

**SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS WITH LOW VISION
IN SELECTED INCLUSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF LUSAKA AND MBALA
DISTRICTS, ZAMBIA**

BY

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Education in Special Education**

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AUTHORS DECLARATION

I, **Alice Kabwe** do hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has never been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or at any other University.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Alice Kabwe** is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of a Master of Education in Special Education of the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in selected inclusive schools in Lusaka and Mbala Districts. The objectives of the study were to establish the social experiences of learners with low vision in selected rural and urban inclusive secondary schools, to assess academic experiences that have characterized the learning of learners with low vision in rural and urban secondary schools, to establish perceptions of Head Teachers, Heads of Departments, teachers, sighted and learners with low vision on the social and academic experiences of the learners with low vision in schools, to explore the interventions instituted to improve social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools.

The study was qualitative in nature and used a case study design. There were 38 participants consisting of 12 learners with low vision, 12 sighted learners, 10 teachers, 2 head teachers and 2 heads of departments. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers and heads of departments (HoDs), teachers and learners with low vision while simple random was used to select sighted learners. Data from learners was collected using Focus Group Discussions while that from head teachers, heads of departments and teachers was collected through interviews. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. This involved coding and categorizing of data to generate themes which were presented descriptively.

The findings on social experiences showed that the attitude of some teachers and some sighted learners towards learners with low vision was negative. Learners with low vision were not easily accepted in schools. During FGDs both sighted and learners with low vision indicated that learners with low vision were often discriminated, teased and bullied in the mainstream environment and found it difficult to participate in social activities. On the academic experiences of learners with low vision it was found that there was lack of specialized teachers, lack of learning and teaching materials, lack of coordination between specialized and ordinary teachers as well as no extra time given to learners with low vision which tended to compromise their learning. It was evident from the findings that most teachers and sighted learners perceived learners with low vision as pretenders while head teachers and heads of departments did not. Interventions that the schools instituted to improve the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision included: sensitization of school administrators teachers and learners, creation of social environment acceptable to all, frequent sourcing of learning materials and advocacy for inclusion of learners with low vision in schools and communities. In view of the findings, it was recommended that head teachers of schools should strengthen sensitization of learners and teachers on social life of LLV to stop stigmatization. The Ministry of General education (MoGE) should provide instructional materials and equipment to support academic life of learners with low vision in inclusive schools.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father Mr. Gabriel Kabwe who has been a source of inspiration and encouragement throughout my life. Thank you so much for your endless support.

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ACRONYMS

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
EFA	Education for All
ESO	Education Standards Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HoD	Head of Department
INSPRO	In – Service Program
LLV	Learners with Low Vision
LV	Low Vision
LVI	Learners with Visual Impairments
MoGE	Ministry of General Education
NASAAZ	National Schools Arts Association of Zambia
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
UD	United Declaration
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nation Education, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
VI	Visual Impairment
VISO	Voice Input – Speech

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. Other aspects discussed in the chapter are the limitations, delimitation of the study and definitions of terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

The 1994 Salamanca World Conference on Special Education attended by 92 governments which included Zambia and 25 international organizations dealing with persons with disabilities reaffirmed the right to education of every person as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration. It also renewed the commitment made by the 1990 World Conference on education for All (EFA) to ensure the rights to education for all children regardless of their differences. The right is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) and it is clearly articulated in the International Declaration including the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990; 2000), the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1994), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - UNCRPD (2006) recognised the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons with disabilities, including those who require more intensive support. The Salamanca conference recognized the need to work towards developing schools “for All” in all countries in attendance. Mandyata (2011) points out that the objectives of the Conference was to find ways and means of increasing access to education, promoting equalization of educational opportunities and improving the quality of education worldwide.

Denier (2010) cited in Kabeto (2015) explains that a low vision individual is one who is visually impaired after optical correction, but who may increase the visual function through the use of optical devices, non-optical devices, environmental modification and or techniques. Low vision training can be recommended to prepare learners with low vision to become active learners, and enable them to access information from a variety of sources. Low vision is poorly understood by the majority of teachers, including those who have learners who experience low vision in their classrooms. Educationally, LLV have enough residual vision to read large print or regular print with special assistance such as magnification. Their limitation may be greater in their distance vision. These learners may not be referred to as blind but this type of condition affects the performance of the LLV.

Akakandelwa and Musanje (2011) reveal that the 2002/2003 Living Condition Survey indicates that 2.4 percent of the Zambian population is persons living with disabilities. Of this group, 0.9 percent is listed as being either blind or partially sighted (Central statistical office, 2004). Ministry of Health National Eye Strategic Plan of (2007-2011) estimated that Zambia has 120,000 blind people. Childhood blindness was estimated at 5.5 percent of this total affecting around 6,689 children under 15 years.

Globally the major causes of visual impairments are: uncorrected refractive errors-The most common vision problem and the most treatable. A refractive error occurs when a shape of the eye prevents light from focusing on the retina resulting in blurred vision. Refractive errors include: myopia (near-sightedness), hyperopia (far-sightedness) and astigmatism which represents 43%, unoperated cataract- A cloudy area that develops in the lens of the eye that affects vision, and occurs as natural part of aging. They are also the main cause of readily curable blindness (33%) and glaucoma- A progressive eye disease that damages the optic nerve. Intraocular pressure slowly increases because of insufficient drainage of the aqueous

fluid from the eye, with an associated gradual loss of peripheral vision (12. 3%) (WHO, 2014).

In Zambia, some LLV are educated in inclusive schools with most teachers not trained on how to help or identify them. This group of learners has continued to perform poorly academically. Despite the policy directives put in place such as Educating Our Future 1996, Education Act of 2011, Disability Act of 2012 and National Policy on Disability 2015 which supports equalization of provision of education for learners with disabilities, LLV in regular classroom continue to be disadvantaged socially, emotionally and even academically (Corn and Koenig, 1996). For LLV to be able to socialize well they should adjust well psychologically to accept their condition which will eventually enhance their social and academic experiences in schools (Vayrynen, 2008).

Halten (2004) observes that blind or visually impaired learners in inclusive education settings often do not become socially integrated. A reason for this is that visual information plays a role in the refinement and acquisition of social skills that are necessary for acceptance by peers. LLV have challenges in initiating and maintaining interaction with others. Learners with visual loss are also faced with a problem of reading suitable text books and writing in Braille which is their media of reading and writing (Barraga, 1993). In this vain there is need to pay attention to the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive secondary schools in Zambia so as to help them succeed in their social and academic work.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive secondary schools play a pivotal role in as far as equalization of educational opportunities is concerned. This is based on the premise that all learners regardless of their disabilities have equal chances to access quality education

(MOGE, 1996). Previous studies done by Kalabula (1991), Mandyata (2002; 2011) and Akakandelwa & Musanje (2011) have mainly focused on perceptions, views of teachers and provision of learning materials to learners with different disabilities and visually impaired in inclusive schools. Little is however known from the Zambian context on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive urban and rural secondary schools. The study sought to fill this knowledge gap through an investigation on the social and academic experiences of LLV in selected inclusive urban and rural secondary schools of Lusaka and Mbala Districts.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in selected inclusive secondary schools of Lusaka and Mbala Districts.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Establish social experiences of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools.
2. Assess academic experiences that have characterized the learning of learners with low vision in secondary schools
3. Establish perceptions of head teachers, heads of department, teachers, sighted and learners with low vision on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in schools.
4. Explore the interventions instituted to improve social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools in the two districts.

1.6 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the social experiences of learners with low vision in rural and inclusive secondary schools?
2. What academic experiences have characterized learning of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools?
3. How do Head teachers, HoDs, teachers, sighted and the learners with low vision perceive the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in schools?
4. What interventions have schools instituted to improve social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools?

1.7 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the study would generate information on the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools. The findings of the study might be useful to educational administrators, curriculum specialists, teachers and parents. This study might also influence the daily planning and teaching activities to ensure that learners with low vision are properly, socially and academically provided for in inclusive secondary schools. The Ministry of General Education may also use this information to encourage teachers to take keen interest in the LLV as researchers have tended to concentrate on the non-sighted learners.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study was restricted to one inclusive school in Lusaka District and the other school in Mbala District. These sites were chosen because of the larger numbers of learners with low vision found in the selected schools.

1.9 Limitation of the study

Data collection was done during the third term when most teachers were engaged in the invigilation of Grade 9 and 12 examinations. My stay in Mbala was prolonged as I had to make fresh appointments with teachers for FGDs and interviews with key informants. The other constraint was the inadequate literature on LLV from the Zambian context. Despite this limitation, it is hoped that this study serves as a preliminary point and broadly establish the direction of future research into the experiences of education for the LLV which is the Human Right of inclusive education in Zambia.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Cognitive Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1983). Social learning is also referred to observational/mode or imitating learning. The theory is called social learning primary because it is based on what a child learns in his environment as he interacts and observes others (Mwamwenda, 1996).

Whether the behaviour of a model will be imitated depends on factors such as reinforcement, memory and attention. The most important of these is reinforcement, which serves as the motivation for people to imitate others' behaviour. If the model is reinforced, the behaviour will be imitated, whereas if the model is punished the behaviour will be avoided. Should the behaviour not be impressed by the model's behaviour, lack the skills to perform the behaviour, or simply not be interested, no learning will occur (Mwamwenda, 1996).

Social learning guides a person's behaviour so that it is in accordance with societal norm, values and beliefs thus enabling the person to adjust successfully to society. Such learning assists him in becoming socialised, so that what he does is congruent with the norms and the

expectation of the society. Bandura maintains that Cognitive Social Learning Theory has implications for the social experiences of learners in that it explains interaction between the environment and one's behaviour. For instance, as a teacher interacts with his learners, a considerable amount of teaching other than the imparting of information occurs. From their teachers pupils can learn so many things such as self-discipline, disorganisation and cleanliness. While it is good for a teacher to tell his pupils to be kind, generous, helpful, studious and hard working.

Social Learning Theory can also be applied in the school setting. The behaviour of other students and the classroom teachers often serves as models for young students (Rothstein, 1990). Bandura (1983) holds that social learning approach is the way of understanding human behaviour in which people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. Therefore, the theory fits well with this study as it focuses on the social and academic experiences of learners as they learn from each other through observation, interaction and imitation.

The social learning theory posits that it is through interactions with others that human beings learn and make sense of the world. Social learning describes the process of observational learning. People learn behaviours through two kinds of observational learning, i.e, vicarious conditioning and modelling. In vicarious conditioning, a student behaviour will increase or decrease in relation to the rewards or punishment that someone else received for similar behaviours (Rothstein, 1990). The study revealed that LLV were being discriminated, bullied and teased by the sighted learners and this made them feel belittled and avoided sighted learners. The LLV who were never bullied or teased by the sighted learners avoided interactions with sighted learners on account of what they heard happened to their friends.

The sighted learners made fun of the LLV, they laughed at them because of their physical appearance.

The LLV learners reported that they did not receive help from some teachers because some of their teachers found it irritating when a LLV kept on asking for clarifications of words on the board. The negative reaction of teachers to the LLV was a signal to others who wanted to seek clarification to keep quiet lest they are also reprimanded by teachers for asking too many questions.

The study found that due to lack of teaching and learning materials, most LLV depended on the teachers or sighted learners to dictate the notes to them. However, this was not always possible as some teachers or sighted learners responded negatively to LLV. This negative reaction discouraged LLV to continue asking questions. It was also reported that during the end of term test, some LLV complained that the test was written in small print which was difficult to read by LLV, consequently, some LLV performed badly. The LLV could not ask for fear of being reprimanded by teachers. Through, vicarious conditioning, LLV learn behaviour that might invite redicule, teasing or bulling from their friends or teachers. This theory explains why LLV may appear isolated, withdraw or passive in classes or school.

1.11 Definitions of terms

Inclusive schools: These are schools whereby LLV learn together with the sighted. They follow the regular curriculum with the sighted.

Inclusive Education: refers to the process by which the school attempts to respond to learners as individuals by considering and restricting its curricular organization and allocating resources to enhance availability of opportunities.

Low vision: Denier (2010) explains that a low vision individual is one who is visually impaired after optical correction, but who may increase the visual function through the use of optical devices, environmental modification and or techniques.

Visual Impairment: “Visual impairment” is a general term that describes a wide range of visual function, from low vision through total blindness (WHO, 2014).

Social experiences: These refer to experience LLV undergo in their day to day interactions with the sighted adults or peers.

Academic Experiences: refers to any experiences in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in tradition academic settings (schools, classrooms) or non-tradition settings(outside-of -school locations, outdoors environments),or whether it includes traditional education.

Academic performance: This refers to how well or poor a LLV scores in subject taught in class influenced by social interaction.

1.12 Organisation of the study

Chapter One presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study, theoretical framework and definitions of terms used in the study.

Chapter Two explores the literature that relates to the nature of this research. This chapter provides a review of relevant literature to the problem under study that is social and academic experiences of LLV.

Chapter Three provides an in-depth look into the research methodology used in the study. This chapter includes: research design; target population; sample size; sampling procedure;

research instruments; validity and reliability; pilot study; data collection; data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents the research findings using research objectives as thematic guides. The results in this chapter are sequentially arranged in one form which is qualitative in nature.

Chapter Five covers the discussion of the findings. The discussion is based on the research objectives to show the research outputs in relation to the problem being investigated.

Chapter Six presents a summary of the findings and conclusions drawn from the results. It also represents the recommendations made based on the findings of the study and proposed future research.

1.13 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter presented an introduction to the study (social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools) by outlining the major features. These are: the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, limitation and delimitation of the study, theoretical framework and definitions of terms.

