



Re-writing the Disability Script from the Global South: Tsitsi Chataika's Contribution to Disability Studies Scholarship in Africa

By Dr. Sibonokuhle Ndlovu

Abstract

For decades, scholars from the Global North have written the disability script from their own perspective, writing it for persons with disabilities and for disability scholarship in the Global South. A mould has been broken and African scholars have now begun re-writing the script from their own perspectives and from the Global South's perspective. Using Decolonial Theory and the systematic review method, the paper is based on the work of Professor Tsitsi Chataika, which has impacted disability scholarship from an African context and from the Global South at large. The work contributes extensively to disability scholarship in terms of disability conception, disability theory, disability policy and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and of students with disabilities in higher education in African countries. The scholar shifts the narrative from writing disability scholarship from the Global North to the South.

Key words: Disability script re-writing and critiquing, African scholar, Tsitsi Chataika, Global South, Decolonial Theory, Critical Disability Studies

Introduction

African countries' encounter with colonialism has resulted in the disability script being written predominantly by the Western scholars for Africa and the Global South, writing it from a negative western perspective. In the process, negative perceptions about disability have, in turn, influenced the negative conceptions of disability, which foreground individual limitations based on impairments. Goody (2006) has viewed the experience as "*a theft of the history of Africans*" (p. 1). In other words, colonisers who stole the African history and culture, disempowered the Africans, to manipulate, dominate and control them, hence influencing African disability scholarship in a negative way. This has led to the isolation,

marginalisation, exclusion and oppression of persons with disabilities in Africa and in the Global South. A generation of African scholars has emerged to 'right the wrong' imposed by the dominant society in terms of the conception of disability in Africa. Influencing and making a significant impact in terms of re-writing the disability script, from the African perspective is Tsitsi Chataika.

Aims

The aims of this paper are:

- a. To analyse how Tsitsi Chataika's work influences re-writing disability from the African perspective and the Global South.
- b. To review how Chataika's work positively impacts disability inclusion in African countries and the Global South.
- c. To provide evidence that Chataika is an African generation of scholars of the time in the disability field.

Rationale

A generation of African scholars in the Global South have stood up to challenge hegemony, Eurocentric epistemology, dominance, oppression and repression of systems and structures in the Global South. Considering the persistence of Eurocentrism and unwillingness to release power, African scholars, such as Chataika, who stand up to resist such a structure, need to be known.

Theoretical Frame: Decolonial Theory

Decolonial Theory underpins the critique of the work of Tsitsi Chataika. Coloniality of power and knowledge undergirds the ontological and epistemological contribution of the scholar. The zones of location— social and epistemic location, locus of enunciation, decoloniality and decolonial thinking and doing - are tools that combine to explain the works of Tsitsi Chataika in a deeper way.

The zones of location (De Sousa Santos, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2011; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), the social and epistemic location (Quijano 2000; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2001), locus of enunciation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) and decoloniality and decolonial thinking and doing (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015), inform understanding of the African scholars' contribution to the African perspective of disability. Decolonial theoretical

concepts are highlighted in passing because they have been extensively discussed in the works of decolonial scholars in contemporary scholarship.

Method

A systematic literature review method was used to source relevant data for Chataika's positive contribution to disability inclusion and the shift to the African perspective of disability. The Scopus and Web of Science were used in the search process for relevant literature, yielding published books, journal articles, online sources and book chapters. The two websites are where most of Chataika's work is indexed. The search terms and their combination used in the search process included. 'Tsitsi Chataika, disability from African perspective, decolonial theory, disability, inclusion, mainstreaming disability, disability policy and theory, and students with disabilities.

The Selection of Relevant Literature

All literature that yielded the name Tsitsi Chataika was selected, including other scholars with whom she had collaborated and co-authored. Literature that did not bear the name of the respective scholar was excluded. The selection included all peer reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, online resources, reports and conference papers by Chataika, from 2007 to 2024, a period in which all the Chataika's quality work was captured. Duplicates were removed from the original 40 publications leaving 32 publications on Chataika and Decolonial Theory, which suited the aims of the study.

Chataika's Work and Influence on Epistemology.

