

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS WITH VISUAL
IMPAIRMENT IN NDOLA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF TH E
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CURRICULUM**

BY

ANGELA MULENGA CHANDA

**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment of the
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Education.**

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DECLARATION

I, **Angela Mulenga Chanda**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has not been previously submitted by anyone at the University or any other University.

Signature:

Date: /...../.....

APPROVAL

This dissertation of Angela Mulenga Chanda is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Special Education of the University of Zambia.

Examiner 1	Signature	Date
.....

Examiner 2	Signature	Date
.....

Examiner 3	Signature	Date
.....

Chairperson/ Board of Examiners	Signature	Date
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Supervisor	Signature	Date
.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work of my hands to my dearest husband and our children Mukubulo, Mwelwa, Mulenga and Mumba. My heart goes out to my family for understanding my situation in the overwhelming work laid upon me making me unavailable in moments they needed me the most.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to the Almighty God for the special grace He has forever provided for me.

ABSTRACT

The study assessed the contributions of the curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola district, Zambia. The objectives that guided this study were: to establish the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with impairment; to assess factors surrounding socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and to explore the contributions (if any) of the curriculum to socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district. The study employed a case study research design supported by qualitative methods of data collection in order to get in-depth information. A sample size of 26 participants consisting: 12 school leavers with visual impairment, one Head teacher, 10 grade teachers of learners with visual impairment, one Education Standards Officer (ESO), one Senior Education Standard Officer (SESO) and one Curriculum Specialist for visual impairment from the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). The participants were purposively selected for the study. Data was collected using interview and Focus Group Discussion Guides. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis method. The study revealed that although learners with visual impairment used the same curriculum as the sighted in the main stream, it was too theoretical and not quite relevant to the prevailing socio-economic detects in the study district. The curriculum did not make significant contribution to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area in that they continued to live in poverty. The study further revealed that school leavers with visual impairment continued to depend on odd socio-economic activities such as begging in streets and heavy dependence on their relatives for daily livelihood which was indicative of inadequacies in the curriculum they were once exposed to. The inadequacies in the curriculum, in relation to socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment were attributed to: shortage of qualified and specialist teachers; lack of pre-vocational skills content in the curriculum, limited learning materials and equipment to support practical skill pre-vocational training; inappropriate skills assessment process and lack of a clear linkage between school, vocational and tertiary education curriculum. The study recommended the following: prioritising pre-vocational skills training in the curriculum for a possible uplifting of the socio-economic lives of the would be school leavers in the study district, employing qualified teachers specifically for training programmes associated with pre- and vocational training activities, to handle vocational skills related areas. Promote collaboration among various stakeholders such as line ministries; churches; communities and Non-Governmental organisations.

Key words: *Socio-economic, School leavers, Visual impairment, Curriculum.*

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADL	Activities for Daily Living
AFB	American Foundation for the Blind
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
ECC	Expanded Core Curriculum
EFA	Education for All
ESO	Education Standard Officer
FINCA	Foundation for International Community Assistance
GRZ	Government of the Republic Zambia
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoGE	Ministry of General Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ONCE	Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos Espanoles
PWD	People living with Disabilities
PWVI	People Living with Visual Impairment
SADC	Southern African Development Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SESO	Senior Education Standard Officer

SNDP	Seventh National Development Plan
TEVETA	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
VI	Visual Impairment
ZATEC	Zambia Teacher Education Course
ZBEC	Zambia Basic Education Teacher's Course
ZCF	Zambia Curriculum Framework
ZPC	Zambia Primary Course

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Curriculum:	In this study refers to the lessons and the course content taught in a school or in a specific course or programme. It was broadly defined as the totality of the student's social and academic experiences that occur in the educational process.
Visual Impairment:	In this study refers to either low vision (partial loss of sight) which is a decreased ability to see physical things without the help of assistive technology such as glasses, contact lenses or large prints. It also means vision loss (blindness) which means inability to completely see physical things.
Livelihood:	In this study refers to (the way someone earns) the money a person needs to pay for food, a place to live in clothing and so forth.
Socio-economic Status:	In this study refers to a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. In addition, it is the total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation, which enhances the level of interaction with others in society.
Beggar:	In this study refers to a poor person who asks others or begs for money or food.
Street:	In this study refers to a public thoroughfare (usually) paved in a built environment; it is a public land adjoining building in a road.
School Leaver:	In this study means a person who is no longer in school or has left school after completing grade 12.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

In this chapter, an overview to the study is provided. The chapter discusses the background, the statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. It also discusses delimitations, limitations and theoretical framework. The chapter ends with a summary.

1.2 Background

Street begging among persons with visual impairment was not a new phenomenon as it dated back to the time of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible records that as Jesus approached Jericho a blind man was sitting by the road side begging (Luke 18 v 35:1165 New International Version). This practice still exists even today, despite modern education being available to persons with disabilities, in particular persons with visual impairment. The phenomena of street begging amongst the blind had actually been on an increase at an alarming rate, especially in the street of Ndola despite many such people having completed school. It was now a common feature to find the blind adults and their children sleeping in the street of the above-mentioned town. The influx of the blind beggars in the mentioned town had increased because of the towns' central location and commercial activities.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2013), reported that persons with visual impairment often had to resort to street begging as a means of survival though most of them had been to school. In spite of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2017 which sought to end poverty in all its forms, people with visual impairment continued to beg on the streets of major towns in Zambia.

The life of street begging amongst persons with visual impairment gave rise to the need for assessing the contributions made by the curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment. The assessment of the contributions of the curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment was necessary because of what the curriculum was believed to be. According to Bilbao, Lucido, Iringan and Javier (2008), curriculum referred to the total learning experiences

of individuals not only in school but in society as well. The curriculum was therefore thought to have a great influence on the kind of life that was led by those exposed to it.

Wang in Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005), inferred that in order to teach others, or help others to learn, it was critical to develop a sound and meaningful curriculum. The observations were that, without a curriculum there was no expectation from teachers to teach or help others learn in the field of education even though they had qualifications in that field. Education, at its' basic level, provided skills for survival. The knowledge of the curriculum was central to professional teachers and an essential tool for all responsible professionals. Curriculum in its widest frame needed to be aimed at aiding the process of learning rather than the process of teaching (Gagné, Wager, Golas, & Keller, 2005). Indeed, a curriculum was aimed at "intentional" learning as opposed to "incidental" learning. Gagné, Wager, Golas, and Keller, (2005) further cited that target goals and desired learning outcomes guided the design and selection of learning activities. Gagne (1985) defined learning as a process that led to a change in a learner's disposition and capabilities that could be reflected in behaviour. Curriculum development needed to aid the process of learning so that learners could acquire skills valued in the world of works by being exposed to a sound and meaningful curriculum created and taught by professional teachers with prior occupational skills and knowledge.

The contributions of the curriculum to the socio-economic life needed to be assessed since the assumption was that although some people with visual impairment were engaged in street begging, they had been to school. The assessment of the contributions of the curriculum was therefore, to help determine whether or not school leavers with visual impairment had been adequately prepared for a sustainable (socially and economically) life after leaving school.

In 2010, the population of persons living with disabilities including persons with visual impairment on the Copperbelt towns was estimated at 1.6 percent and in the rural areas it was at 2.4 percent of the total population (CSO, 2010). The literacy rate for the disabled population on the Copperbelt province was 73.0 percent and of this percentage, Ndola had the highest proportion of people with disabilities. The population of persons

with disabilities not in school was estimated at 60.1percent (CSO, 2010). This was a clear indication of the low level of exposure to education and hence the need to implement sensitisation programmes on the importance of education and putting in place a curriculum that addressed the needs of the disabled persons in particular persons with visual impairment. One would think increased number of persons with visual impairment on the streets of the study area was partly due to inadequacies in the school curriculum availed to the disabled persons.

The government of Zambia, in its effort to provide education as a way of bettering lives of its citizens, had appended its' signature to most of the world's global conferences that had emerged, to ensure that quality of life for every person was achieved through education. Such conference resolutions that had promoted special and inclusive education included those contained in the Salamanca statement and frame work for action (UNESCO, 1994). The statement reaffirmed the right to education for every individual, which was also enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of the Human Rights, and was pledged by the world conference on Education For All (EFA) of 1990, which sought to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities were upheld. In addition, the statement mentioned the 1994 UN Standard Rules on the equalization of opportunities, which inferred that education of disabled children should be an integral part of the education system. This meant that education would serve as a vehicle to fight poverty and prejudice in the life of the disabled.

Although the rights of children had not been mentioned, the principle that guided this frame work was that, schools could not discriminate, instead accepted children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and other disadvantaged marginalised groups. Representatives from 92 countries (including Zambia) and 25 international organizations re-affirmed the right of all children with special needs (including persons with visual impairment) to an education within the general education system (Chitiyo, 2006; UNESCO; 1994).

Regionally, Zambia affirmed allegiance to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), whose main focus was achieving economic well-being, improving the standard of living, quality of life, freedom, social justice, peace and security for

people of southern Africa. This shared vision was backed up by the common values, principles, historical and cultural affirmatives that existed among the principle of Southern Africa towards support on education for all including those with visual impairments (SADC, 2010).

Locally, The Government of Zambia had reaffirmed its' commitment to the socio-economic development planning, through the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) for the period of 2017-2021 (GRZ, 2017). The plan's aim was to ensure that the country became a prosperous middle-income country by the year 2030.

The Civil Society Organisation (CSO), (2012) noted that although the country (Zambia) had recorded impressive economic growth, there had been little positive impact on the socio-economic conditions of the majority of Zambians. This was attributed to low levels of employment in the formal sector. Therefore, CSO's suggestion of 2012 was the development of a culture of entrepreneurship and self-employment, facilitating market-driven training and skills development in entrepreneurship to be put in place in order to alleviate poverty. In addition, lack of equitable access to land was a major hindrance to reducing poverty. CSO (2012) also cited challenges faced by people living with disabilities, in particular, persons with visual impairment such as lack of vocational skills to help them engage in self-employment activities, lack of income generating ventures, lack of employment as some of the issues that tended to promote inequalities in Zambia.

GRZ (2017), being concerned with cross-cutting and emerging issues, had included measures to address the needs of the disabled and to facilitate their integration as productive members of society. Government noted that, key issues of those vulnerable groups were not attended to and needed to be considered since their living conditions were extremely difficult. To achieve this, government had intentions of focusing on infrastructure development, access to social services such as health, home security, education, skills and entrepreneurship training as well as access to employment for people with disabilities in particular persons with visual impairment. Furthermore, it was noted that compared to non-disabled persons, persons with visual impairment in particular experienced higher rates of unemployment due to lack of acceptance by

fellow workers (sighted peers) at work and employers being biased against them and also largely due to lack of preparedness on the part of individuals with visual impairments when they left school (Douglas & Hewett, 2014). Therefore, the social and economic inactivity, left them at greater risk of insufficient social protection which was key to reducing extreme poverty.

GRZ (2017), postulated that improved education and skills development were key factors in creating societies that were better able to respond to social economic development challenges that a nation faced. The availability of educated and skilled labour force was necessary for smooth transition of all economic sectors towards highly productive activities, raised labour productivity, reduced poverty and built resilience in the economy which depended on education training and economic activities. Further, GRZ (2017) acknowledged that education in all its forms was expected to produce an efficient and inclusive labour force which could resolve mismatches in work force demand and supply and enabled all citizens whether abled or disabled to participate in and benefit from the nations' economic growth. The education sector also played a key role in the economic growth of the nation and hence required quality delivery. The report saw the need for a school curriculum that was responsive to socio-economic lifestyles of its citizenry.

In order to promote quality teaching and learning, the government enacted the Teaching Professional Act in 2013 which facilitated the establishment of the Teaching Council of Zambia. The Act was aimed at promoting professionalism in the teaching service and regulating teacher training institutions. Further, it was believed that without a professional body, the quality of education in Zambia was prone to being compromised through poor quality education services. GRZ (2017), reported that the education sector together with other sectors would employ several ways to ensure that efforts were working towards attainment of Zambia's Vision 2030. One way was the enactment of Education Act (2011), putting in place The Basic School Curriculum Framework, MoE (2012), The Zambia Education Curriculum Framework, MoE (2013) and the introduction of policies such as *Educating our Future*, MoE (1996). Another way of enhancing attainment of the vision was inclusion and participation of all citizens taking

into account their age, gender, disability and other factors. Furthermore, GRZ (2017) intended placing more emphasis on improving the quality and relevance of education for every citizen of Zambia through a curriculum that was accommodative and relevant to socio-economic situation in the country.

The 1996 policy document, *Educating Our Future* emphasised that education was a right for each individual citizen. It was also a means of enhancing the well-being and quality of life for the entire society. The government, therefore, sought to create, promote and support the conditions within which education could realise its potential (MoE, 1996). The questions were, government having been so concerned with the education for every citizen, making accessibility to education a mandate, why was there an influx of persons with visual impairment on the street using begging as a means of survival after having left school? Did the old curriculum prepare school leavers with visual impairment adequately to enable them stand on their own after having gone through schooling?

The issue at hand may look like a social problem but it was more of a special education problem in that at the time of school age, it was believed that every child captured under special education had been accorded the full opportunity to learn under a curriculum that would enable the school leavers acquire knowledge and skills to lead self-sustainable lives in the community. Thus, this had the potential of creating a balance of life's opportunities at the end of the school programme for the disabled (MoE, 2013). This therefore meant that school leavers with visual impairment would either get formal employment or even employ themselves through the vocational skills that they would have had acquired through pre-vocational skills, hence making them live a sustainable life that was self-reliant, independent and not dependent on begging or relatives (Mandyata, Chikopela, Ngambi, Kasonde-Ngandu, Ndhlovu, Kalabula, & Chinombwe, 2017). Yet the picture of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district appeared to be quite different (begging most of the time instead of being employed or being self-employed).

In Zambia, the curriculum for children with special education needs was believed to be an adaptation of the general school curriculum. This meant that the general school

curriculum was modified or adjusted to suit the needs of the pupils with special needs. It was a curriculum that aimed at meeting individual needs of children and youths with special needs. In addition, it was a curriculum that moved them in the direction to realise their potential and prepare them for appropriate participation in community life, including socio-economic stability (Simalalo, 2017, Mtonga, 2011). The question to ask was, had the curriculum addressed school leavers with visual impairments' needs in such a way as to set them up for life's satisfaction?

It was, therefore, for this reason that the researcher had been prompted to go beyond what met the eye by associating the problem to the education system under special Education Department. It was assumed that these adults with visual impairment, who were once children, should have been catered for in terms of effective education services. What socio-economic life are school leavers with visual impairment engaged in? What contributions has the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment? These questions needed to be addressed as one attempted to understand why there was such high numbers of beggars among the adults with visual impairment. The fact still stood that education was a right for both abled and disabled persons or learners with special education needs and, therefore, it needed to avail opportunities for all citizens to live better lives.

The study therefore attempted to assess the socio-economic life of learners with visual impairment and the contributions of the school curriculum to their current livelihood in Ndola district of the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Mweetwa (2012), reports that the socio-economic life of persons with visual impairment has been of great concern to Zambia. For survival persons with visual impairment at times roamed the street begging for alms. In order to promote equity, the Government of the Republic of Zambia through its numerous efforts, however, has shown concern about the plight of persons with visual impairment. This is evident through the Central Statistical Office report of 2010. The report views the government of Zambia as having made provisions to prepare persons with visual impairment for life in the community that is, legislatively and through policy formulation such as 1996

Education Policy, Education Act 2011, Disability Act of 2012 and 2014 Social Cash Transfer Policy under the auspices of the Ministry of Community Development. The intention has been to support the welfare of vulnerable people including those with visual impairment in various sectors of life such as education, health just to mention a few. It is assumed that these persons with visual impairment who were once in school should have decent life in their respective communities which is not the case at present (Kalabula, 2007).

The questions however remain; how is the socio-economic life like among school leavers with visual impairment in the study district? It was for this reason that the study sought to assess the socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment and contributions of curriculum in Ndola District, on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the nature of the socio – economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and the contributions made by the curriculum to their livelihood in Ndola District, on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To establish the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.
2. To assess the factors surrounding the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.
3. To explore the contributions (if any) of the curriculum to socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.

1.6 Research Questions

- 1 What is the nature of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?
- 2 What factors have surrounded the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?

- 3 What contributions (if any), has the curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?

1.7 Significance of the study

Firstly, it is hoped that the findings of the study would help the curriculum specialist develop a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of learners with visual impairment consequently making them lead quality independent socio-economic life (devoid of begging). Secondly, it is hoped that the study findings would help the Government, through the Ministry of Education, provide materials, equipment and qualified teachers for effective implementation of the curriculum. Thirdly, it is hoped that the findings would create awareness amongst the various stake holders such as churches, parents non-Governmental Organisations and the community on the need to support school leavers with visual impairment to lead socially and economically independent lives.

Fourthly, the findings may help the Examination Council of Zambia revisit its examination process in terms of examination time allocation and release of examination results for the learners with visual impairment. In the case of teachers, it is hoped that the findings of the study would help them to see the need of having the curriculum adapted from the onset and teaching of the vocational skills. Learners with visual impairment may also benefit from this study in that the study findings would make them be aware of the importance of academic pursuits as well as vocational skill of their interest from the onset.