The chapter which follows focuses on literature review. It provides a general view of the relevant literature to the problem under discussion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The chapter reviews the relevant literature on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools. The chapter further discusses literature relevant to the study objectives of the study.

2.2 Social experiences of learners with low vision in rural and urban secondary schools

To promote social interaction and inclusion, children with VI need to develop their awareness of themselves and a range of social skills through a variant of experiences. Opportunities to interact with others need to be embedded in everyday whole life class activities and also need to be taken as and when they emerge (Joao, 2008) Planning however is important so that environments and strategies that are conducive to positive learning experiences are in place and incidental learning is more likely to occur. There is need to have opportunities to practice skills that are difficult to access, particularly when children cannot learn as easily from imitation of others (Joao, 2008). Opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, school clubs and consultation about issues that are relevant to the individual also need consideration (Webster and Roe, 1998).

Visual impairments change the way children obtain information about the world around them and limit opportunities to learn through observation of visual elements in the school curriculum and elsewhere. This means that, in addition to regular classroom studies, children who are blind or visually impaired need to learn specialized skills (frequently referred to as the expanded core-curricular) from teachers and others who are properly trained to teach such skills, such as certified teachers of VI children and orientation and mobility specialists. The specialized skills learners who are VI should learn include: social interaction, understanding

body language and other visual concepts, and independent living skills (America foundation for the blind, 2004).

Educators in the field have acknowledged that students with visual impairments (those who are blind or have low vision) who are in general education as well as in special education settings can lack social competence (Halten, Sacks and Silberman, 2000). For a person who is VI, social competence is a key component of a positive self-concept, more assertive behaviour, and the ability to accept one's ability as a part of one self (Wagner, 2004). Information on the conventions and rules that are generally observed by sighted people are strategies that reinforce proper behaviour and correct inappropriate behaviour need to be taught as the basis for adapting and adjusting to living with a visual impairment (Sacks and corn, 1996)

Mbiti (2012) investigated the impact of social experiences on academic performance of learners with low vision in integrated schools in Nairobi country. This study used descriptive survey research design. Target population was learners with low vision of classes 5, 6, and 7, teachers in these classes and head teachers. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study showed that the level of peer and teacher interaction had the highest influenced academic performance of pupils with low vision and that support given by the school for example teaching resources and friendly environment influenced performance the least. Other findings included that, the curriculum had not been adapted to suit learners with low vision and that most of the teachers had no training in special education.

However, Mbiti (2012)'s works focused on the social experiences and academic performance of pupils with low vision in integrated primary schools in Kenya. This study focuses on social

and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools in Zambia.

Social, economic and cultural challenges faced by learners with visual impairments in inclusive schools were investigated by Agesa, (2014). The study used a descriptive survey design and a mixed methods approach. This study investigates the challenges faced by learners with visual impairments in inclusive setting, in Trans-Nzoia County Kenya on 110 learners, 20 classroom teachers and 6 itinerant teachers. Data was collected through use of questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis. The study found out that most learners with visual impairments performed poorly in academics due to lack of implementation of the visually impaired schools. The nature of varied differences in needs of learners with visual impairments calls for more teachers in special needs education. Parents to LVI and community should also be sensitized on their education.

Jill and Southcott (2015) focused on the school experience of a senior school student with visual impairment. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was employed in this single participant research into the insider perspectives of a student with VI about his schooling. Semi-structured interviews were used as a research instrument. The study revealed that orientation and mobility, equality and equity in the classroom were major factors imparting on the students' academic achievement. Social issues were also found to have a profound effect.

Kordestani, Daneshfar and Roustaei (2014) compared the quality of life and social skills between students who were visually impaired (blind and partially blind) and sighted students. The population consisted of all students with visual problems (blind and partially blind) and sighted students in secondary schools in Tehran in the academic year 2013-2014. Using a

multi-stage random sampling method, 40 students were selected from each group. The SF-36s quality of life and social skills questionnaires were used as research tools. The data was analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and pearson correlation coefficient. The results showed that sighted people had a better quality of life than those who were blind. There were no significant difference between the partially blind people's quality of life, blind and the sighted people's life. The sighted people had better social behaviour than partially blind and blind people. In terms of other factors, there was no significant difference between the positive social behaviour of partially blind and blind people. However, sighted people had weaker negative social behaviour than partially blind and blind people. The negative social behaviour of partially blind people was weaker than blind people.

2.3 Academic experiences that have characterized learning of learners with low vision in rural and urban secondary schools

Akakandelwa & Munsanje, (2011) investigated the provision of learning and teaching materials for pupils with visual impairments in basic and high schools in Zambia. A mixed methods approach was used to collect data using questionnaires, interviews and observations. A total of 30 schools 23 basic schools and, 7 high schools were surveyed. A total of 473 learners, 14 teachers, 5 school administrators and 4 resource room managers were sampled. The findings suggest that the schools in this study did not have adequate and sustainable learning materials for low vision learners. Most schools reported not having resource rooms, low or non-existence budgetary allocations, no special libraries and lack of learning and teaching materials.

Kabeto (2015) explored the academic experiences of learners with low vision in integrated schools. The participants in this research work were seven LLV, one principal and three teachers in one of the integrated schools. In this study the researcher used qualitative

methodology with purposive sampling technique to select respondents and used descriptive design. It was found that in most cases the attitude of teachers and sighted learners towards learners with low vision was negative, social isolation and withdraw of learners with low vision from sighted groups were the main problems. During this research process respondents reported that there was lack of learning resources and modification of teaching materials to suit the needs of learners with low vision.

However, Kabeto (2015) works focused on the academic experiences of LLV in integrated schools and only seven LLV, one principal and three teachers. This study did not focus on the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive secondary schools.

Munsanje, Kalabula & Nzala (2009) conducted a study to provide a situational analysis of inclusive education for children with visual impairments in some selected schools in ten districts in Zambia. The aim of the study was to establish the extent to which the Inclusive Education Programme (INSPRO) system piloted by ESSP III experts in the Ministry of Education is being sensitive, insensitive or responsive to the various needs brought about by visual impairment. The study was done on 67 schools in 10 districts of Zambia. 172 visually impaired children, 172 parents and guardians, 100 and 185 specialists and non-specialists teachers respectively, 300 sighted pupils were randomly selected to participate in answering the questionnaires used in the study. Partially sighted pupils included in ordinary schools have no support regarding learning resources; The study found that schools were more willing to enrol children with visual impairments; The parents and guardians of children with visual impairments were happy to have their children included in ordinary schools. The DEBS and ESOs lack coordination in matters of monitoring and training teachers for VI in inclusive schools.

Challenges and strategies of working with LLV were investigated by Yalo et al, (2010). The purpose of this study was to document challenges that LLV have and their impact on teacher performance when teaching LLV in special primary schools for the visually impaired in Kenya. The study was carried out in six schools for the visually impaired on 78 teachers. Survey design was used to gather data. The study established challenges faced by teachers as lack of appropriate devices for learners, lack of adequate training of teachers and lack of regular teacher auditing. Strategies suggested to address the challenges were supply of low vision devices, low vision teams based at each school be reconstituted to provide coordinated learning support and regular case conferencing be mounted to provide teacher support.

The study conducted by Dingh and Kumar (2012) was an attempt to analyse the learning difficulties of secondary schools students with low vision in an inclusive Indian classroom. In this study, eight students with low vision from four different inclusive secondary schools of Jharkhand (India) were selected by convenient sampling method. An interview guide was used to collect data. A set of questions were prepared in advance by the researcher for conducting the interviews. The data collected was analysed qualitatively. The study reveals that secondary school student with low vision in an inclusive India classroom face difficulties in reading, writing and taking notes. The study by Dingh and Kumar (2012) is closer to the current study because it focused on the low vision learners in an inclusive classroom. However the study was an attempt to analyse learning difficulties of secondary school students with low vision in inclusive classroom.

The advice from qualified teachers of children with VI is crucial to plan effective provision for children with VI ensuring they have access to the curriculum and can take part in group activities. Collaboration working practices between the settings professionals and specialist teachers to plan and review are needed. The focus of collaboration planning should not only

be on how to ensure the child has access to the curriculum but also on how to support the child in the most inclusive way. Cooperation learning strategies can be used to promote self-esteem, social skills and positive interaction (D'Allura, 2002).

2.4 Perceptions of head teachers, heads of departments, teachers, sighted and the low vision learners on the social and academic experiences of learners with Low vision in schools

Mandyata (2002; 2011) investigated the views of teachers in inclusive practices in basic schools in kasama District, Zambia. 124 respondents participated in the study. Respondents consisted of 60 ordinary teachers, 32 Special education teachers, 9 Head teachers, 9 Deputy Head teachers and 14 Senior teachers from basic schools in the districts. Questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain information from the respondents. Frequencies, percentages and chi-square test were used to analyse the quantitative data obtained. Responses from interviews were coded and grouped to establish the emerging themes in the study.

The study found that teachers were not in favour of including pupils with disabilities in ordinary schools, type of training was not a potent factor in teachers acceptance of pupils with disabilities in ordinary schools, location of schools, length of service of a teacher, education resources and information on inclusive practices were significant in teachers acceptance of pupils with disabilities. Teachers preferred pupils with learning disabilities, physical impairments and partial sighted for inclusion in ordinary schools.

However Mandyata (2002; 2011) focused on the views of teachers on inclusive practices in basic schools. He was concerned with the views of Ordinary teachers, Special teachers Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers and senior teachers on the issue of inclusion of different

disabilities in ordinary schools. He did not look at social and academic experiences of learners with low vision or partially sighted in inclusive schools.

Kalabula (1991) investigated the perceptions of secondary school teachers in Zambia regarding integration of visually impaired pupils in ordinary schools. It was observed that teachers had many obstacles to overcome in an integrated classroom. Teachers confirmed that they lacked training and guidance in teaching visually impaired children in their classes. Ordinary Secondary school teachers regarded provision of information as important for their effective delivery of education to LVI in integrated classes. They generally felt that visually impaired pupils should be taught separately, unless teachers in ordinary schools are adequately prepared for integration.

Kalabula (1991)'s works focused on perceptions of teachers on visually impaired pupils not specifically on the learners with the low vision. Teachers may have different perceptions on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools.

Muwana (2012) conducted a study to survey University of Zambia students, examining their attitudes toward inclusion and their perceptions about supports and resource needs for successful implementation of inclusion. Questionnaires were distributed to 497 students at the University of Zambia. Four hundred eighty-four questionnaires were included in the analysis, resulting in a response rate of 97%. Results of the study indicated that, overall, University of Zambia students hold positive attitudes toward inclusion. College major, year in college, number of years teaching, age, and gender were related to students' attitudes toward inclusion. However, students believed that the implementation of inclusion was hindered by the lack of adequate resources and supports from the government.

Dakwa (2011) conducted a study in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe to investigate the teacher's perception towards the inclusion of children with visual impairment in the ordinary school. A sample of 15 teachers was chosen, representing 3 schools - one secondary and two primary, where children with visual impairment were being included in ordinary classes. A questionnaire was administered on the teachers. The study revealed that teachers received assistance from the specialist teachers in the resource rooms. They agreed that inclusion of children with visual impairment was successful because children interacted with other students in several activities. Teachers need to be in-serviced in the use of Braille and large print material so that children with visual impairment can be effectively included in the ordinary school.

Dakwa (2016) examined the extent to which learners with visual impairments were included in regular class situations in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. The sample consisted 15 teachers who included specialist resource room teachers and 12 mainstream teachers involved in the inclusion of these children. Purposive sampling was employed on the teacher sample. In addition, 20 children with visual impairments were randomly selected from 3 regular schools where inclusion was practiced in the classes at primary and high school levels. An interview schedule was administered on both the teacher and the pupil samples to solicit their views and observations regarding the effectiveness of inclusion. The study revealed that, despite problems related to inadequate materials, the children benefited from inclusion. Teachers in the regular classes needed more specialists training as well as in – service courses. It was clear also that the schools, in particular resource unit, needed Braille kits and brailed books for blind children as well as large print material for children with low vision. The reading community shall benefit as they will acquaint themselves with the needs of the children with visual impairment.

Korir (2015) sought to establish the perception of students and teachers on the integration programme of students with visual impairment in secondary schools. The study was carried out in Ainamoi sub county, Kericho County, Kenya. A case study design method was used. The data collecting techniques included questionnaires, focus group discussion and document analysis. A total of 200 respondents participated in the study and data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings revealed that majority of the students had a positive perception of the policy of integration. This is attributed to the fact that some visually impaired students actually excel in class far much better than their sighted peers. However, those who negated this view cited a number of challenges that are experienced by the visually impaired students. Teachers` perceptions differed from the perceptions of the students because the teachers were not sensitized and lacked the required skills to handle visually impaired learners.

2.5 The interventions instituted to improve social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools

Students with low vision use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, they may require adaptation to lighting, print size or provision of written materials in Braille (Pierangelo, 2006). Accessible and supportive classroom can be a rich teaching resource for helping students learn more diversity and positively relate to one another. They can foster student collaboration, problem solving and learning and give all students a sense they belong at school and can participate. (American foundation for the blind, 2004).

Owusu-Amoako (2015) assesses the school environment and facilities support pupils with visual impairment at Bechem St. Joseph's Practice Inclusive Basic School in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The descriptive study involved an administration of structured questionnaires to 14 teachers of the Bechem St. Joseph's Practice Basic Inclusive School. 14

teachers were randomly sampled to participate in the study. The results of the study revealed that school buildings and furniture arrangement were friendly to pupils with visual impairment. The teachers introduced adaptations in the curriculum while resource teachers provided additional instructional support in the form of braille writing, transcription of class work and enlargement of prints which helped to meet the needs of the pupils with visual impairment. The research also revealed that the school has a resource room for the resource personnel and adequate supply of writing materials for pupils with visual impairment.