Chataika's wide array of research and publications, which also include a sole authored book entitled, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability in Southern Africa* (Chataika, 2018b), influences epistemology by re-centring disability inclusion scholarship from the African perspective. All peer reviewed articles, chapters in books and books reflect on disability inclusion from the African perspective. Chataika demonstrates that all human beings are knowledge producers from their central positions of location, uniquely contributing to epistemology from the African context specifically. Chataika disrupts the notion that disability knowledge and

ways of knowing, can only be produced from the Global North. Evidence to the argument is her many works in which the central location of knowledge production is Africa.

Chataika is a proponent of rights of persons with disabilities (Chataika 2015; Chataika et al. 2018), disability policy (Chataika et al. 2011) and disability and gender (Chataika 2013; 2017; 2020). The evidence is in her direct engagement with not only persons with disabilities but also gender issues to do with women's rights (Chataika 2013; 2017; 2020). She has engaged in childhood studies on disability (Chataika & Mackenzie 2018), and has, and is, in all cases, situating disability in the African context. Her work is exceptional as it discusses different categories of disabilities including albinism (Chataika 2018). Though albinism is unique and requires specific intervention and support in the disability field and in educational contexts, it has not been given adequate attention as an impairment,

Chataika has impacted disability and religion from the African perspective (Chataika 2013). The intersection of disability and religion from the African context is important in terms of explaining the influence of religion on disability and vice-versa. Due to African religious inclinations, African countries have looked at disability negatively. In essence, Chataika's work is distinct as it considers intersectionality. Chataika does not engage with disability in isolation but as it intersects with gender, age, religion. Thus, her work reveals the multidimensional discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in society. Chataika thus manages to mainstream disability and its different intersections in Africa (Chataika & Mackenzie 2016). Her work shifts from the Eurocentric understanding of disability (Phasha, Mahlo & Dei 2017), to consider other worldviews.

Chataika's firm stand in writing disability from the African perspective is influenced by her social and epistemic location. She has an African mindset and she is epistemologically, socially, and geographically located in Africa and the Global South. When socialised by a modern Western Education, individuals become colonised into Western ways of thinking and of knowing. They become colonial subjects who are subjectified, hence their epistemic location become that of the Global North (Ndlovu-

Gatsheni 2001). Further argued is that some people are socially located in the zone of non-being and are oppressed, but they think like their oppressors and speak their language (De Sousa Santos 2007; Ndlovu 2015). Chataika is not tainted in terms of understanding disability. She fights oppression from an African epistemic location, as her disability work reveals. This is evident in her engagement and publications that are African oriented, proving that she is epistemically located in the Global South, and Africa is the centrality from which she creates disability knowledge.

Influence on Disability Theory

Chataika's work has an influence on disability theory, more specifically Critical Disability Studies (CDS). The theory is referred to that way because it is viewed as having outgrown the capacity of a theory (Critical Disability Theory), because of the numerous studies that have researched, discussed and reviewed mainstream understanding of disability. Critical Disability Studies involves analysis not of bodily or mental impairments but the social norms, contexts and conditions that are attributed to limitations, stigmatisation, social isolation and discrimination experienced by other social groups more especially those with disabilities (Schalk 2017). The proponents of CDS are scholars who gloss over the influence of the African social and cultural context that marginalise persons with disabilities. Chataika's engagement in the output, '*What Kind of Development Are We Talking About?*' A Virtual Roundtable with Tsitsi Chataika' presents her own contribution to CDS (Chataika et al. 2016), from an African perspective. Chataika directly engages the proponents of Critical Disability Studies and she influences CDS from the African context and positively impacts disability inclusion.

From the Decolonial Theory perspective, Chataika's contribution to Critical Disability Studies is decolonial thinking and doing, in which she makes a concerted effort to infuse the African perspective into the theory that is Global North orientated. It has been argued that theories and scholars from the South and those who produce them, have been inferiorised and censored, being considered as of less value from those produced in the Global North scholars (Grosfoguel 2011). However, Chataika resists the oppression that theories which are seen as legitimate in epistemology are those produced by

the scholars in the Global North, and she motivates for a consideration of the African perspective and its context in CDS. As evidence of her resistance to oppression related to disability theories, she has sat on round table debates with scholars from the Global North, to also contribute to Critical Disability Studies from the African perspective (Chataika et al. 2016). In essence, Chataika's work and its impact on theory disrupts the long-standing hegemony. The overarching fact is that Chataika's work influences a disability theory that has so much impact in terms of disability inclusion in the Global South and in Africa specifically.