The findings may also provide vital information to Education Planners, Managers and Service Organisations with baseline information about the plight of school leavers with visual impairment. Last but not the least, it is believed that the study findings would add to available body of knowledge on issues of curriculum in the context of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Zambia.

1.8 Limitations

Since this was a qualitative study, it was limited by a small sample size that could not allow generalization of the findings to the wider population.

1.9 Delimitation

This study was carried out in Ndola district on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. The town had been chosen because of income generating activities such as small-scale mining, agriculture and street vending and free interactive environment that attracted persons with visual impairment from other towns to converge in the study district.

1.10 Theoretical framework

Dreyfus model of skills acquisition was developed in the 1980s and the model is still relevant today. Dreyfus and Hubert (1980) theory on skills acquisition believed that practice led to performance improvements. The model qualifies as a theory that proposes practice which led to more efficient procedures for performing a vocational task that could have a bearing on one's livelihood. In addition, Dreyfus and Hubert (1980) explained that as human beings acquire a skill through instructions and experiences, they do not just get to the know-how overnight and become expert's overtime. In their skill acquisition model, the two scholars postulated that individuals pass through five keys stages before they could become experts in the area they are pursuing. The theory cites: Novice, Advanced Beginner, Competent, Proficient and Expert as stages one went through before a more viable livelihood was attained from an education or training experience.

The progression, through the five stages, is viewed as a gradual process that an individual need to go through in order for him or her to reach the stage of expertise or knowing-how (Hall & Grealy, 2013). The aspect of skill acquisition is very important to persons with visual impairment. According to Hill and Blasch (1980), it is believed that 85 percent of what is learnt is through vision (seeing) and mostly it is incidental, as for persons with visual impairment, it becomes a problem for them to relate to life experiences. They are limited in sight and hence largely depend on verbal instructions and coming in contact, if possible, with whatever they need to learn (tactile) which acts as a compensation for sight loss. Curriculum may be quite limited as being too theoretical in its service delivery. Hall and Grealy (2013) see and suggests practical aspect of skills acquisition for persons with visual impairment to have a chance of living a more positive life.

In line with the above theory, for the school curriculum to be relevant to socio-economic livelihood of persons with visual impairment, it needed to employ the five-phase skill acquisition. Through practice in skills acquisition, school leavers with visual impairment had opportunities to extend the same vocational related skills to their post school livelihood. As skills for academic excellence are pursued, even skills for self-employment could be explored through (hand crafts, farming, and business) related aspects of the curriculum. The achievement of skill acquisition would largely be dependent on the part of the school curriculum and how it is offered to learners. A skill-based curriculum would provide a positive integration into community for the school leavers with visual impairment which may not currently be the case in schools for learners with visual impairment.

1.11 Summary

Chapter one has discussed background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objective and research questions. It has also provided the significance, delimitation, limitations, theoretical framework. The chapter ends with the summary. The next chapter presents the review of related literature to justify the present study.

1.12 Organisation of the Dissertation

Chapter one discussed background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objective and research questions. It has also provided the significance, delimitation, limitations, theoretical framework. Chapter two, reviewed related literature to the study of other researchers and scholars. Chapter three focused on explaining the research methodology. It looked at the paradigm, research design, population sample as well as the sampling procedure used in the study. It also discussed research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis as well as ethical considerations before providing a summary of the chapter. Chapter four presented the findings of the study on the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola District in Zambia. Chapter five looked at discussion of findings. Chapter six provided the conclusion of the study, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviewed some of the related literature to the study by other researchers and scholars. The reviewed literature related to the objectives of the study, these being the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district, factors surrounding the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district and contributions of the curriculum if any to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment (development of the curriculum in Zambia and the analysis of the curriculum at global, regional and local levels)

2.2 Nature of Socio-Economic Life of School Leavers with Visual Impairment.

Blind people were individuals, whose vision was defective with corresponding functional limitations in visual orientation and mobility skills, daily living activities and visual tasks, resulting from poor or defective visual condition (Iroegbu, 2006). Individuals with visual impairment faced many problems when it came to getting tasks done due to lack of sight even when they used corrective lenses. Persons with visual impairment were unable to live self-sustainable lives for lack of survival skills and knowledge for independent living. Research conducted in three countries; Morocco, India and America revealed that persons with visual impairment were stigmatised and looked down upon with contempt (Hertz mark, 2012). The problem of failure to economically sustain themselves among persons with visual impairment may not just be a concern of the countries cited above, but also for a country like Zambia, hence the attempt through present study to investigate the socio-economic livelihood of persons with visual impairment in Ndola, Zambia.

In support of the findings, Hertzmark, (2012) observed that beggars with visual impairment on the street were harassed by law enforcing officers and in addition, stiff laws were put in place that were meant to deter persons with visual impairment from begging on the streets. Despite the introduction of the law that forbade them from begging, there was no change in the behaviour of persons with visual impairment as they continued with the trend of begging as a way to survive. In order to arrest the situation from getting out of hand, the three countries came up with punitive measures.

Examples of punitive measures put in place in Morocco for instance, were that beggars caught in the act, were imprisoned for six months whilst in India, persons with visual impairment found begging were detained and during the detention period were trained in one or two vocational skills and later on employed with the aim of preventing them from going back to the streets (Bombay, Prevention of beggary Act, 1959).

In United States of America, in the city of Los Angeles, a study revealed that begging did not meet any punitive measures as this was seen as an infringement on the freedom of expression (Hertzmark, 2012). Social interaction is one key point that was so cardinal for the uplifting of self-esteem for school leavers with visual impairment. For persons with visual impairment, social interaction was hindered due to challenges in mobility. A study carried out in Iran revealed that in every aspect of life, blindness and low vision alone reduced the quality of life. Research by Nzengwu and Dooley (2012), had shown that persons with partial sight were able to walk about and leave the house more often and encountered less difficulty leaving the house on their own than the person with no vision. The study had shown that persons with partial sight faced fewer problems than the blind in making friends, fulfilling life's roles, as well as felt less socially isolated. While, on the other hand, the blind tended to have more problems in undertaking life's roles, making friends, and social interactions because they had to depend on someone who was sighted to guide them around. The general impression is that both the partially sighted and the blind found themselves in the same problem as regards to sound socio-economic livelihood after their school experience, a situation which might be the same in the study site in Zambia.

Arising from the above literature, it appears that most school leavers with visual impairment led poor lives due to lack of engagement in income generating ventures. In India, a study by Khanna, Usha, and Rao, (2007) revealed that any kind of disability had an effect on the well-being of an individual, be it social, emotional or economic. Visual impairment too had a socio-economic dimension. One of its effects was that it could place a person with visual impairment at a risk of losing access to any means of livelihood. Khanna, Usha, and Rao, (2007), further revealed that visual impairment as a

disability often led to unemployment, which in turn led to loss of income, higher levels of poverty, hunger and low standards of living.

A study in Croatia (2004) by Bežovan concluded that the quality of life for persons with visual impairment was of poor quality. In addition, Bežovan (2004) findings were that currently, the only jobs that persons with visual impairment could be hired for were few positions such as telephone operators, administrators and administrative secretaries, which were not the career choice for most persons with visual impairment due to either lack of job specifications or relatively poor hiring opportunities. The picture was similar to Zambia before the onset of the mobile internet services. However, with the coming of the mobile internet services, jobs which were characteristic of people with visual impairment such telephone operation might not be available to them leading to failure to secure employment in industries and organizations which once provided such opportunities. Further, research had indicated that young people with visual impairment found the transition to post-school difficult. In addition, learners faced social isolation, and experienced high levels of unemployment and underemployment after school because of a mismatch between what the school was able to offer and the realities on the labour market. Consequently, post school transition which was so important to prepare persons with visual impairment for adult life proved to be a difficult experience more so among persons with visual impairment, a situation which might be the same in the study district.

In the study conducted by Islek, (2016), post school transition was seen to be a challenge among the learners with visual impairment and could not be ignored any longer. A study carried out in Turkey revealed that Turkey was one of the countries that had a highly prescriptive and controlled national curriculum in ensuring that it was implemented and taught the same subjects at the same level as other schools. Its national curriculum not only dictated which topics would be taught but it also prescribed when they could be taught, causing concerns whether specific needs of learners with visual impairment were addressed thereby, causing weakness in curriculum service provision. In addition, the key findings of the study were that, there was need to modify the curriculum in order to make it flexible and also to develop a

curriculum similar to the ECC (Expanded Core Curriculum) for teaching necessary skills for independent life. Islek, (2016) study did not address curriculum benefits in relation to independent living among school leavers with visual impairment as one of the key principles in the provision of education, an aspect the current study sought to investigate.

Additionally, learners with visual impairment faced challenges after school for lack of adequate preparation socially and economically. Konarska (2007), postulated that though transition-to-post school had been well-researched, there were still few studies that had examined how adolescents with visual impairment were prepared for post-school life. This preparation was about how the transition was, and how prepared they (learners) were for post-school life.

A similar study by Wong (2004), confirmed the difficulties that adolescents went through during the transition period such as social isolation and dependence. Research carried out in America showed too that transition from secondary school to post-school life was a very challenging time (McBroom; Tedder; 1993 & Wolffe, 2000). Although adolescents with visual impairment in secondary schools received innovative transition programmes, community experiences, and access to the regular school curriculum, it was observed that parents, educators, and professionals in the rehabilitation area struggled with issues related to social isolation, dependence and lack of potential employment prospects (Sacks, Wolffe, & Tierney, 1998). Every parent's wish was to see a positive change in a child after having passed through the education process. It was hoped that school would prepare the young people to live a life of self-sustenance. However, the assumption of the achievement of socio-economic sustainability, to a large extent, depended on the adequacy of preparation for independent life after school. In most cases, society's view of persons with visual impairment was of treatment with an attitude of abandonment, hostility at the same time with pity and a notion that such persons could not do things on their own, therefore it was normal for them to continue being dependent on others.

Other scholars like (Wong 2004; Johnson 1998 & Wolffe, 1997) had also noticed some of the barriers that had impeded on the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers

with visual impairment. Chukuka (2008), cites two reasons as sources of barriers to realising the educational goals for this category of learners. Firstly, the negative attitudes of most employers who saw the blind as unproductive or incapable of functioning in a job setting. Secondly, the current practice in educational provision (curriculum design) did not provide learners with visual impairment the experiences that could empower them to be self-employed. Chukuka (2008), further cited that the training given to persons with visual impairment seemed to limit them to job seekers instead of job creators. This was a notable feature in that as things stood now, most of the learners with visual impairment desire was to become either teachers or musicians assuming that these occupations were easier to achieve and fit in life for socio-economic gain a situation which might be the same in the study district.

A similar study by Ayodele and Ogbonnaya (2005) revealed that, persons with visual impairment, faced a lot of barriers in employment opportunities such as discrimination, exclusion from education and inability to access the business environment. Implying that, there was great need for thorough preparation for economic independence right from inception at school because of the many challenges faced in finding for themselves in the growing individualistic and materialistic world.

In Zambia, beggars with visual impairment were looked down upon with pity and at the same time were treated as objects of charity and a platform to gain favour in the eyes of God by giving alms to them. This act did not solve the problem of begging instead they (persons with visual impairment) needed vocational skills (Snelson, 1974 & Kalabula, 1989). The intention of the curriculum was to prepare every individual learner even persons with visual impairment to live a socio-economic independent life after school. There was need to also include efforts made by government to discourage the giving of alms in streets through social welfare. Zambia, through Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare has established the Social Cash Transfer for needy and disabled persons in the hope of alleviating poverty amongst them. Government's hope was to deter them from engaging in such vices as begging which was still going on. However, governments support does not provide adequately the much-needed economic independence. Generally, school leavers with visual impairment led a life of

dependence due to lack of economic empowerment-no employment, vocational skills, limited social interaction and under- education. Hence the ultimate means of survival was only through begging. Despite government efforts through policy formulation such as Disability Act (2012), *Educating Our Future* Moe (1996), Education Act of 2011 and the establishment of Social Cash Transfer Programme in 2014, school leavers with visual impairment still continued to live without anything significant to support their livelihood. Not much is known as to what contributions the curriculum has made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola district, Zambia. It was against this background that the researcher undertook this study aimed at assessing the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and the contributions of the curriculum to this socio-economic life (if any).

2.3 Factors Surrounding the Socio-Economic Life of School Leavers with Visual Impairment

The socio-economic status of persons with visual impairment was of great concern to everyone especially stakeholders and policy makers along with policy implementers in the education sector. The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy (2005), defined socio-economic status as an individual's or group's position within a hierarchical social structure. The features of socio-economic status included: occupation, education, income, wealth and place of residence. These variables were important in describing the social status of any individual or group of persons. The major issue of socio-economic status however, was poverty because it was the source of many other socio-economic concerns.

A study by Namonje and Mandyata (2017) revealed that from inception, African societies were built on a principle of collectivism, which attended to successes and failure within the family circles. The socio-economic status of an individual had a bearing on the social status and stability of the family. Most of the Zambians, including disabled persons had been absorbed in informal sector as herbalists, marketeers, street vendors (selling salaula), call-boys or bus conductors, gardeners, maids (servants) and shop assistants in trying to earn a living. Among the jobs mentioned above, it is very difficult for persons with visual impairment to be engaged in any of the above-

mentioned jobs due to stigma and stereotyping. Hence the need for the curriculum to specifically contribute to vocational training that would provide appropriate skills to prepare school leavers with visual impairment for a sustainable socio-economic livelihood after school. The present study seeks to establish the linkage between the school curriculum and the socio-economic lives of persons with visual impairment in the study district.

Social interaction is also key for human beings regardless of their status. It helps in the well-rounded development of an individual and enabled that individual to fit in the community and world of work. But many times, social skills which are supposed to be learnt through the school interactions are hindered. A study by Chikopela, Ndhlovu, Mandyata, and Mpolomoka (2018) revealed factors such as short-term funding and unskilled teaching staff as part of the challenges working against the full implementation of extracurricular activities in the curriculum which would produce an ideal social interactive environment for learners with disabilities. Could this be the same status in schools for learners with visual impairment?

Social and economic factors played a key role in work participation, more especially for persons with visual impairment. Before any participation in work, people with visual impairment needed training in Braille, communication, use of information, technology, orientation and mobility. Besides Braille training and other factors necessary for work participation, persons with visual impairment needed career counselling in order to prepare them for the world of work. It was also noted that living environment for the persons with visual impairment played an important role in their life. In this case, a conducive living environment, coupled with family, friends and social circle acted as a source of encouragement for the individuals with visual impairment.

A study by Mugabi (2012) revealed that, people with visual impairment experienced a lot of hindrances or barriers in their transition from school into the community and the world of work. Among these barriers or hindrances were, negative attitudes, lack of functional employment policies, limited work experience, low self-esteem among people with visual impairment themselves and limited choices of jobs to mention but a few. On the other hand, the study discovered that people with visual impairment

(PWVI) were able to make it through transition from school into society and employment later if they focused on their studies, maintained their self-esteem, and ensured good inter-personal relationships and being quick to adapt to new situations. All these factors mentioned above had socio-economic implications on the livelihood of persons with visual impairment in adult life, a situation which might be the same in the study district.

A study carried out by Lagelaan, De Boer, Van Nispen, Wouters, Moll, and Van Rens (2007), revealed that the curriculum for persons with visual impairment had no effects on the quality of life and to a larger extent was as a result of lack of skills building and self-reliance. Measuring the quality of life of persons with visual impairment persons needed to be seen from the challenges encountered after leaving school with no adequate vocational skills to use, which appeared to be characteristic of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.

It has been noted that persons with visual impairment, faced a lot of challenges in social and economic endeavours. Banja and Mandyata (2018) attests to that by observing that the global picture shows, the plight of persons with disabilities including persons with visual impairment had increasingly become a major source of concern for both the governments and communities as the majority of them were living in obsolete poverty and partly as a result of inappropriate education received whilst in school. With the increasing levels of poverty in Zambia, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) had argued that the problem of disability in the nation had created a lot of suffering among persons with disability (ILO, 2011). More problems had been noted for persons with visual impairment in particular, who had resorted to begging on the streets for survival upon leaving school and put the blame on the quality of education given to them.

A study carried out by Kalabula, Mandyata, and Chinombwe, (2006), established the need to make education and training a priority to persons with visual impairment in order to minimize poverty among such individuals and families in the communities. Kalabula and Mandyata (2003), inferred for a collective effort to improve the socio-economic status of persons with visual impairment for them to live a meaningful life. The call for collective effort needed to be extended even to schools for the persons with

visual impairment to ensure that as learners accessed education, they also received vocational training skills in preparation for economic independent life upon leaving school indeed, the researcher acknowledged the contents of the general curriculum as good but lacked support in its full implementation.

Mandyata, (2011; 2018) cautions that, the move to improve lives of people living with disabilities through training and education in society was a positive step but this could only be achieved by attending to numerous challenges that hindered progression such as insufficient teaching and learning resources and ill-prepared personnel in the education of the disabled. The challenges noted above are some of the factors that have caused ineffectiveness regarding the curriculum and its contribution to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment leading to failure to live independent lives. Hence the need to seriously put emphasis on the teaching of vocational skills through Skills Acquisition Model theory to help school leavers with visual impairment be prepared to lead socio-economic independent lives in the community.

