacity my brother, I would never date an alcoholic; especially the one that is disabled.”)

(Ndlovu, 2009:81)

The above literary text is a discriminatory speech towards the physically disabled character. The physically disabled character Queen is drunk and has just fallen in a wheelchair while she has been trying to run away from his fiancé, Shesha. One character who is standing among the crowd who have been watching Queen, asserts that he will never date an alcoholic, especially the disabled one. This man’s speech displays discrimination. This discrimination is the effect of Queen physical disability, because if Queen were not disabled, he would not have vowed that he would never date a disabled alcoholic. In the novel titled *Ngizoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli there is discrimination towards a character with a disability, he even decides to just leave a wedding after being made fun of:

*Uthe usazibaziba, wezwa kusuka olukhulu uhleko lapha eduze kwakhe; kukhona abahleka besuka, bedi bemnyonkolota, kukhombi nje ukuthi nabo bananela ingoma lena esiqanjwe ngaye. Wavele wajabha umzimba. Wathatha induku yakhe, wanyobozela wahamba.*

(“While he is trying ignore them, he hears some of those near him laughing loudly, some are getting away while laughing, looking at him, it become clear that they are also enjoying the song about him. He just gets disappointed, takes his stick and then he slowly walks away.”)

(Ntuli, 1969: 14)

Almost everybody at the wedding seems to laugh at Gwaqaza who suffers from monocular vision. He was attending the ceremony like everyone else in the community and people start singing about his condition. At first he thought they will stop and sing about others, as they have been doing. They don’t stop singing and laughing once they have started singing about him. He eventually decides to leave because he can no longer tolerate people making a joke out of his condition. When he leaves the ceremony, he decides to go and watch a soccer game at school and when he gets there, children still laugh at him calling him one-eyed as people have been doing at the wedding. He then decides to stop watching the game and leaves, heartbroken. This is discrimination against Gwaqaza, results in him isolating himself so that he can avoid people calling him with derogatory names and laughing at him. Social model of disability seeks to fight against all forms of discrimination against people with disabilities (Terzi, 2004).

#### **4.2.4 Vulnerability**

Individuals with disabilities might be especially exposed to violations including relational viciousness. People with disabilities are regularly the minimum ready to perceive the threat, and the slightest ready to get help inside the criminal equity framework (Bangilhole, 1997). The vulnerability of people with disabilities to danger is the effect of their disability. In isiZulu short story titled “Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo” (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli, the intellectually disabled character is fighting and he is defeated by the other character:

*Alibambe igula. Athi uyapaquza uMbuthuma, esekhamisile ngoba ephefumula ngomlomo, mbumbumbu ubisi. Uphimisa nje, selingenile ithamo elincane. Olunye lumthele ebusweni. Kodwa ayamphelela amandla uMbuthuma. Akubone lokhu uNqeku asukume. Athi ja phansi uMbuthuma.*

(Nqeku takes the calabash and pours the milk in Mbuthuma’s mouth. Some of the milk enters Mbuthuma’s mouth and other splits on his face. Mbuthuma loses power and Nqeku notices that and he releases Mbuthuma. Mbuthuma lies prone)

(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1982:78)

Mbuthuma is fighting with his brother-in-law, Nqeku and is defeated. The fight between them started when Nqeku was trying to stop Mbuthuma from abusing his wives. Mbuthuma has been milking his three wives and Nqeku is angered when he sees that and he tries to stop Mbuthuma. Mbuthuma asks Nqeku not to interfere in his family affairs and they then start fighting. Mbuthuma loses and is defeated by Nqeku. This is the effect of disability, because if Mbuthuma was not intellectually disabled he would not have done something that endangered his life. IsiZulu short story titled “USofasonke” (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli portrays a mentally disabled character who sets himself on fire and he dies:

*“Kuthe uma sengizitshinga ngaphandle izibi zokugcina, ngezwa izwi limpongoloza. Liphuma khona endlini kaSofasonke. Ngavele ngabona ukuthi uyafa lomuntu, ingabe yini kangaka. Ngisuke ngejubane ngiphikelele khona. Noma ngabe unolaka kumele ukuba uyaludinga usizo. Lapho ngisendleleni nje. Ngibone kuphuma ilangabi lomlilo liphuma emnyango. Uyakhala umuntu.”*

(“When I was out to throw away the last garbage, I heard a voice screaming. It was coming from Sofasonke’s house. I realized that he is in trouble and wondered what was happening. I started running at a high speed to his house. He needs help, no matter how short-tempered he is. On my way, I saw the fire coming out of his house. He was screaming.”)

(Ntuli in Ntuli and Ntuli, 1986: 89)

The above details are disclosed during Sofasonke’s funeral. The character that is talking at the funeral service is the neighbor of Sofasonke. He is also a relative with Sofasonke and he used to spend some time with him before he passed on. He witnessed the incident when a fire killed Sofasonke and he mentions that they tried to rescue him, but he could not be easily rescued from the fiery room. The character mentions that Sofasonke started by setting his cat on fire and after a few days he set himself on fire. This is the indication that Sofasonke was vulnerable to danger as a character with a mental disability. This is an effect of his disability, because if Sofasonke was not mentally disabled, he would not have been vulnerable to such hazardous incident. In “UMhlengikazi” (The nurse) by D.B.Z Ntuli a character with a perceived mental disability is chased by other characters:

*“Vimbani phambili! Vimbani,” ngimemeza ngalo lonke izwi lami. Kubekhona abangizwayo, babone ukuthi ngixosha loyamuntu wezimhlophe, bamsukele bayomvimbela. Ngifika khona angisakwazi*

*nakuphefumula. Bangibambe sengithi ngiyazifikela ngebhazo.”*

(“Stop her!” Stop her!” I shouted at the top of my voice. Some people heard me, and they realized that I’m chasing the lady wearing white clothes and they stopped her. They also stopped me when I was trying to chop her head with the hatchet.”)

(Ntuli, 1969: 89)

The mentally disabled character whom they refer to as Mhlengikazi demonstrated insanity and she ended up being almost terribly hurt by MaMchunu. Mhlengikazi injects MaMchunu's kids Gwinyiqatha and Ntombi, which tremendously angers MaMchunu, and she is stopped when she is trying to use a hatchet to chop Mhlengikazi. Mhlengikazi as a mentally disabled character does something that endangers her life, and arguably she would not have done something that would put her life in danger had she not been disabled. In “Ukunqamuka Konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa, Mcuphi, who is mentally disabled character endangers himself, and he is being shot:

*Luqale uhlanya lwenze imigilingwane yalo. Luyisukele inhlabathi egcekeni. Luyigubhe. Akhuze uMfekayi. Ngisho ukuba lunake uhlanya. Aqale ukungabi nasikhundla uMfekayi. Adumele isibhamu uMfekayi.*

“The madman starts performing his acrobatics. He starts digging in the yard. Mfekayi tries to stop him, but Mcuphi just continues digging. Mfekayi is panicking, and he pulls out a gun.”)

(Hlengwa, 1995: 56)

Mfekayi tries to stop Mcuphi from digging in his yard by shooting at him. Mfekayi is guilty, and he is scared that Mcuphi might reveal something that will expose him. Mfekayi murdered Dr. Nhlapho and buried him in his yard, and Mcuphi is the only one who has a strong suspicion against Mfekayi. Mcuphi decides to dig Mfekayi’s yard, because he realizes that no one is willing to listen to his story. He does something that endangers himself just so that he will get the attention he requires. If Mcuphi were not mentally disabled, he would not have endangered his life by digging in Mfekayi’s yard, but no one is willing to listen to him because he is mentally disabled. This is the effect of Mfekayi’s disability, because if he were not disabled, people would have given him attention. In “Uhlanya” (The lunatic) by N.G Sibiya, the character with a perceived mental disability is hurt when they grasp him, and he is bleeding as he is tied with rope:

*“Kangihlanyi mina. Kangihlanyi mina!” Useyopha nalapha ezandleni ngenxa yokusikwa yintambo. Nep hijanyana abelifakile selize laklebhuka lapha ehlombe.”*

(“I’m not mad. I’m not mad!” The rope is cutting him in hands and he is now bleeding. The pajamas he is wearing are torn.)

(Ntuli, 2004: 22)

Nduduzo who is falsely perceived as being mentally disabled is grasped by his brother, Zakhele and hospital attendants. He refuses to enter because he is confident that he is not mentally disabled, his brother Zakhele is the one who is mentally disabled. Although Nduduzo is not mentally disabled the way he is harmed shows how mentally disabled people are treated. This is the effect of his disability, he has not been treated in this manner and now that they think he has become disabled, he is being mistreated. In “Ucu” (The love necklace) by N.G Sibiya a mentally retarded character does something imprudent and endangers his life:

*“Ngize ngifike kubona. Ngibaxazulule. Sekuwe nezibuko kumisi.  
Ngimephuze iwisa umzala. Ngithi ukumbhula ngalo ezimbanjeni.”*

(Finally, I get to them and draw them apart. School mistress Majola’s eyeglasses have fallen. I take the knobkerrie away from Scathulo, and hit him lightly in the ribs.”)

