CHALLENGES OF INCLUSION OF LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF GABRIEL TAAPOPI SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE OSHANA EDUCATION REGION IN NAMIBIA

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ABSTRACT

This study presented a qualitative case study which focused on exploring challenges facing school management of an urban inclusive school for learners with visual impairments in northern Namibia. A stratified-purposive sampling technique, which was a mixture of approaches in which the aim was to select groups that displayed variation on a phenomenon but fairly homogenous, was used. Sixteen (16) participants composed of the school principal, three (3) heads of departments, six (6) teachers and six (6) learners at Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School took part in this study. An observation schedule supported by still picture camera and a semi-structured interview guide were used as research instruments while a narrative analysis and thematic technique were used to analyse collected data. The main findings of the study were that members of the school management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments were faced with multiple challenges. The challenges ranged from negative attitudes towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments, physical make-up of school environment, overcrowded inclusive classrooms, lack of training for staff, lack of teaching and learning facilities and materials, restriction of learners with visual impairments from taking some subjects in the curriculum, social exclusion, and lack of targeted measures to include learners with visual impairments in social and other academic programmes of the school. After critical examination of the findings the study, various recommendations were made to school management, teachers, learners and the Ministry of Education to mitigate the identified challenges. The study also made recommendations for further research. The study concluded that providing a conducive

environment for learners with visual impairments in mainstream schools is a policy provision to realise equitable access to quality education by all.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all my colleagues, family and friends for the kindest support and encouragement. When under pressure, they immensely provided words of encouragement and wisdom.

DECLARATIONS

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Lukas Matati Josua

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List of abbreviations / acronyms

BETD: Basic Education Teachers Diploma

BVIPs: Blind and Visually Impaired Persons

CCTV/s: Closed-Circuit Television/s

CPD: Centre for Professional Development

DNEA: Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment

EFA: Education for All

ESS: Eluwa Special School

ETP: Education Theory and Practice

GTSS: Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School

IE: Inclusive Education

JAWS: Job Access with Speech

LRC: Learners' Representative Council

LWA: Learners with Albinism

MBECS: Ministry of Basic Education, Culture and Sport

MOE: Ministry of Education

MWTC: Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication

NSSC (H): Namibia Secondary School Certificate High Level

OCE: Ongwediva College of Education

OPS: Oniipa Printing Shop

PDE: Professional Diploma in Education

PGDE: Postgraduate Diploma in Education

PS: Permanent Secretary

PWD: Persons with Disabilities

SBE: Skills Based Education

SBM: School-Based Management

SDFs: School Development Funds

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

TEFA: Towards Education for All

UNAM: University of Namibia

UNESCO: United Nation Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

VVTC: Valombola Vocational Training Canter

WTHS: Windhoek Technical High School

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the Study

The discussion around inclusive education (IE) featured prominently during the 1994 Salamanca Conference in Spain where contemporary educationists reaffirmed the principle of IE as advocated in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on special needs education access and quality. Part of this framework reads:

> ...all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangement, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities (UNESCO, 1994, p.11).

It was this commitment, and the difficulties experienced with existing special school systems, that encouraged governments, including that of Namibia, to start moving towards an inclusive education paradigm.

In Namibia, specialised institutions have been at the centre of educating learners with special needs since the colonial times, Haihambo-Muetudhana as cited in Zimba *et al*., (1999). In the 1980s it was realised that special schools are not the only option to educate learners with special needs as they represented segregation. This was a result of a global movement that held the view that the separation approach never benefited children and adults with special needs, nor their communities (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2000). However, the view of special schools that represent segregation has changed as a

result of the inclusive education philosophy that came after the philosophy of integration, which is defined by Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998, p.10) as "the process to transfer children and young people from special to mainstream school." On the other hand, inclusion is described as "the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, of creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (EFA); moreover, they provide an effective education for the majority of children" (Garuba, 2003, p.191).

In March 1990, Namibia sent a delegation of educationists to Jomtien in Thailand to participate in the World Delegation on EFA. Again in 1994 Namibia was represented at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality held in Salamanca, Spain. The Conference, adopted the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action. It was informed by the principle of inclusion (Nghipondoka, 2002).

In this connection, the signatories to the latter took the position that learners with special needs including those with disabilities should be educated, as far as possible, with their peers in regular education settings. Namibia is a signatory to the Salamanca Convention, hence introduction of inclusive education which is in line with Chapter 3 of the Namibian Constitution, Article 20 (1) that states, "All person shall have right to education" (Namibian Constitution, 1990, p.12-13). These policy milestones shaped the ethos of inclusive education which according to Mustapha and Jelas (2006, p.36) "is a

concept that allows students with special needs to be placed and receive instruction in mainstream classes and being taught by mainstream teachers".

Until their signatories to both Jomtien and Salamanca statements, Namibia focused on special schools as the answer to learners' special needs. The history cited in the above paragraphs culminated into piloting inclusive education in a regular school setting in northern Namibia. Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School (GTSS) in Ongwediva, Oshana Region, which opened its doors in January 1988, was selected to pilot the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. In 1995, after the ratification of the Salamanca Convention, GTSS became the first school in Namibia to implement a pilot programme on the inclusion of learners with visual impairments who completed grade 10 at Eluwa Special School (Cloete, 2002). Unlike in the past when learners with severe to profound visual impairments would not have an opportunity to proceed to senior secondary school, and consequently to higher education, GTSS offered an opportunity for them to proceed to senior secondary education level, that is grade 11 and 12. Learners with visual impairments shared the same classrooms with learners without visual impairments and their teachers were expected to render the necessary support they would need in order to access all teaching and learning services.

Since the first enrolment of learners with visual impairments, there has been a yearly continuum of enrolment for learners with varied visual impairments into GTSS. At the time of the current study in 2011, the school had thirty-four teachers (this figure is inclusive of the principal, three Heads of Departments, a teacher with visual

impairments and a resource teacher). There were nine hundred and seventy-two (972) learners: this figure is comprised of 375 males and 597 females. Only two male learners had partial visual impairments.

When the inclusion process at GTSS started, most teachers had little or no training in the area of special needs and were not in a position to give the necessary support to learners with special needs in the regular school system (Mostert, 2001). None of the teacher-education institutions prepared teachers for inclusion except for general pedagogy which encourages teachers to be cognisant of all learners' needs. The majority of teachers had little or no training aimed at preparing them for inclusion of learners with visual impairments in mainstream schools. At the time of piloting inclusion for learners with visual impairments, teacher education for primary school teachers was the responsibility of the four former Colleges of Education in Namibia, namely Ongwediva College of Education, Rundu College of Education, Caprivi College of Education and Windhoek College of Education. Teachers' education for secondary level was and continues to be the responsibility of University of Namibia (UNAM). At both, UNAM and Colleges of Education, student-teachers were not exposed to sufficient content and strategies for supporting the learning process of children with special needs (Mostert, 2001).

By 1995, when the inclusion of learners with visual impairments was piloted, both UNAM and the Colleges of Education did not offer inclusive education courses at a level that would provide adequate management and functional skills to teachers who could be school managers. Most of the teachers in the current inclusive school were

trained in Colleges of Education's Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) and UNAM's Bachelor of Education (BED) or Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or Higher Education Diploma for Secondary Education whose curriculum inadequately prepared teachers to support the learning of students with special needs (Zimba *et al*., 1999). Recently, the UNAM took up the responsibility to train teachers for primary and secondary school level who may be future school managers as heads of departments and school principals.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since 1995, after the commencement of the piloting of the programme on the inclusion of learners with visual impairments, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has made efforts to create the understanding of inclusive education through workshops and in-service training given to teachers, heads of departments and principals at the helm of managing schools. These programmes were important since principals, heads of departments and teachers play a pivotal role in managing inclusive schools. These interventions gave minimal preparation in terms of appropriate skills to manage schools that practise the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Cloete (2002) indicated that there has been a lack of broader consultation between management of the inclusive school and the decision makers in the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC).There has, also, been a lack of training for teachers which lead to a lack of skills.

In the light of the perceived absence of skills needed for managing inclusive schools, this study focuses on exploring challenges facing school management at GTSS, an

inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. The study shall further propose ways to mitigate these challenges.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to thoroughly explore the challenges the school management at GTSS experienced in facilitating the inclusion of learners with visual impairments, the following research questions are addressed:

- What were the perceptions of members of the school management on the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school?
- What were the challenges the school management faced in facilitating the inclusion of learners with visual impairments?
- What measures did the school management put in place to address identified social and academic challenges?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Several studies including those of (Emvula, 2007; Haihambo, 2010; Human, 2010; Knouwds, 2010; Magweva & Mavundukure, 2002; Mayubelo, 2006; Mowes, 2002; Nghipondoka, 2002; Zimba, *et al*., 2002) have been undertaken on inclusive education in the Namibian context. However, the aspect of challenges to school management of inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments received little attention if any. As such, it is anticipated that once the challenges of management are identified, ways to mitigate them may be found in order to improve the management of inclusive schools.

Furthermore, members of the school management may play a vital role in planning for the success of inclusive education for learners with visual impairments in the mainstream schools.

Therefore, it is expected that the study will be of benefit to various stakeholders in various ways. Firstly, it may help school managers to address challenges posed by the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a regular school environment. Secondly, it is also expected that the findings of the study may create deeper understandings of what is expected from the management of inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments to enhance success. Thirdly, the findings of this study may benefit curriculum developers in education to consider the management of inclusive schools as an important component when revising the existing curricula on education. Fourthly, the study may guide policy makers on critical issues to consider when formulating or reviewing existing policies on inclusive education especially for learners with visual impairments. Finally, the results of this study may provide building blocks for the expansion of managing inclusive education to more schools while ensuring that novice inclusive schools do not re-invent the wheel (Ministry of Education, 2008).

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Given the fact that this was a qualitative study and that observation was used as one of the data collection methods, the observer's biasness could have interfered with the conclusions made by the researcher.

There are only two schools in Namibia which have been officially declared as inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments by MoE. These schools are the Windhoek Technical High School (WTHS) and in the Khomas Region and Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School in the Oshana Region. Moreover, there could be other schools with good inclusive practices although they have not yet been officially declared as inclusive schools by MoE. However, due to distance and geographical location, GTSS was selected and as such the findings of the study may be limited to the experiences of management of that particular school, in the Oshana Education Region. In order to mitigate the identified limitations, the researcher undertook a thorough and in-depth study and adopted a case study approach.

1.6 Definitions of Concepts

This section describes the operational concepts and terms that were used in this study. These concepts and terms are defined or described within the context of the study.

Inclusive Education generally refers to an approach of serving children with disabilities within the general education settings (Ainscow & César, 2006). It is also, as Al-Zyoudi (2006) puts it, about fitting schools to meet the needs of all learners. It is, further, subscribed to the practice whereby students with physical, sensory, or intellectual impairments that affect learning are educated in a regular school as opposed to conventional special schools (Johnstone & Chapman, 2009). In this study, inclusive education is used to only refer to the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a regular school system.

Inclusion is conceptualised in this study as what Booth and Ainscow (2002) referred to as making schools supportive and stimulating places for staff as well as students. It is, further, understood as a process of taking action in order to address the wide diversity of needs of all learners (Knouwds, 2010). Knouwds (2010) further defined inclusion as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion" (6). In agreement with UNESCO (2005), inclusion is about involving changes and modification in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. To give context to this study, inclusion will be understood as all adaptations made to ensure that learners with visual impairments are adequately included in all activities of the school.

Mainstreaming, in this study means moving students from a special education classroom to a regular education classroom only in situations where they are able to keep up with their typically developing peers without specially designed instruction or support (Inclusion White Paper, 2002). Mainstreaming refers to the inclusion of learners with visual impairments from a special school in the regular school system.

Learners with Visual Impairments, in this study are classified as a heterogeneous group ranging from those who are blind to those with slight visual impairments as Human (2010) puts it. Furthermore, in the context of this study, it refers to learners who have visual disabilities which adversely affect learners' academic performance

(Knouwds, 2010). This includes all learners who have accepted and demonstrate that they need help in the course of their studies due to visual impairments without necessarily referring to the severity of the visual impairments. The clause "learners with visual impairments" will be used to refer to both partially sighted and blind learners.

School Management, in this study refers to the school leadership which is made up of heads of departments and the principal, who ensure that functional tasks as well as managerial activities are carried out at school level. The management forms a team that addresses the challenges of the school such as those related to motivation, human resource development, provision of resources, financial management, discipline as well as support and creation of conducive teaching and learning conditions (Sister, 2004).

Challenges, in this study refer to the constraints, barriers or hindrances that the management, teachers and learners of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments are facing.

Low Vision, as adopted in this study refers to what Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank and Smith (2004) describe as the sight of individuals who can generally read print although they may depend on optical aids such as magnifying lenses, to see well. It will further refer to learners with albinism conditions that result in short sightedness. These learners must have been declared to have visual disabilities by recognised medical personnel and that their visual disabilities affect their academic performance.

Learners with Disabilities, is conceptualised as learners who differ from others in terms of sensory characteristics. Such differences are of a nature that it poses specific

limitations to learning. In this study the term is used to refer to learners with visual disabilities.

1.7 Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the study that explored challenges of inclusive education with regard to learners with visual impairments as experienced by the school management of the research site. The researcher provided an orientation of the study to make readers aware of the problem under investigation. The statement of the problem addressed the justification of the researcher on the current study and what the study strives to achieve. The significance of the study was highlighted and paved a way for investigation on the research questions which acted as guidance for stating the objectives to be achieved. The limitations of the study are stated; the key concepts from the study topic were defined and clarified to make the study more understandable to the readers.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter a review of literature on school management is done. Thereafter, a theoretical framework within which the study is viewed is discussed. Then literature review related to inclusive education, views related to stakeholders regarding learners with disabilities, challenges related to inclusive education and measures put in place to ensure learners with special needs or disabilities are well accommodated in the social and academic activities of the schools.

Findings of relevant studies or research on inclusive education are outlined to provide a rationale to investigate challenges encountered by school management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. These findings are critically examined to provide the theoretical context, identify gaps in knowledge and find ways to address these gaps. The research questions as outlined in *Chapter 1* formed the core basis of the literature review.

2.2 School Management

A school is an organisation. Management theorist Barnard cited in Kreitner (1992) defines an organisation as a system of consciously coordinated activities, which implies a degree of planning and division of labour, or forces of two or more persons. According to Auala (2012,p.7) “management is about coordinating activities of an organisation in accordance with set policies, rules and procedures with the aim to achieve agreed

objectives and goals". Management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments has to coordinate activities in order to achieve agreed objectives and goals.

However, from a psychological point of view, Schein cited in Kreitner (1992) refers to an organisation as a body that shares these four characteristics: coordination of effort, common goal or purpose, division of labour and hierarchy of activity. A public inclusive school is an organisation which meets these characteristics among others.

According to Gamage and Sooksomchitra (2004, p. 289) the decentralisation and devolution of authority to school level have emerged as a phenomenon in most education systems around the globe. Namibia is no excuse to the debates over decentralising the management of education to individual schools.

From independence school management in Namibia is reformed to decentralise authority to schools with the assumption that shifting authority and management responsibilities to local levels will promote effective and efficient use of resources. The schools were clustered in centers which are assumed to work best when they are accompanied by as much decentralised and participatory decision-making as possible (Dittmar, Mendelson & Ward, 2002).

In Namibia the term "school clustering" is sometimes used instead of School-Based Management (SBM). School clustering has been implemented on the assumption that teaching and school management will improve through sharing resources, experiences,

and expertise amongst teachers (Pomuti & Weber, 2012). School clustering in Namibia is intended to improve school management as well as teaching and learning.

Since there are only two officially declared inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments in Namibia, SBM will be used to refer to site-based school management, where the principal, heads of departments, teachers and sometimes learners are expected to play the decision making role. The assumption is that the inclusive schools will make informed decision based on the needs of learners with visual impairments.

In Namibia, schools' day-to-day activities are managed by the principals, heads of departments and teachers. School principals see to it the entire staff membership of schools are actively involved in planning, organising, controlling and leading activities that make the inclusion of learners with visual impairments a success. Heads of departments are accountable to the principal and they supervise teaching and learning in their respective departments in a more comprehensive manner. Teachers, on the other hand, are reciprocally accountable to heads of departments and their key responsibilities are to ensure that effective teaching and learning processes engage all learners. Moreover, principals, heads of departments and teachers have a responsibility of ensuring that any learner including those with visual impairments are getting optimal benefits from the education that they receive in schools. This process applies to all schools, including inclusive schools.

The practice of school management involves many stakeholder namely principals, heads of departments, teachers and community members. Therefore, the inquiry in this

research involves a range of persons such as the principal, heads of departments, teachers and learners.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This section reviews the *School-Based Management (SBM)* theory that informed the study.

2.3.1 School-Based Management

The School-Based Management (SBM) is a process that involves self-management of schools by stakeholders such as principals, heads of departments and teachers. Under SBM the customary role of the principal has changed as decision making is shared among stakeholders (Botha, 2006). Yap and Adorio (2010, p.51-52) further explained that "the premises of SBM is that principals, teachers, parents, and the local communities are in the best position to know the needs of their schools and to make appropriate decisions in a timely manner". These stakeholders manage the day-to-day activities of schools and therefore, they are in the better position to know the needs of the school and to make appropriate timely decisions.

The primary distinction from these definitions is that power to make certain decision has been shifted from the central authority to the sites (a school). In this study, school management shall be composed of principal, heads of departments, teachers and at times students whose site participation is directly involved in school wide decision making. These are key stakeholders in an inclusive school that is locally managed by these members of school management.

Auala, Amukugo and Mushaandja (2011) are of the opinion that before you can successfully introduce any form of change in any organisation you should first have to win the hearts and minds of the stakeholders. Successful change management is about taking the people with you. Unless the people in the school at all levels, from senior management to employees and students are committed to change, it will fail. This is not an option and without winning the hearts and minds of the people any change is doomed.

Principals, heads of departments and teachers directly deal with issues regarding the management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. These stakeholders can manage change by moving individuals, teams, and organisations from the current state to a desired future organisation (Auala, Amukugo & Mushaandja, 2011). In the SBM framework, the responsibility for decision-making, authority over school operation is transferred to principals and teachers, and sometimes students, and community members (World Bank, 2007). These stakeholders meet challenges, on a day-to-day basis, that are posed by the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. It is important to note that in the context of the study despite the authority being decentralised, the school-level actors have to operate within policies determined by central government.

The SBM framework transfers authority in activities such as personnel, budget allocation, curriculum development, procurement of educational materials, improving infrastructures and monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning at school level.

This study is placed within a framework of SBM thus the inquiry involves a range of persons.

2.4 Inclusive Education

In 1945, the League of Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights whose Article 26 proclaims the right of every citizen to an appropriate education, regardless of differences. This right is also treasured in the constitutions of many independent nations according to Kisanji cited in Zimba *et al*., (1999).

For too long learners with special needs have been left out of education and as a gesture of sympathy, children with special needs in Namibia were categorised and placed into special schools. The practice of special schools led to two parallel education systems, which are regular and special education. Conventional special schools practiced exclusion and this practice changed after a team of educationists gathered in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, to take part in the global conference on EFA. This conference produced a declaration on offering education to all. At the independence of Namibia on 21 March 1990, the country adopted a Constitution under which education is declared as a basic human right for everyone (*see Chapter 1, 1.1*). Everyone means all people, irrespective of their abilities, have a right to education as enshrined in the supreme law of the country.

In 1994, another team of educationists congregated in Salamanca, Spain to participate in the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education. The Salamanca Statement,

agreed to by 92 governments and 25 international organisations articulated the following:

> Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the more effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994, p. 2).

Namibia is a signatory to this declaration; insofar inclusive education is based on the concept of providing social equity and is consistent with a social and now affirmation model of disability. The above developments started the premise of the theories that influenced the practice of inclusive education. Inclusive education is a philosophy and a practice based on an inclusive theory of teaching and learning. It is based on the right of all individuals to have *access* to *quality* education with *equal* opportunities and in a *democratic* environment (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). It refers to the education of children and youths with disabilities in regular education classrooms with their nondisabled peers. It also includes issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social status, religion, creed, etc. Inclusion implies more than the physical integration of learners with impairments in a regular school. It should entail full acceptance of learners with disabilities, especially visual impairments, in a regular school system. In addition to accessible classrooms and facilities, learners with disabilities must be afforded enough instructional support which may include the following: flexible curriculum for learners with visual impairments, adequately prepared

teaching staff, a welcoming school environment and culture that embrace total acceptance.

The shift from special education to inclusive education requires the commitment of members of school management to win the minds and hearts of the stakeholders stated by Auala *et al*. (2011). This study is about exploring challenges facing members of school management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. Management of an inclusive school is studied from decentralised managerial duties to a school level or site-based management. The following section discusses the role of management in an inclusive school.

2.4.1 The role of management in an inclusive school

A school as an organisation needs proper management in order to achieve its goals. Management is defined by Robbins and Decenzo (2001, p. 5) as "a process of getting things done effectively and efficiently through and with other people." In terms of organisational division of labour and hierarchy of authority, a school is more site-base managed by a principal, heads of departments and teachers. In an inclusive school, members of school management deal with the challenges presented by all learners including those with special needs. It is a special challenge in the administrative ranks to educate the learners with disabilities (Livingston, Reed & Good, 2001).