The quality of life led by persons with visual impairment was poor in that they lacked relevant economic skills to support their adult life. Factors contributing to poor living among persons with visual impairment included; challenges in mobility, housing and failure or financial incapability. In order to solve some of these challenges, most school leavers with visual impairment resorted to begging on the street or engaging in prostitution as a way of raising money for themselves (Khanna, Usha, and Rao, 2007).

Kalabula (2007) postulated that most of the learners with visual impairment in Zambian schools lacked important vocational skills to help them lead independent lives. Khanna, Usha, and Rao (2007, further inferred that, blindness as a disability, often led to unemployment which in turn led to loss of income, higher levels of poverty, hunger and low standards of living. This then resulted in limited accessibility and affordability to health-care services and deprivation of those affected of further education and other opportunities. This should not be so with education in place because it is the bridge between poverty and prosperity. Osiki (1999), postulated that street begging in Nigeria was a serious problem that had become rampant in Africa for two reasons. The first reason given was that the attitude of society towards persons living with disabilities was

of abandonment, apathy and over-protection. The second reason was that society had created an attitude of total dependency in persons living with disabilities in particular persons with visual impairment. Poverty levels had forced a number of persons with visual impairment to be on the street to beg despite having been to school. Begging was also linked to conditions that had sociological inclinations such as poverty, under-education, being underprivileged and homelessness.

Phelan, Bruce, Moore and Estueve (1997) and Osiki (1999) also linked begging to conditions that had sociological inclinations such as poverty, under-education, being underprivileged and homelessness. Most of the school leavers with visual impairment were not employed, depended on their relatives for upkeep, well-wishers and, begging in order to survive.

Most studies done globally, regionally and locally on persons with visual impairment concluded that their poor living standard was mainly due to poverty, begging, and under- education (Kalabula, 2007; Nzengwu and Dooley 2012; Khanna, Usha & Rao 2007; Phelan, Bruce, Moore & Estueve, 1999). None of these studies linked the poor standard of living directly to curriculum contributions to socio-economic life and its benefits in relation to independent living among school leavers with visual impairment. Hence the justification for carrying out this study.

2.4 Contributions of Curriculum (if any) to the Socio-economic Life of School Leavers with visual Impairment.

In considering the contributions (if any) made by the curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment, it is important to consider curriculum development in Zambia and do an analysis of the curriculum at global, regional and local level and how it influences the socio-economic lives of individuals more so those with visual impairment.

In an attempt to improve on the school curriculum, since 1964 the curriculum in Zambia has under gone through several reviews (Zambia Curriculum Framework, 2013). Among the several reviews is the Education Act of 1966, which sought to standardise and diversify the curriculum in order to make its content relevant to the needs of all

learners. Zambia Primary Course (ZPC), saw teachers been trained either for Lower Primary Course (L2) or Upper Primary Course (U2). Nonetheless, the available literature gave no clear picture on how relevant the curriculum available at that time was to the disabled and more so to persons with visual impairment in Zambia.

The 1977 primary school and part of the junior secondary school education (Form 1 and 2) educational systems were transformed to Basic Schools Education while the Senior Secondary and part of the Junior Secondary Education (form 3) became high school education. The transformation meant that, completion of Basic school was to be done in 9 years, (grade 1 to 9) while high school was to be completed in 3 years, (grade 10 to 12). The expected outcome was that, at the end of each academic phase completed, learners including those with disabilities even persons with visual impairment would be able to lead a productive life even through self-employment by being prepared adequately with vocational skills. This was hoped to lessen dependence that had made persons with visual impairment to beg as a means of survival even though accessibility to education had been provided by the government and other stakeholders (e.g. the Catholic Church).

By the year 2000, using the 1996 *Educating Our Future* Education Policy, ZBEC was changed to Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC) and this led to a change in the curriculum. With the coming of ZATEC, traditional subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science and so forth were grouped together to stop overcrowding, competition and to put them in their well-defined roles. As a result, the 12 subjects offered at that time were integrated into 6 study areas namely, Literacy and Language, Physical Education, Mathematics and Science, Expressive Arts, Technology Studies and Social Studies, Spiritual and Moral Studies. The question however was, how relevant was the curriculum to learners with visual impairments for them to live a meaningful life after school in the study district.

In the year 2000, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) revised the Lower and Middle Basic Education (grade-1 to 7) school curriculum. The revision was intended to re-define the desired learner outcomes, the teacher or educator or instructor and teaching and learning out comes so as to make education relevant and responsive to the

individual and society. Curriculum was last reviewed completely in the early 1970s, and at that time the focus was more on Certification which showed that most learners took academic subjects with less than 15 percent taking practical subjects of any kind (ZCF, 2013). The result indicated that, that curriculum had so much potential to promote academic subjects as progress was measured by passing the examination in order to progress to the next grade as, this was treated as a mark of achievement. Not long ago, another review of the curriculum was launched in 2014 known as the new revised curriculum with the view of giving equal attention to both academic as well as vocational work. Reports were that over the past 49 years of Zambia's independence there had been calls to revise the curriculum provided to primary and secondary school going children to meet the unique needs of the individual learner for socio-economic independence (Times of Zambia, 2014). However, the interest of this study was not focused on the revised curriculum (new) but the study sought to establish how the old curriculum had contributed to the socio- economic life of school leavers with visual impairment.

In the recent past, Zambia's general curriculum had made provisions for practical skills in Upper Basic Schools in particular grades 8 and 9 pupils but faced challenges as acknowledged by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 1996). One of the challenges was inadequate supply and an uneven distribution of teachers to meet all the demands of teaching pupils in grade 8 and 9 practical skills such as Industrial Arts, Agriculture Science, Commercial Subjects and Home Economics, which might have been the case in the study schools for persons with visual impairment. Practical subjects such as Home Economics or Agriculture Science were key and relevant to the domestic and economic activities of the community where learners with visual impairment lived. Such learners had the potential of being prepared adequately for independent life in adulthood. None the less, little was known on how practical skills offered under the general curriculum and how such skills maybe contributing to the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment.

It is generally believed that when learners with visual impairment were well taught in the practical subjects, they stood a better chance of developing a vocational skill that

was worthwhile for sustainability (Willings, 2017). After all, the essence of education whether formal or informal was to equip one's life for economic independence, productivity and effective contribution to the growth of the economy. This could only be achieved if the curriculum had been engaging learners with visual impairment not only academically for examination purposes but more importantly to develop vocational skills as well. What is not known is the extent to which the previous curriculum had prepared school leavers with impairment for an independent socio-economic life. MoE (1996) acknowledges the lack of training for teachers in teaching of vocational skills and on the usage of learning and teaching materials that were targeted on skills acquisition among the learners in schools especially persons with visual impairment at that time.

Effective teaching needed teaching and learning materials, qualified teachers and equipment. One of the aims of *Educating Our Future policy* of 1996 was ensuring that quality education was provided, in that it enhanced the well-being and quality of life of its citizens through education service provision. For this aim to be realised, there was need for availability and use of the text books and other additional teaching materials that prepared learners with visual impairment for a positive outcome as school leavers. To that effect, the MOE (1996) asserted its commitment to support institutions that would enhance the provision of class activities for conducive learning. Although all the teaching and learning materials could be availed, which was quite good, a question still remained, what contributions could have the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment? The present study, identified a gap and therefore, sought to assess the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the context of contributions of the school curriculum to their livelihood.

The processes of assessment and evaluation were essential in establishing how effective the programme had run. MOE (1996) referred to evaluation as the process by which determinations were made as to whether the education system was achieving its objectives or not. The Zambian education system used two aspects of evaluation, these being internal and external. The internal aspect examined whether the curriculum, programmes, methods and materials used influenced the expected learning and

attitudinal outcomes in a learner (MOE, 1996). In addition, this aspect did not just look at ensuring that the teaching materials were in place, but it was also concerned with the performance of the school learner.

On the other hand, the external aspect was concerned with the evaluation that was undertaken to determine how effective the school was in producing high calibre school leavers with visual impairment which was what society expected (MoE, 1996). Society's main focus was to see how end of year examinations determined who proceeded to the next grade or who dropped out of school. At whatever level those school leavers were off loaded into the community, they were expected to easily integrate into society with the assumption that the curriculum had done its well-intended job, which was to prepare them for independent and self-sustaining adult life. What is not clear is why despite having MoE (1996) and MoE (2013) curriculum directions on the need for a more practical approach to education of children; school leavers with visual impairment continued to depend on others for survival and were unable to live independent lives. This study attempted to investigate the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and the contributions of the curriculum so as to establish and contribute to any missing knowledge on the matter.

Society's expectation of school is about an individual getting a job in the formal sector as a sign to show that one had received good education. However, the current economic status worldwide encourages everyone to have a skill as a backup for survival in order to live a better life. The MoE (1996) expressed great concern by noting that the curriculum for Basic Education was only formal education that most of the learners were likely to acquire. Therefore, government's intention was to continually examine how well-prepared pupils were for life after school, academically and vocationally. However, the call to universal access to education was a positive move for the well-being of a nation's citizenry. The trend was that many learners with visual impairment left school after completion of grade 7, 9 and grade 12 respectively resulting in the number of school leavers swelling up in the community. The number of school leavers with visual impairment had kept on growing but with no economic empowerment and therefore resorted to asking for alms from well-wishers. Such a scenario, needed to

establish how well the curriculum had contributed preparing the school leavers with visual impairment for socio-economic independent life (MoE, 1996).

Kalimaposo (2010) posits that curriculum is a social system which is supposed to be sensitive and responsive to social problems that are emerging. He further states that curriculum innovation is part of a social problem calling for social solutions. To a large extent, the curriculum is shaped by the culture of the society in which it operates. The curriculum is also influenced by social values, social needs and social problems. He further states that, if the curriculum remained static in a dynamic society, especially in periods of rapid social change, it is likely that the education which was meant to induct the young into society and to promote their independent living would only cater for needs and values which had no bearing on the lives of the learners. If a problem emerged and persisted, then the curriculum needed to incorporate in its delivery service on how to tackle the problem. For instance, Human Immune Virus (HIV) had to be tabled in the curriculum to address the scourge. Just like the problem of dependence amongst the school leavers with visual impairment, it is hoped to be addressed through the school curriculum although it is not known how the problem of vocational skills was being addressed as well as how it had affected school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.

At global level, studies carried by Reys, Barbra, Richard, and Gregory (2003), referred to curriculum as a set of learning goals that had been put across grades which mapped out the intentions of subject (for example mathematics) contents and processed learning out comes at particular points in time. Reys, Barbra, Richard and Gregory (2003) further observed that the curriculum included the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources and processes which evaluated the attainment of educational objectives. In addition, curriculum could be split into different forms, such as the co curriculum, hidden and the extra-curriculum. Curriculum could be standardised or adapted, all being dependent on the learners needs although many countries had a national curriculum in primary and secondary education, an example being the United Kingdom's national curriculum. Reys, Barbra, Richard and Gregory (2003) further stated that, the curriculum used throughout the world was the same for

both the sighted and persons with visual impairment. This meant that learners with visual impairment had to compete on the same academic platform with their sighted peers (Kalabula, 2007). Though that being the case, it was noted that learners with visual impairment needed to be exposed to vocational skills as a backup to help them come out of school with tangible vocational skills to support their livelihood (Willings, 2017).

Bilbao, Lucido, Iringan and Javier (2008) inferred that a curriculum was considered to be the “heart” of any learning institution, which meant that schools or universities could not exist without a curriculum because of its importance in formal education. Curriculum had become a dynamic process due to the changes that occurred in our society (Bilbao, Lucido, Iringan & Javier, 2008).

Hatlen (2000) posits that children with visual impairment had unique educational needs and that they needed to be offered additional instructions on top of the general curriculum (standard). For instance, teaching Tactile Codes in Braille had been used for a long time as a means of accessing literacy. Teaching these codes needed additional training from specialised teachers. The other area that needed special instruction was mobility. Siberman and Sacks (2007), state that mobility and orientation needed well trained personnel to train learners with visual impairment travel independently by using a cane. Additional curriculum was also important in order to help learners with visual impairment use their remaining vision at the maximum level through the use of assistive technology. Assistive technology like talking computers, calculators have raised more additional instructional areas for individuals with visual impairments. While sighted students accessed a computer with little instructions, students with visual impairment need special instruction on how to use a screen reader or magnification software and hence the need for specialist teachers. Overall recognition of these distinctive needs of children with visual impairment has given rise to a number of curriculum areas such as vocational skills which needed a lot of attentions for them to live independent lives.

Serrano, Palomares and Garrote, (2013) inferred that it was extremely important too, for learners with visual impairment to acquire knowledge and skills that allowed them to become independent and properly utilise the tools that provided access to knowledge,

thus acquiring a functional learning rate that promoted inclusion in their academic and social environment with as much normalcy as possible. Serrano, Palomares and Garrote, (2013) further indicated that there was need for adjustment of individual needs of learners with visual impairment for preparation into responsible adults to fit in society independently through the acquisition of academic and vocational skills.

A study by Erin (2014), inferred the need for individuals with visual impairment to be taught similar subjects such as Mathematics, History, Local Language and so on with the sighted peers was to present an equal platform for future occupation opportunities. The only caution was to ensure that adjustments were made to enable easy access to information. Such considerations would be in the use of braille instead of print, and use of low vision and aids to access normal print. Douglas et al (2011) posits that a broad distinction between the mainstream curriculum and additional curriculum area could be very useful when considering curricular delivery for learners with visual impairment. Bishop (2004) explains core curricular as being composed of subjects that form a particular educational plan. Natural curricular commonly referred to a group of subjects and courses that formed the basis of a particular educational plan. An academic core curricular would greatly include a native language, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign language (Holbrook & Koeing, 2000).

However, the nature of the school curriculum availed to learners with visual impairment was not known, instead schools taught all subjects mentioned above with the aim of achieving national goals of an educational system in the country. Beal and Shaw (2008), reported that achievements in Mathematics among learners with visual impairment tended to be below their expected performance. Rapp and Rapp (1992) cited that learners with visual impairment, particularly those who used Braille, were less likely to participate in advanced mathematics classes. Similar findings for Science were reported by Dunkerton (1997). These factors were a great impingement on the life of individuals with visual impairment in that they came out as average performers and faced a lot of barriers when seeking employment due to poor certification, leading to inadequacy in economic empowerment and failure to lead self-sustainable lives.

Regionally, a study carried out by Fraser and Maguvhe, (2008), revealed that, adaptation of teaching and learning environment was cardinal in the successful achievement of learning outcomes of learners with visual impairment. Fraser and Maguvhe, (2008) further stated that, if the environment where learning was taking place was unsupportive to learners with visual impairments, their learning would automatically be interrupted. Research showed that the context in which learning occurred, inflexible curriculum and inappropriate assessment procedures were some of the factors that led to ineffective learning amongst students with visual impairment with a positive bearing on after school life. Further, Fraser and Maguvhe (2008) reported that many teachers, even some of those working in specialist schools for learners with visual impairment, only had general teacher training, and, therefore, lacked the skills and ideas for adapting the curriculum for those without sight. This resulted in the learners missing out on participating in class fully to expose their potential in relation to vocational works to better their livelihood. Fraser and Maguvhe (2008), further postulate that, teaching of vocational skills was cardinal for the preparation of the learner for any eventuality in this world's economy which could no longer be sustained by white collar jobs. The fact that these children are needy individuals, they needed not be left to chance.

In Tanzania, teaching learners with visual impairment required specialised instructions from well trained teachers to handle disabilities and specific needs (Heward, 2006). Although teachers could use their usual instructions techniques with some modification to provide an effective education programme, they needed to understand the nature of a particular visual problem for the choice of the appropriate curriculum that accommodated tactics that enhanced teaching of vocational skills.

In Kenya, regular and special needs education was disseminated through a standard curriculum. In this regard, all learners went through the same learning experiences without paying attention to their individual differences. As such, learners with special needs were discouraged because of such curriculum provisions. In its effort to provide quality education, Kenya had made sure that the education system developed relevant curriculum and support materials for use at all levels of education and training for all

teacher's, except universities. To cater for diverse conditions of the learners with special needs, the curriculum was adopted and adapted when necessary (K.I.S.E. Bulletin, 2000).

In Zimbabwe, Zimsec (2014) sighted a serious lack of material resources coupled with a shortage of qualified special education teachers due to brain drain as some of the challenges in curriculum that have affected the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment. The curriculum needed to have all the required materials for it to function well in preparing the school leavers with visual impairment. The quality of life for school leavers with visual impairment was definitely not linked to the curriculum's intentions and aspiration. Unless the curriculum was tailored to address their needs, learners with visual impairment would be under privileged socially and economically. Findings further revealed that there was a negative link between the curriculum and the quality of life of school leavers with visual impairment. The education and training they received appeared to have had very little bearing on their livelihood. These findings are supported by a report by Page (2019) stating that, the education which learners with visual impairment were receiving was failing them because it was not quality education. In addition, Page (2019) inferred that education received had not prepared them (learners with visual impairment) to compete in the demanding high tech economy and society of the 21st century. He further stated that they were not learning to develop skills for socio-economic independence, so as to become mature, responsible and productive adults. The curriculum had not translated into independence living livelihood for school leavers with visual impairment upon leaving school and joining the society. The study further revealed that those who failed to make it to colleges or universities went through a lot of hardship as a result they were forced to engage in demeaning ways such as begging on the streets and heavily depending on others in order to survive.