While other scholars in the disability field have also made significant contributions to the disability scholarship by way of publication, Chataika's distinguishes herself by way of decolonial thinking and doing. Decolonial doing refers to what is being done on practical terms to fight oppression, a situation when decolonial thoughts have been, and are being, translated into action, to engage practical resistance and struggle against hegemony. Chataika, in her disability work, translates decolonial thoughts into action. Thus, Chataika's decolonial thinking and doing, in which she engages in practical terms with scholars from the West, is to include the African perspective on CDS, which could be seen as having practically contributed to core production of disability knowledge from both worlds.

Influence on Hybridity

Chataika has also contributed to postcolonial theory (Chataika 2012), in which hybridity is emphasised. Chaitaka' work impacts hybridity, in which the Global South and the West need to find solutions for common problems. This entails learning from each other about different cultures, different experiences of disability (hybridity), including the construction of disability knowledge, ways of knowing about it and different ways in which disability is interpreted (Grech & Soldatic 2015). Her influence on hybridity is evidenced on the number of peer-reviewed articles she has published on postcolonial theory (Chataika 2012), in which hybridity is emphasised. She has also been the co-editor of a book on postcolonial disability, in which all chapter centre around postcolonial theory and postcolonial disability studies (Chataika & Goodley 2024). Above all, she distinguishes herself

“ Chataika does not engage with disability in isolation but as it intersects with gender, age, religion. ”

on the actual engagement (decolonial thinking doing) with Western scholars to share disability knowledge and culture from the Global South and African perspective (Chataika et al. 2016).

In emphasising the need for hybridity, as reflected in her works in post-colony theory, Chataika is concerned about sharing disability knowledge and cultures from the Global North and South on common platforms in which there is no censoring of any disability experience and knowledge or considering one as better than the other. Furthermore, in post-colonial theory, she proposes post-colonial disability studies, which are also accessible to the marginalised Global South and the inclusion of persons with disability into the research.

Chataika does not only propose hybridity in postcolonial theory, but she implements the proposal as she practically engages Western scholars (Chataika et al. 2016). From the perspective of decoloniality, it could be argued that while Chataika, as an African scholar, brings the perspective of Africanism into disability scholarship, she is not a fundamentalist (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). This is evident in that she does not totally refute everything Western but understands that it is not about contesting and resisting, but to seek solutions for common problems between the Global North and South. Such an approach has a positive impact in which both worlds can come together to solve the challenge of disability inclusion, at the same time adding value to disability scholarship from both worlds.

Impact on Inclusive Education Policies in African countries

Chataika has influenced policy, from the international legal instrument, United Nations on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) (Chataika 2016), to a number of other policy issue engagements in higher education in different African countries (Chataika 2007; Chataika & Hlatywayo 2022). Chataika has made a direct impact on policies of inclusion in Africa, at regional and national levels. Chataika has influenced and continues to impact policy in a positive way by drafting inclusive education policies in different African countries, besides reviewing and evaluating the existent ones. She has engaged in formulating disability policies in African countries, which include among others, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sierra Leon. Chataika has produced national reports that have been commended for their impact on disability inclusion (Chataika & Hlatywayo 2019). Chataika's approach to issues of policy is thus unique because unlike other scholars in the field who only analyse and critique existent disability policies, Chataika has actual formulated disability policies (Chataika 2007; Chataika 2016; Chataika & Hlatywayo 2022).

Chataika drafted the National Development Plan of 2010 in Uganda, through the National Union of Disabled People of Uganda. Chataika has also influenced the policy by ensuring that disability was included in the respective national policies. She drafted the National Disability Policy of 2021 in Sierra Leone. In Zimbabwe, where for a long time there was no inclusive education policy, she drafted the inclusive education policy, and has also been involved in drafting the Persons with Disabilities Act and spearheaded the drafting of the Draft Higher and Tertiary Disability Inclusive Education Policy, which is presently awaiting public consultations.