Assistive technology can give learners who are blind or have low vision support in all academic areas as well as in expanded core – curriculum. Bouck (2011) compared the effects of a newly developed computer-based voice input, speech output (VISO) calculator with students' regular method of calculation. Their participants were three students with VI, including one male and two females with an age range of 18-19. The participants were asked to complete computational math problems with the VISO calculator and with their regular method of calculation where the participants used a talking calculator, or relying on another individual to input numbers into a calculator. The time they took to complete assessments and the average number of attempts per problem was recorded. Results suggest that when using the VISO calculator, students required more time to complete the assessments than with their typical method of calculation. Using the VISO calculator also required a higher number of attempts to enter problems than their typical method of calculation. With more experience of using the VISO calculator, the time of completion and attempts per problem both decreased though it still took more time and attempts than when using their typical calculation method.

Higgins, Russell, and Hoffman (2005) examined whether the presentation form of computer administration affected student test scores. They found that there were no significant differences in reading comprehension scores across testing modes. There were no significant

differences in scores based on computer fluidity and computer literacy. However, the majority of students who took the reading test on a computer indicated that they would prefer to take the test on computer.

One piece of research suggests that there are many similarities between Braille reading and print reading. Wetzel and Knowlton (2000) studied the reading of 47 subjects (24 were print readers, 23 were Braille readers) on a reading assessment. The print readers had normal vision, and the Braille readers were either totally blind or had limited useful vision and read Braille. Individuals received either a regular print or Braille version of the test, depending on their needs. Average print-reading rate ranged from 30% to 60% faster than the average Braille reading rate. Less than one third of the Braille readers read slower than the print readers. Based on their performances in the different modes (e.g., oral, silent, studying), it appeared that Braille and print readers employ similar strategies for different tasks.

Katharina (2014) highlights that early detection of disability followed by early education with support from the community, helps children with disabilities to participate in mainstream schools. Sensitization of the teachers and the public can overcome discrimination and exclusion. Teachers have to be trained to adapt teaching methods for the benefit of those with special needs. The author concludes that communities ought to initiate strategies in their local schools as inclusive education is good for all children.

2.6 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter has reviewed related literature to the topic under study. From the literature reviewed there appear to be a gap on the views of stakeholders on social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools in Zambia. This study therefore focuses on social

and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools of Lusaka and Mbala Districts

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology which was used to carry out the study. It includes research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

Orodho (2003) defines a research design as a scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. The study was qualitative in nature and used a case study design. Qualitative research is naturalistic; it attempts to study everyday life of different groups of people and communities in their natural setting; it is particularly useful to study educational setting and processes (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative methods refer to several distinct research activities; observations, intensive interviewing and Focus Group Discussions (Chambliss and Schutt, 2013). This study used a case study design to depict the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools of Lusaka and Mbala Districts. A Case study offers an opportunity to consider a situation, individual, event, group, organization or whatever is appropriate as the objective of study. One of the advantages of using a case study methodology is that it provides in-depth study of phenomenon in its real life context using multiple sources of evidence (Robson, 1993). The case study design was used because the research would describe in detail various aspects of the study such as the setting, the social and academic experiences of the learners with low vision in an inclusive school.

3.3 Target Population

Creswell (2005) state that a population consists of a group of elements, which could be individuals, objects or even elements that pertain to what the researchers embarks to generate the results for the research. Best (2009) defines population as an element which is a subject in which measurement is being taken. It is the unit of study in which the researcher is interested in gathering his or her findings of study. In this study, the target population involved all learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools, sighted learners, school administrators such as the head teachers, heads of departments and teachers in Lusaka and Mbala Districts.

3.4 Sample size

A sample is a small proportion of the selected population for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample which is the diverse, representative, accessible and knowledgeable in the study area, findings can be generalized (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The nature and the sample, and who is included in depend on what the research is trying to deduce (Kothari, 2004). The two inclusive schools were chosen on the basis of having a larger number of learners with low vision. In this study the sample consisted of thirty eight (38) participants and drawn as follows; Twelve (12) learners with low vision, Twelve (12) sighted learners, Ten (10) teachers, Two (2) head teachers and Two (2) heads of departments.

Table 3.1: Location of the participants

	LOCATION OF PARTICIPANTS		
	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL
LV Learners	6	6	12
Sighted Learners	6	6	12
Teachers	5	5	10
Head Teachers	1	1	2
Heads of Departments	1	1	2
Total	19	19	38

Table 3.1 shows the total number of 38 participants who took part in the study. From the table above, it is clear that, an equal number of participants was selected for both the sighted and learners with low vision, teachers, head teachers and heads of department from the two study districts. This made it easy for the researcher to collect data from the participants on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in the two environments.

Table 3.2: Gender of participants

Gender	LV Learners	Sighted Learners	Teachers	Head Teachers	HoDs	Total
Male	5	4	4	2	1	16
Female	7	8	6	-	1	22
Total	12	12	10	2	2	38

Table 3.2 shows participants according to gender in which 5 were LLV male and 7 were female. For the sighted, 4 were male and 8 were female. This implies that the majority of

learners by gender in the study were female while the minority were male learner participants. As for the teachers, 4 were males and 6 were females. This means that the majority among the teachers as participants was females and the minority were males. For the head teachers, 2 were male and none for the female. Whereas for the heads of department, 1 was male and 1 was female. This implies that the majority of the school administrators (Head teachers and HoDs) of the participants were males while the minority were female participants in the two study districts.

Table 3.3: Age range of participants in the two study districts (n=38)

Age Range	LV Learners	Sighted Learners	Teachers	Head Teachers	HoDs	Total
15 years and below	1	4	-	-	-	5
16-20 yrs	3	8	-	-	-	11
21-25 yrs	8	-	-	-	-	8
26-30 yrs	-	-	4	-	-	4
31 and above	-	-	6	2	2	10
Total	12	12	10	4	2	38

According to table 3.3, the majority of learners in this study 11 were aged between 16 and 20 years while the minorities of learners were aged between 21 and 25years. Whereas, the majority of teachers participants 6 were aged 31 and above with the lowest number 4 of teacher participants aged between 26 and 30 years. All school administrators (head teachers and HoDs) 4 were above the age of 31 years. Therefore the majority of the participants were those within the range of 16 - 20years while the minority of participants were those in the

range of 26 - 30years. Hence participants were old enough and sufficiently experienced to contribute to the study in the two study districts.

Table 3.4: Experience of Teachers, Head Teachers and HoDs

Years of Experience	Teachers	Head Teachers	HoDs	Total
0-5	-	-	-	-
6-10	-	-	-	-
11-15	6	-	-	6
16-20	2	-	-	2
21 -25	1	-	-	1
26-30	1	2	1	4
31 and above	-	1	-	1
Total	10	3	1	14

Table 3.4 shows the total numbers of 14 school administrators (head teachers and HODs) and teachers who participated in the study. For the teachers none had experiences between 0-5 and 6-10years whereas 6 had experiences between 11-15 years. 2 teachers had their experiences ranging from 16-20years. 1 teacher had the experiences between 21-25. In this case it shows that majority of the teachers 6 had their experiences between the range of 11-15years and the minority 2 had experiences between 21-30years. Hence such teachers could be reliable in providing authentic information on the topic for this research.

The majority of the administrators (head teachers and HoDs) 3 had their experiences ranging from 26-30years and the minority 1 had above 31years experience. This implies that the

school administrators (Head teachers and HoDs) had sufficient experience to contribute their views on the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools.

Table 3.5: Qualifications of Teachers and School administrators

Qualifications	Teachers	Head Teachers	HoDs	Totals
Primary teachers certificate	2	-	-	2
Diploma	2	-	-	2
University Degree	6	3	-	9
Masters Degree	-	-	1	1
Total	10	3	1	14

Table 3.5 above shows qualifications of teachers and school administrators (head teachers and HoDs) both from urban and rural study districts. Interestingly, majority of the teachers and school administrators (head teachers and HoDs) participants were those with University Degree while the least number of participants were those with a second Degree (Masters). The teachers and school administrators (head teachers and HoDs) participants appeared to have had sufficient experience on social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in an inclusive secondary setting to contribute to the study.

Table 3.6: Teachers Trained or not Trained in Special Education

Teachers were asked if they were trained in Special Education. The teachers' responses were as follows;

Teachers Trained or not Trained in Special Education	Urban	Rural	Total
Male	1	1	2
Female	2	-	2
None	2	4	6
Total	5	5	10

Table 3.6 above shows teachers trained or not trained in Special Education both from urban and rural study districts. The majority of the teachers were not trained in Special Education while the least number of the teachers were trained in Special Education. The teachers' participants appeared not to have sufficient knowledge on the social and academic experiences of LLV in an inclusive secondary school.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling procedure was used to select head teachers, HoDs, teachers and learners with low vision while simple random sampling was used to select sighted learners. Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013) refers to sampling technique as a part of the research plan that indicates how cases are to be selected for the study. Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research especially obtaining data from the respondents who have the knowledge and the information on the subject (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016; Kothari, 2004). Creswell (2014)

explains that, “purposeful sampling is when a researcher selects participants or sites or documents that will help in understanding the problem and the research questions”. Researcher would purposively choose respondents who in their opinion would be thought to be relevant to the research topic (Cohen and Manwri, 2000). The inclusion criteria for selection of schools was inclusive schools located only in Lusaka and Mbala Districts while the selection of learners in inclusion schools in the two districts with LV as well as sighted learners regardless of age, sex and social economic status. The research focused on the LLV in Grade 8 and 10 only because at the time of data collection, the grade 9 and 12 learners were preparing for their final examinations.

3.6 Data collection Instruments

Two instruments were employed in data collection for the study. These included: The Focus Group Discussions and interviews guides. FGDs and interviews were physically conducted by the researcher.

3.6.1 Focus Group Discussion Guide

Focus group discussions (FGDs) Guide were used with some learners in schools from both districts. Focus Group Discussion focuses on a particular topic or issues by encouraging discussions among participants and the sharing of perceptions in an open and tolerant environment (Saunders et al, 2016). A focused group normally includes 6 - 12 members who are homogenous in terms of their social demographic features with a session lasting one to one and half hours with two hours being the maximum time (Creswell, 2012). A group facilitator keeps the discussion on truck by asking a series of open ended questions meant to stimulate discussion and also creates a thoughtful, permissive atmosphere, provides ground rules and sets a tone of discussion (Schostok, 2010). This technique was used on both the

LLV and sighted learners to obtain the social and academic experiences of LLV in an inclusive school.

This approach was vital because it allowed the collection of data which reflected the attitudes, values and opinions of the participants and created an open and free atmosphere to allow participants to give their opinions and views on the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools in urban and rural settings.

3.6.2 Interviews Guide

An interview can be described in terms of individuals directing their intention towards each other with the purpose of opening up the possibility of gaining an insight into the experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values and knowledge of the respondents (Schostok, 2010). In this case an interview guide developed for this study was used to collect data from head teachers, HoDs and teachers. An interview conducted required head teachers, HoDs and teachers to respond to issues concerning the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools, the views of participants on the social and academic experiences of LLV and the interventions instituted to improve social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive secondary schools in the two districts. An interview guide contained 23 questions.

3.7 Reliability and Trustworthiness

Reliability and trustworthiness relates to the researcher not misrepresenting the views of participants. Reliability and trustworthiness is demonstrated when participants recognize the report findings as their own experiences (Maxwell, 2005). To ensure reliability and trustworthiness, the researcher employed the following measures: The Focus Group Discussions were tape-recorded and transcriptions were made of each FGDs for referral adequacy. The researcher went back to some of the participants, to ascertain whether the

transcribed data was a truthful version of their experiences. Some head teachers, head of departments were also revisited to prove if the data given to the researcher was the same.

3.8 Validity of Data

Validity is the extent to which measurement measures what it is supposed to measure (Carmines and Zeller, 1979 and Gay, 1996). Participant validation was done by relating the findings with evidence from the available literature. To ensure that the findings were valid, a pilot study was undertaken and member-checking was considered. Member checking is a quality control process by which a researcher seeks to improve the accuracy, credibility and validity of what has been recorded during a research interviews (Byrne, 2001). Participant validation was also used. For instance, data collected from interviews was cross-checked with data collected from focus group discussions.

3.9 Pilot study

Before conducting the main study, the researcher conducted a pilot study. A pilot testing of the structured interview and the focus group discussion was done. The data collection instruments such as the interviews and FGDs had some of the questions rephrased and others replaced after the pilot study. Questions which were not relevant to the study were also dropped. Other suitable questions were formulated.

The pilot study was conducted on grade 8 and 10 teachers ($n= 20$) at two schools in Lusaka district with similar characteristics to the main study. However, only 11 teachers were interviewed. Two head teachers were involved in an interview. The importance of the pilot study did not just aim at conferring the dependability of the instruments but also rested on the need to assess the cost, feasibility, and the methodology and data analysis for the main study (Nunam, 1992; and Polit and Beck, 2004).

3.10 Data collection procedure

In the main study, administering of face to face interviews with the head teachers, HoDs and teachers was done and on average took 30 – 40 minutes. This was to avoid having some questions unanswered and misinterpretation of some questions.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data from interviews with school head teachers, HoDs, teachers and the data from Focus Group Discussions of LLV and sighted learners were analysed using thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail.

However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). Holloway & Todres (2003) argue that qualitative approaches are incredibly diverse, complex and nuanced and therefore, thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis.