Locally, In Zambia the general curriculum faced challenges which included shortage of teaching and learning materials and qualified personnel. In addition, the curriculum did not prepare school leavers with visual impairment to live independent lives. The reason being that it lacked vocational skills training, a situation that is worsened by lack of education resources to support such training or education. A study carried out by

Kalabula and Mandyata (2003) revealed that, educational materials for learners with visual impairment were not enough and that there were no specialist teachers in most institutions who gave advice to ordinary teachers to help in managing learners with visual impairment who had been included in ordinary schools in Northern Province. The need to have more qualified teachers in special education could not be over emphasised as human labour was key in the delivery of quality service in the education sector too. Proper and adequate learning and teaching materials were key for the enhancement of learning and achievement of projected goals in both the learner as well as teacher. The purpose of learning was to nurture and produce a well-rounded individual who would be able to fit in the community and society as a whole as an independent individual socially and economically.

Further, Kalabula and Mandyata (2003) study conclusion was that if government wanted to succeed in off-loading the burden of providing for learners with visual impairment in the country, it needed to invest heavily in the education of learners with visual impairment, so that they could be capable of managing their lives and become self-reliant even to contribute to the economic growth of the nation after leaving school. However, that could only be fully achieved by using a curriculum whose contributions would actively promote enhancement of livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment through addressing of socio-economic skills, which led to economic empowerment.

In addition, Kalimaposo (2010) study revealed that, in Malawi, the curriculum had put an emphasis on survival skills teaching and learning experiences for learners. Some of the teaching and learning experiences were derived from the local environment with the collaboration of the community for use in daily living activities in order to enhance socio-economic independence. This was not the case in the present study. The community's input, in most cases had been left out in curriculum implementation for persons with visual impairment. This magnitude of a problem could not be left to Government alone, but needed the concerted effort of the community and other stakeholders to chart the way forward.

Shanzi, (2016) study revealed that most of the teachers entrusted with the teaching of learners with visual impairment were not so conversant with the importance of the Expanded Core Curriculum in its usefulness to access the general curriculum for skills and knowledge for independent living. Shanzi's study focused on the nature of the ECC and its implementation in the class room environment but did not relate to promotion of independent living after school for school leavers with visual impairment through teaching of vocational skills. This study sought to establish the nature of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and thereby assessed contributions of the curriculum to their life.

Learners with visual impairment had unique educational needs, which were effectively met using a team approach of professionals, parents and students. Specific considerations such as, specialised services, books and materials in Braille, as well as specialised equipment and technology, needed to be put in place. This was to ensure equal access to the core and specialised curricular to enable both the sighted and learners with visual impairment to compete effectively with their peers in school and ultimately in society. In addition, there was need for a variety of programme options and support services, so that, the Individualised Education Programme (IEP) team could select the most suitable placement in the least restrictive environment for each individual student with visual impairment for effective preparation for adult life. (American Foundation for the Blind, 2019).

There was further need to have enough personnel training programmes to equip staff for specialised services, which in turn addressed the unique academic and non-academic curriculum needs of learners with visual impairments. The need for on-going in-service provision for specialised personnel development opportunities for all staff working with learners with visual impairment was cardinal. Specialised parent education was also very cardinal for achieving positive outcomes including those related to vocational skills in the delivery of the school curriculum (Kalabula, 2007). The extent to which the above needs were addressed in the study district still remained unclear. Learners with visual impairments needed an educational system that met the individual needs of all learners, fostering independence and which was measured by how successful each individual was

in school and the community (Manda, 2013). This expectation appears to be quite far from being met in the study district.

Educational goals for learners with visual impairments were essentially the same for all students. These goals were: effective communication, social competence, employability and personal independence. In order for these goals to be accomplished, there was need for specific intervention and modifications of the educational programme. This could be enhanced through addressing the curriculum in areas such as, concept development, academic functioning, communication skills, sensory or motor skills, social/emotional skills, orientation and mobility, daily living skills, career or vocation skills and utilisation of low vision. Arising from the available literature, it was not clear as to what extent school leavers with visual impairment were socially competent and employable in the study district.

Overall, the curriculum played a key role in the in the social and economic growth of an individual as well as the entire nation as a whole. Its input is definitely evidenced by its output. Learners with visual impairment required special needs for their survival in a contemporary world and especially for their education. A report from Times of Zambia (2014) stated that over the past forty-nine (49) years of Zambia's independence, there had been calls to have the primary and secondary curriculum offered to school going children changed because it had not addressed the specific needs of the learners.

2.5 Summary

This chapter, reviewed related literature to the study of other researchers and scholars. Literature reviewed that although a number of scholars and researchers had something to say about the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and the contributions of curriculum, these issues were studied in isolation. For instance, as mentioned in the study, the key findings of Islek's study were that, there was need to modify the curriculum in order to make it flexible and also to develop a curriculum similar to the ECC (Expanded Core Curriculum) for teaching necessary skills for independent life. The gap therefore with this study was that the study did not consider the curriculum and the benefits it could bring about in terms of socio-economic independent living among school leavers with visual impairment.

Literature reviewed for studies done by researchers at global, regional and locally on persons with visual impairment concluded that their poor living standard was mainly due to poverty, begging, and under- education (Kalabula, 2007; Nzengwu and Dooley 2012; Khanna, Usha & Rao 2007; Phelan, Bruce, Moore & Estueve, 1999). None of these studies linked the poor standard of living directly to curriculum and its relevance in preparation of learners with visual impairment to live sustainable adult lives in their respective residence. Hence the justification for addressing yet another gap.

Another gap is given by the study carried out by Shanzi in (2016). His study revealed that there was Lack of knowledge on expanded core curriculum among teachers resulting in failure to effect expanded core curriculum. Shanzi's study focused on the nature of the ECC and its implementation in the class room environment but did not relate its findings to the promotion of independent living after school for school leavers with visual impairment through teaching of vocational skills.

Studies in Morocco, India and America revealed that persons with visual impairment were stigmatised and looked down upon with contempt. The problem of failure to economically sustain themselves among people with persons with visual impairment may not just be a concern of the countries cited above, but also for a country like Zambia, hence the attempt through present study to investigate the socio-economic livelihood of persons with visual impairment in Ndola, Zambia. The next chapter discusses the Methodology used in carrying out this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The previous chapter, reviewed related literature on the nature of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment, factors surrounding the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and the contributions of curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district. This chapter, however, presents the methodology of the study. It highlights the research paradigm and design used by explaining it in detail and justifying the chosen design. It also highlights the target population, sample size, sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection and procedure and data analysis. Ethical consideration and lastly a summary of the chapter was given.

3.2 Research paradigm

The Epistemology used in this study was interpretivism. Creswell (2006), inferred that human beings changed their behaviour when they knew that they were beings studied. He observed that to understand social action, one needed to go deeper to get the reasons and meanings to understand why human beings behaved in such away. A case study with qualitative method was used to assess the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment, factors surrounding the socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment and contributions of curriculum to their livelihood in a detailed naturalistic manner. Through use of such a research design and method of data collection it was hoped a deeper understanding of the problem at hand would be possible. The research methodology that was used was, therefore, appropriate for this kind of study.

3.3 Research Design

Case study was a type of research design that was used and supported by the qualitative technique. A case study design was employed in the study because of its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and how curriculum contributed to such a life. In addition, because the study was purely qualitative research method, a case design was ideal. The use of

this design was supported by Kombo and Tromp (2006) who postulated that a case study design is used to describe a unit in detail, in context and holistically. It is also a way of organizing educational data and looking at the object to be studied as a whole.

In addition, the researcher collected detailed information through qualitative methods of data collection for a certain period of time. The research design was based on a naturalistic approach where the researcher develops a holistic picture, analysed documents, and detailed views of informants and conducted the study in its natural setting (Creswell, 2007). A case study, therefore, was seen to be comprised of human activities embedded in the real world which could only be studied or understood in that context. This meant that a case study, be it a single individual, a group such as a family or an institution such as a school or community which had the same values, feelings and beliefs could only be discovered through intensive interactive study of that individual entity. Hence, the research design was seen to be relevant to the present study on the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment. The case study had a specific time frame and required the physical presence of the researcher and sought to explain current phenomena which the researcher took note of.

3.4 Target Population

Population refers to a complete set of elements (persons or objects) that possesses some common characteristic to support a particular study (Msabila & Nalaila, 2013). The target population for the study comprised of all special education teachers of learners with visual impairment, school leavers with visual impairment, special education head teacher, Senior Standard Education Officer for special education, Education Standard Officer for special education, and curriculum development specialist for learners with visual impairment, were the target population. It was believed that all these had sufficient knowledge on the theme to contribute effectively to the study. They had reliable information to address the phenomena under study. A group of school leavers with visual impairment, education administrators for special education, curriculum specialist for visual impairment and teachers of learners with visual impairment were studied as a single entity because they all belonged to special education unit (same characteristics).

3.5 Sample Size

Kasonde (2013:36) states, “Sample size is the number of participants selected from the universe to constitute a desired sample.” Qualitative sample size is expected to be large enough so that a phenomenon of interest can be fully described. Creswell (1998) suggested an ideal sample size of 20-30. In this study, the sample comprised of 26 participants. These participants were purposefully selected based on the pre-selected criteria based on the research questions.

The participants consisted of: 12 school leavers with visual impairment, to get comprehensive detailed information about their life after school, 1 Head teacher for special education from the administrative point of view, 10 grade teachers of learners with visual impairment who are the curriculum implementers, 1 Education Standards Officer (ESO) for special education, 1 Senior Education Standard Officer (SESO) for special education (Ndola District) who are concerned with the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum delivery and 1 Curriculum Specialist for visual impairment from the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) Lusaka. The number of participants (26[^]) was found to be the saturation point and was reliable to give first hand key information to address the phenomena at hand.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling procedure to select teachers, a Curriculum Specialist, Head Teacher, Education Standard Officer (ESO) and Senior Education Standards Officers (SESO). Purposive sampling was used because the participants chosen were knowledgeable and informative about the problem at hand. Since they were directly involved in curriculum implementation, they were able to give up-to-date information. On the other hand, school leavers with visual impairment were selected through the use of the snowball technique in which one participant advised how to access other school leavers with visual impairment on streets. Dawson (2013), stated that snowballing was a sampling technique that a researcher uses to ask the initial participants to locate other participants of similar characteristics to be included in the study. Snowball technique was used to select school leavers with visual impairment. The participants (school leavers with visual impairment) helped the researcher through

snowball to get other participants that otherwise would have been hard to reach if the researcher had used a different approach in the selection of the participants.

3.7 Research Instruments

In this study, tools used for collecting data included interview schedules, and Focus group discussion guides. The researcher interviewed the head teacher, teachers, curriculum specialist, Senior Standards Officer, Education Standard Officer for special education and school leavers with visual impairment (through focus group discussions) seeking their opinion as the interview schedule required. Information through interviews from the participants was collected by use of voice recordings in order to get the exact answers or information to avoid distortion. Equally, voice recordings were done to collect information during focus group discussion from school leavers with visual impairment also to avoid distortion of information.

Interview method was used to enable the researcher to gather complex, in-depth data that would have not been easily obtained through questionnaires or question - and - answer interview approaches. This technique helped the researcher to observe and record the participant's unique perspective or experience as it related to the particular issue under study. The approach helped the researcher to get first-hand information, first-person account which gave a clear picture of where the participant was coming from instead of getting 'yes' or 'no' answers that provided incomplete feedback. In this study, the researcher involved face to face interviews between the researcher and the participants to get first-hand information.

Focus group discussion as the other primary source of information was conducted by engaging, two groups, of school leavers with visual impairment. A focus group interview represented an open purposive conversation where the researcher asked questions based on the interview guide and then guided the discussion by means of questioning. Focus group discussions enabled the researcher to elicit participant's feelings, attitudes and understanding about a particular topic through conversation and interactions (William &Katz, 2001). It was noted that focus group discussion was less intimidating than one-on-one interviews (William &Katz, 2001). The interactive sessions in focus group discussions helped the researcher to gain more information on

the issue under study that is on assessing the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and contribution of the school curriculum.

The study endeavoured to remain credible and trustworthy. The following strategies were used to achieve this. The study engaged triangulation. Hemming (2008) explains that under triangulation, methods of data collection are mixed and, in this study, interviews and focus group discussions were used to help give a deeper insight and holistic picture of the issues in the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and the curriculum. In other words, triangulation of methods gave corroborative evidence from different sources.

The study equally used member checking. According to Punch (1998), member checking means checking the script with the people who gave data. In this study, interview transcripts were taken to the interviewees before and during analysis for them to check for accuracy, confirm, validate and verify information captured in audio scripts.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection refers to gathering specific information aimed at providing or refuting some facts (Kombo & Tromp, 2014). The term “generating data” as opposed to data collection was considered more appropriate in qualitative approaches because researchers do not merely collect and describe data in a natural and detached manner, but are involved in a more creative way by interacting closely with the participants.

The data collection exercise begun with the researcher seeking permission from the relevant authorities. Firstly, a written permission from the Assistant Dean of Post Graduate Studies addressed to the providers of the research information at each selected schools or institution was sought. Secondly, before any data was collected, submission of a proposal to the research committee Post Graduate Studies for considerations was done and an introductory letter was served to be presented to study districts education officers before proceeding with the individual interviews, and focus group discussions. The purpose of undertaking institutional clearance was to uphold professional integrity in the process of carrying out social research.

3.9 Data analysis

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), data analysis is the stage when the researcher interprets the information collected from the participants. In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. This involved coding of data in open, axial and selective codes to get the emerging themes and sub themes. Information collected from qualitative data, that is, from interviews and focus group discussions, was grouped in themes and presented as findings using a descriptive approach. To strengthen the presentation of the findings, verbatim was used to the presented findings in some section of the findings.

For purposes of easy identification of the participants in the description of the findings, participants were given codes such as EM -Education Manager (ESO, SESO, and CDC Specialist), Head Teacher -HT, T-Teacher, FG1-School Leavers with Visual Impairment and FG2- school leavers with visual impairment.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration was part of the research works, and could not be avoided (Bryman, 2004). Observation of research ethics helped to protect the rights of the research participants, developed a sense of trust with them, and promoted the integrity of the research (Israel & Hay, 2006). Creswell (2009), Kombo and Tromp (2006), insisted on anonymity and confidentiality in research study. In this study, the names of participants in the entire study were kept anonymous. Participant's names were represented by letters. This reduced the possibility of the participants being recognized. Additionally, the data collected from the participants was kept confidential. As a way of upholding ethics in the research process, several steps were taken. Firstly, written permission from the Assistant Dean of Post Graduate Studies addressed to the providers of the research information at each selected school or institution was sought. Secondly, before any data was collected, submission of a proposal to the research committee Post Graduate Studies for considerations was done and an introductory letter was served to be presented to study district education officers before proceeding with the individual interviews, and focus group discussions. The objective of undertaking institutional

clearance was to maintain professional integrity in the process of carrying out social research.

3.11 Summary

This chapter focused on explaining the research methodology. It looked at the paradigm, research design, population sample as well as the sampling procedure used in the study. It also discussed research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis as well as ethical considerations before providing a summary of the chapter. The next chapter presents the findings of the research on the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and contributions of the curriculum in Ndola district, Zambia.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

The previous chapter highlighted the methodology used to collect data for the study. In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. The data was collected by using interview and focus group discussion guides. Qualitative data generated is presented through this study. To present the findings, the chapter was guided by the following research questions:

4.2 Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?
2. What factors have surrounded the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?
3. What contributions if any, has the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?

To present the findings, the researcher used themes derived from the verbatim. Verbatim responses gave an in-depth description of findings and indeed the emerging themes. For the purpose of easy identification of participants in the verbatim provided in the chapter, they were given codes as shown below: The following are the codes that were used to describe participants:

EM -Education Managers (SESO, ESO & Curriculum Dev. Specialist)

HT-Head Teacher-

T – Teachers

FG 1 - Focus Group 1 - School leavers with Visual Impairment

FG 2- Focus Group 2 School leavers with Visual Impairment

4.3 What is the Nature of Socio-Economic Life of School Leavers with Visual impairment in the Study District?

4.3.1 Economic and social Activities School Leavers with Visual Impairment were involved in.

In order to find out the socio-economic status of school leavers with visual impairment, participants were asked what economic and social activities they were involved in. All the participants (12) said that they had nothing tangible going on in their socio-economic lives but instead they depended on other family members for their livelihood. One view of school leavers with visual impairment (FG1) was that:

Only able to socialize with friends in the neighbourhood. Also attend funerals and goes to church. Economically activities begging and sometimes selling brushes seem to be the order of the day and highly depended on family support.

Another contribution from school leavers with visual impairment (FG 2) was that:

Nothing I just stay at home. If no one picks me I will be on my own. It is difficult to move without a sight guide. I don't have any business, I tried selling clothes with the help of someone, but the money was squandered and I am left with no capital.

Contributing on the same issue, another school leaver with visual impairment, Focus Group (FG2) said that:

Socially I spend most of the time singing, doing some rehearsals at church with friends. Economically I am not doing anything except spending more time on the street begging.

The findings revealed that the School leavers with visual impairment had no stable income generating ventures as a result spent most of their time on the street begging in order to survive. Socially, school leavers with visual impairment spent more time at home alone or at church doing church activities such as choir rehearsals. This was the case because the school curriculum had not empowered them with vocational skills to use or explore other economic activities in adult life.