One function of members of school management is to manage diverse human resources. Human resource management in education is crucial to the provision of high quality

educational experiences (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998). An inclusive school for learners with visual impairments is no exception to this.

Principals, heads of departments and teachers form a collective force that manages a school. M*ö*wes (2002) listed a number of compliant skills needed to perform the leadership, administrative and manager role effectively. The skills below will be discussed as key aspects in management of an inclusive school.

- Managing various approaches to teaching in different educational contexts and with diverse groups of learners.

An inclusive class for learners with visual impairments requires that a teacher should use various approaches such as such as group work, collaborative learning, individualised learning and peer-mediated learning when teaching diverse groups of learners. Principals, heads of departments and teachers may be faced with a challenge to seek for approaches that appropriately suit inclusive teaching and learning.

- Working with peers in participative decision-making and collaborative teaching with the aim of maximising the participation of all learners.

Members of management in a school should make decisions that involve stakeholders within the school. Teachers, for example, need to collaborate when teaching learners with visual impairments. This could encourage inclusive participation by all learners.

- Creating an inclusive ethos in the school where all learners, staff, parents and community members are valued.

The education of learners with visual impairments in a tripartite environment requires members of school management to engage all stakeholders (learners, teachers and parents or community). Management should create awareness for all stakeholders so that they are all involved in the education of learners with visual impairments.

- Resolving conflicts in the classroom and school in a sensitive manner;

Members of management in an inclusive school should be sensitive, in their approach; to conflict that involves learners with diverse special needs such as visual impairments.

- Accessing human and material resources from the community in order to maximise the participation of all learners;

The inclusive school society alone cannot satisfy the learning needs for learners with visual impairments. Forces such as location, cost, and personnel often hinder the availability of assistive technologies for individuals with visual impairments (Derrick, Stacy & Gaylen, 2011). Management must locate human, financial, and material resources from members of the community to engage all learners, including learners with visual impairments.

- Planning collaboratively with peers in developing on-going staff development programmes that are relevant and meet local needs;

Management should find suitable staff development programmes such as in-service training and workshops. Management is in a better position to know which area needs to be uplifted. They should look at the strategic objectives and do an analysis on strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). There is a need for collaborative planning with peers to the benefit of all learners.

- Promoting and supporting innovative practices in order to improve the school's responsiveness to diversity.

Inclusive education for learners with visual impairments needs innovative ways of responding to diversity. Managing diversity is a key aspect in managing an inclusive school.

The members of school management play a major role of planning, organising, controlling and leading the activities of the school. In their efforts to ensure success in achieving goals of the school as an organisation, management meets certain challenges. This study investigates the challenges that confront the members of school management of a mainstream school that includes learners with visual impairments.

2.5 Views of stakeholders in education regarding learners with disabilities

This part of the study discusses different views, perceptions and attitudes of various stakeholders at a school level. The discussion begins by looking at the negative views and, later, on positive views regarding inclusive education in general.

2.5.1 Negative views on inclusive education

Reviewed literatures on general inclusive education were based on attitudes, perception or views of stakeholders. In these reviewed studies regarding attitudes, views or feelings

of learners, communities or parents towards inclusive education have been identified as challenges (Lambe & Bones, 2006; Mittler, 2000; and Ocloo & Subbey, 2008).

Findings of these studies generally indicate that the best way to address the problem is not to create separate classrooms but to include these learners in the general education classroom in which they will have lasting benefits for both learners with special needs and their peers without special needs (Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006 and Hull, 2005).

Ocloo and Subbey, (2008) observe that most teachers expressed misgivings about negative attitudes by some teachers who pay lip services to the program of inclusion and displayed apathy towards giving support to children with disabilities in their schools.

In a study on barriers to learning, Mayaba (2008) found that educators held negative perceptions towards adapting the curriculum to learners with barriers to learning. This has resulted in a mixed perception on academic performance of special needs and mainstream learners in inclusive settings. Garuba (2003) stated a problem of attitude towards persons with disabilities, which in most cases is far from being favourable.

The introduction of inclusive education in Namibia was met with mixed views from sectors of society. This is attributed to the general prejudice, stigma and myths attached to observable disabilities. In this part, the literature review attitude, views or perceptions towards education for people with special needs in Namibia.

A study by Zimba, Haihambo and February (2004) found that parents of children with disabilities in Namibia were rejected, while some children with disabilities were bullied for having disabilities. Zimba *et al*., (2002) also found that attitudes, views or feelings of

learners, communities or parents towards inclusive education have been identified as challenges to inclusive education in Namibia.

A negative attitude towards special educational needs is identified as a barrier that must be addressed in order to develop and expand successful inclusive education programmes (Haihambo, 2010). The National Report of Namibia on the Development of Education states that negative attitudes, stigmatisation and ignorance are major stumbling blocks towards inclusion (Ministry of Education, 2008).

It is pivotal for this study to answer these questions: what are the views of the teachers at Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School and how do these views pose challenges to the management of a regular school which is inclusive to learners with visual impairments?

The studies reviewed in this section indicated generally that various stakeholders in education have negative attitudes, views or perceptions towards inclusions of learners with disabilities in a regular school. Cloete, (2002, p.78) stressed that "certain teachers seem to be rather negative about inclusion and therefore less acceptance towards learners with visual impairments". The researcher believes that both positive and negative perceptions of role players have an impact on challenges of school managements of inclusive schools.

2.5.2 Positive views on inclusive education

Contrary to the negative attitudes discussed in the previous section a number of studies reviewed in this section found positive attitudes shown towards inclusive education (Al-

Zyoudi, 2006; Avramidis, Buyliss & Burden, 2000 and Kahikuata-Kariko, 2003). These studies will be explained as follow:

Al-Zyoudi (2006) explained the factors that contributed to positive or acceptable attitudes to the inclusive education in Jordan. These factors are such as the nature of disabilities and severity of disabilities, teaching experience, training, factors related to the school, gender and grade level taught.

Kahikuata-Kariko (2003) also found that principals in Namibia had a general positive attitude towards learners with special educational needs and that they had preferences on the type of disabilities they consider for inclusion in their schools. This positive attitude shown by the principals could be attributed to the experience that they have acquired in management. In a study on mainstream teachers' attitude towards general inclusion of children with special educational needs in an ordinary school Avramidis, Buyliss and Burden (2000) showed that teachers had positive attitudes toward learners with disabilities.

The researches by Al-Zyoudi (2006) and Avramidis *et al*., (2000) that found positive attitudes towards inclusion of persons with learning difficulties were conducted in foreign cultural contexts which might have influenced the findings. The above findings are the same as that in a study by Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) that found that principals felt that although inclusion could work in the state of Illinois mainstream schools, not all learners with disabilities could fit in an inclusive school.

The positive attitudes could be attributed to the experience that they have acquired in teaching or heading a department or a school. The researcher's view is that principals and heads of departments are using experience of teaching and heading departments before they were promoted to positions of management in schools. Their positive attitudes could also be attributed to the fear of being regarded as incompetent, therefore they could fake the attitudes and perception they hold towards inclusive education.

For inclusive education of learners with visual impairments to succeed members of school management need a mental shift from negative to positive attitudes. The mental shift should involve new ways of looking at disabilities from a social model as opposed to a medical model perspective.

2.6 Challenges in implementing inclusive education

A number of studies reviewed on inclusive education, were carried out in foreign countries with a few done in Namibia. These studies were generally about inclusive education and not directly about challenges facing school management of inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments (Arikewuyo, 2009; Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Eleweke & Rodda, 2010; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

According to literature, challenges in the provision of inclusive education are embedded in school aspects such as the schools' physical environment, teachers' training and professional development, class size, curriculum choices available, lack of assistive devices, and teaching materials (Emvula, 2007; Haihambo Ya-Otto *et al*., 2009; Mayumbelo, 2006 and Ocloo & Subbey, 2008). These are discussed as follow:

2.6.1 The schools' environments

The physical makeup of the schools poses challenges to management of any inclusive school. Most inclusive schools were not physically designed to accommodate persons using wheelchairs as well as those who are blind (Mayumbelo, 2006; Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1998; Towards Education for All [TEFA]-Ministry of Education, 1993 and Zimba *et al*., 2002). It can, thus, be concluded that the current inclusive schools were not initially built with the vision for inclusive education. This being the case, it is expected that school management in inclusive schools will always be confronted with issues of accessibility.

Human (2010) revealed that an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments is not safe because it has stairs, stones or pavements. All schools that officially practice the inclusion for learners with visual impairments in Namibia were built before the ratification of Jomtien Convention on EFA and the 1994 Salamanca Convention on Inclusive Education. These schools were not specifically built for inclusive education purposes. They only happened to be used for inclusion of learners with visual impairments when government decided to pilot the inclusive education philosophy. When the physical facilities of the current inclusive schools were built, there was no legal mandate binding contractors to build structures that are accessible by learners and community members with disabilities.

A study by Haihambo Ya-Otto *et al*., (2009) on the responses of vocational training institutions in Namibia to inclusion of students with general disabilities revealed that, from managements` perspective, students with disabilities were hindered by non-

responsive infrastructures. Although this study was conducted in a different context from that of the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream secondary school, its findings confirmed the importance of friendly infrastructures if inclusive education is to become a success. Haihambo (2010) revealed that some challenges are also based on institutional structures that made it difficult for students with disabilities to access venues. This study was carried out this study in institutions of high education in Namibia to explore the challenges of inclusive education to students with disabilities. The findings of her research, although it is not about schools, reiterated challenges highlighted in the Development of Education National Report of Namibia that most of the schools' physical facilities are not accessible to persons with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2008).

2.6.2 Teachers' training and professional development

In organisations, professional development and training are responsibilities of Human Resource Management (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 2010). Proper staff training and development programmes should be designed for managers in schools to ensure that they carry out their managerial tasks and responsibilities sufficiently and effectively. Sang (2010, p.3) confirms that "training is a prerequisite for effective performance of duties." Thus, training of teachers on leadership and management upon appointment should be considered. It was found that longevity of teaching experience and teachers' training appears to be the major yardstick that is being used to promote teachers to the rank of principal (Arikewuyo, 2009 and Mushaandja, 2006). This is confirmed by the

requirements on the Regional Circular 10 of 2006 for the promotional posts advertised for heads of departments in schools in Oshana Education region; in which six years of teaching experience was required.

Studies found that lack of staff professional development or skills, lack of qualified secondary special education content specialists as well as inadequate training of staff were major setbacks in realising inclusive education in schools (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; HaihamboYa-Otto *et al*., 2009; Human, 2010; Lambe & Bones 2006 and Mayumbelo, 2006). Eleweke and Rodda (2010) have also referred to inadequate personnel training programmes as a challenge on offering inclusive education. In the same vein, the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) in a policy for the Education Sector, *Towards Education for All*, noted that schools are already overburdened and teachers who have little specialised preparation may not be able to develop constructive and supportive learning environments for children entrusted to them.

Mostert (2001) indicated that most teachers in Namibia have very little or no training in the area of special needs and they are not in a position to give necessary support to learners with special educational needs in the regular school system. These findings confirm the essence of professional development and in-service training for teachers, especially those in inclusive settings.

It is confirmed that classroom teachers at all levels feel inadequately prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Norman, Caseau & Stefanich, 1998). Also the Ministry of Education in Namibia reported that the lack of teachers' pre-service training

on inclusive education was the main barrier to inclusive education in Namibia (Ministry of Education, 2008). While Cloete (2002) and Zimba (2011) indicated that lack of in-service training is a challenge in an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments.

One crucial skill teachers of learners with visual impairments need to have is brailing and de-brailing. Human (2010) indicated that teachers in Namibia were sent for brailing courses at the introduction of the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school. This was a good idea of training teachers how to read and write in Braille. However, their brailing skills faded with time because they never practised it. Some of the teachers never had a chance to work with learners with visual impairments and put into practice the skills that they learned after their training. Some teachers who are working with learners with visual impairments relied on the assistance of the resource teacher instead of using their skills; therefore, they never got a chance to practice the skills they gained (Human, 2010).

Massenga and Mkandawire (2007) found the lack of knowledge and skills to manage the teaching and learning of children with special educational needs to be one of the current sources of exclusion. Knowledge is acquired through training and education. If there are no training programmes aimed at enhancing inclusion, this may result into a challenge to management.

In their study titled *South African Teachers' Voices on Support in Inclusive Education*, Eloff and Kgwete (2007) identified challenges that mainstream educators had to contend with, these included lack of skills and competence. Their take on skills and competence is that they help teachers better understand inclusive education and it also empowers them with skills that will help them meet learners' diverse needs.

The inclusion of learners with visual impairments requires teachers with the knowledge and skills to manage teaching and learning. The knowledge and skills can be acquired through pre-service and continuous training throughout the professional career of teachers. Having reviewed literature on this theme, it appears that for Namibia, the lack of both pre-service and continuous training during service continue to remain an impediment for the success of inclusive education for learners with visual impairments.

2.6.3 Class size

Anecdotal data indicates the teacher-learner ratio in many African countries is characterised by high numbers of learners per teacher, a practice which is common in previously disadvantaged regions. Unrealistic teacher-learners ratio makes it extremely difficult to provide quality education (Iipinge, n.d). Good teacher-learners ratio is crucial in an inclusive class group. Currently, the practice in Namibia is that there are as many as forty (40) or more learners in a normal school setting. The inclusive school has more or less the same average number of students in a classroom. If an inclusive class is overcrowded, it could impact the teaching and learning negatively. A teacher will not be able to give attention to individual learners to cater for their diverse disabilities.

One of the obstacles to achieving meaningful inclusion in developing countries is large class sizes (Eleweke & Rodda, 2010). Also, Ocloo and Subbey (2008, p.647) investigated the perceptions of basic school teachers towards inclusive education in Hohoe District in Ghana and found that respondents lamented "large class size, which always pose insurmountable challenges to effective teaching". Their findings can be related to challenges facing members of school management regarding how the large class size can affect quality teaching.

According to Mostert (2001) and Eloff & Kigwete (2007), large class groups make it very difficult for the general classroom teachers to cope with learners on a daily basis and to give attention individually. Also Hipondoka, as cited in Lewis (2002), indicated that class size is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education.

Carpenter and Dyal (2007) also affirmed that overcrowding is a challenge to inclusive education. Developing countries' benefits of inclusion are not being achieved because the developing countries have economical and developmental difficulties, therefore achieving Western models of inclusion will remain unrealistic. In most developing countries, school managements are challenged by overcrowded classrooms because it exhausts teachers' energy (Doswell, 2007).

The different research reviewed as indicated above come to the same conclusion that high teacher-pupil ratio have negative impacts on effective teaching and could affect effective management of inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments.

2.6.4 Curriculum choices

According to Mayumbelo (2006), the curriculum used in schools does not cater for the needs of learners with special educational needs; therefore learners with visual impairments' needs may not be catered for as well. Learners with visual impairments could be confined to doing subjects that do not suit them. Some subjects such as science have components that are practical in nature. For example, learners are expected to complete a practical examination paper. This is not possible with learners that are blind or colour blind. The syllabi expect from learners to make observations in laboratories, which pose an obvious challenge for learners who are blind.

To cement this observation, Human (2010) confirmed that learners with visual impairments struggled with subject choices; they have difficulties with school subjects that are practical in nature such as Science and Biology.

M*ö*wes, as cited in Kasanda and Mostert (2006), listed these obstacles to inclusive education which include curriculum modification of lessons. M*ö*wes' research was aimed at summarising key aspects considered relevant for realising an inclusive education system and not specific for inclusion of learners with visual impairments.

Having reviewed various literatures on curriculum choice, the researcher was empowered to explore the aspect of subject choices for learners with visual impairments in one school in northern Namibia and how this aspect may pose a challenge to school management of the school that served as the research site.

2.6.5 Assistive devices and teaching materials

Successful teaching and learning in an inclusive school demand for the availability of assistive technology. The cost involved in acquiring these assistive technologies for learners with visual impairments is more expensive than any other types of technology (Cloete, 2002 and Emvula, 2007). The Ministry of Education (2008) cited economic barriers towards inclusion in education, arguing that all legislations and policies cannot be realised if there is no budget allocation for the specific inclusion reasons. Most schools' revenues come from the collection of school development funds. This fund is intended to cater for all learners in the inclusive school. The cost of assistive devices for learners with visual impairments is so high that, if acquired, it can deplete the school development fund account and it may also imply that learners with visual impairments benefit at the expense of regular learners.

Another barrier according to Peters (2006) is a lack of materials needed for adoption to the curriculum and instruction. It is agreed that there are no many books in Braille as well as other materials such as magnifying devices, and talking computers and calculators. The lack of these resources put learners with visual impairments at a disadvantage and school managers need to find ways of bringing these learners on par with their peers as required by the inclusive education paradigm.

2.6.6 Absence of social and recreational activities

Education combines both academic and social activities such as sport, recreational and cultural activities. It is expected that learners take part in extramural activities to help

relax their minds from academic pressure. In this section, the researcher reviews literature related to social activities with specific reference to learners with disabilities.

Cronin (1992, p.149) confirmed that "physical education and sports can be an area of difficulty for students with visual impairments." In most literature and as confirmed by the researcher's observation as an educator in Namibia, the lack of social activities such as sport is indicative of a tendency of social exclusion. This exclusion may cause learners with visual impairments to have reduced physical competencies below their sighted peers. It may also lead to inability to learn through social interaction advocated in Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development (Dabbagh & Riddle, 1999). Most ball games such as netball, basketball and football involve the ball travelling through the air. Learners with visual impairments are restricted to participate due to the nature of the games. This leaves the blind learners in isolation because they cannot compete with their sighted peers. Sesay (n.d.) agreed that there are no specific measures to accommodate learners with visual impairments in social programmes.

Knouwds (2010) confirmed that individuals with visual impairments are often excluded from sports and other social activities such as going to the movies, because others think that they would not be able to cope.

Management of inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments has to explore possibilities of having learners with visual impairments included in the social activities offered in the school. Their participation in activities such as sports promotes physical, emotional and social wellbeing according to Murphy, Carbone and the Council on

Children with Disabilities Paediatrics (2008). It is a challenge to management to find social activities that are likely to accommodate learners with visual impairments so that they benefit from physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

2.7 Measures to accommodate learners with disabilities in academic and social settings of inclusive schools in Namibia

This section reviewed literature related to measures to accommodate learners with disabilities in academic and social activities of their schools. In exploring this theme, the literature reviewed policy documents and articles. The measures are discussed according to this pattern: It starts with regulatory framework on inclusive education and proceeds to discuss teacher training, infrastructure improvement, provision of assistive devices, provision of skills-based education to learners with disabilities, adopting the assessment tools and social inclusion.

2.7.1 Inclusive education regulatory framework

A number of measures have been put in place to accommodate learners with disabilities or special needs, such as visual impairments, in mainstream schools. These documents include the *Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, Article 20, (1990), Towards Education for All (1993), Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999), National Policy on Disabilities (1997), National Disability Council Act (2004)* etc. Namibia, being committed to these documents, signifies a pledge to establish an inclusive society through the IE system.

The *National Policy on Disabilities (1997)* states the following:

> "The provision of education shall be based on the fundamental principles of inclusive education which demands that all children shall be taught together, whenever possible, regardless of any individual differences or difficulties they may have. This inclusion entails developing the capacity of the regular school system to enable it to meet the diverse educational needs of all children", (Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation1997, p.10).

The above view clearly illustrates the position taken by the government of Namibia towards inclusion of people with disabilities in the mainstream education setting. This policy introduced the managing of diversity in the work of members of school management. School managers are, thus, expected to work towards ensuring that all learners, irrespective of their diverse needs, benefit from the education given to them. The challenges facing school management of an inclusive school regarding implementation of this policy involves availability of human and material resources, positive attitude and an enabling environment among others.

2.7.2 Teacher training

Providing human resources development through teacher training institutions and through in-service training is another measure of ensuring academic inclusion of learners with disabilities. The University of Namibia, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education offers courses which cover issues related to inclusive education (Haihambo-Muetudhana & Hengari, 2001). The courses are such as Bachelor of Education with modules on Inclusive Education, Guidance and Counselling, Master of Education (Advanced Special Education) as well as a lone standing Masters in Inclusive Education. Most of the programmes offered, provide

general information about learners with disabilities to create awareness of their needs. However, the courses have hardly dwelled on imparting practical skills in teachers so that they are able to design and plan for the lessons inclusive of learners with special needs. Once appointed at schools, teachers rely on the assistance of resource teachers and the skills that they acquired in the training fade away with time (Human, 2010).

Currently, the University of Namibia offers to the future educationists a number of educational courses with the Inclusive Education module. Old programmes offered by the Department of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education in UNAM had changed focus from special education needs to the inclusive education. Inclusive Education is one of the compulsory modules of the Bachelor of Education programme at lower primary, upper primary and secondary levels. There is a Master of Education specialising in Inclusive Education, A Bachelor of Education (B Ed) and a Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) with the module Inclusive Education (*Faculty of Education Prospectus, 2012*).

Most students that graduated from these programmes have climbed the ladders through promotion to become Heads of Departments, Education Officers and Principals respectively but they hardly practiced any skills picked up from these programmes in the teacher training curriculum.

