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## CAUSES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES VULNERABILITY TO DISASTER: LESSONS FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND REDUCTION PLANNERS

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### ABSTRACT

Today, through several international and national legal instruments the participation of persons with disabilities in the socio-economic and political development of their respective societies with limited impediments has become a fundamental human rights principle. Therefore, there cannot be any genuine justification for the relaxation of this human right especially when disasters strike. Unfortunately, in most nations, the policies and legislations thrust of disaster prevention, reduction, and management in many instances are framed towards abled-bodied persons. Of recent, the world has witnessed increasing intensity and frequency of weather-associated calamities mainly caused by unprecedented climate changes. There is some scientific evidence that suggest that persons with disabilities are two to four times more likely to be injured or die when disaster strikes compare to the rest. The rationale for the systematic literature review is to interrogate causes of the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to disaster, share knowledge to spark and inspire processes that will usher rapid growth from all directions. A systematic review of the literatures using information collected from different sources was actuated. Google search engine and others were used to search for articles. Only peer-reviewed articles published after 1999 were selected except extracts of fundamental mileage. However, articles published by staunch international organizations working in the area for years and produced indefatigable knowledge were stealthily appraised. The study revealed that the causes of the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to disaster are multidimensional and include: lack of participation in programming, inaccessible transportation system, poor housing conditions, lack of education, high poverty rate, lack of access to resources, inaccessible built environment, lack of preparation, lack of inclusive systems, lack of inclusive policies, lack of inclusive service delivery, stigma and discriminatory cultural practices, elevated risk exposure, inaccessible evacuation routes, lack of comprehending impending dangers, inability to accurately communicate needs, inability to swiftly respond to rescue calls, lack of scientific data, structural exclusion, planners negative attitudes towards PWDs, lack of access to proper information, governments not recognizing disability as development issue, lack of information and knowledge about disabilities, living in poor communities; and lack of standard definition for disability.

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## INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities like any other person in the society has the fundamental human rights to effectively and efficiently participate in the socio-economic and political development of their communities without an iota of discrimination. In the same vein; they have the same rights to enjoy all services in the societies not just because they are citizens but also as taxpayers. Therefore, denying them these rights especially during disaster is never justifiable and tantamount to gross violation of their human rights (Wisner, 2016). In general terms, communities' vulnerability to disaster is generally influenced by several and different factors that include personal and structural ones, in which the later consist of social, political, economic; and cultural determinants that either mitigate or exacerbate the situation. However, occasionally persons with disabilities do experience some difficulties to stay safe and secured due to several factors. Factors

mostly linked to the unprecedented increased in vulnerability of persons with disabilities to disaster are numerous and include lack of political will, poverty, inadequate and/or inaccessible information and knowledge, inaccessible built environment, lack of the relevant social networks; and pre-existing disability conditions (Smith, Jolley, & Schmidt, 2015).

These factors among others ultimately contribute to their heighten vulnerability and also failing to make the best use of available services and supports (Wisner, 2016). In most cases during and after disaster, national and international agencies provide support, however, most of them are not accessible to persons with disabilities because of their special needs justifying the urgency for inclusive disaster management and reduction strategies (Wisner, 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

A systematic review of the literatures using information collected from different sources was actuated. Google search engine, googlescholar, web of science, scopus database, etc. were used to search for these articles. During the search numeration combinations of words and phrases were used to ensure articles reflect the most recent knowledge and scholarly works. The systematic searches beget varied and voluminous articles which had to be sieved not only to meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria but to ensure the fundamental objectives of the study are wrangled. Therefore, only peer-reviewed scholarly publications published after 1999 were selected except extracts perceived to be of basal mileage to the study. However, articles published by staunch international organizations known to have been working in disability and disaster for years and has produced indefatigable knowledge in the area and related issues were stealthily appraised.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Procedures:** The underneath procedures were adopted in articles inclusion. That is, only:

- Peer-reviewed scholarly articles on disability and disaster.
- Peer-reviewed scholarly articles published from 1999 to 2024.
- Articles on international or regional perspectives on disability and disaster related issues.
- Articles on disability and disaster related issues published by international organizations with years of meritorious experiences in the promotion of inclusive disaster management and reduction programming.

To exclude some articles from the review, the below captioned criteria were applied. That is:

- Non-peer reviewed articles.
- Articles published before 1999 unless critical and impactful.
- Media generated articles including newspapers.
- Articles not published in the English language.