Firstly, data was systematically arranged to answer research questions. This involved going back to the Focus Group Discussions and interview guide and differentiated topics or questions that were being answered and those that, were simply included in a Focus Group Discussions and interview guide that were emerging from the data.

Secondly at this stage, the researcher organized ideas and concepts and this involved at the various responses for one particular question and identifying specific word or ideas that kept coming up from participants' responses. In this case a list of different responses and ideas were arrived at. Ideas, concepts and phrases were found then the researcher organized these themes into codes or categories.

Thirdly, this was the time to build up over-arching themes in the data. Each of the response categories had more than one associated theme that gave a deeper meaning of data. Further different categories collapsed under one main over-arching theme. This allowed the researcher to test emerging findings and as themes and patterns from the data.

The last stage demanded that a researcher makes a summary of the findings basing on the themes. The findings were compared with literature and also these were tied to the themes to get a better ideal of the results found. In conclusion, qualitative data was analyzed thematically. This involved coding and categorizing of data to generate themes which were presented descriptively.

The codes were given to the participants for confidentiality purposes. The schools were presented as urban school was (school A) and rural school was (school B). FGD1 for LLV was indicated as (L1, L2, L3 L4, L5, and L6). FGD2 for the sighted learners was indicated as (L6, L7, L8, L9, L10, L11 and L12). Teachers were indicated as (T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5) from an urban school and (T6, T7, T8, T9 and T10) from a rural school. For the Head Teachers was show as Head teacher (HT1) from an urban school and Head Teacher (HT2) from a rural school while the HoD from an urban school was given (HoD 1) and rural school (HoD2).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical Approval was obtained from the University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee to conduct the study. Permission was obtained from PEO and DEBS to work with the schools in Lusaka and Mbala Districts. The researcher notified the respondents that participation was voluntary. A consent form was given to the head teachers, HoDs, teachers and parents to the learners by the researcher if they wanted to participate in the study. The respondent's identity

was protected while the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents. This was to ensure that respondents were given enough information about the study. Confidentiality was assured by not recording the names of the participants. The researcher obtained consent for recording the discussions with the participants using a tape recorder.

3.14 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter focused on the methodology that was used to generate data from the respondent. It discussed methodological aspects that were key factor to the collection and processing data of the study. The aspects concerning reliability, validity and research ethics for this study were also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

In this chapter the researcher presents the findings of the study on social and academic experiences of LLV in Lusaka and Mbala Districts in Zambia. The findings are arranged according to the research questions as follows; (i) What are the social experiences of LLV in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools? (ii) What academic experiences have characterized learning of LLV in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools? (iii) How do head teachers, heads of departments, teachers, sighted learners and the LLV perceive the social and academic experiences of LLV in schools and (iv) What interventions have schools instituted to improve social and academic experiences of LLV in secondary schools in the two districts.

The research questions were answered by using the opinions, experiences and views of LLV, sighted learners, teachers, head teachers and HoDs in inclusive schools.

4.2 What are the social experiences of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools?

The researcher took time to interact with the participants in order to appreciate their social experiences that LLV face in urban and rural schools. In line with this, a question was asked to Head teachers, Heads of departments, teachers and learners to state the social experiences of LLV in inclusive schools in urban and rural schools and their responses were as presented below;

Social experiences

The findings of the study showed that most LLV lacked skills to socially interact with the teachers and sighted learners in inclusive urban and rural schools. This was evident from the statements provided by various participants during the Focus Group Discussions with the sighted learners, LLV, head teachers and HoDs. The following were some of the social concerns that arose from the study;

Teasing and Bullying

Sighted learners sometimes teased the LLV. The findings obtained through the discussions revealed that there was lack of social skills in LLV as well as sighted learners to socially interact with each other. A female L2 from school A reported that they were bullied about their physical appearance and she said the following:

I think sometimes to me I feel I can't communicate with my friends because in our class if I talk to others, they say this one is looking like this...shani... nashani (Meaning that her face does not look appealing because she has problems with her eyes) so it affects me...ee as myself, yes.

A female L4 from school B said the following:

Madam bambi ama teachers naba sighted balanda ati, ama problems yaba VI na ...ba low vision yesa mulandu wa HIV and AIDS nangu amalwele ayashaishibikwa so ba sighted na ma teachers balabatina ati aba bantu tapali efyo bakacita mu laifi yabo.

Translation of the above narrative into English language goes like this;

Madam some teachers and the sighted learners say that the problems for the Visually Impaired and LLV occurs because of HIV and AIDS or unknown diseases hence some teachers and sighted learners fear and they say these people will do nothing in their lives.

A female L5 from school B commented:

Madam... we play with them it is only that most of the LLV isolate themselves. They will always give excuses that they are busy with other things.

A male HT1 from school A said:

LLV find it very difficult to relate well with the sighted learners and the teachers in the sense that they feel they are not accepted.

A female HoD2 from school B said the following:

Madam... LLV socialize with people who accept the way they are not those who laugh at them because of their eyes.

From the above findings it was evident that LLV in A and B schools did not socialize easily with teachers and their sighted counterparts resulting in negative social experiences.

Social support

Most sighted learners were of the view that LLV did not receive the social support they needed because of the negative views people have on LLV in schools. One female L7 from school B said:

Madam I think...aah most of them do not receive support because nowadays when you wear specks people will think you are...intelligent as a result people run away from you thinking you are more important and usually people will not interact with you or support you even if you need something from them.

On the other hand, LLV observed that some sighted learners were socially helpful to the LLV. A male L4 from school B said he got help from his friends who were sighted on a number of times and observed that;

Nganaluba visually impaired teshibe ukwakwingila wamusendako nanguteshibe word wamwafwako pantu... tabamwenekesa pa board. (Meaning if the visually impaired doesn't know where to go, you assist or you help them with words because they can't see properly on the board).

During Focus Group Discussions, most learners said that head teachers were helpful and supported the LLV in school. A female L10 from school A said their head teacher urged his teachers to support the LLV. This is what was said in Bemba:

Madam...ba head support balabapela bena ngatabeshile mukulemba balaya mukubamona babaleta limbi baipusha ba madam ati nabalemba ama notes? Limbi ba madam basuminishafye filyafine limbi tababapele so ninshi ba head balaisa mukukalipa. Filyaba head nangu tuli mu class nangu ati balipela test limbi ngacilika balatweba ati balamupela icilambu bamupelela pa assembly bambi balikwata amano saana.

Translation of the above narrative goes like this:

Madam... the head gives them support if they have not come to write... he goes to see them, bring them and asks the madam if they have written the notes. May be the madam agrees meanwhile she has not done it in this case the head teacher gets upset. When we are in class or the test was given and a LLV does very well a present will be given to him or her at the assembly. Some are very intelligent.

However, there was a general feeling from findings that teachers who were not trained in special education did not socially seem to help LLV. This was evident in the statements such as one below; A male L5 from school A said the following:

In class it depends with the teacher others are good to you others are rude. Aaah...aah it's like for example you didn't write the notes...eeeh... you are using Braille you had no one to dictate the notes then you come the following day she will come and tell you that you are...are not serious meanwhile she is forgetting that you have no one to dictate to you

and some teachers feel bad if you keep on asking the words which you can't understand.

During interviews with the head teachers and HoDs, they said they supported the LLV in so many ways. A female HoD2 from school B said:

Some teachers support the LLV more especially the orphans. They buy them groceries and other necessities for they are in boarding.

A male HT2 from school B said the following:

LLV at our school are encouraged to seek the guidance office when they needed help concerning their social life.

It was clear from the findings that participants had mixed feelings on whether or not LLV received adequate social support from other learners and teachers in the schools some felt they did while others disagreed with the notion.

Participation in extra-curriculum activities

When learners where asked if they participated in extra-curriculum activities such as sports, chess and debate, it was found that most LLV participated in debate but not sports because of lack of sports materials to support their participation. Some LLV expressed lack of interest in sports as teachers did not encourage them to participate in sports for they thought they were not able to see clearly. One female L12 from school A said that LLV did not play sports because of their limitation in vision. She observed that:

Mostly LLV here participate in activities like debate because debate needs one to speak rather than reading .Therefore, the LLV get involved. Sporting activities appear challenging for the LLV because sight is important during sports.

A female L1 from school B commented:

Even in sports... we were asking the head...Mr. A last year so that we can also do sports. For example football and athletics, he said if you want to do that go and ask Mr. P and when you go to Mr. P he will tell you just go and ask the head teacher. Madam we can appreciate if they can give things we can enjoy in sports even if we can't see properly. We do not participate in football, netball and running.

Focus Group Discussions with LLV from both A and B schools revealed that LLV hardly participated in sports but were quite active in playing chess and debate. Learners from school B participated in choral music, cultural dance, NASAAZ and poetry. This is what a male L2 from school A narrated:

I take part in chess and debate. For sports like football, it is quite rare. Because sports like football need someone with good eye sight but in terms of chess any one whether with long or short sight can play.

A female L5 from school B had this to say:

Madam....us we participate in coral music, cultural dance, NASAAZ, Jets, drama and poetry. We do not participate in football netball and running.

A female L7 from school B added:

The LLV are involved in gardening, cleaning the surrounding and a few of them participate in debate, chess and jets.

During interviews with a male head teacher from school B, he observed that LLV did easily get frustrated in an inclusive school because the school did not offer sports, like football and netball with ringing bells inside for them to effectively participant in these games. This view was supported by the following statements from one male HT2 who said:

Sports is the field where learners with visual impairments are excluded the most. The learners in the hostels are the most frustrated, because apart from reading the books they just sit in the hostel.

A male L7 from school B agreed with the head teacher and this is what he had to say:

LLV would like to do sports, but the school does not cater for this need. They do take part in cultural dance, but they would like also to participate in sports.

A male HoD1 from school A said the following:

Most ordinary teachers feel it is a share waste of time to mingle with LLV although the specialists teachers encourage them to participate in activities that they can manage.

On the whole, the findings show that although LLV were generally excluded in extra curriculum activities such as sports, they periodically participated in selected sports such as chess.

4.3 What academic experiences have characterized the learning of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools?

The participants were asked to indicate the academic experiences of the LLV in inclusive schools. The participants indicated that lack of learning materials, lack of trained special education teachers, lack of adequate time, classroom management, and negative attitude from teachers and lack of coordination between ordinary teachers (non-specialists teachers) and specialized teachers.

Lack of Learning Materials

During Focus Group Discussions, learners were asked whether or not they had enough learning materials in class. Generally it was reported that learning materials were scarce

especially for the LLV. They lacked teaching and learning resources such as Braille materials, talking computers, Braille frames and styluses, Braille printers. One female L3 from school B reported that:

Madam. . .like ifi ku ma end of term tests filya ngabalemba question paper yaba sighted elo ifwe tabatucitila print like ababambi abashimonako ink print cilashupa ama teachers ebatupundila nama stories saana so cilaba difficult tulashalila muma questions. Mock ngayaisa, isa mu ink print not Braille then twakwatafyе machine imo elo nga yafwa ninshi bakulatupundila ama questions elo tulelemba nomba ama teachers bamо tabeshiba ukutupundila mu Braille cilashupa ukucita transcribe apali diagram balandafye ati palicineci...sonaso so tulaba confused. Madam tatwakwata ama materials like Braille printers, Braille frames nama styluses ayaba enough ...ifi filalenga twashalila muma test na mu class.

Translation of the above narrative in English language goes like this:

Madam... like end of term tests when a question paper is written for the sighted us they don't print like those who can't even see ink print...its difficult. Teachers are the ones who dictate for us and full of stories so it becomes difficult, we remain behind in questions. When it's time for the mock Exam, it comes in ink print not in Braille and we have only one (1) machine. If it gets damaged the questions are just dictated by the teachers. Some teachers don't know Braille...it's difficult for them to transcribe where there is a diagram they will just tell you that there is this and this.... so and so....we become confused.

A male sighted L8 from school B said that LLV had little learning materials and depended on copying notes from the board. This frustrated teachers who sometimes lost their patience in handling the LLV. This is what he commented:

Madam... sometimes some teachers complain, they say that LLV should be seating in front when they are in class so that they see the work on the

board. Most of the teachers get annoyed when LLV continue to ask for clarification of the words on the board and as a result some pupils prefer to seat at the back, not because they want to but because they feel they are not wanted by how the teachers respond to them. They always complain to us that the teachers do not understand their problems.

During interviews with the school head teachers, HoDs and teachers it was reported that some inclusive schools did not have enough materials for the LLV. A female T6 from school B noted that:

Concerning materials for the visually impaired learners, the school has a challenge more especially the issue of materials in large print for LLV. They could only be helped if materials in large print are available because not all the LLV are able to read and write in Braille. In this case LLV mostly depend on either the teacher or the sighted learners to dictate the notes or an exercise to them. For instance the ends of term tests are usually in small print the LLV are unable to read clearly as the result they perform badly.

One of male HT2 from school B said the following:

Madam... it is very difficult to encourage teachers to teach LLV in the sense that the school lacks specialized equipment such as braille frames, styluses, braille paper, perking braillers, talking computers and books in large print. These materials are difficult to access and the school totally depends on the ones supplied to the school sometime back.

A male HoD1 from school A said the following:

At our school we tell the LVI who have their own braille Frames and styluses to come with them at school because the school has a few which cannot cater for every LVI in school.

In short both A and B schools providing inclusive schooling involving LLV appear to have limited materials for such learners to experience positive academic experience.

Lack of adequate time given to Learners with Low Vision during Lessons

During Focus Group Discussion with the LLV and the sighted learners it was reported that time was a major challenge of academic experience of LLV. The LLV were given the same conditions as the sighted learners. A female L4 from school A spoke of limited time given to them and how it affected them and this is what she said:

Aah madam... most of the times the teacher marks the exercise for my friends just there and then while I still have to take it for transcription and the work is marked maybe after 3 days... you sometimes just feel lazy thinking you are wasting your time because of the same issue, you write and you don't get the exercise in good time and you are discouraged. Most of the times, we are behind with the notes because no extra time is given to finish our exercises or notes.