The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) that prepares teachers for general basic education classrooms has a module, Education Theory and Practice (ETP). This module provides some topics that prepare teachers to face inclusive education challenges and it

strengthens inclusive education practice (Shilamba, 2001).This module alone is inadequate to create a supporting environment for learners with visual impairments which is accommodating and learner-centred. The ETP curriculum covers the following topics among others: Individual Differences and Children with General Learning Difficulties; Specific Learning Problems and Children with Special Needs. The BETD-trained teachers are expected to teach from grade 1 to grade 10, and inclusive education for learners with visual impairments is only officially offered in grade 11 and 12. In the majority of cases, teachers being equipped with the basic skills to support learners with disabilities and special needs do not directly work with these learners in classrooms at the level that they teach.

It is also found that the curriculum framework of the Bachelor of Education (Pre-primary, Lower Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary Education) contains modules such as Introduction to Inclusive Education and Inclusive Education (*Faculty of Education Prospectus, 2011*). In the school system, inclusive education for learners with visual impairments is only officially practiced at senior secondary phase. Therefore, only student-teachers that are doing secondary education have narrow chances of working directly with these learners.

So far, there are only two schools in the country that are officially practicing inclusion for learners with visual impairments, namely Windhoek Technical High School in Windhoek, Khomas Region, and Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School in Ongwediva, Oshana Region. There are many other schools that include learners with visual

impairments, mostly by default, even if they are not officially declared inclusive schools by MoE. The definition of learners with visual impairments (*see Chapter 1*) in the context of this study is accommodative to any learners whose visual disabilities affect his or her academic performance (Knouwds, 2010).

Before the merger of the former colleges of education with the University of Namibia, discussions to introduce a Bachelor of Education in Inclusive Education were at an advanced stage at the University of Namibia according to Minutes 02/2009 of Senate (UNAM, 2009). This is an attempt to ensure that measures for inclusive education practice are in place. At this stage however, these plans are on hold while the Faculty of Education is working out mechanisms of phasing in former colleges of education and the management of new and existing programmes.

2.7.3 Infrastructure improvement

Efforts are made to ensure that infrastructure and facilities are accommodative to people with disabilities in Namibia. With regard to the physical environment accessibility, the National Policy on Disability (1997) stated that "the state shall develop mandatory standards and guidelines to make the physical environment accessible to all people with disabilities" (Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation1997, p.9).

The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, (1999) recommended that all new schools should be designed to accommodate children with disabilities and when they attend to an existing school, adaptations should be made as needed, for example for

children that have conditions of visual impairments stairs can be removed and ramps can be erected. The schools that are practicing inclusion for learners with visual impairments were built before the ratification of the convention on inclusive education. Therefore, it requires a budget to make adaptation to the physical structure of the schools.

Despite the mandatory stand on making physical facilities accessible to people with disabilities, there continues to be practical examples where the infrastructures are not accessible to people with disabilities. The inaccessibility of infrastructures is a challenge that confronts the management of inclusive schools.

2.7.4 Provision of Skill-Based Education (SBE) to learners with disabilities

Provision of skill-based education (SBE) to learners with disabilities, especially to equip them with vocational skills, is another attempt to have learners with disabilities included in mainstream institutions of education.

"Having noticed the absence of students with disabilities in vocational education, the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training embarked upon a project of inclusion at Valombola Vocational Training Centre (VVTC), Ongwediva in the Oshana Region in Namibia" (HaihamboYa-Otto *et al*., 2009, p.11). Four blind trainees were admitted at VVTC in a three-year course on Office Administration and Business Management and N$500 000 was allocated for purchasing equipment and implementing the pilot project (Haihambo Ya-Otto *et al*., 2009). The pilot project has produced graduates and one of them is working at VVTC as a switchboard operator. The study in reference is an

attempt to make sure people with disabilities are accommodated in the mainstream educational activities.

2.7.5 Provision of safety nets to learners with disabilities

There are social safety nets provided by the Ministry of Health and Social Services through the Directorate of Social Services which is responsible for disabled persons' and blind persons' grants that often are the only source of income to disabled people (National Disabilities Council Act of 2004, p.213). Furthermore, the SWAPO Party Election Manifesto clearly stated that it remains committed to:

> "Strengthen existing social safety nets and develop new ones to address the plight of vulnerable groups of our society, especially orphans and vulnerable children, senior citizens, war veterans and **people with disabilities**, through consistent improvement of their social grants and access to means of livelihood" (SWAPO Party, 2009, p.35).

The above quote is a commitment made in the ruling party's election manifesto as a measure to ensure that people with disabilities are adequately included in the mainstream academic and social setting.

2.7.6 Making adaptations to assessment tools

The Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment (DNEA) have put measures in place regarding the running of examination for candidates with visual impairments (Ministry of Education, 2010). The measures are such as:

- Additional time allowance of up to 25% for most of the candidates with visual impairments and in severe cases those with Braille papers may require 100%.

- Candidates may get supervised rest breaks.
- Candidates that cannot use Braille can apply through Examination Centre to use a reader.

DNEA can also provide examination papers in these formats: Braille, enlarged text in A3 size and Modified enlarged texts (Ministry of Education, 2010). Needy learners are also exempted from paying examination fees through the Ministry of Finance: Treasury (Ministry of Education, 2008).

In terms of curriculum adaptation and delivery, Fraser and Maguvhe (2008) listed alternative approaches that have been applied to teaching of blind and visually impaired learners. Here are some of the approaches:

- Setting substitute tasks of similar scope and demand.
- Replacing unfriendly tasks with tasks of a different kind.
- Allowing a learner to take a task at a different date.
- Giving learners concession (extra time) to complete tasks.

In 2010, the MoE commissioned the development of alternative curricula for learners with disabilities for all subjects taught in Namibian schools. These curricula are completed and can be used alongside the regular curriculum to support teachers to make the necessary adaptations for learners with various special needs, including visual impairments. There is, for example, an alternative curriculum for Grade 9 of Geography for learners with visual impairments. Such curricula can be requested from NIED. Massanga and Mkandawire (2007) identified three components of curriculum (i.e.

content, methodology and resources) that have been modified to cater for inclusive education as part of an on-going process. These aspects were attended to in the alternative curricular referred above. What remains, is for teachers to be oriented and trained in the utilisation of such components of curriculum.

2.7.7 Provision of social inclusion

In terms of social activities, the National Disability Council Act of 2004 has taken an obligatory stand regarding participation of persons with disabilities in national cultural, religious and sports events. Facilities must be availed or made accessible to all. An act is just a regulatory framework that needs to be implemented. Therefore, the implementation of this act at GTSS (the research site) needs to be evaluated.

One of the interventions to ensure successful social inclusion of learners with visual impairments as Haihambo (2010) alluded to is the appointment of coordinators for inclusive education. It is important for education institutions to have special needs coordinators to oversee the welfare of learners with disabilities and special needs, provide orientation to learners as well as teachers, and to sensitise the school communities about learners with special needs among others.

2.8 Summary

This chapter reviewed and critically discussed the theoretical framework of the study. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed literature about general management, education management as well as inclusive education studies regarding the views or perceptions or

attitudes of various stakeholders in inclusive education. A review of literature regarding the measures put in place to ensure effective inclusive education implementation was covered. Finally, the literature review informed the direction of the research and confirmed the relevance to theoretical framework for this research study on the management of inclusion of learners with visual impairment in a regular school in northern Namibia.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used in this study. This includes the research design, the sample, sampling and data collecting procedure, as well as the research instruments used and how the collected data was analysed. The pilot study and how issues on ethics in the study were addressed also forms part of this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The research design provides a plan how the research will be conducted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).This study adopted a qualitative research approach using a case study design to appropriately address the purpose for which it was intended. Murray Thomas (2003, p.1) refers to qualitative method as "a process that involves a researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements and amounts." In this qualitative approach a case study research design was adopted where a phenomenon was thoroughly studied, and conclusions made from the findings (Gall, Gall & Borg, 1999). According to Yin (2003, p.2) a case study focuses on a contemporary phenomenon within its 'real-life' context. This study focused on day-to-day functioning of an inclusive school and it is believed the researcher was studying the 'real-life' context phenomenon.

Due to the fact that this study dealt with the challenges of inclusive education to the school management, the subjective views and experiences of the principal, heads of

departments (HODs), teachers and learners with and without visual impairments were perceived as vital in understanding how the school is dealing with issues of inclusion of learners with visual impairments and what challenges encountered in a process.

The underlying advantages of the qualitative approach rest in its interpretive character that of discovering the meaning events have for individuals who experience them (Hoepfl, 1997) or what de Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005, p.74) claim as "understanding social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life". By adopting this approach the researcher attempted to understand the subjective reality from the perspective of an insider as well as outsider's perspective.

3.3 Sample

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009, p.11) the sample refers to "individuals selected from a population for a study". Using the stratified-purposeful sampling technique, a total of four (4) members of school management, which included a principal and three (3) heads of departments and six (6) teachers were selected to participate in the study. The sample, also, included four (4) learners without visual impairments and two (2) learners with visual impairments.

The sample technique in this study combined stratified sampling which, according to Babbie (1994, p.227) "is the process of grouping members of the population into relatively homogenous strata before sampling" and a purposive sampling which is defined by to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.115) is "a sample that has been chosen to provide information for a specific purpose" such as, in the case of this study, a

group of members of the school management, teachers, learners with and without visual impairments. Furthermore, the sample was selected on the basis that the participants hold different perspectives on the central phenomenon as Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) has alluded to.

3.4 Research Instruments

An observation schedule and a semi-structured interview guide were used as data collection instruments. The use of multiple methods approach called triangulation, helped to "validate" the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Using these instruments helped the researcher to capture information that was useful in developing an accurate and credible report (Creswell, 2008).

3.4.1 Observation

The observation was conducted on the physical setting, social and curriculum aspects or activities to determine how these aspects or activities influenced the management of the school. The observation was guided by the questions outlined in the Observation Schedule informed by the research questions. The researcher was a non-participant observer looking at a situation from a distance or an outsider's perspective. Like in interviews, the observation was guided by the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, (1.3). To supplement data collected through the observation schedule, still pictures were taken (with permission from the respondents) to depict the physical conditions of the facilities for learners with visual impairment within the school environment.

3.4.2 Interviews

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data that could not be obtained through observations. According to Patton (2002) interviews complement observation by adding meaning and elaboration. Interview allowed the researcher to enter another person's world to comprehend a person's inner perspective to outward behaviours. Although there was a list of questions on issues to be explained, the interviewer was free to probe for further elaboration on a particular subject. Items of the instrument were guided by the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, (1.3).

Both research instruments (Interview Guide and Observation Schedule) used in this study were designed by the researcher with guidance from the supervisors. The instruments were refined based on the results of the pilot study. The process of refining the research instruments is described in the next section.

3.4.3 Pilot study

"A pilot study is an excellent way to determine the feasibility of the study," (Leedy & Ormrod 2005, p. 110). The researcher conducted a pilot study on a selected regular school offering inclusive education to learners with visual impairments in Khomas Education Directorate which had similar basic characteristics to those of the targeted school in the actual study. This school was not included in the actual data collection. The sample of the pilot study consisted of seven (7) respondents that included members of the school management (two Heads of Departments), a pair of learners without visual

impairments (one male and one female), a pair of learners with visual impairments (one male and one female) and a female teacher.

Before interviews were carried out during the pilot study, the purpose of the study was explained to all the respondents and verbal informed consent was obtained from some respondents to tape record the pilot interviews. Interview questions in Instruments 1 to 3 were asked to the participants (learners without visual impairments, learners with visual impairments and a teacher) while instrument 4 was formatted into a questionnaire which was given to two Heads of Departments. These Heads of Departments had to answer the questionnaire questions in the absence of the researcher and hand the answered questionnaires to the researcher. After the interviews were conducted, the participants were asked to identify questions they had difficulties to understand. They were also asked to comment or suggest how best the questions could have been asked to yield the necessary information and inform adjustment by the researcher.

The researcher transcribed some of the recorded responses and checked for the unexpected answers that may have occurred as result of possible misinterpretation of interview questions. The pilot study results indicated that the research instruments elicited most of the anticipated responses. It also indicated that it would be necessary to refine some questions in the interview guides. The following are the results of the pilot study.

3.4.4 Results of the pilot study

The results of the pilot study revealed that the instruments were reliable and valid since the majority of the questions were understood by the respondents. The pilot study indicated that some questions in the instruments should be revised, while other questions were removed. Also, some probing questions were added to enable a clear understanding of some of the questions. Some questions were separated to make them more focused on one issue. The following paragraph indicates how the instruments were changed as result of the pilot study.

- *Instrument 1, Interview guide for regular learners (focus group)*: The pilot study revealed that *question 2*, the word 'management' should be clarified; thus, the word 'principal' and a phrase 'heads of departments' were added in the brackets. *Question 3* was split up into two questions. *Question 3* asked about the academic programmes while *question 4* was about the social programmes. On *question 5*, the probe was changed to make the question clear as the respondents seemed to have misunderstood the question.
- *Instrument 2, Interview guide for learners with visual impairments (focus group)*: *Question 1* and *2* were taken out of the list of questions since they required similar answers and substituted with *question 1* (What challenges do learners with visual impairments have at GTSS) from instruments 1. *Question 4* and *5* were completely taken out from the list of interview questions. And a new question was formulated and inserted as *question 3*. *Question 7* was moved to *question 4* and the word *'environment'* changed to '*programmes'* while the word

‘academic’ was taken out from the question. *Question 8* remained unchanged but the number of interview questions in instrument 2 were reduced to six questions since participants remarked that there were repetitions. *Instrument 3, Interview guide for teachers (focus group)*: All questions generally remained unchanged and the only slight change was on *question 2* where the word ‘management’ was clarified with the addition of the word ‘principal’ and the phrase ‘heads of departments’. Also, *question 4* was separated to form independent questions. Thus, the number of questions increased with one question.

- *Instrument 4, Interview guide for members of school management (individual)*: The length of this instrument was noted before the pilot study could be conducted. It was found that the interview would be too long. As a result, the interview questions were reduced before the pilot study. The following clarifications were made, for example, in Section B; *question 3* the word ‘you’ was clarified by adding in brackets ‘heads of departments’ or ‘principal’. In Section C, *question 1* was cancelled to avoid repetition since the required response was similar to *question 2*.
- *Instrument 5, Observation schedule*: The observation schedule was not changed, since the information in the item was found appropriate for the study.

In terms of administration of the instruments with the teachers and the members of school management during the pilot study few challenges were observed. Securing appointments with teachers at the same time to do a focus group interview was a challenge because the teachers were doing their administrative work. The same

challenge was experienced with regard to the securing of appointments with members of the school management due to their tight schedules and administrative commitments. As a result a semi-structure questionnaire was designed for the management instead of an interview schedule or guide.

3.4.5 Refinement of the research instruments

After the piloting study, the instruments were altered according to the comments by the participants and the analysis of the responses of the participants and on the advice of the supervisory team. The research instruments were altered and refined as indicated in Chapter 3, section 3.4.2 in order to enable the researcher to collect information that will adequately address the research questions.

3.5 Procedure

After permission was obtained from the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Education (MoE), Director of Education of the Oshana Education Region and the school Principal of the case-study school, the data collection process for the actual study commenced.

The process of collecting data was carried out after classes not to disrupt school activities. It began with a mixed-group of learners (learners with visual impairments and those without visual impairments). This was followed by the interview with a pair of learners with visual impairments. Teachers and Heads of Departments (HODs), who were interviewed on an individual basis, formed the last group of respondents.

During all the interviews, the researcher encouraged the respondents to ask for clarity on questions that they did not understand.

The researcher conducted observations before, after and during the interviews for a period of one week, starting the day the researcher entered the research site. Before interviews and observations were conducted, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants and a letter of consent was signed by participants to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. In some cases verbal consent was obtained. Also, still-pictures were taken with the consent of the respondents.

3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data was obtained from transcripts from semi-structured interviews and notes from Observation Schedule. Data analysis is an on-going process in the qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). This section outlines how the data collected was presented and analysed for interpretation.

Firstly, the researcher conducted observation, before and after the interviews, for a period of one week starting the day the researcher entered the research site. The observation notes were taken immediately after every observed activity had taken place. The field notes from the Observation Schedule were presented in reported form and in some cases still-pictures were used to supplement the message. The data were clustered in themes such as challenges regarding physical facilities/ infrastructures, academic curriculum and social activities. A summary of implication was given at the end of every category and theme that are taken from the field notes. The data collected through

observation was analysed using interpretations that relied on the researcher's own insight.

Secondly, the data obtained through interviews were presented and analysed as follows: First of all, the researcher listened to the interviews from the tapes and transcribed them one by one. The transcribed data were re-read several times. The important incidents from the responses per question were presented in report form and in some cases direct quotes were recorded and still-pictures are used to support some responses. At the end of the responses of every interview question a summary interpreting items that appeared more often in the responses was written. Responses for interview questions were analysed using narrative analysis. Gay, Mills and Airasian, (2009, p.385) defines narrative analysis "as a process where the researcher collects descriptions of events through interviews and observations and synthesises them into narratives or stories, similar to the process of restoring". This process yielded themes and categories from which the meaning of the participants' views regarding challenges facing members of the school management of the inclusive school for learners with visual impairment were determined. The data generated from biographical information section of the interview guide were used to describe the participants and determine the distribution of variables (gender, age and years of teaching experience or serving at management level).

3.7 Research Ethics

Before the researcher embarked upon the process of data collection, in order to address ethical issues in this research, permission was sought from the PS of the Ministry of

Education (*see Appendix C*). The permission was granted by the PS in writing through the office of the Director of Education, Oshana region (*see Appendix D*). The letter of the permission was handed to the principal of the school to get the permission to enter the research site, to interview the participants, carry out observations and take pictures in the school. The principal also gave permission in writing to the researcher that allowed him to enter the research site (*see Appendix I).*

After the permission was granted by the principal the researcher visited the school to introduce himself and explain the purpose of research to all participants. Before interviews were conducted, the researcher ensured that participants' informed consent was gained, as De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, (2005) indicated, through signing the informed consent form (*see Appendix E*). Participants were assured of the confidentiality and the right to anonymity as data collected was not going to be used for any other purpose except for research and that no information that would lead to their identification was required. Also, a verbal consent was obtained from the respondents (partial sighted learners) in case their responses could be linked to them. Individualised codes instead of names were used in the interviews so that no names were attached to the responses. All respondents approved the researcher revealing the name of the school in the thesis.

3.8 Information about the researcher

The researcher was a learner at Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School from 1989. He started Standard 6 (now grade 8) and completed Standard 10 (now grade 12) in 1994. In

1998 the researcher enrolled for a Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Namibia which was completed in 2001. In the teacher training programme, the researcher did a module called Special Education, Counselling and Guidance which introduced him to issues on inclusive education. His first contact with learners with visual impairments in a mainstream classroom setting was in year 2001 when the researcher was doing teaching practice at Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School (the research site). After completing a Bachelor of Education degree, in January 2002, the researcher joined Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School as a teacher until 2007. Apart from teaching the researcher was involved in many extramural activities at the school. The researcher, also, served in various committees amongst others, Hostel Supervision Committee, School Board Committee, School Management Committee, Disciplinary Committee, Sport and Culture Committee. The researcher also served as Chief Invigilator of examinations and Chairperson of the Debating Society in the school. This account of a researcher is aimed at informing the reader about the researcher's perspective and how the researcher's background may inform the interpretation of data.

3.9 Summary

Chapter 3 described the methodology used, starting with the research design, the sample and sampling techniques. The instruments used to in data collection were discussed. An account of how the instruments were piloted and how amendments were made to refine the last version of the research instruments was explained. The researcher discussed the protocol of the research procedure, how the data were collected and analysed, how research ethics was ensured. Finally, a brief background of the researcher is presented.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter represents the data gathered from the research tools as discussed in the previous chapter. It starts with the description of the context in which the research was conducted, description of the participants and then presentation of results from field notes and the interviews. The data presented an analysis aimed at exploring challenges facing school management of the inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. The data from an observation schedule are presented in descriptive form and in most cases supplemented with pictures. While most of the results from interviews are reported in the form of descriptive notes, key quotations from interviews are also included. The results are presented according to categories and themes that were generated from research questions.

4.1 Description of the research site

The context in which the research was conducted was Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School in Ongwediva, Northern Namibia. The school was built in 1987/88 and was opened in January 1988. In 1995, after the signing of Salamanca Convention, the school was chosen to pilot the inclusion of learners with visual impairments who passed grade 10 at Eluwa Special School (Cloete, 2002). From 1995 until the time of the study in 2011 the school recorded continuous enrolment of learners of different levels of visual impairments.

At the time of this study, the school had thirty-four teachers (this figure is inclusive of the principal, three Heads of Departments, a teacher with visual impairments and a resource teacher). There were nine hundred and seventy-two (972) learners taking them from grade 8 to grade 12. This figure is comprised of 375 males among them two male learners with partially visual impairments and 597 females. The average class size is 39 pupils. The school, also, had 4 administrative and 21 hostel support staff.