In spite of the fact that both qualitative and quantitative articles were trawled, only 97 articles out of 230 were qualified for reviewed which is largely due to a dearth of data. In essence, only peer-reviewed articles and publications by international organizations considered trustworthy because they occasioned standard, ethical; and robust studies were reviewed.

## DISCUSSION

The literature review has revealed a wide range of causes of persons with disabilities vulnerability to disaster. To discuss them, they are classified into different causes consisting of: lack of participation in programming, inaccessible transportation system, poor housing conditions, lack of education, high poverty rates, lack of access to resources, inaccessible built environment, lack of preparation, lack of inclusive systems, lack of inclusive policies, lack of inclusive service delivery, stigma and discriminatory cultural practices, elevated risk exposure, inaccessible evacuation routes, lack of comprehending impending dangers, inability to communicate needs, inability to swiftly respond to rescue calls, lack of scientific data, structural exclusion, planners bad attitudes, lack of access to proper information, states not recognizing disability as development issue, planners lack of information and knowledge about disabilities, living in poor communities; and lack of standard of definition for disability

**Lack of participation in programming:** Participation in national and community development is not only a fundamental human right for all citizens and sometimes even for non-citizens but must be morally obligatory especially to those who have something to offer being physical, material or financial (Khothalang Moselii, 2018). State and non-state actors encouraging and supporting citizens to participate in

national endeavors pays lot of dividends principal among them is the tapping of local knowledge, expertise, experiences and other critical resources (Oluwatoyin Dare Kolawole, 2012). With this holistic approach to addressing communities' needs and problems, in which concerns and aspiration of all are captured and most importantly; communities, without hesitation taking complete ownership of the programs, substantially, reducing the possibilities of failure if any (Laurent, U., & Ernest, 2021). Thus, anything short of this, will make some groups feel isolated and more disadvantaged concurring with: persons with disabilities are vulnerable to disasters and related catastrophes because, among other things they are not consulted and hardly participate in the design and implementation of strategies meant to reduce and manage disasters in communities (IDMC, 2018). Disasters in addition to heightening the risk of death, injury and displacement of persons with disabilities, survivors are further disadvantaged by the manners in which information, shelters, evacuation and relief systems are designed, implemented and managed that are further compounded by their lack of full participation in communities programs, equitable access to transportation, housing, education and other essential social services provision (Hemingway & Priestley, 2006).

**Inaccessible transportation system:** The ability to move around quickly at a reasonable cost is fundamental in the socio-economic and political development of any society and individuals (ATAG, 2021). In general terms, on daily basis people move from one place to another either to meet their basic needs including safety and/or for pleasure. Thus, to escape from any threat including disaster being natural or manmade, it is critical that people are able to move to safety zones after the alarms are raised (Jenny Anola, 2024). Therefore, any community that cannot swiftly leave a danger zone because of lack of transportation becomes more vulnerable lending support to: the striking increase in vulnerability and deaths of persons with disabilities in disasters is mainly due to lack of inclusive planning and execution, accessible transportation, information, early warning systems; and the discriminatory attitudes within the implementing agencies and individuals in the communities (WOA, 2021). Lack of appropriate and accessible transportation system does not only made communities vulnerable to disaster but it significantly impact their health, shelters, education, movement; and wealth increasing poverty in all aspects (Jessica Boakey, 2022).

**High poverty rate:** Although significant developments have been registered all over the world, still there are some communities that are living in abject poverty (Steven H. Woolf, 2006). Living in abject poverty in any part of the globe can make a particular society vulnerable to numerous harmful things including disasters of nearly all types (Damas Philip, 2004). With high level of abject poverty, people are forced to settle in disaster prone areas exposing themselves more either to natural or manmade disaster acquiescing with: the literature revealed that persons with disabilities particularly the children are highly vulnerable to physical, psychological; and education harms due to varying factors that include higher poverty rates, elevated risk exposure, greater vulnerability to traumatic loss or separation from caregivers, more strain on parents; and aggravated poor post disaster outcomes (Peek & Stough, 2010). If communities are able to increasingly control and manage economic, social; and political poverty, they are more likely to understand and withstand environmental and related shocks (Mahmood Fayazi, 2021).