4.3.2 Financial Support from Government

In order to determine other sources of financial help apart from that received from well-wishers and relatives, (as this affected the nature of the socio-economic livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment), school leavers with visual impairment were asked whether they received any help from the government for their up keep. Generally, participants were able to say that they had no government support and some were not even captured in the Social Cash Transfer Programme that aimed at helping out. Minority said that what they received was not enough to see them throughout the month and that they had less vocational skills to take full advantage of government help to sustain themselves. This view was supported by one school leaver with visual impairment Focus Group (FG1) who said that:

I get K360=00 after two months to support me, but this money is not enough to see me through or to invest in any economic ventures.

Another contribution from school leavers with visual impairment Focus Group (FG2) was that:

I have tried to apply at social welfare, in order to get the social cash transfer allowance, very few have been picked who are persons with visual impairment. For Youth empowerment, I have failed to get help.

Furthermore, school leavers with visual impairment were asked whether they had any school going children and how they supported them. Majority (11) participants said that they had no children and had no support from government while (1) stated that she had children.

This was evidenced by one school leaver with visual impairment Focus Group (FG 1) who said that:

I live through begging, there is not much support from government. I have children who go to school, grade 1 and 2.

The study revealed that support from government through the Social Cash Transfer Programme was not adequate and some school leavers with visual impairment had not been captured on the programme.

4.3.3 Economic Independent Livelihood Indicators

To establish whether school leavers with visual impairment were independent in as far as shelter, acquisition of clothes, beddings and household belongings were concerned, all (12) participants that responded to the question said that they depended on relatives and well-wishers for their livelihood. One school leaver with visual impairment (FG2) had this to say:

Excerpt: 9 Street Begging, source of livelihood.

I stay at the farm as a care taker. I have no house of my own. I stay here two to three weeks (on the street) then go back to kamilenda, Luanshya turnoff. My husband remains at the farm. He is partially sighted but he has stroke and needs medicine all the time

Another contribution by a school leaver with visual impairment (FG 1) was that:

I am given by God's people but not all the time. I mostly depend on (second hand clothes).

The quality of life of the persons with visual impairment was definitely not good and as they depended on other people. Although contributing factors could be the same, certain elements of the curriculum needed to be seriously addressed in terms of adaptation and provision of vocation skills otherwise, the vicious circle of absolute poverty and dependence could continue among school leavers living with visual impairments in the study district.

4.4 What Factors Surrounded the Socio-Economic Life of School Leavers with Visual Impairment in the Study District?

4.4.1 Views about the Quality of Socio-Economic life for School Leavers with Visual Impairment

In order to assess the socio-economic factors that surrounded the life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district, participants were asked to explain what quality of socio-economic life school leavers with visual impairment led in the study district. The findings revealed that the majority twenty (20) out of 26 participants stated that the quality of life was not good socially and also economically as school leavers with visual impairment lacked relevant skills to support their livelihood.

One Class Teacher (T2) made the following remarks:

Learners who fail to succeed academically; when they go to the community, i guess the type of life they lead there is not okay. It is not quality because we see them most of the learners that fail to make it in life we even meet them in the street begging.

The curriculum was not flexible enough to allow vocational activities to be taught so as to help learners who left school at whatever point of their education life.

Responding to the same question on the factors that surrounded the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area, one Education Manager (EM 2) had this to say:

Excerpt 6: Poor Livelihood Characterized Visual Impairment

The quality of life is more often than not; it is not good. Visual impairment more often is a disease of the poor that's how it is. Lifestyle and social life of most of them is on the left side, not very good. Once they have left school... But no one wants to employ someone who cannot see, they want at least someone who can see even if one is limping. The problem is that visual impairment is very

difficult, that's why you find the streets are overcrowded with persons with visual impairment asking for alms here and there.

Another Education Manager (EM3) had same sentiments by saying that:

Definitely they face a lot of problems in terms of employment, providing food, mobility, and housing, marrying, and taking care of their siblings. Definitely challenges are there, that's why you see some resort into prostitution and all sorts of things in order to raise money for themselves.

The old curriculum did not prepare school leavers with visual impairment adequately for social and economic independence; as a result, they resorted to unprofessional ways of raising money to support their livelihood. A School Head Teacher (HT) however, had a different opinion and contributed by saying that:

Since inception of grade twelve in 2015, the school has offloaded graduates into the University of Zambia, Nkrumah and other various colleges to study. We expect them to live better lives to sustain themselves and help their families economically as well as communities. For drop outs, a child can acquire skills in music.

The main findings of the study, in regarding the quality of life that school leavers with visual impairment led was that, they led poor livelihoods (economically and socially) as most of them were not employed.

4.4.2 Views on Street Begging by School Leavers with Visual Impairment.

Participants were asked whether they enjoyed what they did (begging) and what changes they would like to see take place in their lives. All (12) participants were able to say that they were not happy to be on the street begging when they could do much valuable work but felt not enough was invested in education and no support to venture in other socio-economic activities to support theirs.

One school leaver with visual impairment from the Focus Group (FG 2) had this to say:

Not at all, if there was something else to do like support for start-up capital do a business, I would be very happy and would stop begging. It is very humiliating to sit in the sun with your hands stretch out, but what can one do to survive?

In support of the same view one school leaver with visual impairment (FG1) had this to say:

The street life has got challenges. We get insulted, called names such as (ifyoo fimpofu, mwafimona, meaning there goes the blind, have you seen them). Sometimes we are stigmatized. Sometimes our belonging and earned money get stolen by street kids.

Further contributions from another school leaver with visual impairment (FG 2) were that:

No, I do not like begging, but I would like to be empowered to go to college and become independent not to be helped like a child.

The quality of life led by school leavers with visual impairment was definitely not good. Unless the school curriculum was tailored to address their socio-economic needs, they were likely to continue living in poverty even if they had been to school before.

4.5 What Contributions (if any), had the Curriculum made to Socio-Economic Life of School Leavers with Visual Impairment in the Study District?

4.5.1 Intended Outcomes of Curriculum on School Leavers with visual impairment.

Findings from focus group discussions showed that all the participants felt that the curriculum (activities) given to them was to prepare them to live independent lives but this was not the case. In support of this view a school leaver with visual impairment Focus Group (FG1) said that:

In order for us to be prepared in the future subjects like civics would help us to know what was happening in our country. Music, if you go out in the community and fail to go to college for lack of sponsorship, you can use music to earn a living. These subjects can prepare us to be what we need to do in future. Our careers just like any other person we need to be knowledgeable.

The study revealed that learners were aware of the importance of vocational skills considering academic challenges that were obvious with such a curriculum that was in place.

Further contributions from school leavers with visual impairment Focus Group (FG2) also believed that:

The importance why the school gave us these activities is that they want us to live an independent future, live a better life even if our parents are no more, ukuwina (to be rich) ... The activities also can help us to be able to do some self-employment. For instance, in school, we had friends who had the skill of plaiting hair, so we organized ourselves and taught one another not that the school was able to teach that, no...

The findings revealed that the Curriculum offered to learners with visual impairment was intended to give them the same opportunities as the sighted since they both followed the same Curriculum. However, implementation needed to be adapted and tailored more to vocational skills teaching for learners with visual impairment because of their disability.

4.5.2 Views on How Helpful Activities Contained in Curriculum were to School Leavers with Visual Impairment.

In order to find out how helpful activities contained in the curriculum were, participants gave the following responses: -

The contribution from a school leaver with visual impairment (FG1) was that:

Excerpt 8: Able to socially Interact but unable to interact economically with others.

... One can take child with visual impairment to school and hope that the child would learn some skills and so on, we were learning because it is a mandate that everyone should be educated, we are leaving in such a way. Socially we try to interact and share ideas and advise but economically we are disadvantaged because we always thought we would proceed to the next grade but when fail grade 12 and go into the community, we have problems economically because one has no proper skills to use.

More views from school leavers with visual impairment, Focus Group (FG2) on the same theme were that:

The ADLS (Activities for Daily Living) we learnt at school can make one get a job or as a garden boy or house maid. But to be factual, who can tolerate to employ a person who cannot see. No one, very few people understand that even persons with visual impairment can do these things.

Further views on same theme from school leavers with visual impairment Focus Group (FG1) were that:

We had no specific things that we learn. But that at a place called Kangonga, persons with visual impairment make brushes, brooms, and baskets. For us we did not have those skills. The only skills we learnt were little things like sweeping, washing clothes, cleaning which cannot help you to raise money to live an independent economic life. Our school had craft just on paper, there were no practical subjects in the school.

In support of this thought, one school leaver with visual impairment Focus Group (FG2) had this to say:

We cannot interact hundred percent socially and economically. In terms of movements we cannot unless there is someone guiding you...Sometimes we are teased by sighted friends...At other times, they maybe guiding you and just decide to live you in an awkward place to see if you would find your way. Sometimes people (sighted) think that we pretend.

The study revealed that activities contained in the curriculum were not preparing the school leavers with visual impairment to live socio-economic independent lives since there were no vocational skills that were taught. Mobility was a big hindrance in terms of socialising and full participation in community activities, due to lack of guides most of the times. In addition, activities for daily living, upon leaving school could not be used due to stigmatisation and they were not linked to socio-economic life in the community.

4.5.3 Contributions of the Curriculum to the Socio-economic Life of School Leavers with Visual Impairment in the Study District

Concerning how the curriculum contributed to the socio-economic life school leavers with visual impairment, in its quest to prepare them for adult life, participants were asked if the curriculum contributed to the socio-economic livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district. The findings were that majority, (23) were of the view that the curriculum had no influence on the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment while the minority (3) participants said that the curriculum contributed positively to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment. The belief was that; the onus was on individual teachers to adapt the curriculum accordingly. A response from one Education Manager (EM3) was that:

It was not meeting the specific survival needs. Why, maybe there is too much theory or there is no specified or identified need that can be met with a well-designed programme. We are generally teaching them

just as we would teach an ordinary child...Therefore, whether we like it or not the way forward is to have a curriculum that is adapted or an alternative one.

Furthermore, another Education Manager (EM2) said that:

...children cannot learn subjects like mathematics, physics, chemistry and those which need some calculations... Entry into Universities or colleges requires mathematics and science. Even if they say they will not follow this, gaps are there.

Responding on the same issue, another Education Manager (EM3) said that:

Stakeholders forgot to make a provision for adaptation of subjects taught to suit the learners with visual impairments. Schools have no well-trained teachers; teachers don't appear to have sufficient skills in Braille and also there is no enough teaching and learning materials. There is no continuous development programme. Learners do not learn in a conducive environment. Lack of enough manpower, teachers employed after some time move to greener pastures due to poor management by those institutions of higher learning.

Making contributions on the same issue, one Class Teacher (T2) said that:

Gaps are there since we are still depending on the old curriculum, because we have not put enough to train these learners in case they fail academically to train them in other skills to look after themselves in future.

Contributing on the same issue, another Class Teacher (T4) had this to say:

Yes, gaps are there especially on the vocational aspect such that if they failed to find a place at tertiary level, usually there is no economic activity that they get engaged in. So, you find that some do well at grade 12 but may be due to lack of sponsorship they fail to go

into colleges or universities that would render them economically disadvantaged in that they have no entrepreneurship skills. They cannot venture into business, cannot venture into agriculture or any of these informal jobs that may give them an economic benefit.

The curriculum had a lot of challenges in its implementation ranging from its being too theoretical to lack of sciences at senior level, adaptation, shortage of qualified personnel, lack of equipment, teaching and learning materials, and failure to teach vocational skills for informal jobs that could give school leavers with visual impairment an economic benefit.

However, concerning the same issue, one Class Teacher (T1) disagreed that there were no challenges in the curriculum by stating that:

Not really much, because even as teachers we are trying our level best to ensure that there are no gaps left for our learners that's why we try by all means even to quantify the curriculum to suit our learners so that they benefit.

The curriculum had a big role in preparing one's economic independence life whether formally or informally. Therefore, vocational skills needed to work hand in hand with academic programmes.

4.5.4 Curriculum's Relevance to Socio-Economic Life of School Leavers with Visual Impairment

In order to fully assess the socio-economic livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district, participants were asked how relevant the curriculum was to the livelihood of persons with disabilities in the study area, especially school leavers with visual impairment. Findings showed that majority (20) participants out of 26 felt that the curriculum was relevant to the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment while the rest felt otherwise. Information sourced from the interviewed class teachers, had one Class Teacher (T5) contributing that:

It is relevant because after someone has completed Grade twelve, they go to college, especially the College of Education to do teaching.

The curriculum was leaning more on academic excellence. The focus was so much on examination passing, neglecting an average child who could be very good in vocational skills which could become a possible income source for his or her livelihood.

A contribution by Education Manager (EM3) was that:

Curriculum is good, topics are good but adaptation which was supposed to be finalised in 2017 has not been done. That is when we are about to send books into schools not for all the grades but only for the first four grades (1-4).

Information sourced from interviews from Education Managers revealed one Education Manager (EM1) remarking that:

Excerpt 7: Vocational Oriented Curriculum

The curriculum is not meeting the needs of learners in full ...to develop practical in subjects like music, entrepreneurship, ICT programmes, business and other practical subjects working in consultation with Tevet practical skills needs to be emphasized to meet the needs of the learners...The curriculum needs to do more about employing them not just to do teaching.

Findings through Focus Groups Discussion revealed that all participants (12) felt that curriculum was partly relevant to the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment, although they would have liked to have had vocational skills in it. Views from school leavers with visual impairment Focus Group (FG1) were that:

Music can help us to live well since most of the people cannot afford to learn, so they can use music to earn money but very few vocational Skills oriented aspects are in the old Curriculum.

However, some school leavers with visual impairment were of the view that the curriculum was irrelevant. One school leaver with visual impairment Focus Group (FG2) had a different opinion by stating that:

It is difficult most of the times we fail to use these things we learn because our learning was mostly theory work and not practical.

Curriculum was fairly good but needed more adaptation and inclusion of skills based subjects to meet the needs of the school leavers with visual impairment in full. Findings also reviewed that Braille books (grade 1-4) had just been recently sent to the school meaning that all along learners had no quality learning to go alongside skills training in pre-vocational disciplines.

4.5.5 Curriculum and Socio-Economic life of School Leavers with Visual Impairment

As a follow up question in trying to establish the socio-economic lives of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district, participants were asked whether the quality of life that school leavers with visual impairment led could be associated to the curriculum they were exposed to. The majority (4) Education Managers and Head teacher acknowledged that there was an association between curriculum and livelihood. In support of this view, one Education Manager (EM1) contributed that:

There is a linkage of what we are today and what we will be tomorrow. We need to emphasize on practical skills from primary level... So, the curriculum yes, must be related to the needs of learners by doing more practical and vocational skills that are related to their skills and abilities.

Another Education Manager (EM3) added that:

Definitely, the quality of life can be associated with the curriculum given to learners with visual impairment. This is because education decides your destiny. If you receive very good education, you can find a well-paid job. Definitely your life is going to be better.

However, one education manager disagreed that the curriculum offered in school was in fact preparing school leavers with visual impairment to live socially and economically independent lives. School Head Teacher (HT) argued that:

... It depends on how a child is going to utilize the skills or knowledge. We are looking at bringing in Home Economics for those not interested in music. Home economics can give a child skill on how to make mats, cooking, needle work and baking... although children cannot be fully baked because of some limitations.

The findings revealed that the curriculum had a big role to play in preparing one's economic independent life whether formally or informally. It acted as a bridge between poverty and wealth. Its contribution was noticed by one's standards of living. Therefore, vocational skills needed to work hand in hand with academic programmes.

4.5.6 Curriculum and its Preparation of Learners with Visual Impairment

A follow up question was asked to teachers to establish whether the curriculum offered at the time, prepared the school leavers with visual impairment to be socially and economically independent. All (10) participants felt that there was no adequate preparation for adult life in the way curriculum was designed and delivered to learners with visual impairment in schools.

One Class Teacher (T5) submitted that:

Partly it is preparing them to be independent but we need to do more. We need to prepare them for vocational courses then other people can help with equipment to use in case they do not go to college. They can be trained in brush and broom making so that they can use the skill where ever they are.

The response from the focus group discussions (school leavers with visual impairment) revealed that all participants (12) felt that the curriculum had not prepared them enough to stand on their own after leaving school.

The view from school leavers with visual impairment of one Focus Group (FG1) was that:

Music can help us to live well. Since most of the people can't afford to learn, so they can use music to make money... Most of the time when we live school we just stay without doing anything unlike our sighted friends.

School leavers with visual impairment had no other better option except music as a way of securing the future. Ignoring the other potential vocational oriented subjects that the child might have, appeared to have been a mistake. The study revealed that school leavers with visual impairment were limited in their search for employment because of the nature of the curriculum they were exposed to whilst at school.

Contribution from one school leavers with visual impairment Focus Group (FG2) was that:

...cultural dancing, it may have helped me in future in that as I left school to go and live in the community, I could be hired to go and dance at different occasions and in the end, make money. This money could have helped me to build a house. If I had chosen music, I could have used the money to build my own studio.

The findings revealed that the curriculum was partly preparing the school leavers with visual impairment to be independent as expressed above, that one could earn a living through music.