4.2 Description of the participants

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Respondents: Members of School Management

RESPONDENT	**M1**	**M2**	**M3**	**M4**
Age-category	25-30	35-45	45-above	35-40
Years of teaching experience	7	12	28	12
Years of teaching experience at this inclusive school	1.5	10	23	8
Years in management at this inclusive school	1.5	5	14	8
Highest qualifications in education	Bachelor of Education	PGDE	Master of Education	PGDE
Qualifications that include inclusive education	Bachelor of Education	PGDE	None	None
Training on inclusive education while teaching at this school (Nature of training)	No	Yes (Mobility and general inclusive education)	Yes (Mobility and general inclusive education)	No

Table 4.1 provides the demographical data for members of school management (Respondents *M1-M4*) at the inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. This includes the school principal and three heads of departments.

Their age categories range between 25 and above 45. These respondents' teaching experience ranges between seven (7) and (28) years. Further, their teaching experience at this inclusive school ranges between one and half (1.5) year to twenty-three (23) years. Their highest qualifications were such as BED, PGDE and Master of Education. Two members of school management were introduced to inclusive education in the BED and PGDE courses while the other two were never introduced to inclusive education during teacher training. Having had opportunities to be introduced to a few issues on inclusive education was not adequate to prepare them thoroughly to deal with issues relating to inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Only two of the four members of school management received inclusive education training (mobility workshop) while teaching at this school.

Table 4.2: Demographic Data of Respondents: Teachers

RESPONDENTS	**T1**	**T2**	**T3**	**T4**	**T5**	**T6**
Age category	35-40	30-35	40-45	25-30	25-30	45-above
Years of teaching experience	2.5	13	15	6	4	22
Highest qualification in education	BETD	BETD	B Ed – (Honours)	B Ed – (Honours)	B Ed	B Ed – (Honours)
Qualifications with a module on IE	BETD	BETD	PGDE	B Ed	B Ed	None
Training on IE while teaching at GTSS (Nature of training)	No	Yes (Mobility and general IE)	No	No	Yes (Mobility workshop)	No

Table 4.2 provides the demographical data on teacher respondents at the research site.

Respondent T1-T6, were teachers. Among these six teachers are a resource teacher and a teacher with visual impairment. The teachers, age categories range between 25 and above 45. Their teaching experience starts from two and half (2.5) years to twenty-two (22) years. The highest qualifications obtained are such as BETD; BED and BED (Honours). Most respondents were introduced to inclusive education in their teacher training while one respondent was never introduced to inclusive education during teacher training. Although teachers had an opportunity to be introduced to a few issues on inclusive education these were not adequate to prepare them thoroughly to deal with issues relating to inclusive education, particularly inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Only two of the six respondents were given inclusive education related training called mobility workshop while teaching at this school. The remaining

respondents never went through any training on inclusive education while teaching at this school.

Table 4.3: Demographic Data of Respondents: Learners

RESPONDENT	**L1**	**L2**	**L3**	**L4**	**L5**	**L6**
Age	17	17	16	17	21	18
Number of years at this school	7 months	7 months	7 months	7 months	7 months	7 months
Formal orientation on inclusive education upon joining this school	No	No	No	No	No	No
Are you in an inclusive class group	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4.3 provides the demographical data for learners at the inclusive school. *Respondents L1 - L6* are made up of learners with and without visual impairments at GTSS.

Respondent L1 - L6 ranged between 16 -21 years. Two of these respondents are learners with visual impairments (partially sighted). These learners they had only been at the school for seven (7) months. The entire sample of learners indicated that they were never oriented on inclusive education while at this school. All these learners were in an inclusive class group.

4.3 Findings from the Field Notes

This part discusses themes identified in the data from the field notes taken from Observations Schedule. The data present views from an outsider's perspective. They are summarised in *Table 4.4* after which a discussion follows.

Table 4.4: Themes and categories from the field notes (*see Appendix B: Observation Schedule*).

THEMES	**CATEGORIES**
Challenges regarding physical facilities/ infrastructures	• Corridors and sidewalks • Classrooms and Labs • Dining hall • Hostels • Sport facilities • Resource rooms
Challenges regarding academic curriculum	• Subject choice • Examinations, tests and homeworks • Library
Challenges regarding social activities	• Social groups • Television facilities • Sports

4.3.1 Challenges regarding physical facilities/ infrastructures

This part discusses the observed challenges brought by the structure of the physical facilities. The discussion starts with corridors and sidewalks followed by classrooms and laboratories, dining hall, hostels, sport facilities and finally the resource rooms.

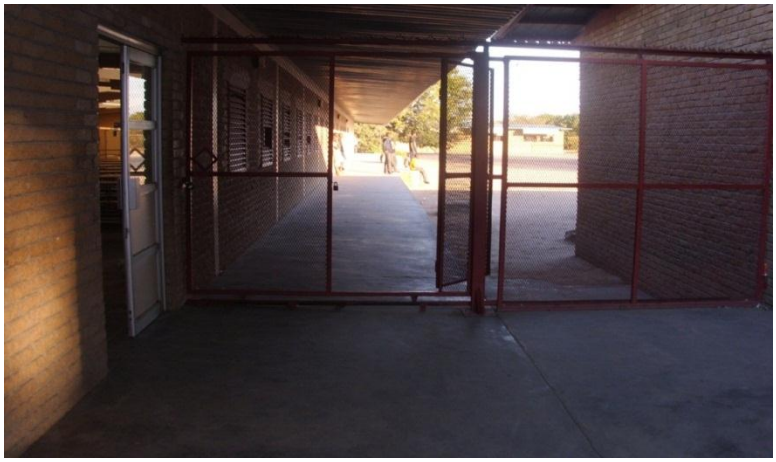
When the researcher was moving around the school, an approximately 150 metres long corridor from the hostel to classrooms was observed. The corridor is 80 centimetres high with metal poles with an interval of 2 metres between them. The corridor is 3.85 metres wide and at some points it is as narrow as 1.70 metres to the periphery. At the entry gate there are three steps or stairs through which one climbs onto the corridor (*see Figure 4.1*). Although stairs can be good for physical fitness they can be hazardous to people with disabilities.

***Figure 4.1*: The stairs at the entry gate of the school**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

Figure 4.1 illustrates the stairs at the gate of the school. One has to climb these steps onto about one metre high corridor. These are the stairs that R*espondent M2* mentioned to express the unfriendliness of the school environment to learners with visual impairments. The corridor leading into the hostel is cordoned off by the fence. At the entrance of the fence there are metal bars of about fifteen centimetres high from the floor (*see Figure 4.2*).

Figure 4.2: The bars on the floor of the hostels entrance



Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

This picture shows a bar at the bottom of the entry gate of the hostels. This bar could trip learners with visual impairments and increases the risks of accidents.

It was also observed that there were children riding bicycles on the corridor and there were objects such as frames of chairs lying on the corridor. The learners with visual impairments are at risk of colliding with bicycles or objects left lying on the corridor. Management should ensure that learners with visual impairments do not fall victim to the objects that are left on the corridors. Management should also ensure that hindrances

such as stairs, high corridors and iron bars are adapted or alternatives provided. For the adaptations to be made there is a need of financial resources that management should secure.

Figure 4.3: **The open window frame**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher with a learner's verbal consent*

This picture above exhibits the open window frame that sticks out on the pathway. It could be a potential danger to learners with visual impairments.

It is observed that there is a need to repair and maintain the light bulbs in classrooms. The notes in class should also accommodate all learners and the class should be decorated with learning materials such as posters. The management of the school should

ensure that learners with visual impairments are not frustrated by the environment around the classrooms.

The lighting in some of the classrooms is poor. The inclusive classroom, for learners with visual impairments, has six double bulbs and one bulb is out of order. In some classrooms there is only one working light bulb. The seating arrangement in the classroom for learners with low vision was made in such a way that their seats were in the front row of the class just a metre from the green-board or chalkboard. The Mathematics notes found on the chalkboard were written in a small font.

There were no posters on the walls of the classroom. There are green-boards in all the classrooms. When learners were moving from one classroom to another there was no particular pattern which they followed.

Figure 4.4: **Learners walking from class to class**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher with learners' verbal consent*

This picture indicates that learners in an inclusive school do not move in a coordinated pattern. This could frustrate learners with visual impairments especially the blind.

***Figure 4.5*: The electric sockets on the floor in the computer lab**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

The picture shows the computer laboratory which has a separate cage were computers for learners with visual impairments are kept but as you enter the computer laboratory there are electric sockets on the floor. Learners with visual impairments may tumble on these sockets (*see Figure 4.5*). This is a potential cause of accidents which may cause injuries. Management is challenged to find an alternative way of erecting the electric sockets without exposing learners with visual impairments to potential danger and accidents.

There are fixed slanted top tables in the Biology and Physical Science laboratories which are fixed two meters away from the green-board.

***Figure 4.6*: Posters on the walls in the biology laboratory**

Source: *Pictures taken by the Researcher*

The pictures above display two posters in the Biology laboratory. The labelling on the posters is not all in magnified prints neither in braille (*see Figure 4.6*). This make learners with visual impairments feel psychologically excluded. Therefore, management is challenged to warrant that no learner is excluded from any learning opportunity.

The dining hall was arranged in such a way that there were no dining benches and tables specifically reserved for learners with visual impairments. The learners with visual impairments mingled with their sighted peers when they were eating. Learners are expected to queue when collecting food. There are iron bars that hold the mesh that barricade learners from kitchen officials (*see Figure 4.7*). One iron bar displayed in the following picture taken by the researcher may pose danger to learners with visual impairments. Although, there was a positive observation made regarding the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the dining hall, management should ensure that learners are safeguarded from bars that may obstruct them and inflict injuries.

***Figure 4.7*: The iron bar that holds the barricade mesh**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher with learners' verbal consent*

Learners with visual impairments (partially sighted) are sharing rooms and wardrobes with their sighted peers. They also share bathrooms and toilet facilities. Water in bathrooms and toilets are heel high stagnant on the floor (*see Figure 4.8*). The toilet facilities are untidy and footprints are observed on the lids of the toilet pots. The learners with visual impairments do not use guides to find their ways around the school and the hostel. This is an indication that they (learners with visual impairments) are independent and have mastered their environment. However, their hygiene is threatened and management should find a way to reduce the risk posed by unhygienic sanitation facilities.

***Figure 4.8*: Toilet facilities filled with stagnant waters**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

The above picture demonstrates the health harzard the learners with visual impairements face due to stagnant water in the males bathroom. This picture confirms the findings of Haihambo (2010) that the bathrooms raise a critical issue on health and safety. The picture supports with the response given by *Respontent T2* who stressed that toilets were some of the unfriendly physical structures that are not good for blind people.

The school has a sandy soccer field, a sandy volleyball court; a basketball and a netball court with an interlocked surface (*see Figure 4.9*). There are no separate sports playing fields and courts for learners with visual impairments. The researcher witnessed a partially sighted learner playing football in the class tournament. The picture below taken by the researcher is depicting that there are no separate sport facilities for learners with visual impairments.

***Figure 4.9*: Girls playing on a sandy football field**

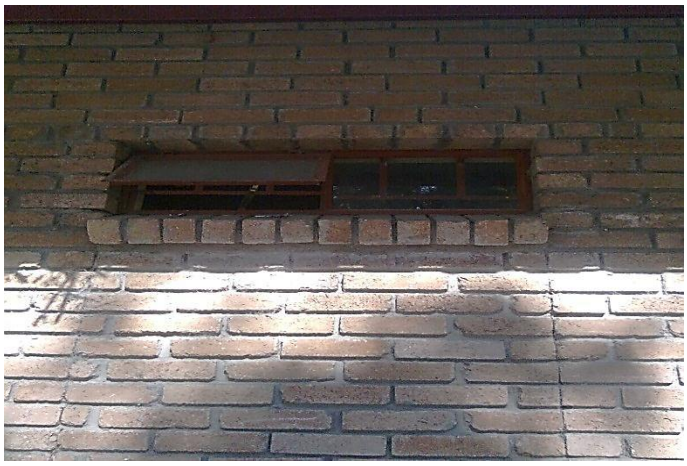
Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher with the learners' consent*

It means that integration in sport facilities between sighted learners and learners with visual impairments but there is no inclusion in sport activities. The challenge to management remains with the safety of learners with visual impairments because in the ball game sports there is a risk of picking up injuries.

A storeroom is converted into a resource room for learners with visual impairments. There are shelves inside the resource room and on one side of the room there are brailed books and some other normal printed books are kept due to lack of space in the school. There is good lighting in the room and the ventilation in the room is not quite commendable, because the windows of the room are small (*see Figure 4.10*). There are two print magnifying machines; one is out of order. Also, there are four Perking Braille machines that are out of order. The resource room is on a corridor which is 65

centimetre high and there is a distance of 1.70 metres from the resource room to the periphery.

***Figure 4.10*: The windows of the resource room**



Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

There is also limited space in the resource room and the two partially sighted learners share one print magnifying machine because the other one is out of order. The learners with visual impairments have no access to DBT and the computers all the time because they are kept in the computer lab which they could not access all the time. Management is challenged to ensure that alteration should be carried out on the window and learners with visual impairment should have access to assistive devices to enhance learning.

4.3.2 Challenges regarding subject choices

This section discusses challenges regarding academic curriculum starting with subject choice, examinations, tests, and homeworks and library.

Learners with visual impairments are enrolled for three subjects on the Natural Sciences and Mathematics field of study. These subjects are Biology, Physical Science and Mathematics. They were also registered for Development Studies from the Social Sciences and Humanities Field of Study. They are doing English as a Second Language (a Medium of Instructions) and a compulsory subject in government and private schools. The sixth subject was Oshikwanyama as a First Language. The observation revealed that the learners with visual impairments are doing subjects from different fields of studies. Doing subjects taken from different fields of studies could influence the selection of further studies careers at institutions of higher learning. The candidate may not meet the requirements when choosing a particular course. Management is challenged to ensure that learners with visual impairments take subjects that could have them admitted to professional careers they want to pursue.

The examination duration for learners with visual impairments is double the normal time for the sighted learners (DNEA Guidelines, 2010). However, the researcher's observation done on class test revealed that tests took place during a 45 minutes period and all learners were expected to finish writing class tests within that time. That limits learners with visual impairments to have only the normal time (45 minutes) to finish writing the tests together with the sighted learners. The researcher, also, observed that a test written by learners who are partially sighted was not printed in magnified font size.

Most of the times class tests are written during 45 minutes lesson period. If the school opts to use the DNEA prescribed time a test could run for a hundred minutes. It will then trespass into the periods of other lessons that are planned for the day; as a result it may

ruin the daily timetable. Management should find an alternative time where all learners take the assessment activities simultaneously without compromising on the validity of the activities and not to interfere with the lessons planned for the day.

The school library was well resourced with academic and non-academic literatures. The following materials were observed in Braille: three Development Studies Modules which are academic literature. There were also non-academic resources such as *National Policy on HIV/AIDS for the Education Sector*; *My Future is My Choice, Volumes 1 to 3* and *AIDS Awareness Activities for Clubs: A Handbook, Volume 1 and 2*. There was no brailed dictionary in the library. During the researcher's stay at the school no learner with visual impairments was found in the library. Management is challenged to ensure that the library is resourced with materials suitable for learners with visual impairments. There is also need to investigate why learners with visual impairments do not make use of the library.

4.3.3 Challenges on social activities

This section discusses the challenges that face the management of the school regarding the social inclusion of learners with visual impairments as they were observed by the researcher. The discussion started with the social groups in which learners with visual impairments took part, followed by the recreation facilities and finally the sport codes that the school offers.

The school had a number of social clubs such as My Future is My Choice, Student Christian Movement (SCM), Christian Learners Group (CLG), drama groups, choirs,

cultural groups and debating club. Even if learners with visual impairments have not been observed taking part in most of these social activities, their participation lies entirely on their interests to participate. One learner with visual impairments participated in Bible study choir.

***Figure 4.11*: A learner with visual impairments taking part in a choir**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher with the learner's verbal consent*

The picture above indicates that learners with visual impairments are accommodated in some social programmes in the mainstream school setting. Management should find out

why learners with visual impairments do not participate in other social activities offered at the school and suggest ways to encourage them to participate.

Figure 4.12 shows a television set connected to Digital Satellite Television (DSTV). It is fixed high up on wall in the television cage. The photo beneath was taken by the researcher in a noisy hall filled by the audiences.

***Figure 4.12*: A television set in the school hall**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

The level of noise in the hall could be the reason why there were no learners with visual impairments among the audience. Learners with visual impairments depend on their

hearing sense in order to follow the storyline which they could not do in a noisy room. Their participation needs the collaboration of their sighted peers.

The seats in the front row were occupied on a first-come first-served basis. There were no seats reserved for learners with partial sightedness. It is a challenge to management who should ensure that learners with visual impairments also enjoy watching television like their peers.

There are sport codes in the school such as athletics, football, volleyball, netball and basketball. The researcher saw a partially sighted learner taking part in a football match. The school does not have specific sport codes planned to facilitate participation of learners with visual impairments. Blind learners may want to participate in sport such as football but there are no facilities that guarantee their safety. At the time of the study, there was no football designed to accommodate blind learners. Management is challenged to find ways to have learners with visual impairments engaged in social activities and have a choice on which social activity to take.

4.4 Perceptions on inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school setting

In this section results from *Respondents M1* to *M4*, who represents members of school management (a principal and three heads of departments) are presented. The members of school management make up the management team of the school.

In examining the perceptions and views of members of school management on inclusive education for learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school, the following issues were addressed:

- The members of school management's perceptions on inclusive education and views on the inclusion of learners with visual impairments at the school;
- Needs of learners with visual impairments according to members of school management;
- Management's intervention strategies and;
- The recommended school environment for learners with visual impairments.

4.4.1 Members of school management's perceptions and views on inclusion of learners with visual impairments

The respondents were asked to give their personal perceptions and views regarding the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school. Their responses gathered the following results:

Respondent M1, viewed inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school system as "*a good thing*" because the inclusive practice makes learners with visual impairments feel they are not different from their peers despite their disabilities.

*Respondent M2 w*as of the opinion that the practice of inclusion of learners with visual impairments brings out quality teaching through innovation to ensure that all learners are accommodated. The reason given why this respondent holds positive views is:

"*Learners with visual impairments have done the school proud by passing with good points and went to different institutions of high learning such as the University of Namibia and Colleges of Education*".

This respondent pointed out pride brought to the school by learners with visual impairments when they perform well academically.

Respondent M3 concurred with the first two respondents that inclusion of learners with visual impairments is "*a good thing*" but had some reservations expressed as follows:

> *Although inclusion is a good thing, practically it calls for hard work". There are no adequate human and material resources, teaching and learning aids are hard to get and most teachers were not trained to teach these learners. The lack of such resources hampers the work of both teachers and members of school management.*

Although in this response it was indicated that inclusion is a *"good thing" this* respondent listed a number of challenges.

Respondent M4 equally agreed with all previous respondents that inclusive education for learners with visual impairments "*is the best thing to do*". *Respondent M4* clarified: "*It is best to have everybody included, that is, when the visual impaired learners and the sighted learners are being taught together in an inclusive class group*". This respondent emphasised that the school is working to implement the Salamanca Convention (1994) which focused on inclusive education. *"It really feels good when the school is serving everybody irrespective of their disabilities", Respondent M4* concluded.

The responses from the members of school management revealed that they hold positive perceptions and views of inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school system. Although, there is reservation shown in two instances where some respondents refer to inclusive education as a "*good thing*" and referring to learners with visual impairments as "*these learners*". This may imply that there is some negative perception in some members of school management. Referring to learners with visual impairments as "*these learners*" seems to imply that the respondent has not fully accepted their inclusion in the mainstream school. The negative perception amongst members of school management is a challenge that management should deal with to ensure authentic inclusion of learners with visual impairments.

4.4.2 Management's views regarding needs of learners with visual impairments

In response to the question on the needs of learners with visual impairments, the members of school management had the following to say:

Respondent M1 said that the needs of learners with visual impairments are extra and special attention; learners with visual impairments also need fellow learners who understand them well.

Respondent M2 said that inclusion of learners with visual impairments needs braille textbooks. There is also a need of a resource teacher who should transcribe notes from normal print to Braille and *vice versa*.

Respondent M3 indicated that learners with visual impairments need "*enabling infrastructures because the type of buildings in the school does not accommodate movements of learners with visual impairments*". They need peers with mobility skills to guide them in dormitories and rooms.

Respondent M4 said that the needs of learners with visual impairments are such as subject materials like books in braille and assistive devices that could be used to read books. *Respondent M4* went further to comment as follows:

> *There is also a challenge of socialisation, because learners with visual impairments cannot really find friends, especially if one is not really active. For example, some girls with visual impairments only hang alone, while the boys that are talkative mingle very well with sighted learners. Mingling and socialisation are not really taken care of by the situation itself. The layout or the terrain of the school is not so friendly to learners with visual impairments*.

The analysis of the responses from the members of school management on what they view as needs of learners with visual impairments yielded the following needs: Resources such as textbooks and assistive devices, patient teachers and teachers who can read Braille as well as understanding and supportive peers. They also need a resource teacher, extra special attention, accommodative infrastructures and socialisation.

These responses indicated that some respondents had a preconceived idea that all learners with visual impairments are those that could only read braille. This, also, implies that learners with low vision are at the risk of not being catered for, as the teachers' focus is only on blind learners. The challenge to management is to provide for learners with low vision that seems to be overlooked.