Chataika has recently been engaged by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), to review inclusive education policies in nine Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, examining whether the legal policies in those countries were inclusive of all diversity, including disabilities. She was engaged by the African Union (AU), various development partners that include CBM International, Save the Children Malawi and Zimbabwe, UNESCO ROSA, World Bank, World Vision and British Council, to review national policies (Chataika et al. 2011). She has produced reports that were highly acknowledged and commended by various stakeholders.

Chataika began to make an impact on inclusive education policies in African countries, ensuring that disability was included in national policies in African countries such as Ethiopia, Malawi, Sierra Leon and Uganda. Inclusion of all diversity including those with disabilities, could be facilitated through policies of inclusion largely and Inclusive Education policies specifically. Her efforts in this regard in the above-mentioned countries has had an impact on disability inclusion within the specific contexts, as influenced by policies she has drafted and reviewed.

Chataika's contribution to theory reveals that she understands that it is when informed by theories of disabilities as Critical Disability Studies, that the hidden systemic and institutional ableism, resulting from preference of the persons without disabilities over those with disabilities, could be revealed. She understands that Critical Disability Studies theory highlights institutional barriers, attitudinal barriers and inaccessible physical structures that continue to stigmatise and marginalise students with disabilities in higher education in Africa. Chataika understands that without engagement with Critical Disability Studies theory, which critiques mainstream disability studies, the deeper underlying and hidden causes of exclusion may only be understood at surface levels. This is evidenced from her many public talks on social media such as Facebook, in which she explains that disability is a social construct, created by society to limit persons with impairments. She does not leave it at that level but goes further to engage with Critical Disability Studies for academics and students in higher education to understand the disability theory as Critical Disability Studies that illuminate exclusion from deeper levels. Thus, Chataika's work has been able to highlight the hidden underlying reasons for institutional, attitudinal, and physical barriers apparent in different institutions of higher education in African countries and in society at large.

Chataika's research and practical involvement in policy issues could be explained in the light of decoloniality and decolonial thinking and doing, which has started from the consciousness and awareness of how policy can be used for furthering the oppression of persons with disabilities, rather than emancipating them. It is shown in her work, in which she argues that some African countries (South Africa in particular) have inclusive education policies, which are just on paper (Chataika 2007).

She also has had engagement with African countries that do not have Inclusive Education policies at all and has published academic work on countries with policies that are just on paper (Chataika 2007; 2010). Such a body of work undoubtedly distinguishes Chataika as an African scholar, who is not only concerned about effective disability policy, but one who is willing to practically effect change in that regard in African countries.

Impact on Voices from the South

Chataika has made an impact in terms of privileging the voice of academics and persons with disabilities from Africa. For decades, the voice from the academics in the South has been underrepresented in disability debates and scholarship. The voice of persons with disabilities in particular have been ignored with those without disabilities, speaking on their behalf (Hosking 2008). In her practical involvement and participation in debates with other scholars from the West, Chataika privileges the African views of disability. In an edited volume, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism* (Berghs et al. 2020), the voices of different African scholars, including those with disabilities, are privileged offering the African perspective.

“
Privileging the voices from
Africa has an impact on disability
scholarship, as disability is
presently being re-written from
the African perspective, by
scholars in Africa and those with
disabilities themselves through
Chataika’s edited volume.”

By virtue of the book being an edited volume rather than sole authored, several African scholars, including those with disabilities are given opportunity to express themselves and speak out on a range of disability issues, from their own African worldview. Proof and evidence of the voices of those with disabilities being provided the opportunity to speak out is shown in the book chapter, ‘My Disability, my Ammunition, my Asset in Advocacy Work’, which Chataika edited with other scholars in the field. It is not only the African academics’ voices that are privileged but also those of academics with disabilities themselves. Ten chapters in the book have been written by scholars with disabilities, who are writing on different disability experiences and perceptions from the African perspective.