A male L2 from school B added the following:

Madam for me I write from there... I write from the Special unit so that my test papers do not go missing. Me madam I decide to write from here at the unit but if the time for the test if its 1:30 minutes its 1:30minutes. No extra minutes is given to the visually Impaired I think they follow their time table.

Another female L3 from school B said:

Madam takwaba extra time tupwilafye pamo naba sighted. Period for example ngayapwa naimbi yatampa so ba teacher balaya time yabo ngayapwa. Madam ciba so... pa end ya period ninshi naimbi yatampa, so ama teachers balaya exactly inshita ngayapwa aah...ngayakwana 40 nangu 80minutes ninshi kuya batumona kwati twabafyengaba sighted.

Translation of the narrative into English language:

Madam there is no extra time, we finish at the same time with the sighted. For example when the period ends another one begins so the teacher leaves when his or her time finishes. Madam it like this... when the period ends, begins another one so teachers leave exactly after 40 or 80 minutes because they consider us to be the same with sighted learners.

A female L7 from school B said:

Madam... the LLV are not given extra time, we just finish at the same time and if they have not finished they copy notes from us.

Interviews with teachers, HoDs and head teachers also showed that LLV were not given extra time during learning time. One of the male T1 from school A said the following:

LLV are not given extra time, the normal time table has to be followed for fear of disadvantaging the sighted learners. Teachers make sure that they go to the next class in good time hence it becomes very difficult to concentrate on LLV in that particular class. He further said pupil-teacher ratio is a concern by most teachers, for instance a teacher handling seventy five (75) learners may not be able to assist learners with VI.

A female HoD2 from school B complained:

The problem that we have is that we follow the normal time table, the LLV are not considered very much concerning time. The extra time is not allocated to them for fear of not finishing the syllabus in good time.

A female specialist T3 from school A added:

Extra time is not given to the LLV during lessons. It is only done during final examinations. Madam... the Ministry of General Education should also put that into consideration, LVI need enough time to finish their work in class.

A male HT1 from school A said:

Teachers are encouraged to give extra time to LLV but it seems this is very challenging to them in that teachers need to give time to their colleagues to teach their particular subject in a specified time.

Lack of trained Special Education Teachers

The study revealed that most of the ordinary teachers in inclusive schools had a negative attitude towards LLV. Some teachers showed lack of sensitivity towards the LLV. The teachers also showed lack of concern and understanding of the conditions of the LLV. One female L2 from school A complained of teachers not being helpful and making them depend on their friends. This is what the learner said:

Sometimes teachers do not give notes they tell us that, you should find friends to dictate for you and these friends are also busy. It's not every day that they can manage to dictate for you. Then the issue of an exercise... the teacher is marking right there and then but for you...you have to take it for transcription and it will take three (3) days for the exercise to be marked so its...something you even feel lazy to say I go with paper I take it to the Special unit, they transcribe it and after three (3) days I go and get it but my friends are marked there and then it's challenging.

A female L3 from school A complained of lack of understanding from the teacher and this is what she narrated:

Exercise madam... if someone who can't know Braille contraction so if we write exercise, they can't manage to mark us, so it is very difficult. If we get an exercise write an exercise....give it to the teacher...aah if he or she don't know how to mark...aah if for example our teachers in inclusive school there are some people who don't know Braille when they go there in the staff room they go and hide them, they will put it in the

lockers or somewhere. When he or she put it forget that I have taken an exercise for the Visually Impaired...sometimes the exercise is not marked...they didn't mark.

Regarding the training in special needs for teachers some participants revealed that; most teachers in inclusive schools were not trained in teaching learners with special needs particularly the visually impaired in inclusive school settings. This is what one of the female L1 from school A commented:

When those teachers who teach braille are not taught or trained how to handle pupils with visual impairment, so like for example when the teacher is teaching Biology he will make you not to... understand diagrams. They will just tell you that me I don't know how to do it and also with the notes, when dictating the notes sometimes some of us who use braille we have a challenge if you don't have someone to dictate for you. You don't write the notes.

A female L3 from school B said the following:

About aah...in inclusive school, we have ...aah problems with the notes when we in class the teacher when he or she finish writing on the board, he or she is supposed to go back and she knew that she has to give notes. He or she don't know to give notes, we just follow him or her...we are looking for the notes if she doesn't want to give us she tells us to go and copy from friends.

A male L9 from school B added that:

Pantu madam ama teachers tabafikapo...ukubalembela nangu uku...balondolwela balabalembela utunono pa board but ngabapela ulya ulemonako panono tababelengela bwino nama notes. Nangu twalemba test batweba ati mulatulembela ama wrong spellings.

Translation of the narrative into English language.

Meaning that some teachers don't really know how to write or explain to the LLV. Usually some teachers write in small prints on the board and if the notes are given to their fellow LLV, they will not read them well for them. When they are writing a test, they tell us the sighted that we write wrong spellings for them.

A male L8 from school A said:

Madam...the specialists teachers are so helpful to the LLV For example when we are in class they dictate notes to them.

During interviews with the teachers, HoDs and head teachers also mentioned that most teachers teaching LVI were not trained in Special Education. This affected their learning in inclusive schools. The male HoD1 from school A said:

Most teachers are not trained in Special Education hence do not embrace the LVI and they are not willing to be introduced to large print more especially when it comes to writing on the chalk board they want to use the small prints which becomes so difficult for the LLV to see clearly.

A male HT1 from school A said the following:

Ordinary teachers are not conversant with braille. Most LLV find it easy to use braille in reading and writing because they are unable to see properly on the chalk board.

It was evident from the findings that teachers who were not trained in special education were not helpful to the learners with visual impairments in inclusive schools both in A and B settings.

Lack of Support from Teachers

There was a general feeling that teachers who had not trained in Special Education did not help the LLV in their academic work as compared to those who were trained. This can be seen in the statements below from LLV as well as sighted learners who participated in the discussion.

During one of the Focus Group Discussions some learners in school B complained about the negative attitude of some teachers especially the untrained in the field of special education.

One of the male L2 from school B said;

Some teachers isolate us saying that we should be learning separately because we are slow in doing things.

Another female L12 from school B commented as follows:

Madam... ba low vision tababafwilisha bamo ama teachers more especially abashaba trained mu special education balofwa ububi ngaba low vision baleipukisha ama words aalipa board.

Translation of the above Bemba quote in English language:

The LLV do not receive help from most teachers, because some teachers especially those who are not trained get irritated when a LLV keeps asking for clarification of words on the board.

A male L6 from school A said:

Madam... for me I can't say I receive support from teachers because you find I don't have the notes, I follow the teacher and then she says what do you want? Because like for example at the unit when you are writing a test, or they have to go and change them in large print... but they don't do that, they just give you like that you solve it on your own. Some teachers are not trained in special education so they ignore us.

Another female L3 from school A also complained that some teachers were not helpful. She commented that:

Some teachers help us, but others don't. For example, other teachers will tell you the word you can't see properly on the board or will ask you to come and seat in front on the first desk while others will just ignore you.

During interviews with the teachers, HoDs and head teachers explained that most teachers were not able to support the LLV because they did not have a skill to handle them. A female T6 from school B said the following:

Some teachers do support the LLV but the problem which is there is that we don't have the skills more especially teaching them how to read and write in braille.

Another female HoD2 from school B commented:

Teachers who support the LLV are the teachers who are trained in Special Education. The ordinary teachers complain that they cannot handle them because they need so much attention in terms of time.

A male HT1 from school A indicated that:

The school has no problems with the teachers who have done Special Education. These teachers easily accommodate the LLV.

Generally it was observed that some teachers who were not trained in Special Education did not know how to handle LLV.

Support from Head Teachers

On the support from Head teachers, most learners said that head teachers were helpful and supported the LLV in school. Three learners at school B reported that their Head teacher encouraged their teachers to support the LLV in their classes. This is what they said:

The Head teacher encouraged teachers to attend to pupils with low vision and instruct them to give them attention and the head teacher also follows to ensure that all of the LLV write their tests.

One female L7 from school B said the following:

The head teacher supports the LVI, during assemblies he encourages both the sighted learners and teachers to accommodate LVI.

In contrast a female L2 from school A commented that:

May be just once. Our head teacher once emphasized in my class to our teacher who had refused the LLV to sit in front to allow them to do so but that was by chance.

A male L4 from school A had this to say:

Let me say this madam, me I came in 2015 but last term this year 2016 is the term the Head teacher knew me. He did not even like if he is passing he would not even know me. When he is at the assembly, he says things to do about the Special unit are about the special unit for him like. Even for Braille facilities the embosser is there but he is not realizing it then it has come of no use to us. Only our HoD Special unit helps us.

A female HoD2 from school B said:

Madam... the support from the head teacher is there although most of the work to help the LLV is left to the HoD for special education.

A male T1 from school A said the following:

Our head teacher is not very conversant with the issues of special education so he rarely supports the LVI.

It appears that the head teacher in school B was more supportive to the LLV as compared to those in school B.

Lack of Coordination between Specialized Teachers and Ordinary teachers (non-specialists)

During interviews with the teachers, HoDs and head teachers, it was reported that there was lack of coordination between the specialist teachers and the ordinary teachers on academic issues surrounding LLV and that seemed to affect the performance of LLV in inclusive classes as indicated by one of the female T5 from school B. She said:

Some ordinary teachers in an inclusive school do not co-operate with the specialized teachers. For instance some ordinary teachers do not forward learning activities for the learners with low vision to be put in large print or transcribed by specialized teachers hence learners lag behind to an extent that their final examinations results were affected due to inadequacy in preparations.

Another male T9 from school B reported that:

Some ordinary teachers are very negative more especially when it comes to test preparation for the learners with low vision. The test items usually are submitted late to the transcribers. Perking Bailers are not available in school hence the transcribers end up using Braille Frames and styluses to transcribe the work which was very slow to finish up in good time. The LLV usually write their end of term test late because the ordinary and specialized teachers lack coordination.

A male HT2 from school B said the following:

Both the specialists and the non-specialists teachers are being encouraged during staff briefings to work together so that they could help the LVI. Specialists' teachers complain that some non-specialists

teachers want to leave everything to specialist teachers. For instance LLV write their tests a bite late compared to the sighted learners.

A male HoD1 from school A said:

The HoD for special Education coordinates the running of the tests in the school to ensure that the ordinary teachers prepare the tests in good time for the specialists to transcribe.

During Focus Group Discussions both the sighted and the LLV revealed that the LLV did not write the tests at the same time with the sighted learners.

This can be seen in the statements from LLV as well as sighted learners.

A male T3 from school B commented as follows:

The LLV usually complain that they are discouraged to write their test after the sighted learners had already written. For them they have to wait for their work to be transcribed from print to braille. Those who used Braille need large print but the tests are taken late by the non-specialists to the specialists to transcribe the work.

A female L4 from school B mentioned that they needed to write their tests at the same time with the sighted learners but that were not the case instead they had to wait for the work to be transcribed. This is what she reported:

Most of the times learners with low vision are neglected in terms of writing the tests whether class test or end of term tests. They have to wait for the work to be transcribed, this made LLV to write the tests late and getting the feedback late in some instances the results were not even seen by the LLV and that discouraged them and sometimes when non-specialists were asked by the LLV about the tests they would tell them to go and ask the specialists at the unit when they were going to write there tests.

It is clear from the findings that there was lack of coordination between specialized teachers and non-specialists teachers. Hence this made the LLV to be delayed in writing their tests and getting feedback at the right time from their teachers.

Academic performance

It was revealed that the academic performance of most of the LLV was affected. They did not perform well because of the challenges they encountered in the inclusive schools.

A female L9 from school B reported:

Madam...nganabacelwa bala babwekeshamo nokuboma madam elo banono ababapela ama notes ngababeba ati mwisemusenda ama notes...ngatabelemukupoka taba sakamana ama teachers.

Madam...tafibasaana nangu tabalembelepo title pali subject, balafî sankanya social studies, English na science tabeshiba so bambi tabapasa bwino ama test baposaamano kulisifwe... fwebamona bwino. Nangunkuli test tabaposako amano ati teshile nangunalwala...aah ati akesalemba mailo tabaposako amano ati alembe baposafye amano kuli ifwe fwebamona.

Translation of the above narrative into English language goes like this:

Madam, when they are late, they are sent back and sometimes beaten and there are very few teachers who give them notes. When the LLV are told to go and get the notes... if they have not gone to get, teachers don't care. Madam, it's not all... that some teachers don't bother to write the title on the board they mix the subjects Social Studies, English and Science. They don't know so some learners with low vision don't perform well in the tests. They only care for us who see properly. When there is a test some teachers don't bother whether a learner with low vision has come or he or she is unwell...aah he or she will come and write tomorrow, but they don't make a follow up so that they also write. They only concentrate on us who are able to see properly.

A female L6 from school B had this to say:

When you go into the lab madam... for example you are doing experiments for one topic in biology you...you not be given the instruments to use may be they will say you can't see he/she will just say wait I will give you until the time finishes so we are behind in practicals and when some of the question comes, we fail to answer.

A male HoD1 from school A had to say the following:

Most VI learners do not perform well in their academic work in the sense that they encounter so many challenges in inclusive schools. They don't have teaching and learning materials, extra time is not given to them and most of the teachers have problems on the issues of Braille, they don't know how to read and write in Braille.