4.4.3 Management's intervention measures to address the needs of learners with visual impairments

When the members of school management were asked about what they have done to address the needs of learners with visual impairments they had the following to say:

Respondent M1 said:

> *Management has provided a teacher who is responsible for translating texts for blind learners to and from Braille; this is one thing that addresses learners with visual impairments' needs. Also, at the beginning of the year, learners in the school are informed of the presence of learners with visual impairments. When learners with visual impairments need help, then the sighted learners should help*.

Respondent M2 said, "*The learners with visual impairments need to be provided with notes and textbooks in Braille for blind learners or magnified printings for learners with low vision or partially sighted"*. The school management tried by all means to have braille books with the help of Oniipa Printing Shop (OPS). Management has also secured the services of the resource teacher. They acquired an Embosser (this is a printer whose output is Braille instead of print). Teachers are requested by management to enlarge the printed work for the partially sighted learners. Management has also acquired video-magnifying machines that enlarge print for people with low vision called CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television). *Respondent M3* exclaimed not to have seen anything done by management regarding sending teachers for training on supporting learners with visual impairments in an inclusive school system. Members of management are not trained on inclusive education in their pre-service studies. Management lacks ideas on how to assist learners with visual impairments. The

implication drawn from this response is that due to lack of in-service training on inclusive education there is a lack of capacity to support learners with visual impairments in an inclusive school.

Respondent M4 acknowledged that regarding socialisation; management has not done much with the exception of encouraging learners with visual impairments to accept the situation. However, management could attest that the school has always made budgetary provision to buy teaching and learning materials for learners with visual impairments.

The responses revealed that there are a number of interventions made by management to address the needs of learners with visual impairments. These interventions are such as getting a resource teacher, providing resources and assistive devices such as brailed books, magnifying machines that enlarge print and an Embosser. Management has also appealed to the teachers to engage in inclusive teaching and sighted learners to be helpful and not to bully learners with visual impairments. Most assistive devices mentioned only suit blind learners; it seems the members of school management have a misconception that the term ‘learners with visual impairments’ only refers to blind learners.

One member of management was unaware that other members of management are trained on inclusive education in their pre-service studies. The latter could be attributed to the fact that this member of management has not gone through any pre-service training of inclusive education. It is unclear whether learners without visual impairments are in the position to help their peers with visual impairments if they have

not been trained like some of the teachers. Although, one of the needs for learners with visual impairments is socialisation, there seem to be no attempt to address their socialisation needs. One respondent commented: "*Learners with visual impairments must just accept the situation*". Management should ensure that socialisation for a learner with visual impairments is taken care of. If it is stated by one member of management that learners with visual impairments must just accept the situation the question remains, how is that member going to persuade fellow members of management who feel that learners with visual impairments must just accept the situation to buy-into the idea that taking care of learners' needs requires concerted effort from entire staff including members of management.

4.4.4 School environment that should host learners with visual impairments

The question whether learners with visual impairments could be taught in a mainstream or special school yielded the following results:

Respondent M1's view on the best placement for learners with visual impairments is twofold as articulated below:

> *They could be put in categories according to visual acuity. Those who are partially sighted can be included in the mainstream while those who are blind could go to special schools because the mainstream school does not have enough teachers trained to take care of blind learners*.

This respondent further stated that the inclusion of blind learners will have the school struggling because teachers are not trained to handle learners with visual impairments. This respondent seems to be arguing from the medical model of disability's perspective

which prefers special environment placement for learners with severe special needs (Rieser and Peasley, 2002). The phrase "*to handle*" seems to reveal a non-inclusive attitude shown by this particular respondent.

Respondent M2 said that the exclusion of learners with visual impairments is not necessary. Any teacher can teach "*these learners*" (learners with visual impairments) provided he or she understands learners with visual impairments and their needs. If the understanding of learners with visual impairments is in place, they can be taught in a regular school together with sighted learners. It is assumed from the response that for a teacher to understand learners with visual impairments he or she should undergo some training on inclusive education. Therefore, the respondent sees no need to have learners with visual impairments taught in a special school.

Respondent M3 said that at the beginning of the inclusion, it was viewed that learners with visual impairments were just a burden. The question asked was: Why do they not just go to the special school? But after attending different workshops an understanding was created that everybody needs to be included in mainstream setting. The learners with visual impairments are like all other learners; therefore their place is in the mainstream school. This respondent is arguing from the social model of inclusion which could be influenced by training.

Respondent M4 believed in mainstreaming because learners with visual impairments are part of the society and should be prepared for society. They should not be isolated from the society.

From the discussion above it was found that all, but one member of school management, felt that the place of learners with visual impairments is in a mainstream school. These members of school management seemed to place their reasoning within the social model of disability. One member of school management felt that learners with acute or severe visual impairments must be taught in a special school, arguing from a perspective of a medical model of disability.

The member of school management who indicated that blind learners' place is a special school, might have assumed that teachers at the special school are trained to support blind learners. This respondent also assumed that teachers in the mainstream school system are not obliged to support blind learners. In the light of management of an inclusive school, given that there are some members of management who do not believe in inclusion, this may negatively affect the proper management of an inclusive school. Management is challenged to bring about a paradigm shift in staff members that understand disability from a medical model point of view. It is a challenge to management to create understanding among teachers that disability in a school setting should be viewed from a social model and rather than medical model.

4.5 Challenges related to inclusive education faced by members of school management

This section captures views of management on challenges they faced in an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. The challenges are presented according to themes derived from the research questions.

4.5.1 Challenges members of school management face as a result of inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school

The researcher asked respondents what challenges members of school management face as a result of inclusion of learners with visual impairments. The following challenges were identified by respondents:

According to *Respondent M1* a challenge brought by the inclusion of learners with visual impairments is time management. *Respondent M1* commented as follows:

> *The time that a teacher takes in class to attend to learners with and without visual impairments at the same time poses a challenge. One would not finish the syllabus within the prescribed time because teaching an inclusive class slows the pace of teaching*.

The slow pace of teaching causes teachers not to finish the syllabus on time and it could affect effective teaching. *Respondent M1* said that teachers "*sacrifice time*" to accommodate every learner in class, which could result into not completing the syllabus.

Respondent M2 has not witnessed first-hand challenges with the inclusion of learners with visual impairments since they do not take the practical subject such as Accounting. The subject consists of many numbers, calculations and showing of steps. It seemed the respondent is implying that learners with visual impairments would struggle if they are offered subjects such as Accounting. This could be a challenge to management caused by believing that learners with visual impairments will not cope with subjects with number structures. This respondent has not been working directly with learners with visual impairments. However, having worked at the school for about ten years and

having worked in the environment where learners with visual impairments are, this respondent detected some challenges. The challenges are expressed as follows:

> *One could not just prepare an immediate test because tests for visual impairments need to be brailed, magnified or printed in big fonts while sometimes the time to brail and magnify is not enough. … also indicated that marking their work and giving feedback may take time because the translation usually takes too long.*

Respondent M3 listed challenges such as responsibility of taking care of learners with visual impairments and also the availability of resources. Another challenge is regarding the arrangement of internal and external examinations which require that question papers for learners with visual impairments be enlarged or brailed. Judging from this response the challenges are a lack of resources and budgeting or financial planning. The use of phrase "*taking care*" of learners with visual impairments seems to be an additional burden to the responsibilities of this specific member of school management.

Other challenges according to *Respondent M4* are giving extra attention to learners with visual impairments, giving moral and emotional support and budgeting to buy consumable materials and capital assets that are very expensive.

Respondent M4 further stated:

> *The last challenge is observed in the classroom environment. While a teacher may want to demonstrate certain practical aspects of their subjects to learners in class are often deterred by the realisation that they may not do justice to learners with visual impairment. More often teachers opt not to do practical demonstrations.*

The responses to this question indicated that management has challenges that resulted from inclusion of learners with visual impairments. They are such as time management;

teachers have not been able to manage the time of an inclusive lesson presentation. Others are such as teachers' inability to give impromptu tests, slow feedback on assessment activities, high cost of resources and financial planning or budgeting for learners with visual impairments.

4.5.2 Restrictions regarding selection of fields of study

The members of school management were asked whether learners with visual impairments have some restrictions when selecting fields of study. Their responses revealed the following:

Respondent M1 said: "*Since joining the school I am not aware of any restrictions regarding the selection of fields of study*".

This response could be attributed to being at the school for less than two years (*see Table 4.1*). This seems to imply that this respondent was never involved in guiding learners with visual impairments to make choices of the fields of study.

Respondent M2 said: "*Yes, there are restrictions in subjects such as those with a lot of drawings and sketches, are not really good for learners with visual impairments*".

This respondent also indicated that learners with visual impairments have been restricted from Mathematics, Accounting and Economics (that is Commerce Field of Study).

Respondent M3 agreed with *Respondent M2* that some subjects could not be offered to learners with visual impairments. These respondents stated that in the past, learners with visual impairments were forced to take Typing instead of Science subjects because they

cannot do experiments. They had to take subjects from different fields of study for example Typing is from the Commerce Field of Study and Agriculture was from the Science Field of Study. The implication drawn from these responses is that learners with visual impairments have no choice to decide upon a field of study.

While *Respondent M4* said subjects which are practical in nature are not taken by blind learners. The nature of their impairments dictates that they could not do practical activities. *Respondent M4* stated: "*Recently the Directorate of National Examinations and Assessments (DNEA) passed a directive that learners with visual impairments especially blind ones must not do Agriculture because they are not able to do a practical examination".*

Also *Respondent M4* said that they are not officially restricted from doing Mathematics, but the nature of the subject and the degree of the impairment dictate whether or not a particular learner can be allowed to take a particular subject.

In Mathematics one needs to follow steps to arrive at an answer. The school is not really able to prepare these learners due to lack of human and materials resources. Also, the fact that these learners passed grade 10 at a special school where they were not taught Mathematics sufficiently in grade 10 makes it difficult for the school to suddenly prepare them for the end of a two years senior secondary phase examinations. That was created by the nature of the environment where they did primary and junior secondary education and not that they are restricted from taking Mathematics. Restriction from Physical Science is only on High Level because the examination at this level requires

learners to do laboratory practical work where learners are expected to comment on what they have observed. In the current form of those examinations, learners with visual impairments, especially the blind, will not be able to make observations.

It is apparent from the responses that there is no uniform restriction on the choice of field of studies for learners with visual impairments. Some respondent supported the barring of blind learners from taking certain subjects while others do not support the barring. Gauging from these responses it is clear that the major challenge to school management regarding subject choice is brought by a number of factors. These contributing factors are such as lack of skills, restriction by bodies such as DNEA and the negative perceptions towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments.

4.5.3 School management's intervention to address the challenges experienced by school management and teachers

Members of school management were asked what they have done to address the challenges mentioned in the previous section. They gave the following interventions:

A lot has been done, says *Respondent M1,* intervention such as providing extra classes or remedial lessons for blind learners are arranged. This implies that teachers have gone out of the way to provide remedial teaching to learners with visual impairments.

Respondent M2 said teachers are informed by management that whenever they set tests they should always consider including the learners with visual impairments. Tests have to be set well in advance and it is up to a teacher to ensure that test scripts are brailed for

blind learners and or magnified for partially sighted learners. These responses seem to indicate that management is doing something to ensure that learners with visual impairments are included in all teaching and learning activities.

In order to address the challenges *Respondent M3* said the school has a resource teacher working directly with learners with visual impairments. It, also, acquired the state of the art technological devices such as two CCTVs, a Thermoform and computers that are used to enhance access to learning material. The management proposed for the change of the curriculum for learners with visual impairments. According to *Respondent M3*, the curriculum has since been changed by taking out pictures from the examination of blind learners. Although learners with visual impairments may be taught topics that involve pictures, pictures will not be part of their summative assessment.

A number of interventions are made according to *Respondent M4*; management offers moral support to the learners, they sensitise staff members and ask them to be tolerant to learners with visual impairments. Learners at the school are told not to find themselves in conflict with the learners with visual impairments because they are sensitive and need to be treated with caution. Management made budgetary provision to cater for the emerging needs of learners with visual impairments.

The responses above have revealed that members of school management made a number of interventions to address the challenges brought by the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school. Some members of school management use words such as "*tolerance*" when referring to learners with visual impairments instead of

using words such as acceptance or embracing. Also, referring to learners with visual impairments as "*sensitive*" and indicating that learners with visual impairments should "*be treated with caution*" seem to suggest that some members of school management view inclusion as integration. Respondents sometimes referred to learners with visual impairments as blind learners without considering that the partially sighted learners are also learners with visual impairments.

4.5.4 Challenges of school management regarding guiding learners with visual impairments for subject combinations

The members of school management were asked to give challenges that they encountered when guiding learners with visual impairments for subject combinations. Their reactions were as follows:

Respondent M1 said that this year the school has only enrolled partially sighted learners. They are all doing a combination of Natural Sciences and Mathematics Fields of Study (Physical Science, Mathematics and Biology) and Social Sciences and Humanities Fields of Study (Development Studies) but up to now it does not look like a challenge to both teachers and management. Learners have taken the subjects that they wanted to do; therefore management was not involved in directing them to subject combinations. This implies that learners with visual impairments, specifically the partially sighted were empowered to take decisions regarding subject choices. In a broader context, it seems that the partially sighted learners are at liberty to make subject choices.

Respondent M2 did not see any indication of a particular learner with visual impairments who wanted to do different subjects from those taken by others. *Respondent M2* stressed:

"*They agreed with the subject combinations given to them*".

The expression above by *Respondent M2* seems to indicate that the subjects are imposed on learners with visual impairments. Most of the time, according to *Respondent M3,* the learners with visual impairments do not agree with the subject combination given to them. *Respondent M3* expressed: "*They feel oppressed and disrespected by school management*".

Similarly, *Respondent M4* said learners with visual impairments do not just take it as you want to direct them to subject combinations, especially with Agriculture they feel that they can take it. There were times when management tried advising learners with visual impairments to do Mathematics but they, later, came out to say that they would not manage.

The responses have confirmed that there is no clear position on convincing learners with visual impairments to make choices of subjects. A half of the members of school management said learners with visual impairments normally take the subjects that are offered to them while the other half said learners with visual impairments do not agree with the choice of subjects most of the time. Gathered from these responses, there seem to be an assumption that learners with visual impairments can only succeed in subjects imposed on them.

4.5.5 Making Mathematics friendlier to learners with visual impairments

From the discussion above, it was indicated that Mathematics has not been taken by blind learners with the exception of partially sighted learners that enrolled in year 2011. In response to the question, how could Mathematics made friendlier to learners with visual impairments? The members of school management had the following views:

Respondent M1 said that Mathematics could be made friendlier to learners with visual impairments through the availability of resources especially books written in Braille. In the absence of those resources, it is going to be a challenge to blind learners.

According to *Respondent M2,* because Mathematics has a lot of numbers and steps in calculations it is not easy for blind learners thus it is a challenge to them.

Respondent M3 said that change in the curriculum of Mathematics such as avoiding sketches and graphs should be made to accommodate learners with blindness. Also, teaching staff should be trained and enough resources should be provided.

While *Respondent M4* stated that Mathematics can be made friendlier to learners with visual impairments if the drawings and graphs are avoided. Also, early exposure to the subject can aid in making Mathematics friendlier to learners with visual impairments. Currently, blind learners do not do Mathematics because they have not done it in depth at the special school.

The discussion in the previous section revealed that there was evidence that Mathematics has been a subject that learners with visual impairments were advised not

to take. In this section some respondents said "… *it is not easy to have Mathematics taken by learners with visual impairments*"; while other respondents believed that through interventions, Mathematics could be made friendlier to learners with visual impairments. Interventions such as, providing books in Braille, assistive devices, change of curriculum to take out graphical information, training of teaching staff and early exposure of learners with visual impairments to the subject were highlighted. Respondents seemed to have limited knowledge on how learners who are blind could access aspects that are conventionally only available in print format. That lack of knowledge is limiting to what they can request from the Ministry of Education and stakeholders on behalf of learners.

4.5.6 Friendliness of physical environment to inclusion of learners with visual impairments

The respondents were asked to give their opinions and justifications on the friendliness of the physical environment of the school to learners with visual impairments. The question has produced the following answers:

Respondent M1 said: "*The physical environment is not completely friendly to learners with visual impairments. In the first place, the buildings were not constructed to accommodate learners with visual impairments"*.

Respondent M2 confirmed that the environment is not user-friendly to learners with visual impairments because the entry gate has stairs or steps (*see Figure 4.6*) and the

corridor leading from the hostels to the classrooms is about a metre high. The corridor poses danger to the visually impaired learners because they may miss the way and fall.

Respondent M3 said:

> *If you just put yourself in the same shoes with them it is very hard to cope. They face dangers like injuries. There is so much chance that they could miss the corridor and fall. Also, the walls are constructed with rough bricks, makes the buildings to be not accommodative at all; therefore the physical environment is not friendly*.

Similarly, *Respondent M4* agrees with other members of school management that the physical environment is not user-friendly. Like other respondents, *Respondent M2* cited that corridors in the school are very high and narrow, especially for the school with a population of more than nine hundred learners. There are no protective metals or bars on the sides of about a metre high sidewalk or corridor. *Respondent M4* concluded: "*Learners with visual impairments can miss the corridor and stumble down*". This expression signifies fear for the safety of learners with visual impairments.

There is no ablution facilities reserved for the learners with disabilities, especially the blind. They share ablution facilities with other learners and this can be unhygienic. They may step on any deposits and droppings left on the lid of the toilet pots. *Respondent M4* indicated that school's sewage system is most of the times out of order or dysfunctional and blind learners may step in the stagnant sewage water, which is unhygienic.

The responses provided evidence that the physical environment of the inclusive school is not entirely friendly to learners with visual impairments. Reasons such as the school was not constructed taking into consideration the inclusion factor, because it has stairs or

steps, corridors that are high, long and narrow with no protective bars on the sides. The school is also constructed with rough bricks and there are no ablution facilities reserved for learners with visual impairments. There was no adjustment made to accommodate learners with diverse needs at the school. The challenge to management is to implement the recommendation of the MBESC which calls for the existing school for children that have conditions of visual impairments to be adapted as needed, for example stairs can be removed and ramps can be erected (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 1999). The school management should mobilise resources to make the physical adaptation to the physical facilities of the school.

4.5.7 Improving physical environment of the inclusive school

Members of management were asked to explain or suggest how the physical environment of the school can be improved to accommodate learners with visual impairments. Their responses included the following viewpoints:

Respondent M1 expressed that it was hard to make a suggestion that may impact on the current situation because lack of enough information on what exactly the learners with visual impairments need. But this respondent went further to suggest that proper lighting is needed and stairs can be removed. Corridors, also, pose dangers because when the school was built it was not meant to accommodate learners with visual impairments. The important critique here is that although this respondent received training on IE during the teacher training programme this respondent chose to use the short duration of being

at the inclusive school as a reason for not making contributions to improve the physical environment of an inclusive school.

According to *Respondent M2* some infrastructure such as stairs at the entry gate can be modified to suit learners with visual impairments but that could be costly. School budget can cater for minor operational costs but to change the long corridor from the hostel to the classes and to change the rough-brick walls (*see Figure 4.13*) of the whole school could only be done with the assistance of the Ministry of Education because it is going to be expensive.

Figure 4.13: Rough-brick walls

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

Respondent M3 suggested that government could renovate the school to make it suitable for learners with visual impairments. Also, mobility training is needed to equip sighted learners, who spend more time with their peers with visual impairments, with skills to live with them.

Respondent M4 said the protective metals could be put on the sides of the corridors to ensure that if one gets on the edge of the corridor then there is something to hold on to. It is best if separate ablution facilities are reserved specifically for the persons with visual impairments so that they do not have to share these facilities with other learners who may mess up the toilet facilities. If a rest room is acquired for use by learners with disabilities only, the level of hygiene could be kept to protect learners with visual impairments from exposure to germs and other health risk.

Although one respondent identified the areas that need improvement, this respondent has not made any suggestions on what could be done to improve the physical environment to be accommodative to learners with visual impairments. The other respondents have indicated how the physical environment of the school could be improved to accommodate learners with visual impairments. Suggestions such as removing stairs and erecting ramps, repairing light bulbs in classes, erecting protective bars on the sides of the corridors and offering training to teachers are made. These micro-level changes could be done by the school and its community. They further suggested that macro-infrastructural adjustments such as changing the rough-brick walls, renovating corridors and building ablution facilities for learners with disabilities could be done by the Ministry of Education due to high cost involved.

4.6 Intervention measures put in place by members of school management to ensure the social and academic inclusion of learners with visual impairments

Firstly, this part presents interventions made by school management to improve physical environment and challenges encountered in achieving this goal. Secondly, measures put in place by management to accommodate learners with visual impairments in the academic programmes are discussed. Thirdly, measures put in place by management to accommodate learners with visual impairments in the social programmes are discussed and finally, orientation to stakeholders within the school is discussed.

4.6.1 Intervention by school management to improve the physical environment and the challenges encountered in achieving this goal

The members of school management were asked how they intervened to improve the physical environment and what challenges they met in achieving the goal of improving the physical environment. Their responses are summarised as follows:

Respondent M1 has not observed anything done by management to better the physical environment in order to accommodate learners with visual impairments.