**Lack of access to resources:** To effectively support and participate in national development and communities' endeavors, persons with disabilities all over the globe have decided to mobilize themselves through memberships by forming organizations of persons with disabilities (IDA, 2019). Because there are different types of disabilities, there are multiple types of organizations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities though have disabilities of different degrees, they are a strong force to reckon with when it comes to national development because among other things they have the number and intellectual capacity to initiate and accomplish agendas (Elizabeth Lockwood, 2014). However, to effectively deliver, their organizations need to be supported especially in mobilizing resources

and ensuring their security during conflicts and other types of disaster otherwise they will be at seriously heighten level of risk to suffer acceding to:the fundamental roles of the organizations of persons with disabilities is to advocate duty bearers to be seriously committed to inclusive disaster management but because of the overwhelming impacts of disasters, organizations of persons with disabilities have now taken additional roles to support actors, however, they are seriously under resourced making it extremely difficult to make the anticipated impacts in risk reduction among others in the communities (CBM Global Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG), 2022). Persons with disabilities are affected in different ways during the strike of disaster mostly due to lack of the capacities they recognized as relevant resources and the ability to convert those resources into critical defend mechanisms (That, Jc, Adamson, & Akgungor, 2020).

**Inaccessible built environment:** Vast majority of the human population wants to be successful in life (Andreas Hirschi, 2021). To succeed among other things one must be able to interact with people as resources holders to access and make the best use of the opportunities that society has to offer to its citizens. In most cases if not in all cases, to explore these opportunities one has to move from one place to other to engage the resource holders. Though there are high level of information and technological developments making it possible to interact and access resources and opportunities online, still people must move around for other critical needs including safety and their overall wellbeing (Suzan van Liempd, 2022). Thus, the inability to move freely without limitations has not only stricken some people access to opportunities but has equally made them vulnerable to calamities including disaster, corroborating: inaccessible physical environment did not only cause persons with disabilities vulnerable to disaster but also resulted to lack of access to shelters, relief services such as food, healthcare; and other critical rehabilitation services (Hemingway & Priestley, 2006).Persons with disabilities are vulnerable to disasters and related calamities because of the inadequate or lack of interaction with individuals, society, communities and the environment that have negatively impacted their ability and capacities to prepare, evacuate and recover from it swiftly with limited external support(Jennifer Quail, 2018). Another critical factor that exposes persons with disabilities to disaster is the external environment as it significantly deter their capacity to utilize available resources to build and strengthen their resilient capabilities (That et al., 2020).

**Lack of preparation:** Participating in community activities at any level ranging from the family to the international level is rewarding in many aspects (Eunice Y Par, 2023). Firstly, it is a strong form of recognition and acceptance in the society, the psychological benefits of which cannot be overstated. With recognition and acceptance, people are not only consulted to share their expertise and experiences in community development and community problems resolutions, but they will be privileged to learn and be prepared to act swiftly in case of any unforeseeable circumstance significantly reducing their vulnerability avouching:in most cases, persons with disabilities are never fully prepared before, during and after disaster resulting to being severely affected in comparison with others (Winarno, 2021).

**Lack of inclusive systems:** Structures and systems are created and sustained in societies to address the needs of the community as a whole without any group or an individual feeling discriminated (Makkos Nándor, 2022). Being excluded or constrained in accessing and enjoying some of these critical mechanisms of services delivery places the life and properties of certain groups at risk especially in disaster prone localities (Kyoo-Man Ha, 2020). To avoid these unfortunate situations in communities, the design and the implementation of critical systems if not all, must be holistic in nature and operation, otherwise, the life of the disadvantaged community could be at risk substantiating: generally there are disparities between the manners in which victims of disasters are treated and in the case of persons with disabilities the causes can be associated with lack of inclusive preparedness, lack of inclusive systems, policies, practices; and the discriminatory cultural assumptions about disability prevalent in societies (Jesus, Kamalakannan, Bhattacharjya, & Bogdanova,

2021). Persons with disabilities in some regions of Philippines are vulnerable to disasters and associated calamities due to multiple factors that include their exclusion in the formulation of policies and strategies, inaccessible physical environments, discrimination; and policy makers viewing participation in disaster programming as either a mean to an end or as an end in itself (Mirian Wester, 2017).