(Sibiya, 1993: 52)

The mentally retarded Scathulo does something that endangers his life. He hits the school mistress Majola with a knobkerrie. Majola had made an empty promise to Scathulo that she will send the grown-up girls to officiate their relationship, now Scathulo is angered. Scathulo’s cousin Bavimbile rescues Majola. After Bavimbile has separated Scathulo and Majola, she takes the knobkerrie away from Scathulo, and hits Scathulo with it. The mentally retarded Scathulo does something that endangers his life, and arguably, this is the effect of his intellectual disability. If Scathulo were not intellectually disabled, he would not have been made a fool by Majola, which is the main reason why he beats her and ends up being beaten by his cousin Bavimbile. In the novel titled *Bengithi Lizokuna?* (I thought it was going to rain) by N.G Sibiya the intellectually disabled character is murdered by a criminal when the former has come to open a gate for the car:

*Ngomzuzwana wayesekhombe ngaso uNyambose, owasibona isibhamu wavele wabhanyaza amehlo nje, wamamatheka. “Bhamu, bhamu,” ememeza enyewuka ekhomba isibhamu sakufuna ukusibamba, esondela kuNdumiso owayedidekile. Wo, wadidekela kuso isibhamu, wayicindezela inkinobho. Yehheni bakithi, kwaduma izulu ngenkathi ediyazela uNyambose, kuwa ibhulukwe kuqala, elilandela naye.*

(In seconds, Ndumiso was pointing the gun at Nyambose, who

just opened big eyes and smiled when he saw the gun. Nyambose shouted and moved towards Ndumiso as if he wanted to grasp the gun. Ndumiso became confused and he undeliberately shot Nyambose and Nyambose fell.)

(Sibiya, 2008: 128)

Ndumiso has just committed robbery in Ngidi's farm and when he comes out of the gate, he sees Nyambose standing at the gate. Ndumiso had left the gate open so that it will be easier for him to get out, but he is frightened when he sees the gate closed and someone is standing at it. Ndumiso has a gun with him, and he thinks Nyambose will be the reason for the failure of his plan. Nyambose just reacts confusedly when he sees the gun, and that is when Ndumiso undeliberately shoots him. This can be viewed as an effect of his disability, because if he were not intellectually disabled, he would have been able to realize that Ndumiso is a criminal. He would not have done something that endangers his life. In the novel titled *INkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi, Ndebenkulu mentions that a physically disabled character deserves a severe hiding:

*"Impela nami ngingafakaza uqinisile uMkhwanazi. Lowaya mfana uluhlaza ngempela, uluhlaza cwe," aze asho nangesiNgisi. "Akanayo nencane nje inhlonipho, nencane nje. Ubephelwelwe nje wukuba umuntu ambhambabule ngenduku."*

("That boy is really rude, extremely rude, I can attest to that," said Ndebenkulu spicing it with a few English words and adding: "He has no manners, he was lucky we didn't give him a serious hiding.")

(Nyembezi, 1961: 59)

Ndebenkulu is talking to the Mkhwanazi family. They are reflecting on the meeting Ndebebulu and Mkhwanazi were attending. Ndebenkulu is lamenting Diliza's behavior at the meeting. Diliza kept on giggling at Ndebenkulu at the meeting; he mentions that Diliza deserves serious hiding because of his behavior. Diliza is a physically disabled character and the fact that he just deserves severe hiding shows that he is in danger. This is the effect of his disability because if his behavior were not deviant from others on the meeting, which is associated with his disability, he would not have behaved the way he did. The novel titled *Ngizoye Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli portrays Gwaqaza who has a disability and is murdered by another character:

*Athi uyachiliza uGwaqaza, qhoqhobaliyane uBhakubha. Uwakhipha onke amandla azalwa nawo uBhakubha. Khushu khushu, khushu khushu! Iminwe kaBhakubha ilambele uqhoqhoqho kaGwaqaza. Uwakhipha onke amandla akhe uGwaqaza angathi nyaka uBhakubha.*

(When Gwaqaza tries to push Bhakubha away, Bhakubha strangles him. Bhakubha gives all his strength. Bhakubha's fingers strangles Gwaqaza's throat. When Gwaqaza tries to move, Bhakubha just keeps on strangling him.)

(Ntuli, 1969: 129)

Bhakubha and Gwaqaza are fighting. Bhakubha has come to avenge his father Dube who was murdered by Gwaqaza. Gwaqaza was avenging himself to Dube because he is the reason why he lost his one eye. This is the effect of Gwaqaza's disability because if Gwaqaza were not disabled he would not have murdered Dube and he would not have been murdered by Bhakubha. In the novel titled *Umnyama Ongenafu* (No sign of hope) by M.M Ndlovu, Queen falls off a wheelchair because of her vulnerability and danger that faces her:

*Wazama ukubaleka ngaso isihlalo, santantatheka naye saye samphosa esihluthu. Wehla uShesha emotweni ehamba noSimanga beyomtakula bephelezela nguhleko lwezidakwa. Wakhishwa lapho uQueen esemanaphanapha wudaka olunakayo olwalulapho emaxhaphozini.*

(She tried to run away in the wheelchair, it rolled all the way into the ditch with her. Shesha and Simanga alight from the car and run to rescue her amidst the laughter of the onlookers. They retrieved Queen who was now splashed with stinking marsh all over her.)

(Ndlovu, 2009:81)

Queen falls into the marsh in her wheelchair. She is trying to run away from her fiancé, Shesha. Queen is drunk, and she is afraid to face Shesha. Queen is coming from the tavern with her friend Mumsy who is drunk and cannot push Queen's wheelchair. This is the effects of her disability because if she was not physically disabled, she would not have been hurt. This shows that she is in danger of being hurt because of her disability. Oliver (1998) asserts that the people with disabilities are more vulnerable than those without disabilities. It is therefore not surprising that in literature, including isiZulu literature, characters with disabilities are portrayed as vulnerable to harm, as Augustin (1998) asserts that literature mirrors the society.

#### **4.3 Coping Strategies**

Coping strategies can be defined as "the cognitive and behavioral efforts required to manage specific external and internal demands that are appraised as exceeding the resources of the person" (Ganjiwale & Sharma, 2016:3). Coping entails a cognitive reassessment of the condition to properly manage it. Coping strategies vary according to diverse types and effects of disability. There are various and disparate coping strategies utilized by characters with disabilities in literature.

### 4.3.1 Use of Assistive Devices

Some characters use assistive devices to cope with their disabilities. The use of assistive devices varies according to different disabilities; for example, people without legs use artificial limbs and people with hearing disabilities may use hearing aids. In “Luphelile” (It is over) by N.F Mbhele the character who uses artificial limb to cope with his disability is portrayed:

*“Ubani futhi ongazi ukuthi wamqoma enomlenze wokufakelwa?”*

(“Who does not know that you fell in love with him when he already had an artificial leg?”)

(Mbhele, 1995:34)

Khethiwe is talking to her daughter, Thandiwe who is informing her that her relationship with her fiancé Ndumiso has come to an end. Khethiwe is worried that she has wasted much money preparing for Thandiwe's wedding, and Thandiwe is telling her that there will be no wedding, because they have broken up. Ndumiso was serving in the army and he was involved in a landmine explosion and lost his leg. He is now using the artificial limb to walk as a coping strategy. In *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli Gwaqaza copes with his disability by wearing sunglasses:

*Nangempela aqinise izibuko zakhe zelanga. Aphikelele khona.*

(He tightens his sunglasses and starts going.)

(Ntuli, 1969:39)

Gwaqaza is ridiculed because he has one eye; people compose songs about his condition and others calling him with discourteous names. To cope with all that mocking, he decides to wear sunglasses so that it will not be easily noticeable that he has one eye. When he leaves a wedding after people started laughing at him, he adjusts his eyeglasses tightly and goes to watch a school soccer match at a nearby sports field. *Umadakeni* (The vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo portrays the physically disabled character who will be using artificial limbs to walk:

*“Odokotela bathe ngiyokwazi ukusebenzisa imilenze yokufakelwa uma sekuphole kahle.”*

(“Doctors said that I will be able to use artificial legs after I have fully recovered.”)

(Ngcobo, 2005:250)



Jabu was involved in a car accident a few weeks ago and lost both her legs. She is happy to inform her friend that she will be able to use artificial limbs, which means she will be able to walk again. This is a coping strategy, because she will be able to walk again using artificial limbs.

#### 4.3.2 Using Alternative Means

People with disabilities might opt to rely on alternatives to cope with their disabilities such as using other skills, involving themselves in the community, and so forth. In “Isiphukuphuku” (A fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli, the intellectually disabled character Vusumuzi opts for alternative skill when he is not successful at school and trains as a builder:

*“Kuthe uma sekufika ekwakheni uqobo, ngaba ngowesibili kwabanemiklomo ephakeme. Abangiphethe banginome kakhulu, bathi nginesiphiwo esingajwayelekile ekwakheni. Selokhu ngaqala ukufunda angikaze nginconywa kanjena. Sekungikhanyele ukuthi wayeqinisile uMgoza uma ethi ngiphiwe kulento.”*

(“In building practicals, I passed with excellent results and was the second-highest. Teachers complimented me on my exceptional talent in building. Ever since I started school, I have never received such compliments. It has become clear that Mgoza was right when he said that I’m talented at this.”)

(Ntuli, 1969: 75)

This good news is brought to MaMkhize by a letter he receives from his son, Vusumuzi who has all along been regarded as intellectually inferior until he left school and took building as an alternative. Initially, Vusumuzi was not interested in building as a career; his dream was to become a medical doctor. After he failed in school his class teacher Mgoza convinced him to study architecture, because he realized that he has exceptional skill in building and he thought he will be successful. This is the way Vusumuzi copes with intellectual disability. In “Ucu” (Love necklace) by N.G Sibiya, the intellectually disabled character Scathulo courts young women:

*“Ehhe mzala. Ngimpintshe impela, kusuka uthuli. Kade ngihleli naye nje. Ithanda ukuthamba impela inhliziyi yakhe. Buka nje ngoba uze wangithosela amagwinya.” Isho imomotheke into yakwabo.”*

(“Yes cousin, I’m close to winning her heart. I spent some time with her today and her heart seems to have softened. Look, she even offered me vetkoeks.” He says with a smile on his face.”)