Similarly, *Respondent M2* said nothing was done by management to improve the physical environment. *Respondent M3* also echoed the response of *Respondent M1* and *M2* adding that it is a challenge because of limited financial resources that come with any attempt to make changes to the physical environment. The Department of Works of

the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication (MWTC) is responsible for repair and maintenance in schools but it has not done much to improve the situation.

Respondent M4 said:

> *Management in its capacity did not do much to improve the physical setup of the school to suit learners with disabilities. Many times management has asked the maintenance work to be done to the toilet facilities by the Department of Works of the MWTC. There are times when almost half of the toilet facilities are not in a working order. The school requests the maintenance department to build more facilities so that the school can have many that are operational. The more there are toilet facilities that are operational the lesser the risk of having stagnant water or leakage for the toilet facilities. The challenge has been that the Ministry division responsible for maintenance has its own shortcomings. A number of times their maintenance officials come to observe the situation, but they just leave without doing anything. When you call to inquire, they will tell you that they do not have any budget to work on that. The school really struggles a lot when it comes to working on these physical facilities.*

It is clear from the responses that there was no intervention made by school management to improve the physical environment of the inclusive school. They have also cited the challenges they encountered in making the physical environment of the inclusive school friendlier. They are such as the financial burden that comes with such interventions and also the Department of Works in the MWTC which is the custodian of government facilities, has not been forth coming to help.

4.6.2 Measures by management to accommodate learners with visual impairments in academic programmes of the school

In an effort to ensure academic inclusion of learners with visual impairments, measures taken by school management are such as assistive and technological devices and human

resource support (resource teacher). It is apparent from the responses that management has put measures in place to accommodate learners with visual impairments in academic programmes. One respondent seem to mean that advising learners with visual impairments to take Office Administration instead of Mathematics is a measure to ensure inclusion. The researcher view this advice is a sign of exclusion, thus viewed as a challenge to management.

The question on what technological devises and equipment acquired by the school to ensure that learner with visual impairments are accommodated in the academic programmes and who manages these devices and equipment yielded the following outcomes:

Respondent M1 stated the school has acquired Perkin Braille machines (*see Figure 4.14*). Some of these machines were bought by the school and they are managed by the resource teacher who supports learners with visual impairments.

***Figure 4.14*: The Perkin braille and the thermoform machines**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

According to *Respondent M2* the school has two computers for learners with visual impairments. These computers have dotted keys on the keyboards and are also installed with the programme that has the audio-feedback qualities. There are Braille machines that the school bought and some were donated by Nedbank Namibia. The resource teacher manages these devices and equipment.

***Figure 4.15*: The computers fitted with the JAWS program**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

This picture was taken by the researcher to show one of the computers with JAWS program. These computers are kept in the computer lab which learners with visual impairments can only access from Monday to Thursday between 14h00 and 15h00.

***Figure 4.16*: The Duxbury Braille Translator (DBT) or Embosser**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

Figure 4.16 shows the Duxbury Braille Translator (DBT) or Embosser machine kept in the computer laboratory, which is not accessible at all times. The machine can only be operated effectively by a person who understands Braille.

Respondent M3 listed the equipment such as computers, Braille machines, books and tape cassettes. Some of the equipment like computers are donated by the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) while some are bought by the school.

Respondent M4 similarly mentioned the assistive devices that the school bought, they are such as Perkin Braille machines; the ICEIDA has donated the Embosser (a machine that prints in Braille after writing in normal print on a computer). This machine could not be operated by anyone who does not know how to read braille; it may be difficult when editing the written work if one does not understand Braille. The school also has bought the CCTVs (*see Figure. 4.17*) which magnifies the written work of low sighted

learners. These technological devices and equipment are mostly managed by the resource teacher in the school.

***Figure 4.17*: A closed-circuit television (CCTV)**

Source: *Picture taken by the Researcher*

This picture displays the only working CCTV that magnifies and changes colours of prints. It is located in the resource room for learners with visual impairments.

The responses above are congruent with the measures put in by management to ensure learners with visual impairments are accommodated in the academic programmes. Like in the previous question, respondents listed most technological devices and equipment bought by the school or donated to the school. All respondents stated that these assistive devices are managed by the resource teacher. It is evident from the responses given by members of school management and observations made and supplemented by the pictures that there are assistive devices in the school. But the challenge seems to be on the skills to use some of these devices. Also, most of these devices are for supporting learning for blind learners and not partially sighted learners that are in the school at the time of the study.

4.6.3 Measures by management to accommodate learners with visual impairments in social programmes of the school

The question that explored measures put in place by management to accommodate learners with visual impairments in social programmes of the school produced the responses below:

Respondent M1 indicated that learners with visual impairments are at liberty to choose which social activities they want to take part in. There are no sports for blind learners but some learners with visual impairments took part in regular or ordinary sport codes such as football and athletics, which are offered by the school. In this case, management could not do much to facilitate learners with visual impairments to take part in the social activities.

Respondent M2 said that learners with visual impairments participate in sports such as athletics. The respondent recalled that the school produced one of the best athletes who participated in an international competition and excelled in both 100 and 200 meters sprinting. That learner with visual impairments brought medals to the country and to the school. This demonstrates that through social activities offered by the school learners with visual impairments can also excel and get opportunities to compete at national and international levels.

Respondent M3 exclaimed, *"Is there anything that management has done? Uh! But they sing in the choir*".

Although this respondent gave one social activity, initially this respondent sounded uncertain about the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in social programmes at the school.

Respondent M4 said:

"*Even though the school does not really have many social activities that accommodate learners with visual impairments, when there are activities that require learners to participate and or perform the learners with visual impairments are encouraged to take part*".

According to *Respondent M4*, learners with visual impairments conduct prayer sessions at the morning assemblies and sing in choirs.

There are no absolute measures by management to accommodate learners with visual impairments in social programmes of the school. Management has merely encouraged learners with visual impairments to take part in social activities that they are comfortable with. Some members of school management do not seem to be sure if management has done anything to ensure inclusion of learners with visual impairments in social programmes. Although, there are no specific social activities for learners with visual impairments some learners have taken part in choirs, religious activities, special athletics and football. Management is challenged to guarantee that the learners with visual impairments have a wide range of social activities from which they can choose.

4.6.4 Orientation of teachers, learners without and learners with visual impairments in the school

The members of school management were asked if there was any formal orientation programme in place for teachers and learners in the school to respond appropriately to the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. They were also asked to state how such orientation, if any, was organised. They responded as follows:

Respondent M1 and *Respondent M2* said there is no formal orientation programme for learners with visual impairments. Regular learners are only informed about the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. The regular learners have responded positively to the inclusion of learners with visual impairments and are helpful. They read the academic work to learners with visual impairments and also direct them around the school.

Additionally, *Respondent M2* said there is no official orientation for learners but there was mobility training offered to some teachers in 2010. This training helped teachers to understand the learners with visual impairments.

Respondent M3 remembers that the first group of learners with visual impairments who were first accommodated in the school in 1995 was formally oriented to the environment and this was organised by Eluwa Special School. That orientation session was meant to assist them to find their way around the school. There was no formal orientation for regular learners. However, there was a mobility workshop or training for teachers which

was organised by the Ministry of Education, Head Office in Windhoek. This workshop was an eye opener to many teachers who attended, because it made them understand a number of issues related to inclusion of learners with visual impairments. The respondent was not aware of any similar follow-up workshop.

Respondent M4 said there is no formal orientation program for both groups of learners. But there was an intervention for teachers by the Ministry of Education officials. In 2010 MoE brought a specialist from South Africa to sensitise the staff on how to deal with learners with visual impairments to understand them as human beings. This was done through a mobility workshop which dealt with how to make learners with visual impairments mobile. The workshop helped teachers but it was not done on a regular basis.

The respondents provided evidence that there was no formal orientation programme for regular learners neither for learners with visual impairments. At the introduction of inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school setting there was an orientation programme organised by Eluwa Special School. Recently, a mobility workshop was organised for teachers by Ministry of Education, Head Office in Windhoek. The workshops and an orientation programme lasted for a week. Respondents indicated that there was no continuum of orientation and mobility trainings, which are crucial in effective inclusive education models. Judging from the respondents, school management did not have any awareness of the role of orientation of stakeholders and thus never took it upon them to address the issue. The challenge to management is

how the learners are going to offer the best help if they too have never received any training regarding inclusive education.

4.7 Suggestions on effective management of an inclusive school

Members of school management were asked to suggest how an inclusive school could be effectively managed. The suggestions made are summarised as follows:

- The need for training, workshops and conferences on inclusive education for learners with visual impairments.

Respondent M1 said *"there is a need for workshops to give management members skills on how to manage the school*".

The training should target stakeholders (learners, teachers and community) of this inclusive school.

- Request the Ministry of Education to provide a budget to this inclusive school to enable it to buy the resources for learners with visual impairments.

Respondent M4 suggested that the Ministry of Education should make a budgetary allocation to inclusive schools. Schools practicing inclusion should be treated different from other schools that are not practicing inclusion. *Respondent M4* justified the stand as follow:

> *The school ends up struggling to acquire this and that on its own without any financial assistance from government. The budget of the school*

> *cannot address the needs of learners with visual impairments adequately without bail out from the Ministry of Education.*

- The Ministry of Education should relax the three quotations required when a school wants to buy technological devices for learners with visual impairments.

Respondent M4 clarified*:*

> *The management of the school sometimes ends up really frustrated. For example, if the school wants to buy certain devices for learners with visual impairments the school is asked to submit three quotations. There are times when the device the school is in need of is only provided by a sole organisation in the country. Failure to provide the other two quotations one ends up losing out on the funding.*

- DNEA should review the requirements of the school to take learners with visual impairments (both full-time and part-time examination candidates) to eye specialists for testing before allowing them to write examinations.

The DNEA has asks the school to look for learners with visual impairments so that they can be tested by the certified medical doctor to confirm severity of their disabilities. It is known that the school is an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments and yet the school is asked to provide medical proof for disabilities. Some learners with visual impairments are part-time examination candidates who have already left the school but the school has to look for them and take them to a doctor. This situation complicates the work of the school management. Only learners with visual impairments benefit from writing in Braille. The school is trying its level best but the examination directorate complicates things and it discourages the school.

4.8 Results from an interview on inclusive school with teachers, learners with visual impairments and regular learners

In this section *Respondents T1* to *T6* are teachers, among them is a teacher with visual impairments and a resource teacher. *Respondents L1* to *L6* are learners, among this group of learners are two learners with visual impairments. Firstly, the perceptions and views on the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school system are discussed. This is followed by the challenges that are brought by the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Finally, the measures put in place by management to ensure that learners with visual impairments are accommodated in the social and academic programmes of the school are discussed.

4.8.1 Teachers' perceptions and views on inclusion of learners with visual impairments

The teachers were asked; what their perceptions and views regarding the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school were. Their responses have revealed the perceptions and views as follow:

Teachers perceive and view the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school system as a good practice. For example *Respondent T1* views inclusive education as an important practice that enhances understanding and tolerance amongst people. In the past many people had an understanding that if a person is visually impaired, he or she is inhuman (Haihambo & Lightfoot, 2009). It is commonly

believed that with the introduction of inclusive education, all people started to understand that they are all the same and that disability does not mean inability (Mohamedali, 2010). Although, the inclusion of learners with visual impairments is good on the contrary *Respontent T2* has stressed with concern that toilets facilities and corridors in the school are some unfriendly physical structures that are not good for blind people. This respondent's concern corresponds with those of most members of school management.

Some respondents have indicated that inclusion of learners with visual impairments is not a challenge, one of the teachers view inclusion of partially sighted learners to be a good practice while the blind learners can be hosted at a special school. Teachers were also asked to comment on how they viewed management's perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. They view perceptions of management towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school system as a good model. One of these teachers indicated that inclusion is viewed as a burden by management due to unfriendly physical structures in the school. Another respondent opted not to comment on the question.

Furthermore, learners with visual impairments were asked to state how they view inclusive education. Their responses confirmed that they view inclusive education as a good model that addresses social inclusion. Inclusive education brings learners with visual impairments in the mainstream of the society and it creates an understanding of the capabilities of learners with disabilities, in this case, learners with visual

impairments. Judging from the responses of learners with visual impairments, it is evident that they view the inclusion of learners with visual impairments as a good practice. This is in agreement with how management and teachers view the on inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school system.

Teachers, in response to the question designed to find out about the needs of learners with visual impairments; held the following opinions: Textbooks in Braille, a laboratory where learners with visual impairments could work from, computer lessons, their duration for assessment activities such as tests to be double of regular learners' assessment activities duration and induction for learners with visual impairments. They need teachers with knowledge of Braille, teachers with skills to handle learners with visual impairments and teachers with creativity. Most of the needs cited by teachers are congruent to those given by members of school management.

Also, respondents (teachers) were asked to give the structures that should have been in place to facilitate the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Their responses have revealed the following ideal environment:

- Learners with visual impairments should be given freedom to choose subjects they want to do. That freedom gives them a chance to follow the subjects that can lead them to the careers they desire.

- The physical infrastructure should be rehabilitated to make it accessible to all and classrooms must be organised in an inclusive manner.

- There is also need for a resource library equipped with learning materials for learners with visual impairments.

- Sighted learners must be trained to be able to assist their peers with visual impairments and teachers must also be trained to be able to read Braille.

Learners with visual impairments were asked to reflect on the attitudes of fellow learners and teachers towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Their reflection revealed two divergent extremes of the attitudes:

All learners with visual impairments confirmed that regular learners have positive attitudes towards their inclusion. Most regular learners are helpful but some of them have an impression that learners with visual impairments did not write a similar grade 10 examination. This signifies negativity towards inclusion because the learners who harbour feelings that the learners with visual impairments have not written a national examination like theirs, regular peers seem to believe that they were favoured.

They also expressed that some teachers have displayed negative attitudes towards them. Some learners maintained that some teachers do not give them enough time when writing tests and examinations. Some teachers also, ignore requests of learners with visual impairments to print text in large fonts while some obstructed their view on the chalkboard during lessons.

4.8.2 Challenges for inclusion of learners with visual impairments

In this part, respondents (teachers) were asked to mention challenges that they experience when working at the inclusive school for learners with visual impairments.

Responses revealed that teachers experience challenges such as lack of skills to support or teach learners with visual impairments, lack of resources such as textbooks, lack of ability to provide remedial teaching and difficulties in time management in inclusive lessons. Learners with visual impairments also take time to finish evaluation activities such as homework. Another challenge is that learners with visual impairment are too sensitive.

The challenges learners have expressed are such as the pace of lessons and duration of assessment activities, learners' fear of rejection, classroom arrangements and teachers notes that are not prepared to include learners with visual impairments.

One respondent, a learner with visual impairments, affirmed what the peers said, emphasising the challenges caused by sitting far from the chalkboard, which affects their performance because when a teacher explains, they sometimes cannot see on the board. This respondent compared the situation at this school to that of the special school where they used to stand right near the teacher as they were only six learners in a class. According to this respondent, this technique of having learners standing behind the teacher cannot work at the current school, because if learners with visual impairments stand behind the teacher, their peers will not what is written on the chalkboard.

The respondents (teachers) were asked to give their opinion on what management can do to address the challenges of inclusion of learners with visual impairments at the school. The question has revealed the following findings:

Firstly, management could organise in-service training such as workshops for teachers, provide teaching and learning resources, encourage teachers to support inclusion and to provide all teachers with skills to read and understand Braille.

The same set of teachers was asked to explain the structures through which the challenges are reported to school management. A protocol to register challenges for learners with visual impairments to management preferred by most respondents was registering challenges to teachers, heads of departments then to the principal or the school management committee. The resource teacher forwards the challenges to a teacher (if such challenge requires the involvement of a teacher) first, then to management if the challenge could not be resolved by the concerned teacher. The other structure that teachers can use to take challenges to management is through staff meetings.

Learners were also asked on how they communicated the challenges or barriers to school management. They gave different protocols such as reporting challenges to members of the Learners Representative Council (LRC) or teachers especially the resource teachers or directly to the principal. Learners could also submit challenges to school management through a suggestion box.

Learners were asked what management has done to address the challenges facing learners with visual impairments. They detailed interventions by management are such

as assistive devices such as CCTVs and allocating a resource room to learners with visual impairments. On the contrary, two respondents said that management have not done anything to intervene in addressing the challenges of learners with visual impairments. The latter could be attributed to lack of awareness.

All categories of learners were asked how existing challenges facing learners with visual impairments could be addressed. The existing challenges could be addressed by seeking advice from experts; providing remedial teaching; providing magnified notes for partial sighted learners; give "*knowledge programme*" to regular learners and community to create understanding of learners with visual impairments and provide teaching and learning materials.

The following question posed to learners, what has management or anyone in the school done to make sure that learners with visual impairments are not ridiculed, discriminated against or treated unfairly, had the following responses. A number of interventions mentioned are such as allocating a resource room to learners with visual impairments; putting up school rules that protect the social wellbeing of all learners; disciplining ill-disciplined learners; encouraging learners who feel violated to use their right to report incidents to the principal or any supervisor and management have appealed to all learners to treat learners with visual impairments with dignity.

4.8.3 Measures by management to include learners with visual impairments in social and academic programmes of the school

In this part, measures regarding social inclusion and then measures regarding academic inclusion are highlighted.

The researcher asked the respondents (teachers) what management could do to ensure the social inclusion of learners with visual impairments. The responses, from teachers, have revealed a mixture of views regarding measures put in place to accommodate learners with visual impairments in the social programmes of the school. Learners with visual impairments may want to take part in social activities such as ball games but regular learners fear to injure learners with visual impairments. It was suggested that management can liaise with special schools or call in experts in special or inclusive education to get social activities in which learners with visual impairments can take part. On the other hand, some respondents were satisfied with the participation of learners with visual impairments in social activities. For example *Respondent T2* said: *"Learners with visual impairments are included in social programmes and their participation in programmes like My Future is My Choice and HIV/IDS awareness activities shows that they are socially included".* Another respondent suggested that management should also create awareness on the importance of social activities.

A question on how learners with visual impairments are accommodated in the social programmes of the school was also posed to learners. The answers have shown that

learners with visual impairments were free to take part in any social activity of their choice provided they can cope. Learners with visual impairments also said they were well accommodated in social activities. The researcher is of the opinion that the learners with visual impairments are accommodated in a number of social activities that suit them.

The researcher asked the respondents (teachers) what management could do to ensure the academic inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Their responses have shown that there is a need for in-service training for teachers. It is also stated that lessons must be recorded in audio-tapes and more computers with the JAWS programme are needed. There should also be a deadline set for setting examinations so that examination for learners with visual impairments can be brailed and magnified on time. One teacher suggested that special teachers need to be appointed to teach learners with visual impairments.

Learners were also asked how learners with visual impairments were accommodated in the academic programmes of the school. Their responses have confirmed that there are a number of measures taken by management to include learners with visual impairments in the school's academic programmes. The measures are such as providing assistive devices, reserving a study room for them, providing that learners with visual impairments seat in front of the class to get a clear vision on the chalkboard and teaching them together with sighted learners.

The researcher also questioned the teachers on what could be done to ensure a favourable teaching and learning environment for learners with visual impairments. Their responses indicated that a conducive teaching and learning environment for learners with visual impairments can be ensured through provision of adequate teaching and learning materials, provide both pre-service and in-service training for teachers, and introduce group work technique in teaching so that learners with visual impairments benefit from their peers through gap-filling.

4.9 Summary

The observations revealed a number of challenges regarding physical facilities, academic and social activities. They are summarised as follows: Challenges regarding physical facilities are such as corridors that pose danger to learners with visual impairments. In the classroom and laboratories the lighting is poor, there are green boards instead of blackboards, flat top tables instead of slanted top tables, notes found on the chalkboard were in small font and there were no posters accessible by learners with visual impairments and electric sockets mounted on the floor may cause learners with visual impairments to run into or stumble over them.

It is evident from this chapter that respondents had positive views and perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school setting. However, some respondents had negative attitudes towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments.

The challenges facing the members of school management are such as negative attitudes towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments, the physical makeup of school environment, overcrowded inclusive classrooms, lack of training for staff, lack of teaching and learning materials, restrictions from some subjects in curriculum, social exclusion and lack of targeted measures to include learners with visual impairments in social and academic programmes of the school. However, there is some evidence that learners with visual impairments are included in some social and academic programmes of the school.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly discusses the findings, mapped out conclusions of the study and provides recommendations. The discussion of the findings will be carried out in the following order: Firstly, the discussion and analysis of the perceptions or views on inclusive education are presented. Secondly, challenges that management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments face are discussed. Thirdly, measures put in place by school management to ensure that learners with visual impairments are accommodated in the social and academic environment of the school are explained. Finally, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the findings are presented.

5.2 Discussion of challenges related to inclusive education

The discussion on the challenges related to perceptions and views on inclusive education, physical environment, teachers training, class size, acquisition of assistive devices, challenges in teaching-learning materials, choices of subjects in the curriculum and challenges on inclusion of learners with visual impairments in social and academic activities of the school is presented as follows:

5.2.1 Discussion of challenges related to perceptions and views on inclusive education

Judging from the responses, one can conclude that there is a positive view from learners with visual impairments, most of the teachers and members of school management

regarding the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in the mainstream school. These findings are consistent with the findings of the studies (Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Kahikuata-Kariko, 2003). Respondents perceived inclusive education as a positive development as it enables learners with special needs to be taught in the same class and be recognised without using the differences in their abilities as criterion.