In the book, a special dedication is made to people who have gone before and set the foundation for disability rights, to those who are presently fighting to ensure continued justice, equality and equity and to those who would come after, with more sharpened advocacy and lobbying skills, to build a more inclusive world (Berghs et al. 2020). The dedication illustrates how Chataika is engrained in disability rights and her quest to fight for social justice and an inclusive society for all. It is not by coincidence that the book won the Outstanding Taylor and Francis global award in the Social Sciences in April 2020. The same book was nominated among the 20 most influential books in activism globally by Book Authority in 2023. It goes to show the impact that Chataika has made in the global arena in terms of impacting the voice of persons with disabilities in the African context, to be heard in the whole world.

Chataika’s impact on amplifying silenced voices could be seen as decoloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013), in which the oppressed are also given the opportunity to speak out against oppression experienced by persons with disabilities. Chataika is not only aware of oppression in the way of the absence of the voices from the South largely and Africa specifically, but in turn, she uses her agency to disrupt the norm and hegemony that has been normalised, in as far as silencing other voices from the different worlds is concerned, more specifically the African voice. It could be argued that the focus and the purpose of the book is to provide the platform for the silenced voices to also be heard.

Furthermore, by including those with disabilities to have their voices represented in the chapters of the book, it could be viewed as a disruption of hegemony of those without disabilities speaking for those with disabilities (Hosking 2008). Privileging the voices from Africa has an impact on disability scholarship, as disability is presently being rewritten from the African perspective, by scholars in Africa and those with disabilities themselves through Chataika's edited volume. The chances of change and improvement in terms of disability inclusion are high likely in the African context, when silenced voices are being privileged, heard and listened to through the works of Chataika.

Impact on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in African Countries

Chataika's works has had an impact on inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education in African countries. She ensures the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education. In the Zimbabwean context, she outlined the attitudinal, institutional, and physical barriers as limiting those students' functionality and access to learning (Chataika 2007). She did not only identify barriers but proposed possible impactful interventions (Chataika 2007).

I had the opportunity for an interview with her during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which she shared valuable information on the challenges that were confronted by students with disabilities, in the context of the Zimbabwean higher education. She argued that challenges mainly emanated from the economic situation in the country at that time. Interestingly, she revealed that although Zimbabwean students with disabilities were confronted by challenges in their learning, unlike in South Africa, they completed their programmes within the minimum time, and as a result, there is no delayed throughput. Through her idea of hybridity, South Africa can learn from Zimbabwe in terms of timely throughput.

Chataika's awareness of the specific challenges confronting students with disabilities in Zimbabwe specifically and other African countries largely, could be explained as decoloniality, in which she does not see those students as the Other, placed in the lower hierarchy of the higher education

structure, as understood from categorisation of people by the dominant society (Quijano 2000). Chataika's work on disability inclusion does not conform and subscribe to the coloniality of segregating students with disabilities at higher education level. Chataika notes their capability of resilience to get to higher education, despite the limitations imposed on them by society. Chataika considers them as more than equal to their able-bodied counterparts when barriers are dismantled, and an enabling environment is created for them (Chataika 2010). It could be argued that Chataika's positive view of students with disabilities is empowering as it helps students themselves not to see themselves as the Other, despite the fact that they are placed in the lower hierarchy and viewed as the Other, in the coloniality context.

Chataika (2007) has influenced the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education, not only in Zimbabwe, but in other African countries including South Africa. Chataika argues that institutional barriers result from policies and programmes that do not take into cognisance the needs of those with disabilities. She notes that even in those African countries such as South Africa with comprehensive inclusive education policies, they are not effectively implemented (Chataika 2007). In essence, she understands that it is not only about having good policies of inclusive education, but it is in genuine policy intent that enables effective implementation. It could be argued that her awareness and consciousness is not only in policy influencing disability inclusion; it could influence change in which policies are analysed for their relevance and intentions. With policy intent analysed, leading to effective implementation, institutional barriers could be dismantled, hence the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education in African countries, which has been a challenge for decades.

The impact of inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education has significance in that by being included in higher education, those students, have overcome barriers in order to access to higher education, and are thus in a privileged position to significant change in disability inclusion and scholarship. They can rewrite disability scholarship from the African perspectives in dissertations and theses in higher education.