(Sibiya, 1993: 49)

The intellectually disabled character Scathulo is talking to his cousin, Bavimbile. Scathulo is informing his cousin that he is courting school mistress Majola, and he is positive that he will win her heart. Scathulo is well-known as person who is intellectually disabled, but the things he does are done by normal people of his age. That makes people shift from his disability to his ability and audacity of courting the lovely school mistress Majola. Arguably, this is Scathulo's way of coping with his disability, he does things that are not expected of him, things that are done by other people of his age in society. In "Ukunqamuka Konyaka" (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa, the mentally disabled character Mcuphi uses alternative means to expose Mfekayi's involvement in Dr. Nhlapho disappearance:

*Wayehlezi endaweni eyodwa enganyakazi uMcuphi. Kwakubonakala nje ukuthi usemcabangweni noma-ke kwakukhona akuhlolayo. Lokhu kuhlala kwamphazamisa uMfekayi. Pho kwakungathiwani ohlanyeni? Luqale uhlanya lwenze imigilingwane yalo. Luyisukele inhlabathi egcekeni. Luyigubhe*

(Mcuphi sat in one place and didn't move. It was clear that he was in deep thought and that did not sit well with Mfekayi.  
What could be said to the lutanic? Mcuphi started digging in the yard.)

(Hlengwa, 1995: 56)

Mcuphi is digging in Mfekayi's yard. He had been hesitant about informing people about his suspicions on Mfekayi. Dr. Nhlapho disappeared on New Year's Day and Mcuphi suspects that Mfekayi is behind Dr. Nhlapho's disappearance. Mcuphi has thought about informing police about his suspicions but he is aware that he will not be taken seriously just because he is mentally disabled and that he will be discriminated against. To expose Mfekayi, he just starts digging in Mfekayi's yard until he gets the attention he requires, and the police arrest Mfekayi. "Umdwebi" (The painter) by N.G Sibiya portrays Magendane, a character with perceived mental disability who is an artist:

*Aqonde endlini. Uphuma usephethe lezi zingqwembe ezidwetshwe lemi sangano yakhe.*

(He goes straight to the house. He comes out carrying boards on which his does his crazy paintings.)

(Sibiya, 1993: 57)

Magendane has a perceived mental disability and he has an exceptional talent and has now got people who are willing to buy his paintings and it is clear that he will be able to support his family using his talent. Although he has been regarded as mentally disabled by friends and

family, particularly after quitting his job, he has adopted alternative means in the form of his talent to survive and to support his family. This can be regarded as his coping strategy. In “USofasonke” (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli, Sofasonke who displays signs that he is mentally deranged, uses other skills to cope:

*“Akusiyona indoda exoxa kakhulu kodwa into engayitholayo ukuthi  
ithanda ukufunda. Inezincwadi eziningi ezibhalwe ngezilimi ezahlukene.  
Uma ngivuka ngiyokwakha athathe igeja nefosholo ayolima.”*

(“He was not a talkative person, but what I noticed is that he liked to read. He had a lot of books written in different languages. When I up woke to go and build my house, he would take his plough and shovel to go and plough.”)

(Ntuli, 1986:11)

This shows Sofasonke as someone who has a lot of other skills despite being mentally disabled. He copes with his disability by reading books written in different languages. He also wakes up every morning to go and work in the fields. He also possesses remarkable culinary skills and his cooking is the envy of his neighbours. In short, he has different skills and utilizes them to cope with his disability. In “UNqobile” (Nqobile) by D.B.Z Ntuli the physically disabled Nqobile demonstrates admirable insight in public speaking:

*Washo ngezwi elipholile, wabuza umbuzo ozikile mayelana nodaba  
okwakukhulunywa ngalo. Kwaqalaza wonke umuntu endlini emangaliswa  
ngumqondo owawuphume kuleyongosi yendlu.*

(In a cool, calm voice, Nqobile raised an insightful question on what was discussed, and everyone was looked in her direction, surprised by the maturity of the idea that had emerged from that corner of the house.)

(Ntuli in Ntuli and Ntuli, 1986: 98)

Nqobile is participating in discussions during a meeting and raises vital questions that leave everyone in the hall in awe and admiration of her. The fact that she cannot walk does not stop her from participating in the community meetings and displaying her other skills. It can be argued that this is the way she copes with her disability; she does not sit at home the entire day bemoaning that she cannot walk, but she thoroughly participates in community gatherings despite her disability.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

There are diverse effects of disabilities that are portrayed in isiZulu literary works. These among others include job loss and reduced earnings, dependency of characters with disabilities,

discrimination and vulnerability of characters with the disability. Job loss and reduced earning, and dependency of characters with physical disabilities are the most common effects of disability in isiZulu literary works. The characters coping strategies vary according to the types and effects of their disabilities. Coping strategies of characters in isiZulu literary works include among other things, the utilization of artificial limbs, exploring alternative skills and active social involvement and participation. Social involvement helps characters to deal with daily stress they are constantly facing because of their disabilities.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE ROLE AND STATUS OF CHARACTERS WITH DISABILITIES**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will be an analysis of the roles and status that authors assign to disabled characters in literary works. Focus will be on how their portrayal in terms of the role they play in texts is a true reflection of the disabled people that we meet in real life and how this links with expectations and responsibilities as espoused by the disability model that is the theoretical framework for this study.

#### **5.2 Role of Characters**

Maphumulo (1995) postulates that it is important for all characters to be introduced to and known by the readers even though they do not play a vital role in the unfolding of events in a literary works. This suggests that all characters should, to some extent be treated as equal and accorded the same status and objective attitude towards them. Characters can, on the main, be differentiated as main and minor characters. The main characters' role is to drive the story forward and they are the centre of the story around which all events evolve. "The main character is responsible for handling the main problem and is focused on by the storyline, whereas minor character is a character in a narrative that is not focused on by the primary storyline, but appears or is mentioned in the story enough to be more than just a minor character" (William, 1997: 42). Philips (2008) argues that minor characters are not focused on by the storyline, they just complement main characters and help move the story forward.

##### **5.2.1 Disabled Characters as Main Characters**

In isiZulu literary works, there are characters with disabilities who are portrayed as the main characters. "Isiphukuphuku" (A fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) depicts the intellectually disabled character Vusumuzi as the main character. He is the center of the story; he is introduced at the beginning of the short story, together with the obstacle he is facing which is his inability to perform well or normally and move on to next grade within the expected times. He is the oldest in class and there is no hope that he will pass the current grade in which he is. Other learners laugh at him whenever he gives incorrect answers to his class teacher and as a result they call him by all silly names. Vusumuzi plays a vital role in development of the story. After his teacher Mgoza has realized that he is not doing well in school he tries to convince him to attend a building school to advance his building skills, and he becomes successful. In the beginning

of the short story the obstacle he is facing is introduced and at the end of the short story, it is resolved when he is successful in his building studies. This shows that despite his intellectual shortcomings, the author makes him a focal point in the story and shows both his weaknesses and strength, thus avoid the prevalent trends and attitudes in societies that depict disabled people as hopeless failures.

“Umhlengikazi” (The nurse) by D.B.Z Ntuli portrays Mhlengikazi, the main character who has perceived mental disability. The whole story is based on the character with perceived mental disability. She is the reason why MaMchunu is writing the letter to her husband. The title of the story is also based on her and the whole story is centered on her.

There is a main character with the intellectual disability in the short story titled “Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo” (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1982). Mbuthuma is the main character and the entire story is built around him, he is the one who causes the incidents that happen in the story. The title of the short story also refers to him. He is introduced at the beginning of the story by the narrator and the things he does are the reasons for the development of the story. He is abusive to his three wives in several ways. At first, he ties them with a rope and tells them to run around the cattle kraal and he also milks them. Everything that is done by Mbuthuma in the short story drives the story forward. Towards the end of the story the problem is solved when Mbuthuma is milking his wives and his brother-in-law, Nqeku tries to stop him, and they end up fighting and Mbuthuma is defeated. This all shows that Mbuthuma is the main character, everything he does has a significant impact on the entire story.

In “USofasonke” (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1986), the mentally disabled character Sofasonke is the main character. First, the title of the short story refers to him which shows that he is the main character; his name is Sofasonke and the title of the short story is “USofasonke.” The entire story is about Sofasonke; it is his funeral service and someone who used to spend time with him when he was still alive is addressing the mourners and relates how Sofasonke died. He is also citing other incidents that preceded Sofasonke’s death. Sofasonke is therefore the primary focus of the entire story; the speaker introduces him at the beginning of the story when he starts to talk at his funeral; he then talks about how he met Sofasonke. Lastly, he talks about the incidents that led to Sofasonke’s death. The story is centered on him, and he is the only character that is explicitly stated in the story.

The character with a perceived mental disability Nduduzo in the short story titled “Uhlanya” (The lunatic) by N.G Sibiya (2005) is also the main character. Nduduzo is introduced in the

first line of the story by the narrator which suggests that he is the main character. The problem he faces is also introduced at the very beginning of the story. Nduduzo is courting Nandi and he thinks the love he has for Nandi will result in him becoming insane.

The short story titled “Ibhanoyi” (An aeroplane) by N.S Ntuli (1991) portrays Zitha, the main character with a perceived mental disability. He is focused on by the storyline and is responsible for handling the main problem in the short story. Zitha is perceived as mentally disturbed person by his brothers, Thembitshe and Bhekuyise. He has informed them that he is planning to purchase an aeroplane, which to his brothers is a sign that he is mentally disturbed. The entire story is built around Zitha and he is the center of the story. From the beginning to the end of the story, his brothers are discussing this matter.