During interviews with the teachers, HoDs and head teachers it was revealed that most of the LLV performed poorly in both A and B inclusive schools because of the challenges they encounter. The HT2 at school B said:

The academic performance of LLV is encouraging to some of them but most of them perform poorly because of the challenges they encounter in inclusive school.

A male T7 from school B said he following:

LLV at our school do not perform well because they need specialized teachers and enough time to teach them.

It was evident from the findings that most of the learners with low vision performed poorly academically in both urban and rural schools.

4.4 How do Head teachers, HoDs, learners with low vision perceive the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools?

Responses from LLV, sighted, teachers, head teachers and HoDs

The study on how LLV are perceived and how they perceive themselves is important to consider. It was observed that the LLV were misunderstood in inclusive schools and this made it difficult to help them.

During Focus Group Discussions, some of the LLV from school B complained about the negative attitude of some teachers. They reported that;

Most of the teachers don't understand us. Some teachers isolate us saying that we should be learning separately.

A male T8 from school B had this to say:

Its fine to be in an inclusive school but materials should be provided for the learners with visual impairments, people should accept and understand us even if we can't see properly.

One female L9 from school A mentioned that seeing LLV as intelligent because of the glasses they put on was not helpful. This is what she said:

I feel they are different from us in that they face some challenges such as reading and they are looked at as very intelligent when they need help.

Another female L4 from school B said that teachers did not have time for them because they were seen as slow learners. She said the following;

Again it depends with the type of a teacher. Usually they judge us and say since you are a slow learner; I will not waste my time.

A male L6 from school A had however a positive perception of the LLV. This is what he said:

The LLV are just like us. We should support them and encourage them to work hard in school.

When the teachers, HoDs and head teachers were asked on how they perceived the LLV in inclusive schools it was revealed that LLV had challenges in both social and academic experiences.

A male T2 from school B had this to say:

Well they can be incorporated in inclusive schools but they have so many issues in both social and academic experiences. For example, in academic we have been directed by the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) to be finishing the syllabus within a stipulated time so it's difficult to attend to them or give them extra time.

A male HoD1 from school A said the following:

LLV are not accepted by most teachers and sighted learners they think they just pretend that they cannot see properly because they are able to move on their own.

A male HT1 from school A commented:

Most teachers get irritated when teaching the learners with visual impairments because they do not have the skills to handle them hence they think that they pretend and usually they are labelled to be dull slow learners.

It is evident from the findings that most teachers perceived the LLV to be pretenders while the sighted learners regarded learners with low vision to have a number of challenges in inclusive schools which called for attention by Head teachers and the Heads of departments, teachers and sighted learners.

4.5 What Interventions have the schools instituted to improve social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools?

Responses from Head teachers, HoDs' sighted and learners with low vision

The Head teachers, teachers and learner participants were asked to comment on the interventions that have been put in place in order to help the LLV in inclusive schools. They reported that some schools had not put in place working programmes to help LLV because of lack of facilities and low budget allocated to teaching and learning materials. Some measures put in place include classroom management, frequent sourcing of teaching and learning materials, sensitization of school administrators, teachers and learners, creation of social environment acceptable to all, advocacy of inclusion of learners with low vision in schools and communities and giving of remedial work.

Classroom Management

Controlling the learning environment to suite LLV is one of the interventions that have been put in place to help the LLV in inclusive schools.

During interviews with a male HT1 from school A, the head teacher reported that the administrators made sure that noise was avoided in classes to accommodate LLV. This is what they said:

We usually pass through the classes to ensure that the learners in the classrooms are quiet during learning hours so that LLV concentrate on their class activities for most of them use Braille to read and write.

A male HT2 from school B made mention of the sitting arrangements. This is what he said:

We allow LLV to sit in a position comfortably for them. In this case teachers are being reminded during staff briefings, staff meetings and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) meetings to consider

socially and academically include LLV as they delivered their lessons. The reminder is also done during assemblies to the sighted learners to accept the LLV.

Interviews with teachers also showed that LLV are being considered more especially during learning hours. One female T4 from school A had this to say:

During the period of learning, LLV are being advised to sit together with friends who accept them and would assist them more especially in terms of coping the notes from the board.

A female T6 from school B had this to say:

LLV themselves usually remind their teachers that they could not see on the board properly if they were made to sit at the back and teachers accepted their concerns. The head teacher also reminds both the teachers and sighted learners that they should accept the visually impaired learners and treat them positively.

During Focus Group Discussions one male L8 from school B mentioned of controlling of noise in the classroom to allow low vision learners to concentrate during lessons.

This is what he observed:

Noise making was not allowed to allow learners with low vision to concentrate in class. The school advises us to help them in their challenges.

A male L7 from school A commented:

When LLV go to class they remind the sighted learners that they need help from them, when it comes to sitting position. They say that they can only benefit from lessons taught in class if they have good position and also enough space more especially those who use Braille for reading and writing.

From the findings it is clear that controlling the learning environment to suite LLV is one of the interventions that have been put in place to help the LLV in inclusive schools.

Sensitization of school administrators and learners

Interviews with head teachers, HoDs and teachers showed that the administrators and learners were being sensitized as they interacted with the LVI. This is what one of the male HT1 from school A said:

Teachers are being reminded during staff briefings, staff meetings and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) meetings to consider learners with low vision in inclusive schools.

A female HoD2 from school B commented:

Learners are being reminded all the times during assemblies the rights of persons with disabilities and specialist teachers are also given a task in school to sensitize the sighted learners on how to relate with LVI.

A female T6 from school B said the following:

The head teacher always help us to understand the challenges that the LVI face and he emphasizes that teachers should strive to know more about persons with disabilities for they also have the right to education.

During FGD for the LLV and the sighted it was reported that learners were being sensitized on how to relate with the LLV in an inclusive school. This is what one of the female L1 from school B said:

The head teacher comes to our classroom to encourage the LVI and the sighted learners that they should be helping one another in both inside and outside activities.

A male L8 from school A said:

Specialists teachers always teach us that a disability can come in our lives at any time so we should learn to help and encourage People with disabilities.

From the findings it was clear that sensitization of learners, teachers and administrators on the issues of disabilities was being done in inclusive schools.

Frequent sourcing of Learning and teaching Materials

A male HT2 from school B spoke of the need to acquire materials for learning and teaching, which is one of the biggest problems all inclusive schools face. This is what he reported:

The school is in the process of introducing reading materials in large print to learners with low vision.

A male HoD1 interviewed, from school A had this to say:

We usually advise LLV who can manage to source for learning materials and some LLV manage to use their own materials. The school also robs from well-wishers who could assist with the required teaching and learning materials.

A female T3 interviewed from school A added that:

Material usually is not provided in large print instead LLV use initiative to find their material and also equipment such as magnifying lenses.

Another female T9 interviewed from school B had this to say:

Both non-specialist teachers and specialists are encouraged to prepare activities for the LLV in large print for those who did not use Braille.

During Focus Group Discussions both learners from A and B schools reported that some interventions were being put in place in order to cater for LLV in an inclusive school although much needed to be done in schools. One female L1 from a school B lamented:

The transcribing machines had been donated by the well - wishers at the school but it is not used because it needs to be operated by teachers who know how to use the machine.

Another male L11 from school A had this to say:

A few materials such as Braille frames and Braille papers are sometimes being provided by the school.

From the findings on some of the measure that had been put in place to help the LLV in inclusive schools. One of the measures put in place was frequent sourcing of learning materials.

Creation of social environment acceptable for all

During interviews with the head teachers, HoDs and teachers it was revealed that creation of social environment was one of the intervention that was put in place to help the LLV in an inclusive school. This is what one of a male HT1 from school A had said:

Specialists teachers always ensure that LVI and sighted learners are being encouraged to mingle so that they help one another both inside and outside the classroom.

A male HoD1 from school A said the following:

Most LLV do not want to come out, they pretend that all is well with them. Therefore teachers who teach these learners have been encouraged to be close with these learners so that they are helped concerning their needs.

A female T10 from school B commented:

Some LLV feel shy to ask from teachers or their sighted Counterparts if they fell to see the word on the board properly, instead they just keep

quiet in this case both the teachers and the sighted learners are being encouraged to assist them where they think they need to be helped.

During FGD with the LLV and the sighted learners it was reported that the LLV were being provided with hostels so that they live within the school for easy movements to the learning environment. A male L2 from school B said the following:

Madam...ah the boarding hostel has been provided for us, we only go home when schools close. Even if we do not have a library at school we usually study from our hostels.

It was evident that a social environment was created for the LLV through encouraging the teachers and sighted learners to interact with the LLV both inside and outside the class room activities.

Advocacy of Inclusion of learners with Visual Impairment and the community

During interviews with the head teachers, HoDs and teachers it was reported that advocacy of inclusion of LVI was being done in inclusive schools. A female HoD2 from school B said:

The head teacher usually takes time to explain why it is important to include LVI in schools. During Parents Teachers Association (PTA), the head teacher reminds both the teachers and the parents to take keen interest in the teaching and learning of learners with low vision in schools.

A male HT1 from school A commented:

Specialists are given chance to educate non-specialists during briefings and also talk to the parents and guardians as they correct report forms for their children on the open day.

One of the female T6 from school B complained that advocacy is being done by the head teachers and specialists but not much has been done in terms of accepting the LVI in inclusive schools. This is what he complained:

Madam...at our school the head teacher tries to educate teachers on the issues of learners with disabilities but some teachers are negative over the same. More should be done in order to help learners with challenges.

During FGDs with the LLV and the sighted, it was observed that the learners were being reminded on the inclusion of LVI in schools. A male L6 from school A said the following:

Madam... our guidance teacher teaches us on the issues of disabilities, after discussions, she tells us that we shouldn't keep it to ourselves but share the information with our parents and the community.

A female L1 from school B said:

Madam...we are being encouraged by our specialists that we are supposed to be learning with persons with disabilities and that we should not feel belittled for we are just the same.

It was observed that the advocacy on the inclusion of LLV in schools was being done although not very much. The researcher confirmed this when interviewing some teachers.

Remedial work

During FGDs with the LLV and the sighted learners it was revealed that remedial work was being administered by the specialists teachers. This is what a female L3 from school B said:

The specialists teachers assist us at the resource room. We are given the work to do more especially the work done in class if not finished.

A male L4 from school A said:

Some teachers help the learners with low vision more especially after classes.

During interviews with the teachers, HoDs and teachers it was revealed that the teachers were being encouraged to assist the LVI in inclusive schools. A male HT2 from school B said:

Teachers are usually encouraged to help learners with visual impairment after Classes the reason being that they tend to be slow in finishing their work in class since most of them use braille.

A male HoD1 from school A said the following:

Teachers handling LLV are being advised to spare time to attend to LLV in the afternoon after the morning sessions.

A male T2 from school B commented:

We do help but it is a challenge in the sense that some of us we just dictate the work to the LLV those who use braille It takes time for them to finish their work.

It was evident that the LVI were being given remedial work although the researcher observed that it was done more by the specialists.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter presented findings of the study regarding the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools of Lusaka and Mbala Districts. Findings have been presented according to the research objectives cited in chapter one (1)

The study revealed that learners with low vision faced numerous social and academic challenges. These ranged from discrimination, teasing, bullying to lack of social support. On

the part of academic experiences, the study cited lack of teaching and learning materials, in adequate special education teachers to handle learners with visual impairments and lack of coordination between specialized teachers and ordinary teachers. The study also revealed that teachers who were conversant with reading and writing of Braille were a few in inclusive schools which as a result negatively affected the academic experiences of the learners. The next chapter discusses the findings presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISSCUSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings of the study based on the research objectives set at the beginning of the study which are: To establish social experiences of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools in Lusaka and Mbala, to assess academic experiences that have characterized learning of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools, to establish perceptions from Head teachers, HoDs, teachers, sighted and LLV on the social and academic experiences of LLV in schools and to explore the interventions instituted to improve social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools.

This chapter recounts the findings of the previous studies deliberated in Chapter Two under literature review. The discussion also relates the findings to the right educational theory adopted in this study and show the researcher's interpretation of the study to the extent to which the objectives have been addressed. In the same view the researcher makes suggestions for further research based on interpreted findings.

5.2 The social experiences of learners with low vision in rural and urban secondary schools in Lusaka and Mbala.

The first objective of the study was to establish social experiences of learners with low vision in A and B schools practicing inclusive education in Lusaka and Mbala Districts. In determining the social experiences, the purposive sampling technique was used. The sample included Head teachers, Heads of departments (HoDs), Class teachers and LLV. On the other hand, in the selection of sighted learners, simple random sampling was used. In this study the

data obtained through discussions shows that there was lack of social skills in LLV to interact with the sighted learners. Learners with low vision were discriminated, bullied and teased.

Discrimination, Bullying and Teasing

This study revealed that the learners with low vision were being discriminated, bullied, and teased by the sighted learners and this made them to feel belittled and shun away from the sighted learners. The study established similar responses from teachers, Head teachers and HoDs.

The sighted learners made fun of the LLV. For instance when they laughed at them because of their physical appearance, some of their friends told them their eyes looked funny this made the LLV not to be comfortable and isolated themselves from the sighted learners. It is true that socially learners with low vision were often bullied by their counterparts. A sighted learner from school A reported that they played with them but the LLV isolated themselves and always gave excuses that they were busy with other things. Head teacher from school A said that the sighted learners found it very difficult to relate with the sighted and the teachers in that they felt they were not accepted. On the other hand the HoD from school B reported that LLV socialized with people who accepted the way they were but not those who laughed at them. From the literature reviewed, this finding is in agreement with Corn and Sacks (1996) who pointed out that, the questions asked by both the sighted learners and teachers like; why they held books so close to the eyes, wore thick glasses may be quite disturbing to them.