**Lack of inclusive policies:** Policies both as regulatory frameworks and rights according instruments are very critical in the rational distribution, utilization and enjoyment of community and national resources(IMF, 1999). Thus, to safeguard the rights and the interest of all and sundry in the community, the formulation and implementation of the instruments must be participatory and fully inclusive, if not, some communities especially the disadvantaged ones will be placed at heighten vulnerability in case of any calamity including disasters attesting to: persons with disabilities are at high risk of harms during disaster mainly because they are excluded from the formulation of risk reduction projects and measures(Lunga et al., 2013). Persons with disabilities are more vulnerable to disasters and related destruction because in most countries, their needs and concerns are not adequately captured in the formulation of national policies and legislations meant to protect the public(Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn, 2016).

**Elevated risk exposure:** In general terms, there is no society that is immune to calamities including disasters and emergencies (Toshimitsu KOMATSU, 2012). However, what seems to be obvious is that their degree of vulnerability differ which can be associated to multiple of factors including lack of preparation, preventive; and supportive mechanisms. In safeguarding the interest of all, these mechanisms need to be resourced both financially, humanly; and materially (Christo Coetzee, 2023). In some cases because of lack of inclusivity, the level of risk of certain communities including persons with disabilities is elevated making them severely prone to disastrous phenomena as substantiated: multiple of factors can be associated with physical, psychological, and educational vulnerability of persons with disabilities in disasters which include higher poverty rates, elevated risk exposure; and greater vulnerability to traumatic loss or separation from caregiver (Peek & Stough, 2010).

**Inaccessible evacuation routes:** For communities and societies to develop and also for governments to deliver their social contracts with citizen transportation networks must be reasonably motorable if not first class in quality (C P Ng, T H Law, 2019). It is indisputable, with quality roads, reliable and affordable transportation system, local and national authorities will be able to deliver goods and services including security to enhance people life and living conditions(James Peprah Adu, 2024). However, the absence of such especially during and after disaster, the life of many people is put at risk as lamented: persons with disabilities suffer disproportionately during and after disaster due to several factors including inaccessible evacuation routes, comprehending impending dangers, inability to communicate their needs, swiftly respond to rescue calls; and worse of all, they are more likely to be abandoned without support of any kind(Battle, 2015). The poor design of evacuation routes is dangerous as it exposes the life and living conditions of many residents especially in the case of gas among others and disasters and emergencies causatives(Parvin Shafiei Moghaddam, 2022).

**Lack of scientific data:** To be successful both as individuals, communities and nations, there should be some degree of planning in whatever people are to be engaged in being for a short time or long term (Shahzad Naem, 2018). Undoubtedly, without planning one is likely to resort to trial error operation which can be psychosocially and financially expensive as the tendency to fail is very high. Therefore, planning and working on one's plan is an integral part of success though it doesn't mean there cannot be any failure (Juliane Traxler, 2020). However, if any, it might not be as profound compare to the unplanned acts. To plan, especially in addressing critical issues like disasters and conflicts one needs scientific data that are accurate, valid, relevant, trustworthy; and informative, otherwise, certain communities will continue to be vulnerable corroborating:the lack of

accurate data and information regarding the number of persons with disabilities in the communities and their experience has greatly constrained inclusive planning and programming exposing them more to disasters as they are mostly left out and excluded in national and regional actions plans and strategies (IDMC, 2018). The absence of scientific data has not only significantly impacted the understanding of the vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities but equally the adequate monitoring of the impacts of the interventions of different actors including the organizations of persons with disabilities not only for accountability purpose but equally to determine the capacity of the actors in improving the socio-economic life and living conditions of persons with disabilities through inclusive practices (CBM Global Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG), 2022).

**Structural exclusion:** Society is one of the best creations of mankind but also the most sophisticated one (Nishimura, 2018). To effectively serve the best interest of all, it must be structured into different departments better put as social institutions (Kroukamp, 2011). These social institutions as simple as the family are critical in the survival and success of all without exemption. However, if they are not properly managed and monitored, they can be used as weapon against some members of the communities which can occur via differing methods including discrimination (Serge Guimond, 2023). Deeply embedded discriminatory practices, if not controlled, corrected, eliminated; and punished they become near societal norms, which can result to the needs and aspirations of others being neglected exposing them to danger including natural and manmade disasters as substantiated: the factors that significantly contribute to the unprecedented increased in the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to disaster can be broadly classified as structural ones namely; inequality, lack of information and knowledge about disabilities issues among governments and relief organizations personnels, exclusion of persons with disabilities from disaster management and relief programming, inaccessibility of physical environment, preparedness measures, shelters and relief aid, resources, poor settings, stigma; and discrimination (Fred Smith, Emma Jolley, 2012). Persons with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to disaster due to multiple of factors that include being socially disadvantaged, structurally excluded and poverty (Hemingway & Priestley, 2006).