The short story titled “Umdwebi” (The painter) by N.G Sibiya (1993) has Magendane, a character with a perceived mental disability. Magendane is a painter in the story; he left his work to become a painter. He is portrayed from the beginning of the story until the end. The character with a perceived physical disability Shobede in the short story titled “Abanesihawu” (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) is the main character. Shobede is not the one who is introduced at the very beginning of the short story, the narrator starts by introducing pastor Ngwenya. After Shobede has been introduced, the problem he is facing is also introduced, the story starts to develop after his introduction. Shobede becomes the subject of pity when he tells pastor Ngwenya his miserable story. The story moves forward after pastor Ngwenya has met Shobede, because he goes to tell his wife MaXulu about Shobede and they try to help him. At the end of the story, Shobede runs away, and it becomes clear to pastor Ngwenya and his wife MaXulu that Shobede has been deceitful all along. The whole story is centered on Shobede; he is the main character in the story.

The character with a mental disability in isiZulu radio drama titled *Umadakeni* (A vigrant) by M.E Ngcobo (2005) is a leading character. Mazwe is introduced at the beginning of the story when he is looking for transport to Durban. He is responsible for handling the main problem in the story, and he is the one in need of change. He becomes mentally disabled after his wife divorces him. His wife started by cheating on him with Raymond and then she divorces him and takes his house and other crucial belongings. Mazwe then suffers severe depression and that leads to mental disability. His life changes after he has met Thulisile and they get married. After he has married Thulisile he goes back to his normal life, goes back to work and everything becomes normal again. At the end of the drama, he is a happy man.

In “UNqobile” (Nqobile) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo (1985) Nqobile who is the character with physical disability is the main character. The story starts when Nqobile and Mvuseni are attending a meeting at the hall and Mvuseni becomes attracted to her. He then tries to communicate with her by writing a letter. Nqobile’s facial expression attracts him. Mvuseni waits for Nqobile outside the hall after the meeting has ended and he is surprised when he sees that Nqobile is in a wheelchair. Nqobile appears from the beginning to the end of the story.

IsiZulu novel titled *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) depicts the main character Gwaqaza who suffers from a monocular vision. The title of the novel refers to words that are uttered by Gwaqaza when he vows that he will avenge himself on Dube who is the reason for his disability. Gwaqaza is not introduced at the very beginning of the novel, but it is clear that he is the main character. He is responsible for handling the main problem in the novel; he wants to avenge himself to Dube who is the reason for his blind eye. At the beginning of the novel Gwaqaza is arrested for assaulting Dube, then after he has served his sentence, he is out for revenge. He is also facing the issue of discrimination; wherever he goes people discriminate against him, because of his one eye. That ignites his anger towards Dube and he informs his wife MaZungu that he wants to avenge himself to Dube. His wife tries to stop him from killing Dube but Gwaqaza is adamant that he will kill Dube. Eventually he kills Dube and soon after which he gets arrested and Bhakubha who is Dube’s son wants to avenge his father; a promise he fulfils at the end of the novel.

In the novel titled *Kungavuka Abanguni* (Over my dead body) by I.S Kubheka (1973), the character who eventually becomes physically disabled, Nomusa is the main character. Nomusa wants to marry Thamsanqa but her father refuses to allow his daughter to marry Thamsanqa. In the beginning, Nomusa and Thamsanqa are in a relationship, and that does not sit well with Nomusa’s father, Gumede. Gumede tries by all means to break up Nomusa’s relationship, but that just reignite the love Nomusa has for Thamsanqa. In the end, Nomusa wants to marry Thamsanqa but her father Gumede refuses to accept that. He does not want to engage in *ilobolo* negotiations with Thamsanqa’s family. Gumede believes that Thamsanqa is a bad guy and he is not the type of a man he wants his daughter to marry. In the end, Nomusa is hit by a car after she has left her home to digest the rejection of her boyfriend by her father and she becomes physically disabled.

In the novel titled *Ifa Ngukufa* (An inheritance is death) by M.J Mngadi (2001) Themba, who is physically disabled, is the main character in the story, and he is the main focus of the story.



Themba is not introduced at the very beginning of the novel, but the story later focuses on him and that seems to drive the ultimate unfolding of events. Themba appears in every critical incident that happens in the story. First, he is involved in a fight with Dustin who has just started an affair with his mother, and he ends up being the enemy of his mother and Sithembiso, because of Dustin. Second, he is involved in the killing of his brother Daniel. Themba and Sithembiso kill Daniel and Themba is the one who persuades Sithembiso in doing it. Third, although Themba is not directly involved in Sithembiso's death, but the reason why Sithembiso committed suicide is the involvement in killing Daniel with his brother, Themba. Themba survives death while all other characters in the same situation as his die and that makes him the main character in the novel. Towards the end of the story, Themba becomes physically disabled. Themba is often displayed in the novel which makes him the leading character around whom main or important events in novel evolve.

The physically disabled character Queen in the novel titled *Umnyama Ongenafu* (No sign of hope) by M.M Ndlovu (2009) is the main character. The narrator introduces Queen at the beginning of the novel when his husband Muzi brutally abuses her in the novel. Whenever Muzi is drunk, he arrives home and assaults his wife, Queen. Queen tries to report his abusive husband to the police, and that is when she meets new boyfriend, Shesha who promises to protect her against her abusive husband. Queen tries to follow her mother's advice by tolerating his abusive husband, but she ends up cheating on him. Queen ends up divorcing his abusive husband Muzi, and he moves in with her new boyfriend, Shesha. Queen ends up being in a wheelchair after she is shot.

The character with a physical disability in isiZulu drama titled *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe (2012) is the main character in the story. Themba starts by hanging out with wrong friends who have a terrible influence on him. He is a good learner at school and his teachers think he has a good future ahead of him but all that changes when he becomes a criminal. Everyone warns him including his teachers and family that he should not involve himself in criminal activities, but he does not listen. Themba becomes a notorious criminal, and that puts his family in danger. In the end, Themba is shot in the spinal cord and he becomes disabled. He is also facing prison for the crimes he has committed.

### 5.2.2 Disabled Characters as Minor Characters

The short story titled “Ukunqamuka Konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa (1995) portrays Mcuphi, a character with a mental disability. Mcuphi is not the main focus of the storyline in the short story, he is not introduced at the inception of the short story. As a minor character, he serves to complement the major character Mfekayi and helps move the plot forward. Mcuphi is working as a cleaner or a general assistant in Mfekayi store which shows that he complements Mfekayi who is the main character. Mcuphi would not have appeared in the short story without Mfekayi; his appearance is dependent on Mfekayi. He also helps move the plot forward; this happens when Dr. Nhlapho disappears and Mcuphi suspects that Mfekayi who is the main character is responsible for Dr. Nhlapho’s disappearance. This comes out to be true when Dr. Nhlapho is found in Mfekayi’s store, buried in the yard.

The short story titled “Ucu” (Love necklace) by N.G Sibiya (1993) portrays Sicathulo, a minor character with mental retardation. Sicathulo serves to complement the main character Bavimbile, and he helps move the storyline. He is used as primary character’s cousin who only appears in the story when he is talking to his cousin Bavimbile which shows that Sicathulo serves to complement the main character in the story. He also helps move the story forward. He is courting school mistress Majola who is also the main character’s class teacher. School mistress makes empty promises to Scathulo; this angers him and he hits the school mistress with a knobkerrie. This happens when the main character has been expelled from school by school mistress and Sicathulo is the reason why Bavimbile is readmitted to the school. The short story does not often display Scathulo, he is only featured in relation to the main character.

IsiZulu closet drama titled “Iphupho” (A dream) by P.B Vilakazi (1998) portrays a minor character with a physical disability. Mfaniseni only serves to complement the main character in the drama and he helps move the story forward. His brother Maqhinga is the main character in the story and he is the one on which the storyline focuses. Mfaniseni only serves to complement his brother Maqhinga when he persuades his mother MaSokhulu to give the money to his brother to bet. That drives the story forward because if Mfaniseni had not persuaded his mother to give Maqhinga money, the story would not have moved forward. Mfaniseni is not often displayed by the story drama; he only appears in relation to the main character his brother, Maqhinga.

The character with physical disability Sizwe in isiZulu closet drama titled “Aphume Nobomvu” (A good riddance) by B.P Vilakazi (1998) is the minor character. Sizwe only serves to

complement the main character in the story and helps move the plot forward. Bhekithemba is Sizwe's nephew and Sizwe is the one who is handling his *ilobolo* negotiations. Sizwe helps move the plot forward because he is the one who stops Bhekithemba from marrying Mavis. He does this by informing Bhekithemba's parents about his terrible past with Mavis and this becomes the reason for the failure of *ilobolo* negotiations.

The character with a physical disability in the closet drama titled "Luphelile" (It is over) by N.F Mbhele (1994) is a minor character. Ndumiso only serves to complement the main character, Thandiwe. Thandiwe is Ndumiso's fiancée, and he is the one on whom the storyline focuses. Ndumiso helps propel the story forward. Ndumiso only appears in relation to the main character, Thandiwe in the drama. Thandiwe and Ndumiso are about to get married and the preparations for their wedding have been made by Khethiwe who is Thandiwe's mother. There is a big misunderstanding that almost becomes the reason for their wedding plan's failure, but all this is sorted out when Ndumiso comes to see his fiancée Thandiwe. Ndumiso is not featured at the beginning of the drama, which shows that he is a minor character.