Bullying directed towards the learners with low vision was common as the result of their cognitive, behavioural and or physical differences which made them “easy target” for discrimination. Bullying could take many forms and rejection could have long lasting effects

especially on the self – concept of the learners (Beale and Scott, 2005). In this case it makes learners not to socialize or interact easily with others hence they are denied to learn from their sighted peers.

Swart and Pettieper (2005) in Human (2010) argued that regular schools with an inclusive orientation were the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Learners could not really be counted as included if they did acquire the skills they needed to participate in the society or if the skills gap between them and their peers grew too wide (Dyson, 2001). In this sense, the LLV would only have the positive social and academic experiences if they were being accepted in an inclusive school. For instance social skills could be acquired as they interact with their fellow sighted peers and other people.

Lack of Social support

During Focus Group Discussions with sighted and LLV and interviews with the Head Teachers, HoDs and teachers in both rural and urban schools on the social support of LLV, most sighted learners were of the view that low vision learners did not receive social support they needed because of the negative perceptions people had on LLV in school. For instance, a female learner with low vision from school B explained that they did not socially receive help from most teachers because some teachers found it irritating when a LLV kept asking for clarifications of words on the board.

However, most LLV from this school said that their head teacher urged his teachers to support the LLV by attending to their needs. In addition to this, LLV in school reported that they were usually bullied and teased for their physical appearance by the sighted learners. This made it difficult for the LLV to communicate with the sighted learners. The HOD from

school B reported that some teachers support the LLV more especially the orphans. For instance they bought them groceries and other necessities for they were in the boarding. Additionally, the head teacher from school B reported that the LLV at his school were encouraged to seek the guidance office when they needed help concerning their social life.

Sacks (1996) noted that students with low vision may miss or misinterpret social cues given by peers, family or teachers because they were unable to accurately see them. These students did not have an identity as a blind person, nor were they considered fully sighted. Hatlen (2004) commented that if the teacher for LLV does not have the time to either teach or coordinate the social skills, it would be difficult for LLV to learn.

However it was clear from the findings that participants had mixed feelings on whether or not LLV received adequate social support from other learners, teachers, Head teachers and HoDs in the schools. Some felt they did while others disagreed with the notion.

Participation in Extra-Curriculum Activities

From the Focus Group Discussions with sighted and LLV from both A and B schools, interviews with teachers, Head Teachers and HoDs, it was revealed that most LLV participated in debate and chess not sports because of lack of sport materials to support their participation. Some LLV also expressed lack of interest in sports as teachers did not encourage the LLV to participant in sports seeing them as socially unfit.

On the whole the findings showed that although learners were generally excluded in extra-curriculum activities such as sports, they periodically participated in selected sports such as chess and debate. In school B, LLV also participated in cultural dance and poetry. For instance the Head teacher from school B interviewed observed that LLV did easily get

frustrated in an inclusive school because the school did not offer sports like football and netball which required a school to put in place balls with ringing bell inside for them to effectively participate in the football games. The head teacher from school B observed that sport was the field in which LVI were excluded the most. Learners in the hostels were the most frustrated because apart from reading the books they just sat in the hostel.

The findings are similar to Dakwa (2014) in which teachers indicated that there was little participation by children with VI in sport. They confessed that they concentrated on sighted children for the sake of progress. Shapiro et al. (2005) explains that learners, who have difficulty performing sports and physical activity skill, often have lower self- perceptions. These poor perceptions are likely to lead to a reduction in confidence in movement and often extend beyond the athletic domain resulting in adverse psychological and social consequences. Roe (2008) observed that opportunities to interact with the others need to be embedded in everyday, whole class- activities and also to be taken as and when they emerge. Further he noted that opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, school clubs and consultation about issues that are relevant to the individual child also need to be considered (Roe. 2008). It is through interactions with others that humans learn and make sense of the world (Bandura, 1883).

5.3 Academic experiences characterized learning of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive Secondary Schools.

The participants were asked to indicate the academic experiences of the LLV in inclusive schools. The participants indicated that lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of special education teachers, lack of adequate time, poor classroom management, and negative attitudes from ordinary teachers and lack of coordination between ordinary teachers (non-specialists teachers) and specialized teachers.

Lack of Teaching and Learning Materials

The study revealed that in both A and B schools providing inclusive schooling involving LLV appeared to have limited materials for each learner to have positive academic experience.

During interviews with the school head teachers, HoDs and teachers it was reported that some inclusive schools did not have enough materials for the LLV. Most teachers from school A and B noted that the schools had a challenge more especially the issue of materials in large print for the LLV. LLV mostly depended on the teachers or sighted learners to dictate the notes or an exercise to them. The learners also indicated that the end of the term test was usually in small prints, therefore, the LLV were unable to read clearly as the result they performed badly.

This finding is similar to the study done by Akakandelwa and Musanje (2011) which showed that some schools did not have adequate and sustainable teaching and learning materials for the LVI and this led to compromising the quality of education for the learners with visual impairments in school. This is also in agreement with Musanje, Kalabula & Nzala (2009) who conducted a study to provide a situation analysis of inclusive education for children with visual impairments. The findings of the study revealed that partially sighted pupils included in the ordinary school had no support regarding teaching and learning materials. Braille was still the basic and unique reading and written medium of communication and learning for learners who were VI or blind. Therefore they must learn to read and write Braille at the time as sighted learners to begin read and write (Human, 2010).

The researcher observed that teaching and learning materials was a major problem to the LLV, some used Braille and others used large print. To help these learners the provision of

teaching and learning materials was important for them to have a positive experience in their academic work.

Lack of Trained Special Education Teachers

The findings showed that most ordinary teachers had a negative attitude towards LLV. Some teachers showed lack of sensitivity towards the LLV and the teachers showed lack of concern and understanding of the condition of the LLV. Majority of the LLV in both school A and B reported that if the teacher in an inclusive school was not conversant with braille, it became very difficult for them to mark exercises and tests written in class which made it difficult for the LLV to get feedback from the teachers.

Regarding the training in special needs for teachers some participants revealed that; most teachers in inclusive schools were not trained in teaching learners with special needs particularly the LVI in inclusive school settings.

The findings in this study agree with Dakwa (2014) who indicated that the needs of children with low vision were not met as teachers were not adequately trained to assist these children. Most learners with visual impairments performed poorly in academics due to lack implementation of a differentiated curriculum as per the laid down policy on Special Needs Education, which is attributed to social, economical and partly cultural factors. Dakwa (2016) also observed that despite problems related to inadequate material resource, the children benefited from the inclusion. Teachers in the regular classes needed more specialists training as well as in-service courses. The nature of varied differences in needs of LLV calls for more teachers in special needs education so that at least each regular school has one. Parents to LVI and the community should also be sensitized on their education (Ageza, 2014).

From the findings, the researcher observed that ordinary teachers needed to take keen interest in the issues of special education in order for them to help the LLV in inclusive school, so as to improve their academic work

Lack of Adequate Time for the learners with low vision

From the study most teachers, school administrators, sighted and LLV both from school A and B inclusive schools indicated that LLV were not given extra time during learning. One of the male teachers from school A reported that the LLV were given the same conditions as the sighted. For instance most teachers said that it was difficult to give extra time to LLV in that the teachers were restricted to teach their subject in a specified time. He further said pupil teacher ratio was a concern by most teachers. For instance a teacher handling seventy five learners may not be able to assist LVI. Most learners reported that LLV were finishing the lessons at the same time with the sighted learners.

In relation to the issue of giving extra time to LLV in an inclusive school highlighted in the response above from one teacher, This is in contrast to the Education Act 2011 which clearly states that learners with disabilities must be given sufficient time in order to accommodate them in their academic work. This study is similar to Dakwa (2011) who observed that teachers could not cope with the large numbers of children within the classroom situation. Attending to the child with VI actually became an extra burden. Consequently, these children tended to be ignored as teachers focused on the faster sighted children.

The researcher observed that learners with LVI were not given extra time in inclusive school and it made them lag behind in their academic work. For instance they depended mostly on dictation and copying the notes from the friends who accepted their status.

Support from school head teachers, HoDs and teachers

There was a general feeling that teachers who were not trained in Special Education did not help the LLV in their academic work as compared to those who were trained. Head teacher in school B supported the LLV in an inclusive school compared to those from school A.

Three learners from school B reported that their head teacher encouraged their teachers to support the LLV in their classes. They said the head teacher encouraged teachers to attend to LLV and instructed them to give attention to them. A male L4 from school A complained that LLV were not being supported by the head teacher instead he said Special Education matters were to be handled by teachers at the Special unit.

Mitiku et al, (2014) indicated that if the environment, for example a school is rejecting, insensitive, hostile and degrading type, this would not only complicate the adjustment of persons with disabilities but also have a negative bearing on their development. He further said, this would adversely affect their self-esteem which was usually characterized by lack of trust and confidence in one self, low self-esteem and a feeling of hopelessness.

It appears that head teacher from school B was more supportive to the LLV as compared to the one in school A.

Lack of Coordination between Specialized Teachers and Ordinary teachers (non-specialists)

From the interviews with teachers in both school A and school B inclusive schools, it was revealed that there was lack of coordination between specialized teachers and the ordinary teachers on academic issues surrounding LLV and that affected the performance of the learners in inclusive classes as indicated by teachers from school A who reported that

ordinary teachers in an inclusive school did not cooperate with the specialized teachers. For instance some ordinary teachers did not forward learning activities for the LLV to be transcribed by specialized teachers. This made the LLV to lag behind to the extent that their final examinations were affected due to inadequacy in preparations. However, head teachers from both school A and B noted that teachers who were not trained in Special Education did not know how to handle LLV.

The findings agreed with Sharma and Furlanger (2010) cited in Kabeto (2015) who found that within the field of mentoring collaboration with colleagues and administrators support could increase new general education teachers commitment. Further collaboration among general teachers and special educators has been found to be the only factor that relate to teachers positive response towards inclusion.

The researcher observed that teachers in both schools A and B did not collaborate over the issues of LLV which negatively affected the LLV in the social experiences and academic work.

Academic performance

It was revealed that the academic performance of most of the LLV was affected. They did not perform well because of the challenges they encountered in the inclusive schools. The HoDs from school A and B reported that most of the LLV did perform poorly for they did not receive support from some ordinary teachers. Learners also reported that mostly they did not receive feedback in good time as transcribing their work by teachers was a challenge in schools.

The findings are similar with Singh and Kumar (2012) who in his study revealed that secondary school students with low vision in an inclusive India classroom faced difficulties in reading, writing and taking notes; difficulties in participating and performing in class; and difficulties in preparing for performing in the examination.

It was evident from the findings that most of the LLV performed poorly academically in both A and B schools. However, it is important to engage LLV in academic activities such as presentations, group work and whatever activities done in and outside the classroom. Bandura (1983) emphasizes that, children learn through observation, imitating and interaction.

5.4 Perceptions of Head teachers, HoDs, teachers, sighted and learners with low vision on the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools.

It is evident from the findings that most teachers and sighted learners perceived the LLV to be pretenders; sighted learners also regarded LLV to have a number of challenges in inclusive schools which called for attention by administrators, teachers and sighted learners. Most school administrators accepted LLV in an inclusive school and regarded them as learners who could also succeed in their academic work. LLV perceived themselves to be potential learners despite having a challenge with their sight. During FGDs, some of the learners from school B complained about the negative attitude of some teachers. They said most of the teachers did not understand them and some teachers tended to isolate them so that they could be learning separately. They were told that the LLV just pretend that they do not see properly mean while their eyes looked normal

Korir (2015) study revealed that majority of the students had a positive perception of the policy of integration. This is attributed to the fact that some VI students actually excel in class far much better than their sighted peers. However, those who negated this view cited a

number of challenges that were experienced by the VI students. However, teachers' perceptions differed from the perceptions of the students because the teachers were not sensitized and lacked the required skills to handle VI learners.

Similar studies done by Corn and Sacks (1996) which found that, LLV often appear sighted and they may not be understood by their fellow learners who are sighted, their teachers and other people around them. Mbiti (2015) observed that LLV felt lonely most of the times. This loneliness may have arisen from the fact that sighted peers and teachers saw them as sighted therefore, could not understand when in some instances they claimed they could not see.

The findings were generally in agreement with those of Mandyata (2002; 2011) who found that ordinary teachers were not in favour of having learners with disabilities in inclusive schools for they slowed the progress of learners without disabilities. Their argument has been that opportunities for effective participation in academic work, availability of resources, sport equipment and support services in inclusive schools were not enough for all learners to support benefit from inclusive schooling. These views were in line with Kalabula (1991) study which found that teachers were unwilling to support inclusive schooling because of several practical and technical problems. These included: lack of educational resources, inadequate level of information and teaching skills to meet the individual needs of all pupils in ordinary schools.

The researcher observed that the perceptions of school administrators on the social and academic experiences of LLV were positive in both A and B schools although schools had a number of challenges in these learners. Most of the ordinary teachers did not pay much attention to their social and academic experiences because they were not trained to handle

learners with visual impairments. For sighted learners, some accepted them and others did not.

5.5 Interventions instituted to improve Social and Academic Experiences of Learners with Low vision.

The findings showed that measures were put in place in order to cater for learners with low vision in both A and B inclusive schools. These included: classroom management, sensitization, frequent sourcing of teaching and learning materials, creation of social environment acceptable to all, advocacy of inclusion of LVI and the community and remedial work.

Classroom Management.