**Planners negative attitudes towards PWDs:** For government both at central and local levels, to effectively and efficiently execute their contracts with taxpayers they must plan in addition to having well-articulated vision and a mission (Bonn O. Jonyo DBA, 2018). At the central government level, most responsible governments have a blue print. To implement these prints, national action plans are formulated to be implemented by the various ministries, departments; and agencies in collaboration with development partners. At this stage of planning all critical areas to be addressed are identified and costed including disaster reduction and mitigation. In identifying and costing priorities are set, which are not only urgency driven but also influenced by the attitude and level of understanding of issues by planners (William Phaniel Kofi Darbi, 2012). In addition to lack of understanding of disabilities and persons with disabilities, and the general societal negative attitudes towards them, their concerns and needs are hardly prioritized and captured by planners increasing their vulnerabilities to calamities including disasters and conflicts of all forms lending support to: persons with disabilities are vulnerable to disasters because among other things, disaster planners hardly think about how diverse persons with disabilities are and their methods of engaging with the physical and social world (Engelman, Craig, & Iles, 2022). Constructive engagement of beneficiaries and stakeholders can significantly reduce poor planning, management, implementation; and project failures (Farah Jawdat Ibrahim Khalid, 2017).

**Lack of access to authentic information:** To flourish in this complex and information, communication and technology societies, access to authentic information has become a strong pillar for both survival and security (Sergio Adorno, 2013). Thus, in light of this central level

access to information has captured in personal and community development, it is no longer a privilege for few but instead a fundamental human right to be enjoyed by all and sundry (UNHR, n.d.). Apparently, to remain safe and secured in this near unpredictable world, access to information has become all the more urgent than ever. Therefore, being unable to access authentic information at the right time has not only deterred the successful growth of many including the disadvantaged communities but has also made them vulnerable to calamities including disasters conforming with: persons with disabilities in addition to having highest possibility of being victim of disaster for example, by having their homes flooded, being the last to be evacuated; inaccessible, conflicting and confusing information regarding disaster warning have significantly made them more vulnerable compare to the rest (Bailie, Matthews, Bailie, & Villeneuve, 2022). The removal of all barriers does not only make persons with disabilities to easily access information to stay safe, but it is a fundamental requirement in reducing their vulnerability through different prevention strategies (UNDRR, 2023b). During disaster, persons with disabilities encounter lot of problems such as loss of assistive devices and mobility aids due to being separated from their families and difficulties in accessing relevant and appropriate information among other factors (UNDRR, 2023b).

**Stigma and discriminatory cultures:** Culture although created by society; without it there is no society (Jepperson, 2023). Therefore, culture is so fundamental in the socio-economic and political development of society one can safely assert that it's inseparable from society. However, in spite of these critical functions of culture, it has been used to marginalize and even eliminate certain group of people from the face of the earth (John Baldwin, 2017). Thus, marginalization that is deeply rooted in stigma has put the life of many communities in danger as in most cases they are not considered in programming and implementation of community and national plans making them vulnerable to all forms of calamities including disasters (Bergstrand K, 2014). Persons with disabilities are no exception to this concurring with: societal vulnerability and resilience could change due to numerous conditions including community marginalization, gender and sexual identities, age and developmental stage, pre-existing chronic conditions; and disabilities (Christian Henrik Alexander Kuran, 2020). Persons with disabilities continuous vulnerability to disaster can be linked to the degree of the discriminatory processes that vividly play out in their daily lives and living conditions (Gartrell, 2020). The societal discriminatory attitudes towards persons with disabilities especially the women does not only entails making fun of them and abuses such as the physical or sexual violence meted on them but sometimes society failed them seriously making them more vulnerable to calamities including disaster and emergencies (UNDP, 2023). The degree and nature of exclusionary processes meted on persons with disabilities has resulted to heighten risk exposure and significantly reduced resilience (Gartrell, 2020). The discriminatory environmental, social and attitudinal barriers have resulted to the 15 percent of the world population who are persons with disabilities not being considered within disaster management responses (UNDRR, 2023b).