4.5.7 Ability of Teachers to Teach Vocational Skills

Significance of curriculum on the socio-economic livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district was very important. In order to ensure that the curriculum being offered met its intended goals, it was prudent to establish the capacity of teachers and education managers to provide vocational skills to learners with visual impairment in the study district. One of the questions asked was, whether the Education Managers, Head Teacher and Teachers had been trained in Special Education and in

what field specifically. The findings were that, all (14) participants had a holistic training in special education. Meaning that they did not have specialised training in teaching vocational related subjects to learners with visual impairment although they had general knowledge about Special Education. A response from one of the Education Managers (EM1) below confirms this aspect. The Education Manager responded that:
Excerpt 1: Teachers Lacked Pre-Vocational Skills to teach persons with visual impairment

I have been trained holistically at certificate, Diploma, Degree and Post-graduate studies in Special education...but the training did not include teaching pre-vocational Skills to effectively teach learners with visual impairment.

Contributing on the same issue, one Class Teacher (T1) noted that:

I am currently studying Special Education and History. This is when I am being trained. Am in the fourth year but less is done on teaching vocational skills.

Remarking on the same issue, another Class Teacher (T5) was of the view that:

I have no training in Special Education but I teach learners with visual impairment.

Although the curriculum was being implemented, some of its implementers did not have adequate training to support vocational skills training to learners with visual impairment hence these learners left school with less vocational skills to support their livelihood.

4.5.8 School leavers Tracer System in Place

In order to assess other activities that would enhance the curriculum, in its preparation of the learners with visual impairment for socio-economic independent lives, participants were asked if there was a deliberate School Leaver Tracer System that followed up on how the school leavers with visual impairment settled in the community.

The findings showed that the majority of the participants said that there was no Tracer System in place as acknowledged by one Education Manager (EM1) who said that:

Tapaba (there is nothing). What we have is may be examination result analysis. This ends up at who passes grade nine (9) or twelve (12). There is no follow up activities beyond grade twelve (12). The curriculum is not related to what happens in the field. There is no alumni concept.

Contributing on the same issue, one Class Teacher (T4) said that:

There is nothing like that. There is no help after school. Someone needs to fight on his or her own. There are no such follow ups.

However, one Class Teacher (T8) contributed that:

Yes, we have. The guidance teacher follows up on learners with problems.

A follow up question was posed to participants on how the information from the tracer system was used to support the curriculum. The findings showed that only two (2) teachers were able to submit the information since the majority said that there was nothing in place.

One Class Teacher (T1) said that:

We do not have the tracer system so there is no information to support the curriculum.

In response to the same question, one participant said otherwise. One Class Teacher (T8) said that:

Children who drop out because of financial problems we find them sponsors. This has got nothing to do with the curriculum.

Findings from two Focus Group Discussions concerning the tracer system, all (12) participants stated that there was no Tracer Programme at all in the school. The response from one school leavers with visual impairment Focus Group (FG2) was that:

We people with visually impairment are the most vulnerable, if there was such a tracer system, those people who are in the community they could be traced back to school to continue learning especially for those who could not find places to continue school even after passing, but there is nothing in place.

4.5.9 Monitoring and Evaluation of Curriculum Delivery

In order to ensure full implementation of the curriculum was available to learners with visual impairment, participants were asked how often the schools were monitored. Findings revealed that monitoring of schools was done on regular basis. One Education Manager (EM1) had this to say:

Excerpt 2: collaborative work in curriculum Delivery

...In short there is collaboration; my work is to know what is happening at this school or any other school. I visit them periodically.

4.5.10 Job Coaching Provisions

To establish how engaging the curriculum that the school leavers with visual impairment received was, participants were asked whether the curriculum provided had provisions for job coaching to prepare them for independent living after leaving school. All (12) participants during focus group discussions reported that there were no arrangements for job coaching as an aspect of curriculum delivery, hence, school leavers with visual impairment were not ready for job searching after school. This was evidenced through the contribution of one of the Class Teachers' (T3) who noted that:

There are no tours because the school cannot afford. But things like seeing the garden or trees these are in school it's easy to access."

4.5.11 Provision of Hands on Skills

In order to establish whether the curriculum offered to school leavers with visual impairment had any practical aspect in it, school leavers with visual impairment were asked whether hands-on skills were offered aimed at preparing them for life after school. The findings were generally that such provisions were not there to support the learning process in schools as evidenced by one school leaver with visual impairment Focus Group (FG2), who contributed that:

No practical skills.

The nature of the old curriculum offered to school leavers with visual impairment was a general one, same as the one offered in the main stream which had not been adapted and with no emphasis on vocational skills and less support for extracurricular activities lacked entrepreneurial training. School leavers with visual impairment had been taught just like any other ordinary child.

4.6 Summary

The chapter presented the findings of the study on the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola District in Zambia. The findings revealed that although learners with visual impairment used the same curriculum with the sighted learners in the mainstream of education, it did not help them in their socio-economic lives upon completion of school. The study further revealed that school leavers with visual impairment continued to live in poverty and often dependent on relatives for their livelihood. The major weaknesses in the curriculum were attributed to: lack of pre-vocational training among teachers, inappropriate assessment process, and lack of clear linkage between curriculum and vocational and technical education curriculum and indeed failure to access resources to support their socio-economic initiatives in the study district. The next chapter discusses the finding of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

Chapter five discusses the findings of the study. The purpose of the study was to assess the nature of the socio –economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and the contributions made by the curriculum to the socio-economic life in Ndola District, on the Copperbelt Province, Zambia.

The discussion of the study was done in line with the emerging themes under the three objectives of the study. The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To establish the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.
2. To assess the factors surrounding the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.
3. To explore the contributions of the curriculum (if any) to socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.

5.2 Nature of Socio-Economic Life of School leavers with Visual Impairment

5.2.1 Socio- Economic Activities School leavers with Visual Impairment are Involved in.

This study revealed that school leavers with visual impairment in the study area were not engaged in any tangible socio- economic activities. Although this was the case in this study area, research had shown that school leavers with visual impairment could engage in meaningful income generating activities to support their livelihood as reported by International Labour Organization (ILO), (2009) which stated that the majority of disabled persons (including persons with visual impairment) in the rural areas, were involved in various income generating activities as a means of livelihood. Some of the activities engaged in were subsistence farming or small-scale entrepreneurship in the informal sector.

The same report however, observed that getting loans to expand their businesses was always a problem due to the misconception that people with visual impairment were not credit worthy or constituted a ‘higher risk group’ in terms of paying back. This was a

form of stereotyping that worked against the economic growth of persons with visual impairment in terms of business to lead better lives. Therefore, lending institutions such as banks, Micro financing organizations such as FINCA (Foundation for International Community Assistance) and Bayport need to be sensitised against such forms of stereotyping and discrimination in order to allow equity and equality (fair play despite one's status) to bring about better standard of living through engagement in business enterprises. A disability is not an inability to be denied from enjoying such public facilities. A study in Bangladesh, India also revealed that persons with visual impairment were engaged in income generating activities. Shiree (2011), postulated that the integration of income generating activities needed to start from the onset. Some of the income generating activities that persons with visual impairment were engaged in were small businesses such as owning vegetable shops and selling dry fish. Under technical skills, tailoring, handcrafts, pottery, net making, shoe repair, basket making were activities that were carried out. All these activities were done from homes. In addition, rearing of livestock such as goats, sheep including ducks and hens were carried out as short-term income generating activities. On the other hand, growing of mushroom on a small scale basis was also one of the short term income generating activity that was engaged in.

In the study district, facilities offered by the Ministry of Higher education through TEVT (Skills Development section) such as offering tie and dye, Food Production to the sighted school leavers, could also be extended to school leavers with visual impairment in the study district through linkage to TVET as a way of preparing them for independent life after school, socially and economically. Such activities could be carried out under the guidance of the Ministry of Community Development through community based welfare so as to alleviate the high poverty levels among school leavers with visual impairment in collaboration with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), churches and parents in the community. As the situation stands, school leavers with visual impairment are doing nothing in the community where they live despite the above mentioned strategies that government has put in place. The school managers need to be aware of such provisions and make tentative efforts to link with

TVET institutions for vocational skills acquisition to bring about socio-economic independence to persons with visual impairment after leaving school.

In Uganda, Kalanzi (2014), stated that persons with visual impairments (PWVI) were engaged in income generating ventures by using government funds to do poultry keeping. Furthermore, Kalanzi (2014), reported that other PWVI associations invested their grant in candle making projects such as wax, candle moulds and cotton strings among others. Other groups of PWVI invested in shoe repair activities and also in shoe polishing to attract more customers. The study reports that money raised from these economic ventures was used for home up keep, buy food items and to meet other basic needs while savings were used for payment of school fees for their children. These economic ventures seemed not to take place in the study district, which left the school leavers with visual impairment engaging in odd ways of generating their income such as begging on the street. This should not be the case in that, school leavers with visual impairment have the opportunity to be trained in vocational skills such Hand crafts-weaving baskets, chairs, mats, Leather works production - belts, bags sandals, wood work –brush making, broom making and Agriculture –vegetable growing, fish farming, poultry farming and mushroom growing and many more. The produce from these ventures could be supplied to ready markets under the guidance of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for consistence in selling of the products.

Kalanza's study were in tandem with studies carried out in Spain by Gámez (2005) which revealed that, an organisation for persons with visual impairment known as *Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos Espanoles* (ONCE) paid salaries to its workers, supported schools for the blind, built training centres, libraries and guide-dog training schools for persons with visual impairment from its financial performance (profits). In addition, its good performance led to improved standard of living for persons with visual impairment in Spain. Was this what was obtaining in the study district? Unfortunately, no, this was not happening in the study district, as school leavers with visual impairment had no business cooperatives to generate income for self-sustainability which was one of the options among so many to help school leavers with visual impairment come out of the vicious circle of dependence.

5.2.2 Financial Support to Vocational Skills Training

In order to determine other sources of financial help, school leavers with visual impairment were asked whether they received help from the government for their upkeep. Generally, participants were able to say that they had no government support and were not even captured in the Social Cash Transfer Programme for reasons not known, while the minority said that they received help from the Government, although what they received was not enough to see them throughout the month.

Apart from giving financial support to the vulnerable including persons with visual impairment under Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare, government was still seeking ways and means of helping persons with visual impairment lead a better life. It was for this reason that the Government of the Republic of Zambia had incorporated disability issues in the 7th National Development Plan (7NDP). According to GRZ (2017), Government's awareness of emerging cross cutting issues led to plan for infrastructure development, access to social services such as health, home security, education, skills and entrepreneurship training, access to employment for persons with visual impairment. Furthermore, government noted that compared to non-disabled persons, persons with visual impairment in particular experienced higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity, and were at a greater risk of insufficient social protection which was key to reducing extreme poverty.

Siachiyako (2019) reports that the Government of Zambia had prioritised Skills Development as a way of promoting equity, and poverty reduction through TEVETA. If the life of school leavers had to improve, school managers need link schools to TVET institutions for skills acquisition in areas such as agriculture-poultry management, pig production, goat production, fish farming, horticulture and vegetable production, bee keeping and so forth to better the lives of school leavers with visual impairment.

Siachiyako (2019) further reports that, government through its cooperating partners' funds skills development in education through curriculum development and reviews to promote skills development for self -sustainability. Currently, study findings were that there was no linkage between TEVET institutions and learning institutions to foster skills acquisition. The current situation need not be ignored any longer. The curriculum

needed to be responsive to labour market needs in the promotion of independent living for school leavers with visual impairment. Sadly, the current state of affairs is that school leavers are busy engaged in unprofessional ways such as begging and dependence on relatives as a way of earning their living.

5.2.3 Economic Independent Livelihood Indicators

The study revealed that the majority of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area were not economically independent as the majority of them were dependent on their relatives and well –wishers for financial and emotional support. Economic independence according to Oakes and Rossi (2003), was reflected in one's social class to collectively desired resources, be it material, goods, money, power, friendship networks, health care, leisure time or educational opportunities. Accessibility of such resources enabled individuals or groups to thrive in the social world.

Economic independence, from what is reflected above, had an influence on one's social life (hence jointly referred to as social economic status). In order to determine the Social Economic Status (SES) of an individual, a number of variables were to be used (Oakes & Rossi, 2003). The variables included Income (which is the most common measurement). However, income alone could not be an indicator of one's SES because of the unwillingness of individuals to disclose their real income status or other sources of income. Wealth was another variable that was thought could be used in determining the SES of an individual. Wealth represents a number of resources such as Money in the bank, real estate, and business ownership (to mention just but a few). It is important to mention that wealth on its own was not sufficient to quantify the SES of an individual because of its relativity.

The other SES measurement identified by Oakes and Rossi (2003), was Education. They postulated that attainment of College or University qualifications implied that one stood a better chance of leading a better life. This, however, was not guaranteed since it had been observed that there were some highly educated graduates earning low income compared to persons with relatively lower levels of formal education who were earning a high income. Poverty was yet another variable to measure SES. This measure,

however, was not good because poverty was affected by a number of other factors such as being born in a poor family.

Lastly Oakes and Rossi (2003), observed that one's residential neighbourhood could be used to measure SES. The social structure separated persons in that the poor increasingly lived with the poor whilst the rich lived with the rich. Consequently, the poor struggled for employment and educational opportunities while the rich leveraged their material wealth and social relationships to access even greater shares of desired goods and services such as elite college education and occupations. However, the school leavers with visual impairment had no income generating activities, to create wealth, no college qualification, most of them were kept by relatives, and led a life of dependence on well-wisher.

The observations made by Oakes and Rossi (2003), are true in that in that wealth, money in the bank, a good job good education and prestigious neighbourhood are not the true measure of one's economics status because of their relativity (they can change up or down) but with the acquisition of survival skills, one is assured of living an independent life even in their old age. The current economic situation world-wide encourages survival skills such as farming, trading, and so forth to make ends meet. It is even more appropriate to prepare school leavers with visual impairment in vocational skills to equip them for socio-economic demands of the community in which they reside because of their disability. White collar jobs obtained through education are a stable source of income but can be affected by factors (being fired, no salary on endless months, early retirement, less employment opportunities and so forth) as compared to a skill which is a life time source of income generation.

5.3 Factors Surrounding the Socio-Economic life of School leavers with Visual Impairment

5.3.1 Quality of Life of School leavers with Visual Impairment.

Interviews conducted amongst the participants had findings which revealed that majority twenty (20) participants stated that the quality of life was not good socially and also economically as school leavers with visual impairment lacked relevant economic

skills to support their livelihood. The findings showed that there was a definite lack of a link between the curriculum and the life that school leavers with visual impairment led. The study further revealed that since there were no practical skills in place, school leavers with visual impairment were bound to be on the street as a means of survival.

Langelaan, De Boer, Van Nispen, Wouters, Moll, and Van Rens (2007), postulated that the curriculum for learners with visual impairment had no effects on the quality of life and to a larger extent was as result of lack of skills building and self-reliance. Measuring the quality of life of persons with visual impairment needed to be seen from the challenges encountered after leaving school with no adequate vocational skills to use, which appeared to be characteristic of the school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.

It had been noted that persons with visual impairment faced a lot of challenges in social and economic endeavours. Banja and Mandyata (2018) attested to this by observing that the global picture showed that, the plight of persons with disabilities had increasingly become a major source of concern for both the governments and communities as the majority of them were living in abject poverty and this partly being as a result of inappropriate education received whilst in school. These study findings was in line with studies carried out by Kalabula, Mandyata, and Chinombwe, (2006), who established that there was need to make education and training a priority for learners with visual impairment in order to minimize poverty among such individuals and families in the communities. In addition, with the increasing levels of poverty in Zambia, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) argued that the problem of disability in the nation had created a lot of suffering among persons with disability (ILO, 2011). More problems had been noted for persons with visual impairment, in particular, who had resorted to begging on the streets for survival upon leaving school and put the blame on the quality of education given to them.

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) (2019) has recommended vocational skills that could also be used to train school leavers with visual impairment to live independent lives under a job coach instructor. Examples of vocational skills under Job coaching included: Cardboard breaking, folding of towels and bed sheets in large Hotels

(assisted by a Job coach), assembling of parts (table parts, chairs, vegetable racks) and many more, paper shredding in different business locations and Janitorial work at a hospital.

In Zambia, some of these jobs could be under the supervision of a job coach. Locally, factory Jobs such as packing sugar, tea leaves, washing powder, laundry jobs such as packing clean linen and changing linen in government hospitals or government lodges could be carried out. In addition, Super Market jobs such as card board breaking in large super markets like Game Stores, Shoprite and a Pick n Pay and many more could be done under the aid of a job coach at the start and later left to do the job after mastering the skill.

In Spain, Equal Opportunities Act (2007), inferred that employers who hired persons with visual impairment on job on training or permanent posts were entitled to 50 percent tax relief as a motivation. This kind of incentive could be adopted in Zambia as a way (if it is not in place) of motivating employers to employ school leavers with visual impairment to up lift their standard of living.

Kalabula and Mandyata (2003), inferred that a collective effort to improve the socio-economic status of persons with visual impairment for them to live a meaningful life was necessary. The call for collective effort needed to be extended even to schools for learners with visual impairment to ensure that as learners accessed education, they also received vocational training skills in preparation for economic independent life upon leaving school. Indeed, the researcher acknowledged the contents of the general curriculum as good but lacked support in its full implementation.