The data revealed that exposure to inclusive education training seem to have contributed to positive attitudes towards inclusion. A teacher who was never trained on inclusive education despite more than twenty years of teaching experience was less positive and had more fears than those who had training on inclusive education. Similarly, teachers who taught students with special needs, irrespective of their inclusive education training, were also found to hold more positive attitudes towards inclusion than their peers who view inclusion from the position of outsiders. This confirms the findings by Al-Zyoudi (2006) that teachers who taught students with visual impairments were more positive towards including learners with visual disabilities than those who did not teach students with this kind of disabilities.

Contrary to the positive attitudes discussed above, the findings of this study have provided some evidence that there were negative perceptions shown by teachers or managers regarding the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school setting.

The responses imply that teachers who hold negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairments seem to lack adequate skills to support learners with

visual impairments. Referring to learners with visual impairments as “these learners” may arguably also imply a negative attitude, or non-acceptance and avoidance of responsibilities towards a particular individual or group, in this case, learners with visual impairments.

The finding of negative attitudes in this case supports the position of the Ministry of Education regarding the barriers to inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 2008). Therefore, this could be a challenge to management of the school who have to work with teachers who hold negative attitudes.

Ocloo & Subbey, (2008) found that some teachers appeared to pay lip service to the programme and displayed apathy towards giving support to the disabled children in their schools. The implication is that negative attitudes by learners or teachers are challenges that school managers have to deal with. The members of school management are responsible for managing the overall activities in the school and ensuring that teachers do not pay lip-service to the education of learners with visual impairments. If any of the stakeholders embraces negative attitudes towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments, it is a challenge that may negatively impact on the work of members of school management. Although management of an inclusive school picked up negative attitudes amongst teachers and learners, they had only called for teachers to ensure that they prepare inclusive class activities and learners at the school to behave towards their peers with visual impairments.

The findings, however, revealed that a teacher, who held a negative attitude towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments, never received any training on inclusive education (*see Table 3.1*). Members of school management have to address these negative attitudes so that it does not affect effective learning of learners with visual impairments. It is worth concluding that training in inclusive education promotes positive attitudes towards inclusion.

5.2.2 Physical environment

The observation made on the physical environment of the school revealed that it is not conducive to learners with visual impairments. The participants (heads of departments and a principal) have cited a number of reasons why the physical environment is not friendly to learners with visual impairments. The literature showed similar results to the responses from members of the management supported by the researcher's observation which revealed that the physical environment of the school is not friendly to learners with visual impairments (Haihambo Ya-Otto *et al*., 2009; Haihambo, 2010; Human, 2010; Mayumbelo, 2006; and Zimba *et al*., 2002). The respondents have cited problems such as the high corridors or "*stoep*", with no protective metals or bars on the sides, the stairs and the steps (*see Figure 4.2*), burdened ablution facilities, the stagnant sewerage water (*see Figure 4.8*), and the rough-bricks buildings (*see Figure 4.13*). The above listed physical facilities are an indication that the school is not entirely friendly to learners with visual impairments.

There are also a number of challenges related to physical structures which were identified through research observation. They are such as, window frames pointing on the pathway when they are open (*see Figure 4.3*), electric sockets mounted on the floor of the computer lab (*see Figure 4.5*), rough-bricks walls (*see Figure 4.13*), high corridor and unhygienic bathrooms (*see Figure 4.8*). The challenge is that members of management are leading a school with the physical environment not conducive to learners with visual impairments. The current physical environment needs site-based management intervention to make the school disability-friendly.

The situation of environmental unfriendliness may have resulted from the fact that the school was not initially constructed to accommodate learners with disabilities, specifically visual disabilities. The findings discussed above agree with (Mayumbelo, 2006; TEFA, 1993 and Zimba *et al*., 2001). Management of the school has not done much to alleviate the situation due to costs involved. It is suggested that the physical environment should be modified to make it suitable and enable it to accommodate learners with visual impairments. The school was declared a pilot school for learners with visual impairments by the Ministry of Education in 1995. It is a challenge that school management does not have knowledge on the expected environment and procedures to request for infrastructural adjustments from the Ministry of Education.

Mayumbelo (2006) suggested that resources for inclusive education should be made available and buildings should be renovated to make them disability-friendly. The situation highlighted in her study, is similar to that of the inclusive school in this study. The school was built in 1987/88, before the ratification of the Salamanca Convention in

1994, meaning that when the school was build there was no consideration for inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a mainstream school setting. The researcher believes that, an intensified effort from school management is needed to ensure infrastructural adjustments of the school.

Also, Human (2010) indicated that the physical environment of an inclusive school is not safe for learners with visual impairments. The findings of the research by Human (2010) can be confirmed with a picture of the Physical Science Laboratory with fixed tables with flat tops. The fixed tables cannot be adjusted to get closer to the chalkboard to enable learners who are partially sighted to see well on the chalkboard.

Haihambo Ya-Otto *et al*., (2009) found that students with disabilities were hindered from maximum participation in educational programmes by limiting infrastructures. Also, Haihambo (2010) clarifies with visuals that infrastructural barriers are a main opponent of students with disabilities. In the same vein, findings of these studies are in line with those of the Ministry of Education (2008) where it is stressed that most of the schools' physical facilities are not accessible to persons with disabilities.

The above findings of this study confirmed that the physical environment is a challenge to members of school management, because it makes learners with visual impairments dependent on the guidance of their sighted peers. School managers should ensure that no learner is excluded from mainstream schooling through inaccessible physical structures. The physical structures discussed can be adapted to suit learners with visual impairments. The school-based management of the school relies on the School

Development Funds (SDFs) to carry out renovations in the school. The SDFs cannot entirely cover the renovation costs because it also has to cover for other teaching and learning materials in the school. This situation calls for school management to explore other options to address infrastructural adjustment if they are to do justice to inclusive education drive in their school.

5.2.3 Teachers' training

Out of the ten (10) respondents which comprised of six (6) teachers, three (3) heads of departments and one (1) principal, only three (3) did not receive training on inclusive education during their pre-service training (*see Table 4.1 and 4.2*). These respondents cited some challenges related to training on inclusive education for learners with visual impairments in the school. Studies disclosed that a lack of training of staff was one of the major setbacks in realising inclusive education in schools (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; HaihamboYa-Otto *et al*., 2009; Human, 2010; Lambe & Bones, 2006 and Mayumbelo, 2006). Management of inclusive schools will find it difficult to achieve the inclusive objectives if the staff members do not get continuous training.

Although, the respondents indicated a lack of training as a challenge, the problems lie in the belief that children with special needs should not be included in a mainstream school. Management should address this attitude by designing workshops to enhance the skills to teach inclusive class groups and address the problem. Management is challenged by the lack of capacity which may affect teachers' inputs and quality teaching of learners, particularly those with visual impairments.

Although some teachers received training about general inclusive education during the professional teachers' training, they were of the opinion that such training was more based on theory and has imparted no practical skills to read Braille as well as working with learners with visual impairments. These findings are in line with Human (2010), who found that even when teachers were trained in Braille, they still maintained that they were not given enough opportunities to practice the skills. The training of specialised skills should be continuous and teachers should be given opportunities to apply newly acquired skills.

The findings of this research are in line with Mostert (2001), who stated that most teachers have little or no training on inclusive education and in specific areas of special needs and are not in a position to give necessary support to learners with special educational needs. The research findings are thus demonstrating a common concern of teachers who were trained for general education and are expected to teach learners with special needs. It is, therefore, important for management of inclusive schools to invest in workshops that are likely to enhance teachers' confidence and skills in teaching learners with visual impairments. Management of inclusive schools could also create bridges between themselves and adjacent special schools to engage in skills transfer.

Furthermore, they could deal with the challenge of lack of trained staff. Most teachers are trained on general inclusive education during their teaching training program, thus the training they went through was not specific to inclusive education for learners with visual impairments. The inclusive education course curriculum offered at teachers'

training institutions did not deal extensively with issues of inclusion of learners with visual impairments such as in depth skills development in Braille. That has resulted in teachers' reliance on the resource teacher who transcribes the activities into Braille and back to ordinary writing. The resource teacher does not find adequate time to transcribe the work of learners with visual impairments. The members of the school management can effectively achieve the objectives related to inclusion of learners with visual impairments if they have properly trained staff and support staff to lessen the burden on those with specialised skills.

5.2.4 Class size

According to Iipinge (n.d) the better quality education can be achieved when a teacher is able to give differentiated attention to learners with diverse abilities. In other words, quality of education may be hampered by the higher number of learners per teacher. In fact, one respondent in the current study indicated how they were hampered by large class size to learn effectively.

The finding of this study is that a bigger number of teacher-pupil ratio may impact negatively on effective teaching and learning for all learners. Teachers may not be able to give individualised attention to learners with diverse abilities.

In line with the findings of this study, the research conducted by Ocloo & Subbey (2008) confirms that a large class size always poses insurmountable challenges to effective teaching. Similarly, Mostert (2001) found that large class groups make it difficult for the

general classroom teacher to cope with learners on a daily basis and to give individual attention to learners with special needs. The management of inclusive schools have enough ground to negotiate for better staffing norms that will result in ideal teacher-pupil ratio for inclusive education. It is the believe of the researcher that, judging from the political will the Ministry of Education demonstrates to inclusive education, they are likely to positively respond to requests from inclusive schools.

According to Doswell (2007), overcrowding in a classroom exhausts the teacher's energy. The teacher has no time to attend to individual needs of learners. In addition, it prevents optimum learning and it derails the teacher's attention from actual teaching and classroom management. The school management should devise strategies of how they could address the question of overcrowded inclusive classrooms. Acknowledging the impact of overcrowded classrooms on the quality of support to learners with visual impairments in inclusive settings, an attempt can be made to explore other effective alternatives through multi-level teaching and volunteer-teaching assistants.

The following studies (Doswell, 2007; Ipinge, n.d.; Mostert, 2001 and Ocloo & Subbey, 2008) revealed that education is likely to succeed in schools with small class sizes. The findings of this study revealed that learners with visual impairments experienced difficulties due to large class sizes in which teachers did not have the time or the correct positioning to thoroughly explain concepts to them. Therefore, management of GTSS is challenged to find alternative ways of teaching overcrowded inclusive classes.

5.2.5 Teaching-learning materials in an inclusive classroom

Emvula (2007) stated that it is a challenge to acquire these assistive technologies because they are expensive. One finding of this study is that assistive devices are expensive. The conclusion that can be drawn is that members of school management are challenged to find money to buy the teaching and learning devices that can aid effective teaching and learning.

Another finding is management is challenged by the process of ordering assistive devices is the standard procedure in which one is expected to provide three (3) quotations before the purchase is done. That process takes time and it affects the timely delivery of the much needed devices. For example, when there is only one supplier of a device, the process of getting the other two quotations may be tedious. The requirement of getting the quotations is a challenge to management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. When management bought the devices, they were not timely delivered, subsequently impacting negatively on effective teaching and learning.

The majority of these assistive technologies are only operated by the resource teacher. Although some devices can be easily operated by regular teachers, the latter lack confidence and commitment to use and safeguard them. This results in the quality of education being compromised. If teachers lack the skills to use the assistive devices to design activities for learners with visual impairments, they may just skip the activity because they do not want to discriminate. Teachers rely on the assistance and support of

the resource teacher who could also be preoccupied with a teaching load and is set up for burn-out due to high demand.

The research observation found that the school library, although well-resourced for the ordinary learners, lacked sufficient resources from which learners with severe visual impairments could benefit maximally. The lack of adequate resources for learners with severe visual impairments in the library impacts the learning. An observation made in the library confirmed that there was no learner with visual impairments found in the library. This could be attributed to the lack of resources and the lack of social inclusion of the library environment. For instance a dictionary is a learning support tool; but if it is not available in Braille for blind learners, they will struggle to find the meanings of words or definitions. However, the school in year 2011 only had two partially sighted learners and there was no immediate need to have brailed teaching and learning materials. The challenge to management is to supply the library with various resources that academically support learners with visual impairments.

Although computers with a JAWS (a computer programme that gives voice-feedback when one types and also allows one to print in Braille) programme are available at the school, these facilities are not accessible to learners with visual impairments all the time. Management locks these facilities in a safe room as an effective monitoring strategy to keep the devices secured in the computer laboratory which is fitted with a security alarm system. This leads to a situation whereby learners with visual impairments have no

access to these learning facilities because the computer laboratory only opens Mondays to Thursdays after official hours from 14h00 to 15h00.

An observation made on facilities in the resource room for learners with visual impairments found that only one of the two video-magnifying machines that enlarge print for people with low vision called CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television) was available for the utilisation by learners with visual impairments. If one learner is using the CCTV the other one has to choose to do something else that does not require the aid of a CCTV. This negatively impacts their learning progress. This is a challenge to management, who should play a role of assets management, to see that the parts of the technological devices are kept safe and that learners benefit maximally from these devices.

In order to have effective teaching and learning taking place, there should be teaching and learning materials accompanied by assistive devices. These challenges need the intervention of members of the school management because the absence of these resources affects effective teaching and learning to take place.

5.2.6 Choices of subjects in the curriculum

It was found that some subjects in the senior secondary phase curriculum are not suitable for learners with visual impairments. Subjects such as Physical Science and Agriculture are not conducive for them because learners are expected to do observation from the practical assessment activities. They (learners with severe visual impairments), cannot

make the observations because they cannot see, unless the activities are presented in audio-formats. However, partially sighted learners are able to do observations with the help of assistive devices. Management can facilitate to demystify the perceptions that partially sighted learners cannot do Agriculture and Physical Science (Higher Level).

The restrictions of learners with visual impairments to so-called soft-subjects is confirmed by Human (2010) by stating that learners with visual impairments really struggle with subject choices especially subjects such as Science, Biology and other practical subjects. Also, Mayumbelo (2006) stated that the curriculum used in regular schools does not suit learners with special needs. On the other hand, from a human rights and inclusive models of disability's point of view persons with disabilities should be provided with a conducive environment to pursue any career they wish to follow, rather than being discouraged to do so. In a full-inclusion model, the needs of all learners should be met to ensure equity.

The restriction of learners with visual impairments from taking some subjects is a challenge to management because the learners also have rights to choose which subjects could lead them to the promising careers that they may want to pursue. Learners with visual impairments are currently restricted from taking some subjects because teachers cannot adapt the curriculum and the Directorate of National Examination and Assessment (DNEA) is equally rigid about the adaption of the curriculum. The

regulation from DNEA restricts learners with visual impairments from taking Physical Science (Higher Level) and Agriculture because it has the practical activities.

Some restrictions are caused by a lack of properly trained teachers in teaching subjects such as Mathematics to learners with visual impairments in an inclusive classroom. The school management faces resistance from learners with visual impairments when they are trying to convince them to take alternative subjects.

5.2.7 Inclusion of learners with visual impairments in social activities of the school

Participation of children with disabilities in social activities such as sports programmes promotes physical, emotional, and social well-being (Murphy, Carbone and the Council on Children with Disabilities Paediatrics, 2008).

This study found that some teachers felt that learners with visual impairements were not properly included in social programmes. It seems teachers are concerned more about academic inclusion of learners with visual impairments. The study by Knouwds (2010) supports the finding that learners with visual impairments are often excluded from sport and other social activities.

There is an indication from the responses in this section that some respondents were not sure if learners with visual impairments have some social activities in the school. This implies that both teachers and members of management do not seem to care about the participation of learners with visual impairments in social activities. While this is the

case, responses from all six learners indicated that the learners with visual impairments are accommodated in social programmes of the school.

A partially sighted learners was observed taking part in sport activities just like their peers without visual impairments. This seems to support the position of learners regarding the social inclusion of learners with visual impairments. This could be attributed to the fact that learners seem to care more about the social wellbeing of their colleagues than teachers. The literature confirmed that sport can be an area of difficulty for learners with visual impairments (Cronin, 1992). Learners with severe visual impairments find it difficult to participate in games such as ball games.

The issue of recreation provision, and specifically sport is one challenge that management has to address to ensure the social inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Management is expected to play a significant role in ensuring social inclusion of all learners at the school. Management can arrange with experts in inclusive education to train staff members.

This implies that the social inclusion of learners with visual impairments depends on the severity of their visual impairments, the level of acceptance by peers and their choice of which social activities they prefer to take part in. The learners with visual impairments may be desperate to take part in some sport activities that are designed for them but the teachers are not trained to assist them. There are also no special facilities for them where they could play their games. These learners are forced to play the game for learners without visual impairments or to stay away from sport activities. The impact of these

games on learners with visual impairments is that they are at risk of either sustaining injuries or facing social exclusion.

While the management realises these negative consequences, they have a challenge of changing people's mind-set in order to increase their participation in making sport accessible to learners with visual impairments. This is a challenge that management should overcome because there are no teachers trained to handle sports activities for people with disabilities. Also, if the participation of learners with visual impairments in sport activities is not facilitated appropriately, it can exacerbate intolerance and divisiveness amongst peers.

5.3 Discussion on measures put in place to address the social and academic challenges

This part discusses the findings on measures put in place by management to accommodate learners with visual impairments in social and academic programmes of the school. The discussion starts with the measures put in place to accommodate learners with visual impairments in social and then academic programmes of school.

5.3.1 Measures to address the social challenges

The study found that the school does not have specific measures in place to accommodate learners with visual impairments in the social programmes. Sesay (n.d.) argues that the lives of blind and visually impaired persons (BVIPs) are characterised by barriers to culture, sports and recreation. It is found that participation of learners with visual impairments in social activities is voluntary because they have to choose which

activities can accommodate them. The participation of learners with visual impairments creates interaction between learners with visual impairments and their peers without visual impairments.

The study found that there were a number of social groups and sport codes in the school. None of these social groups and sport codes is specifically tailored for learners with visual impairments. One of the two partially sighted learners was observed taking part in the choir of the Bible Study group (*see Figure 4.11*) while the other one was found playing football with the peers without visual impairments.

Despite the fact that there are no social programmes specifically tailored for learners with visual impairments, the findings provided some evidence that the learners with visual impairments were accommodated in some of the social programmes of the school.

The participation of learners with visual impairments is coincidental, unplanned and lacks support from teachers due to lack of skills to support learners with visual impairments in social activities. The coincidental participation of learners with visual impairments brings respect from their abled peers.

5.3.2 Measures to address the academic challenges

Also, management of the school has a responsibility to ensure that all learners are included in the academic programmes of the school. This study found that measures have been put in place to address the academic challenges in an inclusive school.

In an effort to address the shortage of expertise, the school management facilitated the recruitment of a resource teacher from a special school to support the teaching and learning of learners with visual impairments. The resource teacher was requested by the school to come on board after the expert who assisted with the piloting of inclusion left the school. This teacher transcribes and makes magnified copies of the notes, class tests, examinations, class-work, and homework exercises. The role of the resource teacher at the school enhances inclusion by ensuring that the activities of learners with visual impairments are timely prepared. If the resource teacher was not at the school, the situation would have been difficult, because teachers do not have the skills to use the assistive technology to prepare the activities of learners with visual impairments.

In addition, the school has acquired a number of resources ranging from hardware and software devices and equipment. This agrees with Emvula (2007) who listed the assistive devices acquired by the school. Some of the equipment and software were bought by the school, while others were donated. They are used to ensure that optimal teaching and learning for learners with visual impairments is taking place.

Another measure to facilitate the inclusion of learners with visual impairments is the time for assessment activities of learners with visual impairments. The time should be double the normal time of the assessment activities for learners without visual impairments. For example, if learners with visual impairments are taking a listening assessment activity someone must be on standby to stop and rewind the tape. Learners with visual impairments are given the privilege to listen to the activity twice. According

to DNEA regulations, writing a content examination paper additional time of up to 25% for most of the candidates with visual impairments is provided. In severe cases of visual impairments those learners with Braille papers may require 100% (Ministry of Education, 2010). These regulations were not adhered to in the inclusive school. For example, when learners with visual impairments wrote a test during normal period they were confined to write a test within the forty-five minutes of the lesson period.

5.4 Conclusions

The main objective of the study was to explore the challenges facing members of school management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. This was done by attempting to answer the research questions as outlined in Chapter 1(*see 1.3*). The responses of the multiple role players in the school to these questions have provided some evidence that members of school management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments have a number of challenges in managing the school. The conclusions on the challenges will be discussed as follows:

5.4.1 Challenges related to Role-players' Perceptions and Views of Inclusion

Regarding the perceptions and views of inclusion of learners with visual impairments, all learners, teachers with the exception of one, head of department and the principal have indicated that the inclusion of learners with visual impairments was a "good" practice. This indicates that the majority of respondents held positive views with regard to inclusion of learners with visual impairments in a regular school. These findings are in agreement with findings by (Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Avramidis *et al.*, 2000; Barnett &

Monda-Amaya, 1998 and Kahikuata-Kariko, 2003). The findings, however, revealed that one teacher, who held a negative attitude towards inclusion of learners with visual impairments, never received any training on inclusive education. Members of school management have to address these negative attitudes at the school level so that it does not affect learning.