**Lack of comprehending impending dangers:** To live safe and productive life, national and individual security is very critical in the society (Ebeh, 2015). With security, peace can be maintained and thus, developments of all forms can be ushered in and sustained. However, it seems in this modern world, dangerous things either caused by nature or man himself is happening globally on incremental rate (WMO, 2021). Nonetheless, the degree of exposure and vulnerability can vary from one community to another. In most cases if not in all cases, the disadvantaged groups including persons with disabilities bear the heaviest burden (NCDP, 2021). Sometimes because they don't know the degree of the looming danger they are effortlessly victimized as substantiated: to avert communities' disaster vulnerability and furthermore minimize the hazardous impacts; integrating the nature and impacts of looming dangers insights into policy and other framework as well as strengthening disaster risk knowledge, strengthening institutional architecture via community, private sector, media and NGO partnership; strengthening community

integration mechanisms, eliminating fundamental socioeconomic pillars that limit capacities; improving the comprehension of warnings; promoting impact-based forecasting and facilitating feedback is fundamental in disaster prevention and reduction (UNDRR, 2023a). Calamities including disaster risk generally don't only rest on their severity or the number of victims but equally on the communities' susceptibility to the effects, so, comprehending the degree of vulnerability and the would-be impacts help to discuss why some are more severely hit while others are not (WHO, 2024). In situations where communities feel they are not receiving the relevant and right messages, or unable to understand things, or trust the warning disseminated about looming disasters, they don't only become vulnerable but less like to take the necessary actions when disaster occurs (UNDRR, 2023a).

**Lack of access to finance :** To many people, good health is one of the greatest gifts from God to the human race (Bishop Emmanuel Morris, 2023). To maintain this gift and convert it into productive energy for socio-economic, spiritual; and political developments, other critical inputs or factors of production are needed of which finance has nearly become central if not indispensable (Roula Inglesi-Lotz, 2018). With finance, other factors needed can be acquired both in the needed quality and quantity regardless of distant. Therefore, in the absence of finance, hardly significant community development can be registered leaving many communities more especially, the disadvantaged ones vulnerable to lot of calamities including disaster (Antonella Francesca Cicchiello, 2021) concurring with: the lack of access to finance and economic empowerment doesn't only make persons with disabilities vulnerable to exploitation, sexual and physical abuse, violence, intensive inequality, etc. but also vulnerable to disasters as well as the inability to build residence in the face calamity of any nature and degree (UNDP, 2023). Poverty beyond reasonable doubt is one of the fundamental drivers of people's vulnerability to both manmade and natural calamities that in turn substantially increase poverty in the communities which justifies any reduction in poverty would mean reducing disaster risk, likewise any reduction in disaster risk in no small measures reduces poverty (Stéphane Hallegatte, 2020).

**Governments not recognizing disability as development issue:** Societal developmental of any kind is a collective responsibility as any development registered benefits all either directly or indirectly for example, via the multipliers effects (Félix Oscar Socorro Márquez, 2023). In some instances, development is not attained by addressing one particular issue alone but by addressing lot of concerns especially the fundamental basic needs. Thus, comprehensive development requires addressing multiple of societal issues via strong and reliable partnerships (WB, 2000). Persons with disabilities roughly form ten percent of the globe (WBG, 2023). Therefore, such number being economically inactive or in some cases being out of the labor market is not only a huge cost to the tax payers but a significant lost to communities and nations (Sebastian Backup, 2021). In avertedly, not putting disability issues on national development agendas; is not an economic shortsightedness alone but also condemning them to multiple of threats since their issues are never on the decision making tables concurring with: with all the significant achievements registered like passing and enacting critical legislations and conventions to promote and protect the fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities as in the UNCRPD, SDGs and other international normative frameworks on disability, unfortunately, limited actions have been taken on the ground due to multiple factors namely; lack of acceptance and promoting disabilities as development issues, lack of inclusive policies, coherent coordination and implementation of disability issues as development matters; and the absence of specific institutions and resources to combat all issues threatening the life and living of conditions persons with disabilities including disasters (Sijapati, Austin Lord & Ghale, Jeevan Baniya, Obindra Chand, 2016). Actors and governments creating the needed space for persons with disabilities to effectively and efficiently participate in disaster reduction throughout all stages including planning, implementation of national strategies; and services delivery will automatically increase the promotion and observation of the rights and safety of all in the communities (Laura M. Stough, 2017).