Impact on Wider Society

Chataika impacts wider society and is changing the negative conception of disability, previously influenced by the Global North in African societies largely. She runs a face-book page 'Disability Diaries with Prof Tsitsi' where her weekly posts on positive conception of disability on influence readers. On this social media platform, Chataika uses easily accessible language to reach out to all. She explains how disability is a socially constructed phenomena and imposed on those with impairments by society and the environment. She explains in simple terms how local communities create barriers for those with impairments through attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers, ultimately stigmatising, marginalising and disabling persons with impairments.

She highlights the African cultural beliefs that influence negative understanding of impairment, leading to stereotypes about disability. Using local examples that could easily be understood by all in African communities, she explains how disability and impairment differ. Chataika's Facebook page is accessible to all people in Africa and internationally and she urges all people to dismantle barriers in their different communities, to include persons with disabilities. This has an impact because she argues that what is good for persons with impairments is good for everyone. She uses the human right approach, in which she believes that everyone, including those with impairments, have the right to a dignified life. She gives example of people with impairments who function well in life because barriers were removed for them by society. She argues that everyone is vulnerable to an impairment, and all have the potential to have a disability during a lifetime. Through the use of a public platform such as Facebook, Chataika impacts, not only academics, but the whole world of persons with and without disabilities. She is making a massive impact in terms of understanding disability, specifically from the African perspective. As her posts continue each week, there could be change in the way disability has been or is being conceived, not only in Africa but globally.

Prior to her posts on disability as a socially constructed phenomena on her Facebook page, Chataika begins by declaring her positionality, that she is an academic-cum disability activist.

She explains why she is both and how she started engaging in disability matters and what ignited her passion for disability issues. She does not even hide her humble beginnings and that she came from a struggling family, where she learnt about sharing constrained resources with persons who had disabilities in the community from her parents. Chataika's declaration of her positionality as she introduces herself could be explained in the light of locus of enunciation, which is a "particular location from which a human being speaks from within a power structure" (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:114). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argues that there is hypocrisy in coloniality whereby oppressors themselves have been found to speak against oppression. In that regard, decolonial scholars emphasise transparency in terms of locus of enunciation. Chataika's pronouncement of her locus of enunciation and where she stands in the power structure of coloniality, makes her arguments, writings on disability and practical engagement with disability in general, to be transparent, genuine, and authentic. The genuine impression influences the wider society to accept those with disabilities in their different communities in Africa, and internationally.

Influence in 'Nothing without us' Mantra

Chataika could have been a colonial subject, who reproduces and perpetuates the oppression of African people, more especially those with disabilities. Colonialism has such a powerful influence that the common trend is that most African scholars who have been educated in European universities tend to lose their Africanness and become colonial subjects. The longer they stay in European countries, the more readily they think and speak the language of their oppressors, become epistemologically located in the 'zone of being' while they are also oppressed like all other oppressed Africans (Ndlovu 2015). Even during the post-colonialism period, most elite Africans replicated the oppressive tendencies of their formal colonial masters (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2016). Chataika is epistemically located in the Global South. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2001) argued that epistemic location is all about ways of thinking and knowing and has nothing to do with geographical location.

From the way Chataika engages with disability in the African context, her epistemic location in

the Global South cannot be doubted. Chataika engages persons with disabilities in her research work and writing about disability from the African perspective. The critical reader of Chataika's doctoral thesis was an individual with total visual impairment (not named for ethical reasons), whom she intentionally engaged to manifest the 'Nothing for us without us' mantra. She understands that for her to propose for genuine disability inclusion, her work cannot leave out those with a lived experience of disability. For Chataika, therefore the 'Nothing for us without us' slogan, common in the disability field, is not only verbal but a lived experience.

Why Chataika is an African Scholar of her Generation

Chataika's academic work and how she engages with persons with disabilities makes her distinctive persons with disabilities appreciate her as one of their own in the social, academic and the world of activism. She demystifies their marginalisation by generating disability knowledge as seen in core-knowledge production of the book, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism*. Authors with disabilities celebrated the global award for the specific book together with her as they make a greater percentage of the contribution to the book. It could be argued that Chataika lives what she argues that disability is not in an individual but in the social environment. As she mainstreams disability, persons with disabilities are no different from other people in society at large and to her, as an individual. She does not speak for them but speaks with them, as evidenced from her collective disability work. This is the aspect that most scholars fail to balance.