However, Mandyata, (2011), cautions that the move to improve lives of persons with visual impairment through training and education in society was a positive step but that, could only be achieved by attending to numerous challenges that hindered progression such as insufficient teaching and learning resources and ill-prepared personnel in the education of the disabled.

From the above findings, the major factors contributing to the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment are lack of practical skills in curriculum

content, poverty, inappropriate education and lack of employment. The need to seriously put emphasis on appropriate education could no longer be ignored.

5.3.2 Quality of Economic Life led by School Leavers with Visual Impairment.

The study findings revealed that the quality of life led by school leavers with visual impairment was not in line with curriculum experiences. They lacked relevant economic skills to support their adult life. Factors contributing to poor living among school leavers with visual impairment included; challenges in mobility, lacking housing and financial incapability. Due to these challenges, most school leavers with visual impairment resorted to begging on the streets or engaging in prostitution to raise money for themselves.

The findings further revealed that there was a negative link between the curriculum and the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment. The education and training they received appeared to have had very little bearing on their livelihood. The curriculum had not translated into independence living livelihood for school leavers with visual impairment upon leaving school and joining the society. This finding was in line with the report by Page (2019) which inferred that the current education learners with visual impairment received was poor and not fit for socio-economic independence. The study further revealed that those who failed to make it to colleges or universities went through a lot of hardship as a result they were forced to engage in demeaning ways such as begging on the streets and heavily depending on others in order to survive.

These findings resonate with Kalabula (2007), who postulated that most of the learners with visual impairment in Zambian schools lacked important vocational skills to help them lead independent lives after leaving school. Khanna, Usha, and Rao (2007), also postulates that any kind of disability had an effect on the well-being of an individual, be it social, emotional or economic but education can reduce effects of poverty on visual impairment if made more relevant to the socio-economic dictates in the society. Therefore, visual impairment too had a socio-economic dimension. One of its effects was that it placed persons with visual impairment at a risk of losing access to any means of livelihood and independent living, especially if the curriculum did not take note of the unique needs that goes with visual impairment.

Khanna, Usha, and Rao (2007), further inferred that, blindness as a disability, often led to unemployment which in turn led to loss of income, higher levels of poverty, hunger and low standards of living. This then resulted in limited accessibility and affordability to health-care services and deprivation of those affected of further education and other opportunities. This should not be so with education in place because it is the bridge between poverty and prosperity.

The role of education with the curriculum in place, however, has failed to define the positive quality life of the school leavers with visual impairment. This was evidenced by results from the present study which showed that there was a mismatch between the school curriculum and school leavers with visual impairment thereby contributing negatively to their quality of socio-economic life.

From the above findings, it is observed that the key factors associated with the economic life led by the school leavers with visual Impairment contributing to their nature of socio-economic life included difficult in mobility, financial challenges, lack of housing, lack of vocational skills inappropriate education, lack of social interaction and stigmatisation. There should be a greater need to embark on sensitisation programmes on the awareness of appreciating individual differences in terms of job offers, land offers, socialisation, provision of community based vocational skills training in hand crafts, wood work and so forth.

5.3.3 Street Begging among School leavers with Visual Impairment

Participants were asked whether they enjoyed what they did (begging) and what changes they would like to see in education and after school life. The majority were able to say that they were not happy to be on the street asking for alms as a source of livelihood but preferred a more respectable source of income.

Osiki (1999), postulated that street begging in Nigeria was a serious problem and that it had become rampant in Africa for two reasons. The first reason given was that the attitude of society towards persons living with disabilities in particular visual impairment was of abandonment, apathy and over-protection (in some cases). The second reason was that society had created an attitude of total dependency in persons

living with disabilities in particular persons with visual impairment. Poverty levels had forced a number of persons with visual impairment to be on the street to beg despite having been to school. Begging was also linked to conditions that had sociological inclinations such as poverty, under-education, being underprivileged and homelessness.

The quality of life for school leavers with visual impairment was definitely not linked to the curriculum's intentions and aspiration. Unless the curriculum was tailored to address their needs, learners with visual impairment would be underprivileged socially and economically. This thought was in line with a report from the Times of Zambia (2014), which stated that over the past forty-nine (49) years of Zambia's independence there had been calls to have the primary and secondary curriculum offered to school going children changed because it had not addressed the needs of the learners. If, however, the curriculum could emphasise on the teaching of vocational related skills for instance, in business studies such as entrepreneurship (buying and selling), this would enable school leavers with visual impairment to have a starting point to lead sustainable socio-economic lives. This could be done through cooperate owning booths for mobile money and transport system through owning taxis as a way of improving their standard of living.

5.4 What Contributions, (if any) has the School Curriculum Made to the Socio-Economic Life of School leavers with Visual Impairment in the Study District?

5.4.1 Intended Outcomes of Curriculum on School Leavers with Visual Impairment.

Findings from focus group discussions showed that all the participants felt that the curriculum (activities) given to them was to prepare them to live independent lives but it was not being done well. The importance of exposing learners to curriculum related activities was key in the preparation of learners for a secure future that was filled with self-sustainable attributes from the onset of the school programme. Ndhlovu (2015), alluded to the fact that guidance and counselling from teachers was cardinal in aiding learners in their vocational development. The teacher's guidance and counselling services would shape the learners in accordance with the vocation that suited the learner's interest, aptitude, personality and capabilities. Therefore, it was important to

replace learners in their most relevant academic or vocational way from inception so that they could continue developing their career before they got into the world of formal or informal employment.

From the learner's view point, it was clear to note that, they were aware of the importance of vocational skills considering academic challenges that were obvious with such a curriculum in place. The findings revealed that the curriculum offered to learners with visual impairment was intended to give them the same opportunities as the sighted since both followed the same curriculum. However, the findings revealed that the efforts had less effect on the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment hence their regular presence on the streets begging. The obvious case is that for learners who fail to meet the academic challenges, it was normal to work with vocational skills from the onset. Entry into colleges and university is so competitive and coupled with financial constraints, rendering a number of learners failing to acquire entry into the tertiary education. This drawback posed further hindrances in the progression to the next academic level and brought about socio-economic instability as school leavers with visual impairment joined the community. Therefore, vocational skills training needed to start from an early age to enable learners with visual impairment master the skills and use the knowledge for self-sustainability after completion of school.

5.4.2 Helpfulness of Activities Contained in The Curriculum Socio-Economic Life of School leavers with Visual Impairment.

From the social point of view, studies revealed that the problems faced to socialise and also to move independently were due to inadequate training in mobility and orientation outside the school premises (unfamiliar environments). Activities in the curriculum play a major role in defining how the curriculum was equipping each individual learner to come out of school as someone who was able to live independently socially and well empowered with skills and knowledge to engage in income generating ventures and hence contribute to the growth of the economy whether able bodied or disabled.

A study by Bell and Mino (2013), postulated that family and friends played a key role in building the life of an individual with visual impairment through positive support. Their study revealed that the positive interaction with family and friends, as role

models, improved the self-esteem of persons with visual impairment. Albert and Devlieger (1999), stated that persons with disabilities also failed to lead quality lives because of the restrictions in their functioning, not being capable of fulfilling their roles and consequently suffering from social stigma and isolation. Persons with Visual Impairment, needed to have social interaction which was key in order to force them to achieve personal goals just like any other human beings. However, study findings revealed that mobility was easy within school grounds but when they went out of the school environment, they faced challenges to move independently.

In assessing the economic livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district, the findings showed that majority of the participants (22) out of 26 felt that the curriculum was relevant to the livelihood of persons with visual impairment especially for those who had managed to complete College or University education and became teachers. The rest felt that it was not for those who failed to excel academically, because their only means of survival was to become musicians and earn a living from that. From general observations, there are not so many established school leavers with visual impairment who are earnings good living through music in Zambia. Therefore, the resounding views from the participants were that the curriculum needed to do more about vocational skills not just to do academic work and direct them to become teachers for those who manage to go to college or the University. Practical vocational skills in subjects such as home economics –baking, door mat making, knitting and laundry works and so forth are key in promoting self-sustainability. Sensitisation of the public is needed to consider school leavers with visual impaired to do simple jobs related to activities for daily living such as sweeping, washing, ironing, gardening in public and private institutions and so forth in order for them to earn some income to be socially and economically independent.

However, opinions from the majority of the School leavers with Visual Impairment were that the curriculum lacked practical vocational skills as a supplement for those who were weak in academic pursuits to prepare them for adult life. It was too theoretical in nature thereby denying learners the practical skills so much required for adult life. The curriculum had not helped bring about independent living for the school

leavers with visual impairment as they joined society upon leaving school. So far it was irrelevant because it was not meeting the needs of school leavers with visual impairment for socio-economic independent lives.

The issue of side-lining persons with disabilities in vocational and entrepreneurship training programmes had increasingly become a major concern for both government and policy makers. In Zambia, increase of poverty levels, problem of vulnerability amongst disabled groups of the Zambian community was creating a lot of suffering among the disabled particularly persons with visual impairment. Many people had no access to vocational entrepreneurship training for them to acquire skills to help them improve their livelihood.

Many learners with visual impairment had challenges in accessing these services due to insufficient teaching and learning aids, lack of infrastructure, stereotyping and stigmatisation of individuals with visual impairment with respect in acquisition of skills for independent living (Mandyata, *et al*, 2015). Other contributing factors noted were; inadequate institutional policies and unconducive environments, failure to create a sensitive and responsive training environment to the needs of disabled people and limited career opportunities. Could this be the same situation in the schools for the blind whose curriculum seemed so rigid, insensitive and irresponsive to the needs of learners with visual impairment who had been ill prepared for adult life only to be dependants?

From the above findings, it was revealed that the curriculum was just concentrating on academic excellence. The focus was so much on examination passing, making it workable for those who would manage to go to the College or University, thereby neglecting an average child who could be very good in vocational skills which could be a possible income source for his or her livelihood. The findings also revealed a limitation on career choice. Indications were that the most preferred careers availed was Teaching or Music hence failing to explore other careers suitable for persons with visual impairment

5.4.3 Curriculum and its Preparation of School leavers with Visual Impairment

In order to establish whether the curriculum that had been offered to learners with visual impairment had prepared them to be socially and economically independent, the majority (22) participants, teachers and school leavers with visual impairment felt that there was not much preparation done. Contributions from focus group felt that the curriculum was not doing much in that the problem was noted upon leaving school as they went into the community. The reality of ill preparedness could not help them to live a sustainable independent livelihood upon leaving school.

Recent report by Jennifer, Michele and Adele (2018) indicated that only approximately 28 percent of out-of-school youth with visual impairments were employed. The implication of the above report is that, educators faced a definite challenge in providing educational services that would enhance successful post-school outcomes. Therefore, this entailed making appropriate decisions about the development and implementation of programs and services for learner with visual impairments that required a clear understanding of their unique learning needs and interventions necessary to develop successful transition goals for adult independence. This educational approach needed to be embraced by educators of learners with visual impairment in the study district if educational was to prepare school leavers adequately for independent living.

A study carried out in America showed that transition from secondary school to post-school life was a very challenging time (Sacks, Wolffe, & Tierney, 1998). Although adolescents with visual impairment in secondary schools received innovative transition programmes, community experiences and access to the regular school curriculum, it was observed that parents, educators, and professionals in the rehabilitation area struggled with issues related to social isolation, dependence and lack of potential employment prospects. From views expressed in the present study, it seemed the old curriculum, through implementation needed to have gone an extra mile in promoting the teaching of both academic and vocational skills so as to explore the full potential that the child might have to prepare them for independent life. The importance of the curriculum is not only accessibility but also meaningful for the child with a visual impairment. School leavers with visual impairment could also be trained in other career

options like, (radio and TV announcers, radio DJs and so forth) as most of the time when school leavers left school, they ended up doing nothing.

5.4.4 Tracer System for School Leavers with Visual Impairment

In order to assess other activities that would enhance the curriculum in its preparation for learners with visual impairment for socio-economic independent lives, participants were asked whether there was a deliberate School Leaver Tracer System that followed up on how school leavers with visual impairment lived in society. The findings showed that the majority of the participants (24) said that there was no tracer system in place to assist in evaluating the school curriculum in relation to its relevance to the socio-economic livelihood of the school leavers with visual impairment.

The tracer system should be seen as a very tool that can assist education managers establish the whereabouts of all former pupils in terms of settling in the community (the nature of socio-economic life can be easily be established).

5.4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of Curriculum Delivery

In order to ensure the full implementation of the curriculum available to school leavers with visual impairment, participants (teachers) were asked how often the schools were monitored and how they were planning for curriculum delivery. The findings revealed that monitoring of schools was not done regularly. The schools as well as education managers such as ESOs', (Education Standards Officers) DESOs (District Education Standards Officer)' and DEBS (District Education Board Secretary) all had challenges to monitor school activities regularly due to overload of work, in that they needed to attended to other issues within the education sector. Constant monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum is key in order to measure its input and output to make tentative adjustments where it is lacking in catering for specific needs of the learner. As the case is there is inconsistency in the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum delivery and therefore this has caused the school leavers with visual impairment come out of school with no skills to support their livelihood.

5.4.6 Provisions for Job Coaching in Curriculum.

The study, through Focus Group Discussions, revealed that the majority of participants stated that the school curriculum had no provisions for job coaching skills for learners with visual impairment in the learning process, lacked implementation of education tours and had no provision for practical skills.

Study Findings by Gilday (1998), acknowledged that vocational support in the education of children with visual impairment was key in meeting their widely varied learning abilities. He noted the importance for persons with visual impairment connecting to their learning for them to be well rounded in life. He further stated that as children with visual impairment grew older, it was important for them to keep contact with the adults with visual impairment who had knowledge in vocational skills in order to gain experience in various vocational skills so that they could have the opportunity to participate in regular work experiences through vocational skills training. Passing on of skills at an early age academically or vocationally was key in the preparation of the life of persons with visual impairment for adult life. The aspect of mentoring, persons with visual impairment formally or informally, for a vocational skill was very cardinal to the well-being of their life. This could only be achieved through a curriculum that was flexible, engaging and not too academic. Concerns with the old curriculum were that, its participants had not been exposed to vocational skills as it had no place for vocational skills as an enabler for those academically challenged.

According to Omede and Tenimu (2013), career skills provide learners with information about the world of work, career options, and an overview of the skills necessary to be successfully employed. Frequently, learners with visual impairments are unaware of the array of career options because they do not see the variety of workers in their environment or because adults around them are uninformed. Simalalo (2017) studies revealed that, learners with visual impairment needed industrial practice for intended career occupations. Gold and Wolffe (2010), proposed a career education model which suggested that youths with visual impairment be included in activities of daily living and summer work experience. This is said to go a long way in helping the learners with visual impairments to develop skills needed later in life to be independent and have

successful careers. Gold and Wolffe (2010), further stated that career education activities for learners with visual impairments should be future-oriented and directly interwoven throughout the school curriculum in partnership with learners' families. According to Vermont Association for the blind (2016), students with visual impairments needed to be taught about the variety of work and career options that were available since they could not casually observe people in different job roles. It was important to have opportunities to job shadow for concrete experience of different career choices and to learn about other persons with visual impairments who have successful vocational outcomes.

However, career options for learners with visual impairment were limited compared to the real-life options that were available. The common jobs which were sought after included: Teaching, Music, Telephone Operator (though phasing-out of late) and so forth but much can be done to uplift their standard of living. Learners with visual impairment need to be put on industrial practice of the various jobs around them so that that they get mastery of such occupations as they joined the world of work. Traditional jobs like telephone operator cannot be relied on any more as they have been dying away and have been superseded by the modern technology through computer services. Other career options of an individual's interest such as messaging, physiotherapy, banking, tour guide could be explored to enrich the socio-economic live of learners with visual impairment.

5.7 Summary

The overall picture drawn from the findings were that the general curriculum (old curriculum) had challenges such as unqualified teachers and shortage of resources such as learning and teaching materials, as noted through varied responses of the participants. The curriculum was too theoretical in its service delivery as a result failed to prepare school leavers with visual impairment for independent living socially and economically. Lack of qualified specialist teachers to teach vocational related subjects and failure set test items and mark examinations was also a challenge that led to poor academic performance.

Further there was no linkage of the school system to TEVT institutions like (Ndola Rehabilitation Centre) for skills training so as to equip school leavers with visual impairment for independent living. In addition, there was no tentative programme to give continuous feedback as a way of evaluating the curriculum and its performance as far as preparation of the school leavers with visual impairment for independent living was concerned (through activities of tracing former pupils and monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation). This was in line with the study findings in that not only had the curriculum failed to affect positively socio-economic livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment for independent living, but there was no tracer system that would give information as to how they settled in the community. This meant that partnership between the school and the pupil simply ended in the classroom with no extension outside class activities (community).

The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study on the nature of social-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment, factors surrounding the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and contributions of the curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

This chapter provides the conclusion of the study, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

6.2 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to assess the nature of the socio – economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and contributions of the curriculum to their socio – economic life.

In assessing the socio – economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment and the contributions of the curriculum, the following parameters were discussed: To establish the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district. To assess the factors surrounding the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district. To explore the contributions of the school curriculum if any to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district.

The study revealed that the nature of socio- economic life of school leavers with visual impairment was poor causing them to engage in odd activities in order to earn money. These activities included street begging, heavy dependence on relatives and well-wishers for daily livelihood. These were indicative of inadequacies in the curriculum.