**Lack of information and knowledge about disabilities:** For any societies to develop, it must be well armed in all aspects to effectively and efficiently address current and future concerns of its citizens without any an iota of segregation and condemnation as it will be a huge social and economic cost to the communities (Ning Qiu, 2023). To be well equipped to initiate development activities in communities including the safety of people and their properties, planners and executors must have cutting edge knowledge and information about the issues they want to address otherwise they can hardly register any developmental success despite all efforts (B.T. Houlden, 1980). Similarly, promoting and protecting the rights and interests of persons with disabilities including in formulating disaster prevention and mitigation strategies, it requires comprehensive knowledge and information about disabilities as substantiated: the needs and the experiences of persons with disabilities if not put into consideration in planning and making sure there are appropriate intervention schemes and adequate advocacy for their lives and health they will always be seriously at risk during and after disasters (Shahzad Pakjouei, Aidin Aryankhesal, Mohammad Kamali, 2018). The persons with disabilities vulnerability to disaster can be associated with deprivation or the lack of capabilities to cope with calamities which can emanate from shortage of resources and as well the critical knowledge, information, and the enabling conversion factors (Khanh That Ton, 2019). The comprehension of the looming dangers of disaster to minimize vulnerability and associated harms, can be attained via different methods including the sharing of traditional and local knowledge that has been generated locally over the years and tested over generations within the communities (UNDRR, 2023a).

**Living in poor communities:** Poverty though is not a crime in itself but one of the biggest causes of crime and criminal activities especially in this era of soaring cost of living and erroneous belief that life and living is about being rich, if not, being filthy rich (Luke Fleming, 2016). Though generally, disaster can strike at time and anywhere, the disaster prone areas mostly bear the biggest burden of it (Xue Lei, 2024). Persons with disabilities like most disadvantaged groups are more likely to live in remote and poor communities because they cannot afford to settle in highly planned and structured settlements (GPE, 2014), indirectly, exposing themselves to verities of disasters including floods: persons with disabilities are more vulnerable to disaster throughout history and is mostly attributed to exclusion and impoverishment which is more acute in poor communities where they suffer inequities in accessing shelter or relief services and often excluded from full participation in response, recovery; and rehabilitation (Alexander, 2011). Persons with disabilities are not only at the risk of falling ill during disaster and emergencies but also dying due to multiple factors that include poverty which is mostly combined with inaccessible relief services and low prioritization during disaster risk reduction programming (UNDRR, 2022). In most disasters, every one person killed another three are injured or left with permanent disabilities due to trauma, illness from poor living conditions, broken healthcare services, psychological stress; and lack of rehabilitation services (UNDRR, 2022).

**Inability to communicate needs:** For any meaningful development to be attained either at international, national, community; and individual levels, communication must happen (FAO, 2019). Communication between entities can take place through different methods for instant, discussing and debating issues, sharing data, feelings, ideas, opinions, perspectives, etc. Regardless of the method, useful data is always shared that can be used to plan and effect needed changes and societal development. Therefore, to effectively protect any communities from disasters and emergencies situations, they must be able to communicate their needs and worries otherwise they risked to live in vulnerability (Declan Bradley, 2014) concurring with: the vulnerability of certain communities to disaster is significantly associated with communication complications, exposure to false information, polluted information, inability to conduct fact-checking quickly and professionally; and sense-making (Sten Hansson, 2020). The hard hearing persons lack of easy access to

modern information and technology has not only prevented them from using such innovations to effectively and efficiently communicate and access relevant information but has also exposed them to series of disasters and isolation more especially during the Covid-19 pandemic (Di Xu, 2023).

**Inability to swiftly respond to rescue:** In this fast developing world, some people and nations are doing almost everything to keep up with the speed (Oskar Engdahl, 2008). In some cases, some of these activities are illegal having profound negative impacts on communities and the natural environment (Setayesh Radkani, 2023). In view of the strong linkage between the natural environment and the climate, it has equally resulted to significant climate changes through global warming among others (Mikalai Filonchik, 2024). With the current rate of climate changes, calamities are undoubtedly on the increase which in some cases cannot be prevented but rather managed to minimize the negative impacts (WWF, 2024). In minimizing and coping with the negative impacts, vacating affected areas effortlessly has become a critical alternative. However, some communities including persons with disabilities have become more vulnerable hence they cannot instantly respond to rescue calls and alarms lending support to: persons with disabilities inability to quickly respond to alarms and rescue calls with limited constraints have significantly deterred their ability to respond and escape during disasters and other emergencies situations (Essex county, 2024). The inclusion of the mobility needs of persons with disabilities especially those with mobility and visual impairments in housing and workplace adaptation, spare assistive devices, easy access to vehicles, special facilities for emergency evacuation, adaptation and accessibility of shelters, adapted bathrooms and toilets, and transferring by others can significantly reduce their victimization as these measures rapidly enhance their ability to response any disaster warning (Pakjouei S, 2018).