Chataika has been given awards, accolades and prizes for being a distinctive disability inclusion academic in Africa. The accolades have been awarded nationally, regionally, and internationally by amongst others, disability organisations, universities in Africa, and Ministries of Education. She was recognised for the 2018 *Pan African Leadership Women's Achievers Award* in inclusive education. She has received numerous research grants and funding at national, regional and international levels, for disability research in a number of African countries. Although disability scholarship has been written from the Global North perspective for decades, leading to a myriad

of challenges for persons with disabilities, exclusion in society in Africa and in higher education specifically, there is currently a change gradually taking place through the work of Chataika. She is playing a significant role in influencing the shift, and positively impacting disability inclusion from the Global South broadly and the African perspective specifically.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Tsitsi Chataika can be counted among the generation of African scholars who has made an impact in terms of re-writing the disability script from the Global South, largely and from African perspective specifically. Her work influences and positively impacts epistemology from the African perspective, the UNCRPD and inclusive education policies in African countries, disability theories more specifically Critical Disability Studies and the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education in Africa, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society at large. Undoubtedly, she plays a major role in influencing a shift, in terms of understanding disability from the Global South. Of importance, is that her work is not only theoretical, but also practical – motivating for a mental shift which is seen as influencing change in terms of inclusion of all diversity, including those with disabilities.