Diliza, a character with physical disability Diliza in the novel titled *Inkinsela Yasemgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi (1961) is a minor character. He only serves to complement the main character, Ndebenkulu and he helps drive the plot forward. Diliza opposes Ndebenkulu around whom all events in the novel evolve. This happens when they are attending the meeting and Diliza starts disturbing the meeting by laughing at Ndebenkulu. Diliza is the only one in the meeting who believes that Ndebenkulu is a deceitful criminal. Diliza helps move the story forward by influencing other characters not to be deceived by the cunning criminal, Ndebenkulu. He goes to the chief to inform him about his suspicions of Ndebenkulu, and he also goes to Mpungose to ask for his help in exposing Ndebenkulu. Eventually, all Diliza's suspicions come out to be true when Ndebenkulu's genuine intention is discovered, and he is arrested. Diliza is not portrayed at the beginning of the novel; he is only portrayed later in the novel when he attends the meeting. His key role is to help expose the main character, Ndebenkulu.

IsiZulu radio drama titled *Umadakeni* (A vibrant) by M.E Ngcobo (2005) portrays Jabu, a minor character with a physical disability. Jabu is physically disabled and walks with an artificial leg after an amputation when she lost her leg in a car accident. What is clear is that Jabu is a minor character because she is not the main focus of the storyline. Jabu's ex-husband Mazwe is the one who is the focus of the storyline and Jabu is just there to complement him as

the main character. Jabu as a minor character also helps move the story forward; this happens when she divorces the main character Mazwe, and that moves the story forward, because Mazwe becomes mentally disturbed after the divorce.

### **5.3 Status of Disabled Characters**

Status in general comprises education accomplishments, financial security and subjective view of economic wellbeing and social class. Financial status can include personal satisfaction properties and in addition the open doors and benefits available to individuals in society (Ross & Wu, 2005). There are indicators that are often utilized to determine the status which encompasses educational attainment, occupation and financial security and many more. Disabled characters that are portrayed in isiZulu literary texts often possess a variety of indicators that denote status and individual station in life.

#### **5.3.1 Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is the term frequently employed to refer to the highest level of education one has accomplished. Educational attainment remains one of the powerful forecasters of wellbeing. Youthful adults that have finished more elevated amounts of training will probably make financial progress than the individuals who have not (Capi & Wright, 1998). In isiZulu, literary works there are characters with disabilities that are educated. In the short story titled “Isiphukuphuku” (A fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) the character Vusumuzi fails in his primary education and his dream of becoming a doctor seems to be diminishing. He is then convinced by his teacher Mgoza to attend the architecture school, because he realizes that he is talented in drawing and building. Vusumuzi starts by refusing to go and study architecture but then his mother MaMkhize, and his teacher Mgoza persuade him, and he agrees eventually. Vusumuzi excels in architectural studies, and at the end, he informs his mother that he will now consider studying architecture until he finishes his studies, because he has realized that he is flourishing, and his teachers praise him. Vusumuzi’s socioeconomic status is promising to improve in the future since he has now succeeded in architectural studies. In the short story titled “Umhlengikazi” (The nurse) by D.B.Z Ntuli the character with a perceived mental disability is a professional nurse:

*“Sekuvela kamuva ukuthi lentokazi ingumhlengikazi ngempela.”*

(“Eventually, it was confirmed that the young lady is a professional nurse.”)

(Ntuli, 1969:81)

The above literary text is the words that are written by MaMchunu. She is writing a letter to her husband, Mshengu informing him about the incident that happened in their household. What is clear in the text is that the character with a mental disability that is referred to as uMhlengikazi is educated. She is a professional nurse, and that means her status of living is desirable. Marmot (2004) postulates that people who are educated tend to live a satisfactory life, because they can get better-paying jobs. This shows that some characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works are educated. The character with a perceived mental disability in the short story titled “Ibhanoyi” (An aeroplane) by Ntuli in Nxumalo is also highly educated:

*“E...njengoba nazi ke nonke-ke muzi wakwethu nonke-ke uZitha  
ubese ethole isikhundla sokuba umphathi sikole le enungu.”*

(“As you all know my brother’s, Zitha has been appointed as school principal at Nungu”)

(Ntuli in Nxumalo, 1991:17)

In the above literary text, Thembitshe is talking to his brothers informing them about their brother, Zitha. They are in the car heading to Pietermaritzburg; apparently, they have been informed that their brother Zitha’s situation has deteriorated. What is clear in the above literary text is that the character with perceived mental disability, Zitha is highly educated. He has been appointed as principal at Nungu School. Since educational attainment is one of the socioeconomic status indicators, this shows that Zitha status has improved and he is living a much better life as a character with a perceived mental disability. IsiZulu radio drama titled *Umadakeni* (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo portrays the educated mentally disabled character:

*“Ngenxa yokuhlabana kwami ngiba u-salesman iminyaka ilandelana,  
nganikwa isikhundla esithe thuthu sokulolonga o-salesman kulo lonke leli.”*

(“I was assigned to a role of training the salesman all over the country because of winning awards, consecutively.”)

(Ngcobo, 2005:15)

In the above literary text, the character with a mental disability is talking to his mother, MaVezi. He is clarifying the importance of his new role at work. Mazwe has been appointed to train sales people all over the country by the company he is working for. His wife Jabu is not happy that Mazwe is always traveling and she does not get to spend sufficient time with him. What is clear from the above text is that Mazwe is educated; although Mazwe was not mentally disabled in the time when he was promoted to become a salesperson, it is just a flashback where he is telling his friend, Thomas the cause of his mental disability. Mazwe is an educated character,

and his education is on a higher level, because he is assigned with a role of teaching and training other sales persons. This is a clear indication that there are characters in isiZulu literary works that are educated.

### 5.3.2 Occupation and Financial Security

According to Mark (1995), occupation can be best defined by considering the term “job” which is applied interchangeably with the word occupation. The term “job” has a considerably more constrained significance than “occupation” since it is associated with an employment contract in the workplace. Conversely, according to Carl (1995), an occupation is a much broader and widely inclusive term for “employment in which people are drawn in” and isn't confined to a specific workplace. On the other hand, financial security alludes to the genuine feelings of serenity you feel when you are not worried about whether your salary is sufficient to cover your costs. Likewise, it implies that you have enough spare cash to cover your emergencies and your future financial goals. Hanser (2007) explains that occupation and financial security correlate because a person's occupation determines the income they receive. The characters with disability in isiZulu literary works have different occupations. In the short story titled “Ukunqamuka konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa the character with a mental disability works in a shop as a cleaner:

*Yena uqobo uMcuphi ngaleyo nyanga wayengatholi ngisho isenti leli  
ngokushanela egcekeni esitolo.*

(Mcuphi himself was paid nothing for cleaning in the store that month.)

(Hlengwa, 1995:56)

Mcuphi works as a general cleaner in Mfekayi's shop and the job Mcuphi he does is of a relatively low level and hardly commands any desirable socio-economic status. Working as a general cleaner does not need any education qualification (Ross & Wu, 2005). It is mentioned in the text that there are obviously times when Mcuphi doesn't get paid for services rendered during the month. This obviously means that his socio-economic status is undesirable and that the abject poverty in which he lives is exacerbated during months in which he doesn't receive any income. In the short story titled “Umhlengikazi” (The nurse) by D.B.Z Ntuli the character with a perceived mental disability works as a nurse:

*“Yasuke yadumazeka kanti beyithembe ukuthi izothola umsebenzi  
osandakuvulwa womhlengikazi ozohambela imizi.”*

(“She was disappointed, because she was hoping to get travel nurse job

that had just started.”)

(Ntuli, 1969:80)

The character in this story is a nurse, which shows that she is educated because you cannot be a nurse without being educated and that all shows her socio-economic status is desirable (Charlie, 2005). She lives a relatively good life in terms of financial freedom that she derives from a steady income; a rare thing for characters with mental disabilities. The short story titled “Ibhanoyi” (An aeroplane) by Ntuli in Nxumalo portrays a character with a perceived mental disability who works as a principal:

*“E...njengoba nazi nonke-ke muzi wakwethu, umnewethu uZitha ubesethole isikhundla sokuba umphathisikole eNungu.”*

(“As you all know my brouthers, our brother Zitha had just been appointed as school principal at Nungu.”)

(Ntuli in Nxumalo, 1991:17)

In the above literary text, Bhekithemba is talking to his brothers. They are discussing about their brother Zitha who has allegedly become mentally disabled. What is very clear from the text is that Zitha is working or has been appointed to work as a principal in a specific school at Nungu. The job of a principal requires the elevated level of education, and it also requires much experience, so if someone is appointed as a principal, it shows that they have a high level of educational integrity and lot of working experience in their field. This all means that Zitha lives comfortably and his socio-economic status is very desirable. Zitha is a principal and that means he earns a high income to afford his basic needs and to support his family. Hanser (2007) asserts that it is not common for people with mental disabilities to have jobs that pay them adequately well.

Magendane in the short story titled “Umdwebi” (The painter) by N.G Sibiya (1993) is unemployed. He left work to be a painter and his family suffers from poverty as a result. His wife MaZikode is always complaining that it was better when her husband was still employed. Magendane has become a marketable artist and towards the end of the short story two white people arrive at his home together with Xulu to buy his paintings and it can be argued that his life will start to change for better, because he has established a client base for his paintings. This means that Magendane will now afford to provide his family with basic needs and he will be a self-employed individual.

In “Iphupho” (A dream) by P.B Vilakazi (1998) Mfaniseni, who is now physically disabled, once worked at a mine in Johannesburg before he got injured and lost his arm. The fact that Mfaniseni is no longer employed means his socio-economic status is unsatisfactory and even though he was still working at the mines, it was not enough because mine workers are not paid sufficient salaries to sustain themselves and their families (Carl, 2005). Although the general mine workers do not earn sufficient income, it was better when Mfaniseni was still working; his family did not live in absolute poverty.

“Aphume Nobomvu” (A good riddance) by P.B Vilakazi (1998) also portrays the character with a disability who is now unemployed. Sizwe left his job because he became physically disabled and his disability is not explicitly stated in the drama, but it is mentioned that he left work because of disability. The job he was working in, is not stated but he mentions that he was working in Durban. The fact that he is unemployed means that he no longer receives any income and he cannot sustain himself and will not be able to support his family. Sizwe is the head of the family which means that his family suffers financially and has to contend with poverty since the head of the family is unemployed due to his disability.