**Lack of education:** Education of any kind being academic or vocational is a powerful tool for the socio-economic and technological development of any nation and community regardless its of location on the globe (Trinh, 2023). With quality, relevant; and affordable education, behaviors and minds can be nurtured to develop the appropriate technologies and strategies among other things needed for development. Therefore, any denial or lack of education can have profound devastating impacts on life and living conditions of communities more especially the most disadvantaged ones making them more vulnerable to all forms of calamities including disasters and emergencies substantiating: the investment in education has not only proven to be the best strategy for the prevention and also the preparation for the unknown dangers associated with the unprecedented climate changes as well as lack of it being one of the factors making different communities vulnerable to disasters and emergencies (Erich Striessnig, 2013). Education has the power to directly influence the ways how communities and societies perceive disasters, risks and also enhance their skills and acknowledge in its prevention while indirectly reducing poverty one of the fundamental causes of disasters (Muttarak, 2023).

**Disruption of formal support:** Societies and communities are formed and maintained for multiple of rationales principal among which is supporting each other for personal and community growth (Maija Reblin, 2009). As human beings, despite all our capabilities, we are not complete, therefore, we need each other to fill these critical gaps to survive in this challenging world. Sometimes the complimentary support might be just a simple psychological one to boost morale. However, sometimes, it may require establishing formal structures to professionally deliver the required supports (Continue Anddison Eketu, 2020). With disasters and emergencies, some of these structures are totally or partially disintegrated leaving some communities especially the vulnerable ones expose to series of calamities including disaster lending support to: persons with disabilities during disaster and other calamities in the absence or disruption of formal support, they mostly rely upon the overstretched social capital including their families and neighbors for assistance, in addition to short-term loans, reduction in food consumption, and/or

migration for long term resilience and lessening of vulnerability (Alexandra Gartrel, 2020). Persons with disabilities particularly the women are disproportionately affected by calamities and worst of all, they are unable to access institutional support throughout all the phases of disaster from the preparation, response and recovery stages making them more at risk to future climate changes and its associates (Alexandra Gartrel, 2020).

**Lack of standard definition for disability:** For any community to effectively, efficiently, and collaboratively address a community concern including security and safety, they must all have a common understanding and definitional details of what they want to address (Sandrita Škèrienė, 2020). This is not only critical for the formulation of vision and mission of national blue prints but also in how to mobilize the required resources and equally keeping people focus on the issue at hands. Thus, without common understanding, planning, implementation, coordination; and monitoring will be near-impossible as people will be talking and addressing different issues purely based on their different understanding (Kamal Gholipour, 2023). With such, not only resources are wasted but worst of all, the affected communities' life and living conditions will continue to be seriously exposed to risky situations as in reality nothing professionally seem to have been done to address their plight as postulated: persons with disabilities are vulnerable to disaster due to the varying nature in which disability is defined or viewed and the erroneous belief that disability has a purpose in the society (Lunga et al., 2013). For many decades, debates have been on going regarding a universal definition of child maltreatment which has not only affected the execution of scientific studies but equally has significantly deterred making substantial progress in policy formulation, implementation and coordination of programs, establishment of national statistical monitoring systems as well as holding countries and regions accountable via comparisons (Taina Laajasalo, 2023).

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In summation, the causes of persons with disabilities being vulnerable to disaster entail lack of participation in programming, inaccessible transportation system, poor housing conditions, lack of education, high poverty rates, lack of access to resources, inaccessible built environment, lack of preparation, lack of inclusive systems, lack of inclusive policies, lack of inclusive service delivery, stigma and discriminatory cultural practices, elevated risk exposure, inaccessible evacuation routes, lack of comprehending impending dangers, inability to accurately communicate needs, inability to swiftly respond to rescue calls, lack of scientific data, structural exclusion, planners negative attitudes towards PWDs, lack of access to proper information, governments not recognizing disability as development issue, lack of information and knowledge about disabilities, living in poor communities; and lack of standard definition for disability.

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