References

- Bergs, M., Chataika, T., El-Lahib, Y. & Dube, K. 2020. *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism*. London: Routledge.
- Chataika, T., 2007. *Inclusion of Disabled Students in Higher Education in Zimbabwe: From Idealism to Reality: A Social Ecosystem*. Perspective. Ph.D. Thesis, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield: UK.
- Chataika, T., 2010. Inclusion of Disabled Students in Higher Education in Zimbabwe. In J. Lavia and M. Moore (eds.) *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Policy and Practice: Decolonizing Community Contexts*, (pp. 116-131). New York: Routledge.
- Chataika, T., Mulumba, M., Mji, G. & MacLachlan, M. 2011. *Did What? Research Project in Brief: The African Policy on Disability & Development (A-PODD) in Uganda*. Dublin: The Global Health Press.
- Chataika, T., 2012a. Disability, Development and Postcolonialism. In D. Goodley, D. Hughes & L. Davis (eds.), *Disability and Social Theory: New Development and Directions* (pp. 252-269), London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chataika, T., 2012b. Postcolonialism, Disability and Development. In D. Goodley & B. Hughes (Eds.), *Social Theories of Disability: New Developments and Directions* (pp. 252-269). London: Routledge.
- Chataika, T., 2013a. Gender and Disability Mainstreaming Training Manual. Disabled Women in Africa: GIZ Sector Initiative Persons with Disabilities on behalf of BMZ, Germany, pp, 1-75. Available from: http://www.diwa.ws/index.php?option=com_phocadownload
- Chataika, T., 2013b. Cultural and religious explanations of disability and promoting inclusive communities. In J. M. Claassen, Leslie. Swartz & L. Hansen (eds.), *Search for Dignity: Conversations on Human Dignity, Theology and Disability*, (pp. 117-128). Cape Town: African Sun Media.
- Chataika, T. 2015. Kanter: The development of disability rights under international law: From charity to human rights. *African Disability Rights Yearbook*. 2015(3): 329-337.
- Chataika, T. & McKenzie, J. A., 2016. Global Institutions and Their Engagement with Disability Mainstreaming in the South: Development and (dis)connections. In S. Grech & K. Soldatic (Eds.), *Disability in the Global South: The Critical Handbook* (pp. 423-436). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Chataika, T., 2017a. African Perspectives on Article 24 of the CRPD. In C. O'Mahoney & G. Quinn (eds.), *Disability Law and Policy: An Analysis of the UN Convention* (pp. 177-196). London: Clarus Press.
- Chataika, T., 2017b. Disabled Women, Urbanization and Sustainable Development in Africa. In A. Lacey (ed.), *Women, Urbanization and Sustainability: Practices of Survival, Adaptation and Resistance*. (pp. 177-196). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chataika, T., 2018a. *Addressing Albinism in Zimbabwe: A situational analysis*. World Bank: New York.
- Chataika, T., 2018b. *The Routledge Handbook of Disability in Southern Africa*. London: Routledge.
- Chataika, T., & Hlatywayo, L. 2019. *Report on the Implementation of the Continental Plan of Action on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2019)*. Addis Ababa: African Union.
- Chataika, T., 2020. *Toolkit for Action on Advancing the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities: Fighting Harmful Cultural Beliefs and Practices in Zimbabwe*. Harare: UNESCO Regional Office.
- Chataika, T, Hlatywayo, L., 2022. Examining the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe. In T Chataika & L. Hlatywayo (eds.), *Disability Rights and Inclusiveness in Africa: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Challenges and Change* (pp. 79). Boydell & Brewer.
- Chataika, T., Gwaze, I. & Maroveke, M., 2019. *Midterm Review (MTR) of the Christian Blind Mission Country Plan (2015-2019)* Harare: Christen Blinden Mission (CBM).
- Chataika, T., et al., 2016. 'What Kind of Development Are We Talking About?' A Virtual Roundtable with Tsitsi Chataika, Nilika Mehrotra, Karen Soldatic and Katerina Kolarova Edited by Katerina Kolarova, *Somatechnics*. 6(2): 142-158.
- Chataika, T. & Goodley, D., 2024. *The Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Disability Studies*. United Kingdom: Routledge Publishers.
- Dastile, P. N. & Ndlovu-Gatshehi, S. J., 2013. Power, Knowledge and Being: Decolonial Combative Discourse as a Survival Kit for Pan Africanists in the 21st Century. *Alternation*. 20(1): 105-134.
- De Sousa Santos, B., 2007. Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges. *Review*. 30(1): 45-89.
- Goody, J., 2006. *The theft of history*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University press.
- Grech, S. & Soldatic, K., 2015. Disability and Colonialism: (dis) encounters and Anxious Intersectionalities. *Social Identities*. 21(1-3): 1-5.
- Grosfoguel, R., 2007. The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political Economy Paradigms. *Cultural Studies*. 21 (2-3): 211-223.
- Grosfoguel, R., 2011. Decolonising Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking and Coloniality. *Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*. 1(1):1-5.
- Hosking, D. Critical Disability Theory. 2008. In *A paper presented at the 4th Biennial Disability Studies Conference at Lancaster University, UK*.
- Maldonado-Torres, N., 2007. On the Coloniality of Being. *Cultural Studies*. 21:2, 240-270.
- McKenzie, J. & Chataika, T., 2018. Supporting Families in Raising Disabled Children to Enhance African Child Development. In K. Runswick-Cole, T. Curran, & K. Liddiard (Eds.). *The Palgrave Handbook of Disabled Children's Childhood Studies* (pp. 315-332). London: Palgrave

-
- Ndlovu, M., 2015. *Cultural Villages in Post-apartheid South Africa: A Decolonial Perspective*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Department of Anthropology: Monash University.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2001. Imperial Hypocrisy, Settler Colonial Double Standards and Denial of Human Rights to Africans in Colonial Zimbabwe. In N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe: Volume One: Precolonial and Colonial Legacies*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2013. Why Decoloniality in the 21st Century? *The Thinker*. 48: 2013, 10-15.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2015. Decoloniality as the Future of Africa. *History Compass*. 13(10): 485-496.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2016. Decolonizing the University and the problematic Grammars of Change in South Africa. In *Keynote Address Delivered at the 5th Annual Students Conference on Decolonizing the Humanities and Social sciences in South Africa/Africa* (pp. 6-7). Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2018. *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Schalk, S., 2017. Critical Disability Studies as Methodology. *Journal of the Cultural Studies Association*. 6(1):1-4
<https://doi.org/10.25158/L6.1.13>
- Phasha, N, Mahlo, D. & Dei, G. S. 2017. *Inclusive education in African contexts: A critical reader*. Springer.
- Quijano, A., 2000. Coloniality of Power, Ethnocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla*. 3: 533-580.