In “Luphelile” (It is over) by N.F Mbhele (2005) Ndumiso lost his job when he became physically disabled. He lost both legs in a landmine explosion incident and had to stop working. Ndumiso is no longer employed and that means he has no income and cannot afford his basic needs. An occupation determines one’s salary, and when people are jobless that means there will be no income and they will be living in poverty. It is common for characters who suffer from limb amputation to become unemployed after they have become disabled. In the novel titled *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi Diliza works in the big cities despite his physical disability:

*“Nathi sihlala khona emadolobheni amakhulu Baba, sisebenza khona.”*

(“We also live in the big cities, sir, we work there”)

(Nyembezi: 1969:104)

Diliza is talking to a group of men who have been attending a meeting. They are basically discussing what the meeting was about. Diliza left the meeting early because he had been behaving badly. It is clear in the above text that Diliza is employed in one of the big cities, although his occupation has not been specified. That means Diliza as a character with a physical disability is receiving income and he can afford his living expenses. It is not common for



characters with a physical disability to work, but Diliza's case is different because he has been living with a disability since birth. In *Kuxolelwa Abanjani?* (Who deserves forgiveness) by N.G Sibiya the narrator portrays a character who is unemployed because he became physically disabled:

*Lwalusabalele nalapha usizi ngoba bathi befike ngakho kodwa nje  
uGumede wawa esikhafuleni emsebenzini.*

(They were suffering from extreme poverty because Gumede fell from the scaffolding at work after they have just moved.)

(Sibiya, 2002:69)

Gumede's disability is not specified in the text, but it is clear that it is severe, because he had to quit work after he had become disabled. Gumede is no longer employed which means that he no longer receives any income. He cannot afford his living expenses and he can no longer be able to support his family financially. Gumede is the head of the family and that means his family will now suffer from poverty or someone else will have to look for a job so that the family can be sustained. In the novel titled *Ifa Ngukufa* (An inheritance is death) by M.J Mngadi the narrator portrays a character with physical disability that is self-employed:

*Nakuba kunjalo, umdlandla wakhe usaphila emsebenzini oqhubekayo  
emazweni omhlaba.*

(However, he is still vigorous in his business all over the world.)

(Mngadi, 2001:223)

Themba is in a wheelchair but that does not stop him from running his businesses. He became disabled when he was already a businessman and that means he is receiving a high income that enables him to support himself and his family. A social model of disability asserts that people with disability should be portrayed positively. It is not common for a character with a physical disability especially those that are in a wheelchair to be able to work or make a living. In *Umadakeni* (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo the character with a physical disability will be able to work after he has become disabled:

*"Nasemsebenzini ngizofundiswa umsebenzi ovumelana nesimo sempilo  
yami entsha; njengokuba ngu-switch-board operator kanje. Noma omunye  
umsebenzi nje engingawenza nge-computer."*

("At work, they will teach me the kind of job which will be in accordance with my disability like being a switchboard operator. Or any other job that I can do with a computer.")

(Ngcobo, 2005:250)

Jabu was admitted at the hospital after she was involved in a car accident with her fiancée, Raymond and her legs had to be amputated. With this kind of disability, some will have expected that Jabu will no longer be able to work. She confirms that she will be trained to do a job that will suit her disability. That means she will not lose her job because of her disability. She will be working, and she will be earning income, which means she will be able to sustain her life. Her socio-economic condition has not been affected by her disability because she will still be working at her job. It is not usual for characters with a physical disability to be able to work after they have become disabled.

### 5.3.3 Physical Environment

Marmot (2004) says that the physical environments in which people live determine their socio-economic status. It is common for people with high paying jobs to reside in cities or suburbs. It is also common for people who don't have sustainable income to live in places like barracks, hostels, rural areas and so on. In isiZulu literary works, it is common for characters with a disability to reside in places that correlate with their salaries and that makes their portrayal more realistic. The short story titled "Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo" (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1982) portrays a character with mental retardation who owns cattle and has three wives; all that shows that Mbuthuma's socio-economic status is satisfactory, because he can afford having three wives. In "USofasonke" (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli a character with a mental disability lives in a single roundavel:

*"Kona ngangilokhu nginokumangala nje ukuthi iyisima kanjani le nsizwa ehlala yodwa endlini eyodwa nje."*

("It kept puzzling me and made me wonder what kind of a young man this is who lives alone in a single house.")

(Ntuli, 1986:11)

The environment Sofasonke lives in shows that his socio-economic status is unsatisfactory. He cannot afford to build a big house. It is also not stated in the short story where Sofasonke works, which might mean that he is not employed, so he will not have sufficient money to build a big house. It is very common in isiZulu literary works for characters with mental disabilities to stay in small improper environment. The novel titled *Bengithi Lizokuna?* (I thought it was going to rain) by N.G Sibiya has Nyambose who lives in a barrack:

*Wayesethanda ukululama nokho manje, esehlezi phambi kwendlu laphayana enkompolo, eyibuka imoto iya esangweni.*

(Nyambose was recovering; he was sitting in front of the room)

in a compound watching the car heading for the gate.)

(Sibiya, 2008:115)

Nyambose is a character with a mental retardation and stays in the barracks in a compound. Compounds are the large group of buildings that are built for the general farm or mine workers. The general farm or mine workers do not earning sufficient income to be able to live sustainable lives. The environment Nyambose is residing in, shows that his socio-economic status is not satisfactory. He does not earn sufficient income to afford a better place to live in. In the novel titled *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli Gwaqaza's homestead is pathetic and is a sign of the low socio-economic status of the occupants:

*Lo muzi wakhe unezindlwana nje ezintathu ezizungeze isibayana.*

(His home has just three small huts surrounding a small kraal,)

(Ntuli, 1969:13)

Everything in Gwaqaza's home is small and few which shows that Gwaqaza is living in an improper environment and cannot afford to build big houses. Gwaqaza has just been released from prison after serving his sentence and he is currently not employed and his family suffers from poverty. Gwaqaza's socio-economic status is not satisfactory. His wife is always complaining how she suffered when Gwaqaza was still serving his sentence in prison. Changes are very slim that their condition will change since it will be a daunting task for Gwaqaza to secure a job with a prison record coupled with his visual disability.

#### **5.3.4 Family Environment**

According to Coontz (2005), a family is a gathering of individuals partnered by either consanguinity (by perceived birth), affinity (by marriage or other relationship), or home or some mix of these. Individuals from a close family may include life partners, guardians, siblings and children. Individuals from the extended family may comprise grandparents, close relatives, uncles, cousins, nephews, niece, and kin-in-law (Wolf, 1982). In isiZulu literary works there are characters who have different family members. The short story titled "Umdwebi" (The painter) by N.G Sibiya portrays a character with perceived mental disability who has a brother, wife and son:

*"Ngisayobheka izintwana ezincane ngale mali engiyinikwe ngumnewethu.  
Phela kuzofanele nisale nidla ngenkathi ngisathe qu eMgungundlovu."*

("I'm going to buy some small things with the money I was given by my brother.  
You will have to be left with something to eat while I'm in Pietermaritzburg.")

(Sibiya, 1993:56)

This shows that Magendane has a family and all his family members are portrayed in the short story. His brother's name is Mbhekeleni, his wife is MaZikode and his son is Sibhakela. The case is different however in "USofasonke" (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1986) where the main character seems to be a hermit and doesn't have a family. The fact that he only stays in a single rondavel suggests that he stays alone and the single house is only for him. There's no indication in the short story that Sofasonke has ever had a family and his surname is not mentioned anywhere in the short story. In fact his name suggests that everybody in his family died which explains, to some extent, his lonesome life. In "Abanesihawu" (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli there is a character with perceived physical disability who no longer has a family because his parents deserted him:

*"Okwesibili okufike kube buhlungu du ukuthi nomama wahamba  
unomphela akangabe esabuyela kimi."*

("The second most hurting thing is that my mother went for good and  
never returned to me.")

(Ntuli, 1969:56)

Shobede is talking to Pastor Ngwenya. He is whining that his parents have deserted him; first it was his father and then his mother. His father left because he fought with Shobede and his mother went to look for him in Johannesburg and she never returned. Apparently, he has been living alone and dependent on the neighbours. In "Isiphukuphuku" (A fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli the main character, who has a learning disability, has a single parent:

*"Ngiye ngibe nenhliziyo ebuhlungu uma ngicabanga ukuthi umama  
njengoba engumfelokazi nje uhlupheka kanjani ngenxa yokufundisa  
mina."*

("It sometimes hurts me when I think how much my mother who is a widow  
suffers because she wants me to get educated")

(Ntuli, 1969:70)

There is no mention of any siblings in this story nor any indication as to what killed Vusumuzi's father. The short story titled "Ibhanoyi" (An aeroplane) by N.S Ntuli portrays the character with a perceived mental disability who has siblings and he is married:

*“Sizoba ngondingasithebeni phela uma sesigulelwa inhloko yethu.”*

(“We will become vagrants if the head of our family becomes mentally ill.”)

(Ntuli, 1991:21)

Zitha has siblings, a wife and children and this makes him similar to many men his age and who occupy the same socio-economic position as his; a rare thing for people with a mental disability. In “Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo” (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli the character with an intellectual disability is in a polygamous marriage:

*Abemcasulile amakhosikazi akhe amathathu, ngoba phela ngiyathembuza.*

(His three wives had angered him, as he is in a polygamous marriage.)