The study further revealed that the contributing factors surrounding the socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment included inappropriate education, poverty, lack of vocational skills, stereo typing (in terms of employment) and challenges in mobility to engage in income generating activities.

In regard to the contributions made by the curriculum to the socio-economic life school leavers with visual impairment, the study findings revealed that although learners with visual impairment used the same curriculum with their sighted peers in the main stream, it was too theoretical for the learners with visual impairment and not quite relevant to the prevailing socio-economic demands in the study district. The curriculum did not

have any significant positive effect on the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district in that they continued to live poor lives.

The inadequacies in the curriculum in relation to the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment were attributed to a shortage of qualified and specialist teachers, lack of vocational skills content in curriculum, limited learning materials and equipment to support practical skill training, inappropriate examination process and lack of a clear linkage between school and tertiary education curriculum. Lack of adaptation by experts, lack of a tracer system and limited career choice were also factors that impeded the performance of the curriculum.

In conclusion, it can be said that the nature of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment was mostly dependence on relatives and odd ways of raising income such as begging due to factors mentioned above. As regards contributions of the curriculum to the socio-economic lives of the school leavers with visual impairment, it was noted that the old curriculum offered to learners with visual impairment in the study district had not affected the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment positively. There was a big mismatch between the intended outcome of the curriculum (quality, sustainable independent living) and the present socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment (poor, dependent and unsustainable). The mismatch was due to failure to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of school leavers with visual impairment and lack of emphasis on vocational skills.

6.3 Recommendations

In view of the above findings, the study recommends the following:

In order to improve the nature of the socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment (which was discovered to be poor and heavily dependent on relatives and well-wishers), the government under the Ministry of Community development should immediately come up with strategies on how to sensitise the public starting from the home, church, employers and general public on the needs of school leavers with visual impairment, to stop stigmatising or stereotyping them. The government should set an

example by employing these school leavers in laundry sections of Hospitals, Hotels, Lodges, Guest Houses under job coaching arrangements).

Further, the Ministry of Community Development (Government of the Republic of Zambia) should ensure that all school leavers with visual impairment are captured under social cash transfer and receive monthly allocations coupled with sensitisation programmes on how to invest in small income generating ventures so as to enable them lead sustainable lives. The Ministry of Community Development can emulate what is taking place in Uganda, India, Spain, America and other countries.

(ii) In order to be able to determine the nature of the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment it highly recommended that a tracer system which will be linked to the government database under the Ministry of Community Development be introduced so as to easily follow up and determine livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment and where necessary render timely support.

(iii) In order to reduce or remove the contributing factors to the nature of the socio-economic life led by school leavers with visual impairment (begging), which included poverty, under education, underprivileged and homelessness, the Government of the Republic of Zambia in collaboration with other stakeholders such as line ministries; communities (parents of school leavers with visual impairment) ;churches; and Non-Governmental Organisations can establish welfare centres where school leavers with visual impairment could be trained in income generating activities such as brush making, basket weaving or chair weaving and doormat making and also net making to improve their standard of living.

(iv) The findings revealed that the curriculum did not contribute positively to the socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment. In order to make sure that this problem is adequately tackled, a number of recommendations are made:

- a) The government through the Ministry of General Education should employ enough qualified teachers specifically to handle vocational skills related areas; prioritise

provision of adequate learning and teaching materials. (e.g. Braille inscription in subjects like Science).

- b) Heads of institutions for learners with visual impairment to establish links with TEVET institutions or vocational training centres such Ndola rehabilitation centre for vocational practical training from inception (primary levels)
- c) As for long term goals, Government of the Republic of Zambia through the curriculum development centre should prioritise adaptation of the curriculum to suit the needs of school leavers with visual impairment to meet the social economic demands of life in the community where they reside

6.4 Suggestion for Future Research

In view of the above findings, a similar research on assessment of the socio –economic life of school leavers with visual impairment and contributions of curriculum would be very necessary to be carried out in other parts of the country in order to compare the finding of this study and to know what may be happening in other districts that have school leavers with visual impairment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Great East Road | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka 10101 | Tel: +260-211-290 258/291 777
Fax: +260-1-290 258/253 952 | Email: director@drgs.unza.zm | Website: www.unza.zm

Approval of Study

15th February, 2019

REF. NO. HSSREC: 2018-AUG- 049

Ms. Angela Mulenga Chanda
University of Zambia
P.O. Box 32379
Lusaka

Dear Ms. A. M. Chanda,

**RE: "SOCIAL-ECONOMIC LIFE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS WITH VISUAL
IMPAIRMENT IN NDOLA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE
CONTRIBUTION OF THE CURRICULUM"**

The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
IRB has approved the study noting that there are no ethical concerns.

On behalf of The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics
Committee IRB, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

In future ensure that you submit an application for ethical approval early enough.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. J. Mwanza

**CHAIRPERSON
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE IRB**

CC: Director Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Assistant Director (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Senior Administrative Officer (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Excellence in Teaching, Research and Community Service

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

HSSREC FORM 1a



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Telephone: +260-211-290258/293937

Fax: +260-211-290258/293937

P O Box 32379

Lusaka, Zambia

drqs@unza.zm

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORMS

Informed Consent Form for School Leavers with Visual Impairment in Ndola District.

This informed consent form is for School leavers with Visual Impairment in Ndola district, Zambia. I am inviting you to participate in an academic research, titled 'Socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola district, Zambia: An assessment of the contributions of the Curriculum.

Name of Principle Investigator

Angela Mulenga Chanda

Name of Organization

The University of Zambia, School of Education

Name of Sponsor

Self

Name of Project and Version

Socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola district, Zambia:
An assessment of the contributions of the curriculum

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am Angela Mulenga Chanda, a student doing master's degree programme at The University of Zambia. I am doing a research on Socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola district, Zambia: An assessment of the contributions of the curriculum. I will give you necessary information about the research and thereafter invite you to be part of this research. The decision as to whether you will participate in the research or not will be left entirely up to you and may not necessarily be given today. As we go through this consent form, there may be words that you may not understand, please feel free to stop me and ask me for their meaning and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, again, you should feel free to ask them.

Purpose of the Research

The life of street begging amongst persons with visual impairment has been on an increase and this is of great concern to a number of people including myself. It is for this reason that I have found it necessary to establish the kind of life school leavers with visual impairment lead (socially and economically). In the assessment of the Social and economic life of school leavers with visual impairment, it is necessary to determine contributions of the curriculum to the social and economic life of school leavers with visual impairment because, curriculum refers to the total learning experiences of individuals not only in school but in society as well. The curriculum is therefore thought to have a great influence on the kind of life that is led by those exposed to it.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve interview questions in a group discussion that will take about one hour twenty minutes.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience and the knowledge as school leavers with visual impairment, who have passed through school are in a better position to explain how school through curriculum has prepared you to live independent lives.

Voluntary Participation

As stated earlier, your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate, its fine and nothing will change. You are free to decide.

- Do you know that you do not have to take part in this research study, if you do not wish to?
- Do you have any questions?

A. Brief Description of the Study Procedure.

I am here to find out the kind of life that you lead after school, socially and economically. I want to find out the income generating activities you are engaged in and the social interactions available. I also want to find out activities you were involved in at school and how they have enhanced your livelihood. I now invite you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be asked to give me the details of the social and economic activities you are involved in and what you think are the contributions of the curriculum in preparing school leavers with visual impairment to enable them lead social and economic independent lives.

B. Type of questions participants are likely to be asked in the focus group discussion.

The type of interview questions is on social activities and income generating activities school leavers with visual impairment are engaged in to lead self-sustainable lives. Where else they got financial support if any. What activities were they involved in whilst at school to enhance their quality of life after school. This discussion will be guided by myself. I can also answer questions that you might have about the research. I would like to have a discussion with you on the, socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola district, Zambia: An assessment of the contributions of the curriculum.

Be rest assured that there is no wrong or right answer; feel free to participate by sharing your true feelings and opinions about this topic. The discussion will be kept confidential. I will not ask you to share personal beliefs, practices or stories and you do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing. The entire discussion will be tape-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the tape. The tape will be kept with me. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else will have access to it. The tapes will be destroyed immediately within a month after the discussion.

Duration

The research will take place 4 to 5 weeks in total. During that time, I will visit you twice or three times in case there is something I need you to clarify. Group discussion will be held once and will take about one hour twenty minutes.

- Where will it take place?

- If you agree to take part, do you know if you can stop participating?
- Do you know that you may not respond to the questions that you do not wish to respond to?
- Do you have any more questions?

Risks

There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the experiences and challenges you encountered during your schooling. However, I do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about how to best utilise the knowledge that you acquired during learning as a foundation to enhance the contributions of the curriculum to the social and economic life of school leavers with visual impairment.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided with any incentive for take part in the research because this is purely an academic research intended for academic purposes. However reimbursements for travel expenses and for telephone costs will be made available were these are communicated and agreed upon (with a researcher) before incurring the expenses / costs.

- Can you tell me if you have understood correctly the benefits that you will have if you take part in the study?

Confidentiality

The research being carried out in this community may attract attention, and by you participating may result in being asked questions by other people in the community. I will not share any information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that I am collecting from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a code on it instead of your real name. It is only me who will have this information.

Confidentiality: Focus groups

I will request you and others in the group not to talk to people outside the group about what was said in the group. I will, in other words, ask each of you to keep what was said in the group confidential. You should know, however, that we cannot stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should be confidential.

- Did you understand the procedures that i will be using will ensure that any information that we as researchers collect about you will remain confidential?

- Do you understand that i cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of information that you share with us in a group discussion?
- Do you have any more questions?

Sharing the Results

The research findings will be shared widely through publications and conferences, however, no names will be mentioned since names have not been recorded anywhere.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not affect the way you live in any way. You may stop participating in the discussion at any time that you wish without consequences.

Who to Contact

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by
, which is a committee whose task it is to make
 sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find more
 about the IRB, contact

.....

**It has also been reviewed by the University of Zambia humanities and Social
 Sciences Research Ethics Committee IRB.**

Part II: Certificate of Consent

**I have been invited to participate in a research on socio-economic life of school
 leavers with visual impairment in Ndola district, Zambia: An assessment of the
 contributions of the curriculum.**

**I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the
 opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have
 been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this
 study**

Print Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____
Day/month/year

If illiterate ¹

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness _____

Thumb print of participant

Signature of witness _____

Date _____

Day/month/year



Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Risks will be taken care of
2. Anonymity will be guaranteed
3. Information will be kept confidential

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent _____

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

¹ A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for Education Managers- SESO (Senior Education Standards Officer) and ESO (Education Standards Officer) for Special Education

1. Do you have any special education training? If so, what field? Please explain.
2. What would you say is the nature of socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area? Please explain.
3. What socio-economic factors would you say surround the life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area?
4. Has any Head teacher reported any challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered to learners with visual impairment? If so, in what areas?
5. What would you say is the quality of socio-economic life that the school leavers with visual impairment in the study area lead? Please explain.
6. Would you say that the quality of life for the school leavers with visual impairment can be associated with the curriculum (activities that learners with visual impairment were exposed to whilst in school)? Please explain.
7. In your view, what contributions has the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment? Please explain.
8. Do you think there are any gaps or challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being provided in the school for the blind that would result in the school leavers with visual impairment fail to live socio-economic independent lives? Please explain.
9. If there are any established gaps or challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered, what activities (measures) would you suggest be included in the learning process to help the school leavers with visual impairment be independent?
10. Would you say that the school leavers with visual impairment on the streets of the study area are as a result of the curriculum being inadequate in preparing learners with visual impairment for a quality sustainable life after leaving school?

11. How many times in a year do you inspect Schools for the Blind, to ensure that the curriculum being offered is adhered to? Please indicate.
12. Do all teachers prepare schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work in the school you inspect?
13. What challenges have you come across if any, concerning the implementation of the curriculum in the school? Please explain.
14. Is there a deliberate school leaver tracer system that follows up on the performance of persons with visual impairment students in school and after school to establish the kind of livelihood they lead? If so, how do you use the information from the tracer system to support your curriculum?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Curriculum Development Specialist for Visual Impairment Learners at Curriculum Development Center (CDC)

1. Do you have any special education training? In what field please explain.
2. . What would you say is the nature of socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment in the study area? Please explain.
3. What socio-economic factors would you say surround the life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area?
4. Has any Head teacher reported any challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered to learners with visual impairment? If so, in what areas?
5. What would you say is the quality of socio-economic life that the school leavers with visual impairment from school lead? Please explain.
6. Would you say that the quality of life for school-leavers with visual impairment can be associated with the curriculum (activities learners with visual impairment were exposed to whilst in school)? Please explain.
7. In your view, what contributions has the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment? Please explain.
8. Do you think there are any gaps or challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered to learners with visual impairment that would make school leavers with visual impairment fail to live economically independent lives? Please explain.
9. If there are any established gaps or challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered to learners with visual impairment in school, what activities (measures) would you suggest to be included in the learning process to improve socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment?
10. Is there a deliberate school leaver tracer system that follows up on the school leavers so that it can be easy to establish the kind of socio-economic life they were leading? If the tracer system is there, how do you use the information from the tracer system to support curriculum?

11. Are there any changes you would suggest to be made in the curriculum content to support socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment?

THANK FOR YOUR RESPONSES

Appendix 5: Interview Guide for the Head Teacher for School of the Blind

1. Do you have any special education training? In what field? Please explain.
2. What would you say is the nature of socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment in the study area? Please explain.
3. What socio-economic factors would you say surround the life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area?
4. How relevant is the curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?
5. Has any teacher reported any challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered to learners with visual impairment? If so, in what area(s)?
6. What would you say is the quality of socio-economic life that school leavers with visual impairment in the study area lead? Please explain.
7. In your view, what contributions has the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment? Please explain.
8. Do you think there are any gaps or challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered in this school that would result in the school leavers with visual impairment fail to live socially and economically independent lives? Please explain.
9. If there are any established gaps in the curriculum being offered to learners with visual impairment in this school, what activities (measures) would you suggest to be included in the process of learning to support the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment?
10. Is there a deliberate school leaver tracer system that follows up learners with visual impairment after school in order to establish the kind of life they lead?
11. If there is a tracer system, how do you use the information from the tracer system to support the curriculum?
12. Are there any changes that you would suggest to be made in curriculum content that may enhance livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment?

THANK FOR YOUR RESPONSES

Appendix 6: Interview Guide for Teachers for School of the Blind

1. Do you have any Special Education training? In what field. Please explain.
2. What would you say is the nature of socio-economic life of the school leavers with visual impairment in the study area? Please explain.
3. What socio-economic factors would you say surround the life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study area?
4. How relevant is the curriculum to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in the study district?
5. Have you faced any challenges in the implementation of the curriculum being offered to learners with visual impairment in this school? If so, in what area(s)?
6. Under the curriculum that you are offering in this school, please explain in detail what type of planned and unplanned activities that are being carried out.
7. In your view, what contributions has the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment? Please explain.
8. Would you say that the quality of life for school leavers with visual impairment can be associated with the curriculum (activities learners with visual impairment were exposed to whilst in school)? Please explain.
9. In your view does the curriculum offered in this school have any effect on the livelihood of school leavers with visual impairment to be socially and economically independent? Please explain.
10. Do you think there are any gaps or challenges in the curriculum being offered in this school that would result in the school leavers with visual impairment fail to live socially and economically independent lives? Please explain.
11. If there are any established gaps or challenges in the curriculum being offered, what activities would you suggest to be included in the curriculum to enable school leavers with visual impairment live independent lives?
12. Is there a deliberate school leaver tracer system that follows up persons with visual impairment after school to establish the kind of livelihood they were leading after leaving school?
13. If there is a tracer system, how do you use the information from the tracer system to support the curriculum?

14. Are there any changes that you would suggest to be made in the curriculum content that would enhance the livelihood school leavers with visual impairment?

THANK FOR YOUR RESPONSES

Appendix 7: Interview Guide for School leavers with Visual Impairment.

1. How old are you?
2. Have you been to school?
3. What is the level of your education?
4. What nature of curriculum were you engaged in (activities involved in) whilst at school?
5. In your view, what contributions has the school curriculum made to the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment? Please explain. Would you say that what you learnt at school has helped you?
6. What social and economic activities are you engaged in, in your spare time? Please explain.
7. If you have school going children, how do you support them? Please explain.
8. Besides begging, are you engaged in other activities that help you to generate income? Please explain.
9. Does the government help you in your upkeep? If the answer is yes, please explain, how?
10. How much money do you roughly raise in a month from begging?
11. If you are engaged in other activities how much money do you generate from those activities per month?
11. Do you live in your own house or you rent? If you rent, how much rent do you pay per month?
12. Roughly how much do you spend on food per day? Please explain.
13. How do you acquire clothes and beddings? And how often do you get these items?
14. Do you have beds, sofas (basic necessities) in your home?
15. Do you enjoy what you do (begging) on the streets? If the answer is no, please explain why and what changes you would like to take place in your life.

16. In your own opinion, what do you think should be included in the curriculum content for persons with visual impairment if found to be inadequate in preparing them to live socially and economically independent lives after leaving school?

THANK FOR YOUR RESPONSES