During Focus Group Discussions, majority of learners from school B mentioned of controlling of noise in the classroom to allow LLV to concentrate during lessons. The head teachers, HoDs and teachers reported that they made sure that noise was avoided to help LLV in inclusive schools and they were made to sit in front so that they concentrate in doing their work. That is in line with Carney, Engbretson and Scammell (2003) who noted that the seating in the classroom depended on the functioning vision of the student. For instance usually a student with VI would sit in front of the classroom to be in closer proximity to the teacher and the board. The findings are also similar with Dakwa (2011) who affirmed that whatever intervention measures taken to promote the inclusion of the child with visual impairment in the school situation were meant to provide quality life for him. The quality opportunities availed to him will lead to acceptance by members of the community.

However the researcher observed that even if this intervention was put in place, this was not being implemented by all the teachers teaching LLV in the two study districts. More has to be done in order for the LLV to have the positive social and academic experiences.

Sensitization

The study has revealed that in inclusive school some head teachers had taken time to sensitize the teachers, sighted learners and parents as well. This sensitization was done through assemblies, staff briefings, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. In these meetings, the school administrators emphasized more on supporting learners with visual impairments in their school work, socializing with them and accepting their status as well. Although school administrators at the same time complained that it was not easy for them more especially for the ordinary teachers who portrayed a negative attitude to the LLV in the school. Specialist teachers in favour of supporting such learners and usually were given chance to educate both the sighted learners and teachers in such meetings. The results were similar with (Katharina, 2014) who found that sensitization of the learners, teachers and the public could overcome discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities in schools.

Frequent sourcing of Teaching and Learning Materials

From interviews with Head Teachers, HoDs and teachers, it was revealed that some teaching and learning materials had been sourced from well-wishers and this helped the learners with low vision in an inclusive school. Majority of the respondents indicated that LLV were usually advised to source for the learning materials which some of them managed to go with at school. The results were similar to Owusu – Amoako (2015) who indicated that teachers should provide additional instructional support in the form of braille writing, transcription of

class work and enlargement of prints which helped to meet the needs of the pupils with visual impairments.

The researcher observed that the issue of learning and teaching materials in schools was critical in the sense that not all LLV were able to provide their own learning materials and this led to inconsistency in doing their work. For instance, the use of magnifying glasses and braille for reading and writing.

Creation of social environment acceptable for all

The study findings revealed that creation of social environment acceptable for LLV in both school A and B was considered. Some specialists reported that they were given chances to educate teachers and sighted learners to interact with the LVI both in and outside the class room to help them excel in both their social and academic work. This is similar to Watkins (2007) who noted that it was important to focus on creating an optimum learning so that the children learn well and achieve their potential.

The researcher noted that whatever the case might be, there was need for the inclusive schools to take keen interest in the welfares of LVI.

Advocacy of inclusion of learners with visual impairments and the community

The study showed that majority of the respondents from both schools reported that advocacy of the inclusion of LVI and the community was being done by the specialists teachers. This was usually done during assemblies and staff meetings. The parents were being oriented during PTA meetings. Administrators and teachers should talk to the children in schools to create awareness on the right to education and prepare children to support and welcome these who are included (UNICEF, 2014).

The researcher noted that the administrators and some teachers were able to advocate for the inclusion of LVI and the community but the advocacy should be strengthened by involving all the teachers and learners in order for LVI to be helped in inclusive schools. LLV can only do well both socially and academically if they were accepted by the school and the community.

Remedial Work

The findings of the study have revealed that remedial work was being given by specialist teachers at the unit in both the urban and rural schools. This was mainly in reading and writing and usually LLV were given chance to complete their class work from the special unit which they had not finished during their class time. This was consistence with Owusu Amoako (2015) who pointed out that the school should have a resource room for the resource personnel and adequate supply of writing materials for pupils with VI.

The researcher observed that remedial work was important to the LLV in that they lagged behind in most of the class work hence teachers needed to create time to help them catch up in their work and that both teachers and sighted learners needed to interact with the LVI in and outside class activities. This is the only way LLV would have positive experiences both socially and academically.

5.6 Summary of chapter

The chapter discussed the findings regarding the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools.

The findings of the study revealed that LLV faced numerous social and academic challenges. These ranged from teasing, bullying, discrimination, lack of social support. On the part of

academic experiences, there was lack of teaching and learning materials, inadequate special education teachers to handle learners with visual impairments and lack of coordination between specialized teachers and ordinary teachers. School administrators in both A and B schools gave support to the LLV while teachers and sighted learners did not do much concerning the social and academic experiences of LLV.

The next chapter presents the summary of the study findings and the conclusions drawn from the results. It also suggests some recommendations and areas of future research.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

The chapter presents a summary of the study and conclusion drawn from the results. It also presents the recommendations made for the present study and suggestions for future research.

6.2 Summary

The study presented an introduction to the study (social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools) by outlining the major features. These included: the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, limitation and delimitation of the study, theoretical framework and definitions of terms. Related literature has been reviewed to the topic under study. There appeared to be a gap on the views of stakeholders on social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools in Zambia. The methodology was presented which was used to generate data from the respondent. It discussed methodological aspects that were key factor to the collection and processing data of the study. The aspects concerning reliability, validity and research ethics for this study were also discussed. Presentation of findings of the study was done regarding the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools of Lusaka and Mbala Districts. Findings have been presented according to the research objectives cited in chapter one (1). Discussions of the findings regarding the social and academic experiences of LLV in inclusive schools were presented.

6.3 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to investigate the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in selected secondary schools in Lusaka and Mbala Districts of Zambia.

The objectives of the study were to: establish social experiences of learners with low vision in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools in Lusaka and Mbala; assess academic experiences that have characterized learning of LLV in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools; establish perceptions of Head teachers HoDs, teachers, sighted and LLV on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in schools; and explore the interventions instituted to improve social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools in the two districts.

With regard to the social experiences of the inclusion of LLV, the findings showed that the attitude of some teachers and some sighted learners towards LLV was negative in the two schools studied. During FGDs both sighted and LLV indicated that learners with low vision were discriminated, teased and bullied in the mainstream environment and found it difficult to participate in social activities. On the academic experiences of learners with low vision it was found that there was lack of specialized teachers, lack of learning and teaching materials, and lack of coordination between specialized and ordinary teachers as well as that no extra time given to LLV which compromised their learning. It was evident from the findings that most teachers and learners with low vision perceived LLV as pretenders while Head Teachers and HoDs did not. Interventions that the schools instituted to improve the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision included: sensitization of school administrators, teachers and learners, creation of social environment acceptable to all, frequent sourcing and learning materials and advocacy of inclusion of LLV in schools and communities.

It was evident that LLV had negative social and academic experiences in both urban and rural schools in that they were not fully socially and academically accommodated in schools practicing inclusive education. LLV in schools were not adequately socially and academically

supported hence contributing to their lagging behind in their social and academic performance.

6.4 Recommendations

In view of the research findings, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. The Heads of schools should strengthen sensitization of learners and teachers on social life of learners with low vision to stop stigmatization.
2. The Ministry of General Education (MoGE) should provide instructional materials and equipment to support academic life of learners with low vision in schools.
3. Teachers should accept learners with LLV and support them in terms of social and academic issues so as for them to be accommodated in inclusive schools.
4. The Ministry of General Education should strengthen INSET programmes in schools to build capacity for teachers without skills in special Education.
5. Head teachers should strengthen provision of interventions such as sensitization on the issues of VI in schools, creation of social environment acceptable to all and frequent sourcing of teaching and learning materials as a way of improving the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive school settings.

6.5 Suggestion for future research

The study investigated the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in selected inclusive urban and rural secondary schools of Lusaka and Mbala District in Zambia.

Future studies can focus on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive primary schools in Zambia.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Parental consent for young learners

Dear respondent,

This is to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your participation are explained below. Finally, you are being asked to sign this form to indicate that you have agreed to participate in this exercise.

Thank you in advance.

Description

The exercise is an educational research; the researcher is a student at the University of Zambia pursuing Masters of Education in Special Education. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete her programme. Therefore, this exercise is purely academic.

Purpose

The study seeks to investigate the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in selected inclusive secondary schools. The researcher is interested in social experiences surrounding learners with low vision in inclusive secondary schools, the academic experiences that have characterized the learning of learners with low vision in secondary schools, perceptions of Head Teachers, HoDs, Teachers, LV and Sighted on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision. The researcher is also interested in the intervention instituted to improve the social and academic experiences of learners with low in inclusive secondary schools.

Consent

Participation in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise.

Confidentiality

All data collected from this research is treated with utmost confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

Rights of Respondents

All effort will be taken to ensure that the rights of participants are protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

Declaration of Consent

I have read and fully understood this document. I therefore agree to participate in this exercise.

Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix B: Interview schedule for the head teachers and heads of department

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the master of special education, carrying out a research on the “social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools of Lusaka and Mbala Districts”. I am humbly requesting you to participate in this research as a respondent. The information will be used for academic purposes only. The source of the information as well as your responses will be treated with maximum confidentiality.

Please answer the following questions.

1. What is the name of the school?
2. Would you say your school is rural, peri-urban or urban?
3. When was your school opened?
4. How long have you served as a teacher?
5. How many members of staff does the school have?
6. How many? (a) Male (b) Female
7. Are you aware of the policy provision of inclusive education?
8. If yes, what is your understanding of inclusive education?
9. How many teachers for visually impaired learners are in your school?
10. If yes how many? (a) Male (b) Female
11. What are the social experiences of LLV in inclusive schools?
12. Mention some school activities in which LLV are involved.

13. Do these teachers who teach LLV participate in some of these various school activities available in your school?
14. What are the academic experiences that have characterized learning of LLV at your school?
15. Are the teachers able to adjust the time table in order to assist LLV?
16. If yes, how? If no, why?
17. As the head teacher/HoD do you organize programs concerning special education in your school?
18. If yes, how?
19. Do teachers give extra time to those with different disabilities including those with low vision?
20. As the head teacher/ HoD of this school do you give support to the learners who are teaching LLV in regular classrooms? If so what type of support do you give?
21. What do you think are the perceptions of head Teachers, HoDs, teachers, low visioned and signed on the learners with low vision in inclusive schools?
22. Are the LLV fully accommodated in inclusive schools? If yes, how?
23. If no, why?
24. What interventions have been instituted by the schools in order to cater for learners with low vision in your school?

25. Do you have any comment/suggestions you would like to make on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in your school?

Thank you for your co-operation

Appendix C: Interview guide for the teachers

1. What is the name of the school?
2. Would you say your school is rural, peri-urban or urban?
3. When was your school opened?
4. How long have you served as a teacher?
5. How many members of staff does the school have?
6. How many? (a) Male (b) Female
7. Are you aware of the policy provision of inclusive education?
8. If yes, what is your understanding of inclusive education?
9. How many teachers for VI learners are in your school?
10. How many? (a) Male (b) Female
11. What are the social experiences of LLV in inclusive schools?
12. Mention some school activities in which LLV are involved.
13. Do these teachers who teach learners with low vision participate in some of these various school activities available in your school?
14. What are the academic experiences that have characterized learning of LLV in inclusive schools ?
15. Are the teachers able to adjust the time table in order to assist learners with low vision?
16. If yes, how? If no, why?
17. As the teacher do you organize programs concerning special education in your school?

18. If yes, how? If no, why?

19. Do teachers give extra time to those with different disabilities including those with low vision?

20. As the teacher of this school do you give support to the learners who are teaching learners with low vision in regular classrooms? If so what type of support do you give?

21. What do you think are the perceptions of Head Teachers, HoDs, teachers, LLV and sighted learners on the learners with low vision in inclusive schools?

22. Are the learners with low vision fully accommodated in inclusive schools? If yes, how?

23. If no, why?

24. What interventions have been instituted by the school in order to cater for learners with low vision in your school?

25. Do you have any comment/suggestions you would like to make on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in your school?

Thank you for your co-operation

Appendix D: Focus group discussion guide for learners with low and sighted learners

Purpose

We will be discussing educational issues related to social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools. The objectives of this study are: (i) to establish the social experiences of LLV in rural and urban inclusive secondary schools. (ii) to assess academic experiences that have characterized the learning of LLV in secondary schools. (iii) to establish perceptions from head teachers, HoDs, teachers, sighted and LLV on the social and academic experiences of learners with low vision in inclusive schools. (vi) to explore the interventions instituted by the schools to improve social and academic experiences of L LV in inclusive schools.

Explain the ground rules for discussions

This is a friendly discussion so there are no wrong or right answers. Everyone should feel free to air his/her opinion. We would like to have one speaker at any time. You should feel free to agree or disagree in a friendly manner. We will spend about forty minutes in our discussion.

1. Are you aware of the policy provision of inclusive education and if you are aware what does it say?
2. What do you think are the social experiences of LLV in inclusive schools?
3. Mention some school activities in which LLV are involved.
4. Do you participate in some of these activities available in your school? If yes, how? If no, Why?
5. Do learners with low vision at your school receive support socially from sighted learners, teachers and head teacher and HoDs?
6. If they do receive explain and if they don't explain
7. What do you think are the academic experiences that have characterized learning of LLV at your school?

8. Are the teachers able to adjust the time tables in order to allow collaborations with LLV?
9. If yes, how? If no why?
10. Do teachers give extra time to those with different disabilities including those with low vision?
11. What are the perceptions of head Teachers, Teachers, Sighted learners towards learners with LV in inclusive school?
12. Are the learners with low vision fully accommodated in inclusive schools? If yes, how?
13. If no, why?
14. What interventions have the school instituted in order to improve the social and academic experiences of LLV in your school?
15. Do you think the government should train more special teachers to teach learners with special educational needs in inclusive school?
16. If yes, explain and if no, you should explain.
17. Do you have any comment/suggestion you would make on the social and academic experiences of LLV in your school?

Thank you for your co-operation.