(Ntuli, 1982:73)

Mbuthuma is in a polygamous marriage and has three wives. The first wife is MaKheswa, the second one is MaMfeka, and the third one is MaHlengwa. Mbuthuma has a family and although it is not mentioned in the story as to the number of children he has, he probably has many considering the number of his wives. The novel titled *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli portrays a character with a disability who has a wife:

*Ababaningi abantu ozobabona beyaluza. Kungaba yinkosikazi nje noma enye inganyana yentombazana ehlalisa uMaZungu.*

(There are not so many people who can be seen going up and down.  
It is his wife MaZungu and the child who stays with her.)

(Ntuli, 1969:13)

In the above literary text, the narrator portrays the family of a disabled character, Gwaqaza. He has wife, MaZungu. He stays with his wife and the other young girl. Later in the novel, MaZungu gives birth to a child. That means that Gwaqaza has a spouse and child as his family members. Themba, a physically disabled character in *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe (2012) has a mother, brother and a twin sister. His mother is MaNdlela, his twin sister is Thembi and his old brother is Senzo. Mazwe, a character with mental disability in *Umadakeni* (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo (2005) also has family members. He has a mother, sibling, son and wife. He divorces with his first wife Jabu, and in the end, he is married to Thulisile.

Character's age is one of the factors that determine the character's socio-economic status, for example, if a character is still very young and cannot work, they will be dependent on their parents for survival. On the other hand, if the characters are too old and cannot do things on their own, they will depend on their family members or neighbours. In isiZulu literary works, disability is not age-specific and the characters with disabilities that we encounter in the various texts range from young to very old, a fact that seems to be a true reflection of the realities in societies where disability occurs across ages and socio-economic status.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

This chapter focused on discussing the role and socio-economic status of characters with disability in isiZulu literary works. It became evident that in isiZulu literary works, characters with disabilities are marginalized in many ways. Comparatively speaking, there are very few literary works that feature disabled characters and if they do feature their roles are minimal and merely supportive. There are of course texts where disabled characters are major role players, either as protagonists or antagonists. But still their portrayal leaves much to be desired because there is usually a prevalent disregard for portraying them positively. In most cases they lead miserable lives as social outcasts, helpless and dependent, unemployed and faced with a rather very bleak future.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the conclusion to the study by summarizing the main points of the dissertation. It deals with the research findings and suggests areas of further research in future studies that are related to this research project.

#### 6.2 Research Findings

This study examined the representation and portrayal of disability in isiZulu literary works. People with disabilities, like most other people in South African during the apartheid era, were denied fundamental human rights. However, people with disabilities collectively experienced further discrimination based on their disability (Oliver, 1998). Changing this means that the whole society would need to change its attitude towards disabled people both at an individual and systemic level. It has been broadly recognized that literature reflects on the community. Literature mirrors the community, its great qualities and its ills. In its restorative capacity, literature mirrors the ills of the community to committing the society that understands its errors and presents appropriate reparations (Blake, 2014).

By nature, writers are teachers. Writers write because they have something to say to the world and have an important lesson to teach in the society (Carl, 2005). It is then of paramount importance that literature represents all aspects of the society, including people with disability as this can have a positive impact on people's attitudes towards people living with disabilities. The existing disability dynamics in South Africa are not sufficiently represented in isiZulu literary works, despite an abundance of literature; fiction and non-fiction.

This research study showed that there are many types of disabilities that are represented by isiZulu literary works such as physical, visual, mental, intellectual and so forth and that these can be real or perceived depending on the context in which they appear in text and how the author manipulates events in the narrative to suit his creative intentions. In terms of numbers, physical disabilities feature the most in various texts that were analysed for this study. Some characters were born with a certain form of disability such as in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi (1961) where we find Diliza who has been limping since birth. Authors, however seem to associate physical disability with accidents that people meet with later in life. In some cases, one can only assume that a character was involved

in an accident since they are in a wheelchair as is the case, for instance, with Nqobile in “UNqobile” (Nqobile) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo (1985). In other words the author does not disclose the cause of disability, but simply focus on the present state of affairs in the character’s life.

Accidents usually result in characters being confined to wheelchairs or losing limbs and have to use artificial devices after amputation. This can be seen in “Luphelile” (It is over) by N.F Mbhele (1995) where a character loses an arm in a landmine explosion and has to use an artificial one after recovering from the injury. In some cases, disabilities are a result of fights between characters such as in *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) a novel that tells a heart rending story of how Gwaqaza loses an eye in a scuffle with Dube; an incident that sets in motion a series of events that culminate in fatalities. Unfortunately; for most characters, accidents and resultant disabilities result in job losses or reduced earnings.

This study also revealed that physical disability is seen by some as a means of earning money by pretending to be disabled and fool people into feeling sorry for you and part with their money in the form of donations they make in good faith to disabled people, unawares that they are being conned. This happens in “Abanesihawu” (The merciful one) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) where a pastor feels sorry for a disabled young man that he meets on the street only to find out later that the latter is a crook who pretends to be disabled to evoke sympathy from soft-hearted individuals.

A most disturbing observation, however, is a tendency by authors to depict physical disability as a symbol of weird and unwelcome behaviour, as in the case of Diliza in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi (1961). Diliza, who has a limp, is unruly, rude and so disrespectful that he has to be expelled from a dignified community meeting where the youth are supposed to behave properly and politely, at least in the presence of their elders. Physical disability is also unfortunately portrayed as a punishment for one’s sins or for making ancestors angry, as can be seen in *Kungavuka Abanguni* (Over my dead body) by I.S Kubheka (1973) where Nomusa is involved in a tragic car accident as a punishment to her father who has belittled the ancestors in his utterances and stubborn behaviour.

IsiZulu literary works also portray mental and intellectual disabilities. It must be noted that isiZulu language in general and authors in particular use mental disorder and disability terms



loosely to denote all disturbances that seem to interfere with one's mental faculty. In other words, while psychologists for instance, point out distinctions between levels and tags for mental illnesses and challenges, the texts that were analysed seem to make lunacy as one category under which all mentally related challenges and illness fall. Portrayal of such characters vary and range from characters with learning disability such as in "Isiphukuphuku" (A fool) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969); mental disturbance such as in "USofasonke" (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1986) and mental retardation, as in "Ucu" (Love necklace) by N.G Sibiya (1993).

Vision loss and blindness are also portrayed. "Blindness is the incapacity to see anything, even light. If you are partially blind, you have limited vision. Visual problems range from unclear vision to total blindness. Persons with visual difficulties vary widely in their needs, skills, personalities, and attitudes" (Koester, 1976:54). Dudu in "Igebe" (A chasm) by N.G Sibiya (1988) is totally blind. The novel titled *Nginyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) portrays the character Gwaqaza who is blind in one eye. The poem titled "Umnkenenezo" (A melody) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1973) presents a character whose one eye has blurry vision. The name of the character is not mentioned in the poem, but it is mentioned that she is blind in one eye. Vision loss and blindness as a type of disability are not a common feature in isiZulu literary works. This is surprising indeed because the society comprises a large section of the population of people who live with blindness as a disability and one would expect that to be reflected in literary texts.

Another form of disability that is very rarely portrayed in isiZulu literary works is the speech and language disorders. According to Palmer & Yantis (1990) speech and language disorders can meddle with a person's capacity to comprehend, to express his or her considerations, or to be understood. IsiZulu drama titled *UThemi* (Themi) by B.J Dube (1968) portrays Themi, a character who becomes mute after a train crash accident. The trauma of this accident seems to have interfered with her ability to speak. In "Igebe" by N.G Sibiya (1988) there is Xolani who is deaf and although the author doesn't specify as to when he became deaf, one can assume that he has been deaf since birth. Interestingly this is one of the few, if not only, literary works where different disabilities are juxtaposed in one text or narrative: Dudu is blind while Xolani is deaf and they sit across each other in a restaurant throughout the story.

IsiZulu literary works portray characters with perceived mental and physical disabilities. Ndagijimanga (2011) asserts that perceived disability is where a person does not have a disability meeting the Equality Act definition, yet other people suppose they do have a

disability. The short story titled “Umhlengikazi” (The nurse) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) portrays a character with a perceived mental disability. This character is a nurse by profession and it is through her behaviour that fellow characters conclude that she has a mental disability. The short story titled “Abanesihawu” (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) portrays the character with a perceived physical disability. Shobede is not genuinely disabled, but he pretends to be a cripple. Perceived disability also doesn’t feature much as a type of disability in isiZulu literary works.

There are different causes of disabilities portrayed in isiZulu literary works, which among them include environmentally determined causes, genetically determined causes, and unidentified causes. “Environmentally determined causes of disability results from accidents, injury, disease or infections, examples include an acquired brain injury, spinal cord injury and diabetes” (Hahn, 1985:22). There is a physically disabled character Mfaniseni in isiZulu closet drama titled “Iphupho” (A dream) by P.B Vilakazi (1998) and the cause of his disability is a mining accident, and an accident is part of the environmentally determined causes of disability. The novel titled *Ngiyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) portrays a character who was injured by another character in the eye, and his eye has become blind. *Zibambe Ziqine* (Stick to your guns) by T.B Qwabe (2012) portrays Themba, a character who was got gunshots injuries and became physically disabled. The environmentally determined cause is the most common cause of disability in isiZulu literary works.

There is also a genetically determined cause of disability which according to Fine & Asch (1998) is usually inherited from one’s parents. However, a new genetic error can occur leading to symptoms of the condition. The short story titled “Umhlengikazi” (The nurse) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) has a character with perceived mental disabilities. Apparently, she inherited disability from his father. In most cases authors don’t disclose such details in their narratives and this makes genetically determined causes of disability very rare in isiZulu literary works. There is also an unknown cause of disability which includes the disabilities of characters which their causes are not identified.

The research study revealed that there are certain attitudes towards characters with disabilities. These attitudes among others include the narrator’s attitudes, other characters’ attitudes and characters with disabilities’s attitudes towards their own disabilities. Narrator’s attitudes include the way narrators portray the physical appearance of characters with disabilities. This is where characters use specific names, and the characters’ disabilities become their defining

feature. The narrators also portray characters with disabilities as individuals who have severe or undesirable behavior. They portray characters with disabilities as individuals who are dependent on other characters; this happens mostly to characters with physical disabilities; especially, those who cannot walk. Lastly, the narrators use characters with disabilities to demonstrate their artistic interests, such as in a novel titled *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi (1961) when the narrator uses the physically disabled character Diliza for the sake of their artistic interest. Diliza limps when he walks, and in the novel, he always deviates from the majority.

The other characters also have individual attitudes towards characters with disabilities. This among others, include the use of despicable names and other characters' reactions towards characters with disabilities. In the short story titled "Ukunqamuka Konyaka" (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa (1995), Mfekayi uses the word lunatic when referring to mentally disabled character, Mcuphi. In the novel titled *Nginyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) fellow characters use derogatory words when referring to Gwaqaza, who is blind in one eye. In the novel titled *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S. Nyembezi (1961), Mkhwanazi uses the offensive word when referring to the physically disabled character, Diliza. In isiZulu drama titled *UThemi* (Themi) by B.J Dube (1968) Vusi uses the word mute and deaf when referring to the disabled character, MaDlamini. According to social model of disability the disabilities should not be used as a defining feature for people with disability.

The research also showed that there are effects of disabilities in characters with disabilities, and that there are strategies employed by characters to cope with their disability. The effects of disabilities among other things, include some job loss and reduced earnings, a physical and financial dependence of characters with disabilities, discrimination and vulnerability to danger of characters with disability. In the short story titled "Ibhanoyi" (An aeroplane) by N.S Ntuli (1991), Thembitshe and Bhekuyise are worried that they will suffer because their brother Zitha who financially supports them is supposedly mentally disabled. In isiZulu closet drama titled "Iphupho" by P.B Vilakazi (1998) MaSokhulu who is the mother of Mfaniseni, a physically disabled character, laments that they would not be suffering if Mfaniseni were still working. In the novel titled *Kuxolelwa Abanjani?* (Who deserves forgiveness) by N.G Sibiya (2002) the narrator explains that MaZungu, the wife of the physically disabled character Gumede had to go and look for a job after her husband had become disabled.

In the short story titled “UNqobile” (Nqobile) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo (1985) the physically disabled character Nqobile is dependent on her assistant to push her wheelchair. In the short story titled “Abanesihawu” (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) Shobede supposedly depends on the physical and financial support of his neighbors after his parents have deserted him. In the novel titled *Kungavuka Abanguni* (Over my dead body) by I.S Kubheka (1973) nurses confirm that Nomusa will no longer be able to do things on her own and will need someone as an assistant.

Discrimination towards people with disability is also one of the most common effects of disability. Mcuphi in the short story titled “Ukunqamuka Konyaka” (The end of the year) by A.M Hlengwa (1995) is hesitant to go and report to the police about his suspicions on the disappearance of Dr. Nhlapho. He thinks that police will chase him out and ask if the police station is a place for the mentally disabled people. In the novel titled *Umnyama Ongenafu* (No sign of hope) by M.M Ndlovu (2009), other characters feel that Sesha shouldn’t date Queen who is disabled and drinks alcohol. According to this character, the physically disabled character, Queen do not deserve to be loved.

The other effect of characters with disability is that they are vulnerable to danger. The intellectually disabled character Mbuthuma in the short story titled “Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo” (That is Mbuthuma) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1982) is attacked by his brother in law, Nqeku, after he finds him milking his three wives. The character with mental disability, Sofasonke in the short story titled “USofasonke” by D.B.Z Ntuli (1986), set himself on fire and dies. In the novel titled *Bengithi Lizokuna* (Who deserves forgiveness) by N.G Sibiyi (2008) Nyambose who is mentally retarded is murdered by the thief Ndumiso when he comes to open the gate for his car.

Characters in isiZulu literary works use different coping strategies to cope with the effects of their disability. Coping strategies vary according to diverse types and effects of disability. To cope with the effects of disability, characters make use of assistive devices and others use alternatives. In isiZulu closet drama titled “Luphelile” by N.F Mbhele (1995) the physically disabled character Ndumiso uses artificial limbs to cope with his disability. The physically disabled character Jabu in isiZulu radio drama titled *Umadakeni* (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo (2005) uses artificial legs after she lost her both legs. In the short story titled “Isiphukuphuku” by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) the character with intellectual disability, Vusumuzi is not successful at school and opts to pursue vocational studies to advance his building skills.

The research study also indicated that there are distinct roles and status of characters with disabilities. Characters with mental and physical disabilities become the main characters more often. Nduduzo is the main character in the short story titled “Uhlanya” (A lunatic) by N.G Sibiya (2004). Nqobile in the short story titled “UNqobile” by (Nqobile) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1985) is the main character, and the title of the short story refers to her. There are not too many minor characters with disability in isiZulu literary works, but there are more of them compared to main characters with disabilities.

Status of characters with disabilities among other things, includes not merely income, but also educational accomplishments, financial security and subjective view of economic wellbeing, social class and family environment. Educational attainment is the term frequently used to refer to the highest level of education one has accomplished (Capsi & Wright, 1998). There are many disabled characters in isiZulu literary works who boast good educational qualifications such as Zitha who is a school principal in “Ibhanoyi” (An aeroplane) by N.S Ntuli (1991) and the nurse in “Umhlangikazi” by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969).

Characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works have different occupations. The physically disabled character Diliza in the novel titled *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (A tycoon of Pietermaritzburg) by C.L.S Nyembezi (1961) works in a big city which suggests that while his occupation is not specified, one can safely assume that he is reasonably well employed. Themba who is physically disabled in *Ifa Ngukufa* (A death is inheritance) by M.J Mngadi (2001) is self-employed and owns the businesses, which is an indication that he is self-sufficient and financially secure. Jabu who is a character with physical disability in *Umadakeni* (A vagrant) by M.E Ngcobo (2005) works as a switchboard operator. This shows some degree of diversity and variety in how disabled characters are portrayed in terms of their professional occupations. This also shows that authors are not biased towards stereotyping characters with regard to occupations that they hold in society.

Characters with disabilities have diverse physical and family environments. Mbuthuma who seem mentally disturbed in “Ngumbuthuma-ke Lowo” (That is Mbuthuma for you) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1982) lives in a big homestead with a kraal for his many cattle and also has three wives; an indication that he is a relatively well to do man since polygamy requires wealth to establish and sustain. Mbuthuma’s wealth is in sharp contrast with the poverty that is a reality for Gwaqaza in *Nginyoze Ngimthole* (I will eventually find him) D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) and Sofasonke in “USofasonke” (Sofasonke) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1986). The latter has only a rondavel while

Gwaqaza only has three small huts and his wife is always complaining of going to bed on an empty stomach. Some characters such as Shobede in “Abanesihawu” (The merciful ones) by D.B.Z Ntuli (1969) are orphans while other such as Zitha in “Ibhanoyi” (An aeroplane) by N.S Ntuli (1991) come from big families and have many siblings and children. Again, this diversity is a welcome portrayal of realities that permeate societies in real life where we come across people from diverse family backgrounds and social standing.

A social model of disability demands that characters with disabilities must be portrayed in a way that will create a decent image about people with disabilities in society in general (Thomas, 1999). Literature is a potent tool which can be utilized to transform prevalent perceptions in society with regard to attitudes towards people with disabilities (Crotty, 1998). This means that the attitudes towards characters with disabilities in literary works must be positive and that will have a positive impact on the way people look at people with disabilities in society in general. Characters’ with disabilities role and status must be significant in creative works and that will have a positive impact in society and people with disabilities may become role models that everyone aspire to emulate and look up to.

### **6.3 Summary and Recommendations**

Chapter one provided the introduction to the research study. It provides a brief definition of the topic. The objectives of the research were provided and the questions asked by the researcher. This chapter also provided the research methods and theories of the research. Lastly, it provided the background study and literature review.

Chapter two examined the types and causes of disability in isiZulu literary works. In this chapter, the research study examined the types of disabilities that are portrayed in isiZulu literary works. It also determined the causes of disabilities in isiZulu literary works.

Chapter three focused on the attitudes of characters towards disability. This includes the narrator’s attitudes, the attitudes of other characters and; lastly the attitudes of characters with disabilities.

Chapter four investigated the effects of disability and the coping strategies employed by characters with disability in isiZulu literary works. This includes the effects, the job loss and reduced earnings, discrimination, and vulnerability of characters with disabilities to danger.

Chapter five examined the role and status of characters with disabilities in isiZulu literary works. The role includes the portrayal of characters with disabilities as main and minor

characters. The status includes educational attainment, occupation, physical and family environments.

Those who wish to extend this research can investigate the portrayal of disability in isiZulu oral literature. This study only focused on the portrayal of disability in isiZulu written literature, and there is a perceptible gap on the portrayal of disability in isiZulu oral literature which can be minimized by further research studies. The study also did not investigate isiZulu television drama; further research can extend to examine the portrayal of disability in isiZulu television drama. Further studies can also look at the portrayal of disabilities in isiZulu idiomatic expressions; there are idioms like the one “Uthando aluboni” which means that “love is blind,” the further research can be conducted to examine disability in isiZulu idioms and proverbs.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter provided the conclusion for the entire research study. It also provided the summary for the research study. Lastly, it provided research findings and recommendations for further studies to those who would like to focus their studies on the representation of disability in isiZulu literary works.

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