5.4.2 Infrastructural challenges

The findings of this study concluded that the physical makeup of the school posed a challenge to the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. Buildings were not constructed to accommodate learners with visual impairments for example rough-bricks walls make the buildings not accommodative because learners can get scratched by the rough surface. These findings confirm that the physical makeup of the school is not fully conducive to learners with visual impairments. From these findings it is safe to say that the physical makeup of the school is a challenge to management who should ensure that all learners enjoy the benefit of the mainstream school. Management at the level of the school could make some adaption such erecting ramps and protective bars, removing hindrances to ensure that the physical environment of the school is conducive for full-inclusion of learners with visual impairments.

5.4.3 The role of class-size in the success of inclusive education

Researches by (Eleweke & Rodda, 2010; Eloff & Kigwete, 2007; Moster, 2001 and Ocloo & Subbey, 2008) revealed that inclusive education is likely to succeed in schools with small class sizes. The findings of this study revealed that learners with visual impairments experienced difficulties due to large class sizes in which teachers do not have the time or correct positioning to thoroughly explain concepts to them.

It is proven in the current research that teachers, in case of big class size, will have difficulties to give individualised attention to learners. Members of school management are overseeing effective teaching and learning that could be achieved only if teachers are offering individualised attention to learners with different abilities. Members of the school management may find it difficult to convince teachers to provide differentiated teaching in overcrowded inclusive class groups. School management should liaise with the Ministry of Education to ensure the implementation of low a teacher-pupil ratio in an inclusive class to guarantee optimal teaching and learning.

5.5.4 Lack of teachers trained in the inclusive education discourse

The management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments has to deal with the challenge of lack of trained staff in inclusive education. Some teachers had undergone training on general inclusive education at the time of their training for professional qualification. The training they went through was not specific to inclusive education for learners with visual impairments. There has been inadequate in-service

training and workshops to support all the teachers and members of the school management on the inclusion of learners with visual impairments.

The inclusive education course curriculum offered at teachers' training institutions did not deal extensively with issues of inclusion of learners with visual impairments such as in depth skills development in Braille. That has resulted in teachers' reliance on the resource teacher who transcribes the activities into Braille and back to ordinary writing. The resource teacher does not find adequate time to transcribe the work of learners with visual impairments due to high demand and teaching workload. The members of school management can only effectively achieve the objectives related to inclusion of learners with visual impairments if they have properly trained staff.

The points above indicate that it is a challenge for management to get skilled teachers with the capacity to deal with learners with visual impairments in an inclusive school. Therefore, members of school management can organise tailor-made in-service training and workshops to support teachers and members of school management on inclusion.

5.4.5 Challenges related to acquiring teaching and learning materials for learners with visual impairments

In order to have effective teaching and learning taking place there should be teaching and learning materials accompanied by assistive devices. Most of these assistive devices are hard to get due to the high costs. Also, the research hinted on the fact that assistive devices are not readily available on the local market. The logistical requirements and

procurement procedures of the Ministry of Education are cumbersome and time-consuming. These difficulties hamper effective teaching and learning of learners with visual impairments, especially in an inclusive classroom. These are challenges that need the intervention of members of the school management because the absence of these resources affects effective teaching and learning. Members of school management can arrange for exchange and sharing of teaching and learning resources between mainstream school and special or inclusive schools.

5.4.6 Restricting learners with visual impairments from taking some subjects in the curriculum

This study found that there is a challenge related to restricting or barring learners with visual impairment from taking some subjects in the curriculum as supported by Human, (2010). This study found restraints that are caused by lack of skills to teach subjects such as Mathematics to learners with visual impairments in an inclusive classroom. Also, the lack of a strong foundation in Mathematics from the special school restricts learners with visual impairments from taking it at senior secondary level (grade 11 and 12). The regulation from DNEA restricts learners with visual impairments from taking Physical Science (Higher Level) and Agriculture because these subjects have practical examinations. The school management is challenged by resistance from learners with visual impairments when they are trying to convince them to take alternative subjects. They also have difficulties in recruiting teachers with skills to effectively teach subjects such as Mathematics to learners with visual impairments. Members of school

management can arrange for exchange of human resources between mainstream school and special or inclusive schools.

5.4.7 Challenges related to social and academic inclusion of learners with visual impairments

This study had mixed findings regarding the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in social programmes. Teachers and members of school management felt that learners with visual impairments are not properly included in social programmes. On the contrary, learners believe that learners with visual impairments are fairly included. This could be attributed to the fact that learners see their peers participating in social activities more often than teachers. Or perhaps teachers seem to care more about academic inclusion than social inclusion.

The study also found that there are challenges regarding academic inclusion. These challenges could be a as result of a lack of skills amongst teachers, background of learners with visual impairments and DNEA regulation requirements.

Members of school management could arrange for skills exchange with special and inclusive schools. They could also have in-house training conducted by the resource teacher to train other teachers on how to use the assistive devices.

5.5 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study and conclusions made, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

5.5.1 Recommendations to school management

The recommendations for school management are as follows:

- School management is advised to take a conscious decision to take charge of inclusive education aspects of their schools and explore various alternatives to ensure success.
- It is recommended that the school should be renovated and modified to remove infrastructural hindrances that pose danger to learners with visual impairments.
- In the light of the current teacher-pupil ratio of the Ministry of Education whereby class sizes are prescribed by a set regulation, it is recommended that management of inclusive schools should arrange a platform with the Minister of Education at which they present their challenges and argue for reduced class-size for inclusive schools.
- It is recommended that an exchange and sharing of teaching and learning resources between special and inclusive schools as well as between inclusive schools should be encouraged.
- It is also recommended that the school management can invite Disability Sport Namibia and Namibia Special Olympics to give interested teachers and learners some courses on types of sport codes that could accommodate learners with disabilities to create wider participation of learners with visual impairments in sports activities.

- It is further recommended that extensive training of teachers combined with the exchange of expertise between special and inclusive schools be planned and implemented in order to maximise the participation of learners with visual impairments in both social and academic activities.

5.5.2 Recommendations to teachers

The following recommendations to teachers are provided:

- It is clear from the findings that there is a challenge of negative attitudes amongst teachers towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairments. It is recommended that teachers should be provided with in-service training in the form of workshops. Once the teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills related to the inclusion of learners with visual impairments that could change their views and perceptions towards inclusive education for learners with visual impairments. They could also benefit maximally from in-service training courses in multi-level teaching in large classes. Also, through in-service teachers training, learners with visual impairments will not be restricted from taking only some subjects from the curriculum.
- The researcher, therefore, recommended that the Centre for Professional Development (CPD) currently at UNAM Main Campus should prioritise the development of in-service programmes for management and teachers of inclusive schools.

5.5.3 Recommendations to learners

The following recommendations to leaners are made:

- It is recommended that sighted learners must be trained to be able to assist their peers with visual impairments.
- It is also recommended that the general population of inclusive schools must exercise a high level of tolerance towards learners with visual impairments.

5.5.4 Recommendations to the Ministry of Education

The recommendations to the Ministry of Education are provided as follow:

- It is recommended that the Ministry of Education should allocate a budget to make major renovations and adaptations in the physical facilities of inclusive schools to make it friendlier to learners with visual impairments.
- With regards to the delay in procurement procedure for buying assistive devices due to a search for three quotations it is recommended that the Ministry of Education should relax the three quotations requirements upon weighing the merit of the needed assistive devices. This will enable inclusive schools to timely acquire the urgently needed teaching and learning assistive devices.
- It is recommended that Ministry of Education should provide the schools with necessary assistive equipment to help learners with visual impairments and make them less dependent on their peers and teachers.

- Finally, it is recommended that special schools should be empowered with human and material resources so that a strong foundation of knowledge in subjects like Mathematics is created. This arrangement will make it easier for learners with visual impairments to be able to pursue subjects like Mathematics at senior secondary level offered by inclusive and regular mainstream schools.

5.5.5 Recommendations for further research

It was noted that there were issues, that were not comprehensively addressed, that arose during the conduct of this study. Therefore, the following recommendations for further research are provided:

- Firstly, to investigate challenges facing the teaching staff at the unofficially declared inclusive schools for learners with visual impairments.
- Secondly, investigate how novice teachers manage inclusive class groups for learners with visual impairments.
- Thirdly, research on how the resources allocated to inclusive schools by Ministry of Education impact effective management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments.

5.6 Final conclusion

The final conclusion of this study is that members of management of Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School, an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments, are faced with various challenges regarding the practice of inclusion. These challenges are such as negative attitudes of stakeholders towards the inclusion of learners with visual

impairments, non-inclusive physical environment of the school, large class sizes, lack of skills among teachers and lack of targeted measures to include learners with visual impairments in academic and social programmes of the school.

Although, management of Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School made a number of interventions to ensure full-inclusion of learners with visual impairments, what the school has achieved is more of alternative of raising achievements in the learning and teaching environment (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).The school has achieved more integration than full-inclusion. The integration approach prioritises learners with visual impairments' access to education while in an inclusion approach, rendering of support to learners with visual impairments in mainstream settings is obligatory (Haihambo, 2010).

Finally, the researcher commends the management of Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School for the effort they have made in supporting inclusion of learners with visual impairments for many years irrespective of their perceived insufficient support from the Ministry of Education and other crucial role-players.

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7. APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Interview Guides

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS (FOCUS GROUP)

Introduction

My name is Lukas Matati Josua (Student Number: 9803335), I am a Master of Education (Administration and Management) student at the University of Namibia. Thank you very much for your willingness to take part in this research. The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges experienced by members of school management in facilitating the inclusion of leaners with visual impairments in mainstream school setting. I assure you that you will remain anonymous and no record of your responses will be kept for any purpose other than research.

Instructions

- There are no right or wrong answers to questions contained in this interview. Please feel free to respond to interview questions.
- To guarantee confidentiality your responses will be handled anonymously, that is, measures will be taken to ensure that you cannot be linked to the answers that you provided to the questions.
- You are also not required to give your name to the interviewer instead the identification codes will be used.
- Please answer all questions to the best of your ability, and do not discuss the content of this interview with your colleagues. Your personal opinion is highly valued in this interview.

SECTION A: Biographical Information

1. Code:_____
2. Age

Age	Cross (X)
Below 15	
15-20	
20-25	
25 Above	

3. How long have you been at GTSS:_____
4. Were you taken through orientation? _____
5. Are you in an inclusive class group:_____

<u>SECTION B:</u> Questions regarding the Inclusion of LVIs in a mainstream school setting

1. What challenges do learners with visual impairments have at GTSS?
2. What has management (p*rincipal and heads of departments*) done to address these challenges?
3. How are the learners with visual impairments accommodated in the academic programmes of the school?
4. How are the learners with visual impairments accommodated in the social programmes of the school?
5. What could be done to address the existing challenges?
6. What are the attitudes of fellow learners regarding the inclusion of children with visual impairments? (*How has management addressed the attitude?*)

I thank you very much for your time and contribution.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR A PAIR OF LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIREMENTS

Introduction

My name is Lukas Matati Josua (Student Number: 9803335), I am a Master of Education (Administration and Management) student at the University of Namibia. Thank you very much for your willingness to take part in this research. The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges experienced by members of school management in facilitating the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in mainstream school setting. I assure you that you will remain anonymous and no record of your responses will be kept for any purpose other than research.

Instructions

- There are no right or wrong answers to questions contained in this interview. Please feel free to respond to interview questions.
- To guarantee confidentiality your responses will be handled anonymously, that is, measures will be taken to ensure that you cannot be linked to the answers that you provided to the questions.
- You are also not required to give your name to the interviewer instead the identification codes will be used.
- Please answer all questions to the best of your ability, and do not discuss the content of this interview with your colleagues. Your personal opinion is highly valued in this interview.

SECTION A: Biographical Information

1. Code:_____
2. Age

Age	Cross (X)
Below 15	
15-20	
20-25	
25 Above	

3. How long have you been at GTSS:_____
4. Were you taken through orientation? _____
5. Are you in an inclusive class group:_____

<u>SECTION B:</u> Questions regarding the Inclusion of LVIs in a mainstream school setting

1. What challenges do you have at GTSS?

2. What has management (*principal or heads of departments*) done to ensure that challenges you face are addressed?
3. How are you accommodated in the academic programmes of the school?
4. What is done by management to accommodate you in social programmes of the school?
5. What could be done by management to address challenges that you are facing now?
6. What is your view on educating children with visual impairments at GTSS?

I thank you very much for your time and contribution.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Introduction

My name is Lukas Matati Josua (Student Number: 9803335), I am a Master of Education (Administration and Management) student at the University of Namibia. Thank you very much for your willingness to take part in this research. The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges experienced by members of school management in facilitating the inclusion of leaners with visual impairments in mainstream school setting. I assure you that you will remain anonymous and no record of your responses will be kept for any purpose other than research.

Instructions

- There are no right or wrong answers to questions contained in this interview. Please feel free to respond to interview questions.
- To guarantee confidentiality your responses will be handled anonymously, that is, measures will be taken to ensure that you cannot be linked to the answers that you provided to the questions.
- You are also not required to give your name to the interviewer instead the identification codes will be used.
- Please answer all questions to the best of your ability, and do not discuss the content of this interview with your colleagues. Your personal opinion is highly valued in this interview.

<u>SECTION A:</u> Biographical Information

In this section I would like to know a little about you to evaluate different opinions.

1. Code:_____
2. Age

Age	Cross (X)
20-25	
25-30	
30-35	
35-40	
40-45	
45-above	

3. Years of teaching experience:_____
4. Number of years teaching at this inclusive school:_____
5. Number of years in management at this school:_____
6. What qualifications do you have?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Which of the qualifications include an area on inclusive education?

_____

8. Did you receive any other training or workshop with regards to inclusive education?

(*How has is helped you in dealing with the inclusion of learners with visual impairments?*)

_____

9. Do you teach any children with visual impairments?

(*How has it affected your perception of inclusion of learners with visual impairments?)*

_____

10. What in-service training (*regarding management of inclusive education*) have you gone through?

<u>SECTION B:</u> Questions regarding the Inclusion of LVIs in a mainstream school setting

1. What are the challenges brought about by inclusion of learners with visual impairments?
2. What has management done to address these challenges?
3. What could be done to address to address the existing challenges in this inclusive school?
4. What can be done by management to improve the social program to suit learners with visual impairments?
5. What can be done by management to improve the academic program to suit learners with visual impairments?

THE END

I thank you very much for your time and contribution.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Introduction

My name is Lukas Matati Josua (Student Number: 9803335), I am a Master of Education (Administration and Management) student at the University of Namibia. Thank you very much for your willingness to take part in this research. The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges experienced by members of school management in facilitating the inclusion of leaners with visual impairments in mainstream school setting. I assure you that you will remain anonymous and no record of your responses will be kept for any purpose other than research.

Instructions

- There are no right or wrong answers to questions contained in this interview. Please feel free to respond to interview questions.
- To guarantee confidentiality your responses will be handled anonymously, that is, measures will be taken to ensure that you cannot be linked to the answers that you provided to the questions.
- You are also not required to give your name to the interviewer instead the identification codes will be used.
- Please answer all questions to the best of your ability, and do not discuss the content of this interview with your colleagues. Your personal opinion is highly valued in this interview.

<u>SECTION A:</u> Biographical Information

In this section I would like to know a little about you to evaluate different opinions.

1. Code:_____
2. Age

Age	Cross (X)
20-25	
25-30	
30-35	
35-40	
40-45	
45-above	

3. Years of teaching experience:_____
4. Number of years teaching at this inclusive school:_____
5. Position represented in the school:_____
6. Number of years in management at this school:_____
7. What qualifications do you have?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Which of the qualifications include an area on inclusive education?

_____

9. Did you receive any other training or workshop with regards to inclusive education?

(*How has is helped you in dealing with the inclusion of learners with visual impairments?*)

_____

10. Do you teach any children with visual impairments?

(*How has it affected your perception of inclusion of learners with visual impairments?)*

_____

11. What in-service training (*regarding management of inclusive education*) have you gone through?

<u>Section B</u>: School Management's Perception and Views on Inclusive Education

In this section, you are kindly required to provide information on your perception and views on inclusive education for children with visual impairments.

1. What is your personal views and perception with regard to inclusion of learners with visual impairments at GTSS?
2. What do you think are the needs of learners with visual impairments at GTSS?
3. What have you (*management i.e. HOD/Principal*) done to address their needs?
4. Should children with visual impairments be taught in a mainstream school or special school? (*Elaborate, why do you say so?)*

<u>Section C</u>: Challenges faced by School Management of an Inclusive School

In this section, you are kindly required to provide any information on challenges facing member of school management in executing their managerial duties in an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments.

1. What challenges do you have now as a result of inclusion of learners with visual impairments?
2. What have you or management done to address these challenges?
3. What challenges that school management has encountered when LVIs have to choose the subjects combination and why?
4. How can we make subjects such as Mathematics friendlier for visual impaired learners?
5. How is the physical environment at GTSS user friendly for learners with visual impairments?

<u>Section D</u>: Measures that school management has put in place to accommodate learners with visual impairments in academic and social programmes of the school.

In this section, you are kindly required to give measures that school management has put in place to accommodate learners with visual impairments in academic and social programmes of the school.

1. What measure has management put in place to accommodate LVIs in the academic program of the school?
2. What equipment are acquired by the school to accommodate learners in the academic programmes of the school? (Probe, who funds the acquisition of the assistive devices and who manage them?)
3. What measure has the school management put in place to accommodate learners with visual impairment in the social programmes of the school?
4. How do you orientate regular learners to respond more appropriately to learners with visual impairments?

5. How do you empower teachers to respond mere appropriately to learners with visual impairments?

Section E: General Comments

1. If you have any other comment, advise or suggestions regarding the management of inclusive school for learners with visual impairments please feel free to share it:

THE END

I thank you very much for your time and contribution

Appendix B: Observation Schedule

Date:	
Observer:	
Name of the School:	
	PHYSICAL FACILITIES:
	Comments
• Corridors and sidewalks *(Responsibilities of management and what are the challenges)*	
• Classrooms and Labs *(Responsibilities of management and what are the challenges)*	
• Dining hall *(Responsibilities of management and what are the challenges)*	
• Hostels *(What are the challenges does management find regarding hostel issues related to LVIs?)*	
• Sport facilities *(Responsibilities of management and what are the challenges)*	
• Resource rooms *(What challenges does management have in equipping of the resource room with necessary devices*	
	ACCADEMIC CURRICULUM:
	Comments
• Subject choice (*What challenges does management have when*	

learners are choosing subjects?)	
• Examinations, tests and homework (*What challenges does management have when learners with visual impairments are writing examinations tests and homework?*)	
	SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:
	Comments
• Social groups (*What challenges does management have to include LVIs in the social activities of the school?*)	
• Sports (*What challenges does management have to include LVIs in the social activities of the school?*)	

Appendix C: Permission letter to Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education

LUKAS MATATI JOSUA
P.O Box 188
Oshakati
Republic of Namibia

Cell: +264 81 272 18 26
E-mail: mjosua@gmail.com/ljosua@unam.na

Date: March 13, 2011

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
Private Bag 13391
Windhoek

Dear Mr Ilukena,

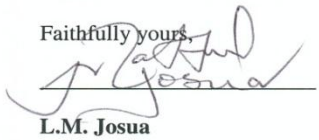
SUBJECT: Request for permission to pilot research instruments at Windhoek Technical High School (WTHS) and collecting data at Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School (GTSS)

I am a registered Master of Education (M Ed) student with the University of Namibia; part of M Ed curriculum requires students to students to do a research after completing the course work. I am intending to carry out a research focusing on the challenges facing management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. This research is purely for academic purpose and it is tailored to help finding these challenges and how to go about addressing them.

I am hereby requesting a permission to carry out a pilot study at WTHS, Windhoek' Khomas Education Region as well as a research at GTSS, Ompundja Circuit in the Oshana Education Region (*with regards to* dates *see the attached minutes of the supervisory team meeting*). Four members of the school management at WTHS will be interviewed in a pilot study and eight members of the school management committee at GTSS will be interviewed for the actual research. The research ethics will be adhered and for anonymity sake names respondents will be withheld in the report. Also, the interviews shall not interfere with the respondents' scheduled teaching time as well as their administration duties. The respondents will also be asked to sign a Consent Form and have every right to withdraw from the research at any point in time.

I thank you very much for your earliest consideration to this request, I thank you.

Faithfully yours,



L.M. Josua

Student Number: 9803335

- *Included: minutes of the supervisory team meeting and the research proposal*

Appendix D: Response from Ministry of Education

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
Aspiring to Excellence in Education for All

Tel: 065 - 230057
Fax: 065 – 230035

Private Bag 5518
Oshakati
NAMIBIA
26 April 2011

Enq: Hilma Shapaka
Ref: 15/3/7

To: Mr. Matati Josua
P.O. Box 188
Oshakati

Dear Mr. Josua

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT SOME SCHOOLS IN OSHANA REGION

1. Receipt of the response from the Permanent Secretary dated 23 March 2011 regarding the above-mentioned subject is hereby acknowledged.
2. The Oshana Directorate of Education would like to inform you that permission has been granted for you to conduct your research in some schools in the region.
3. However, the Region would like you to provide the names of schools where you intend to conduct your research.
4. We also would like you to take note that permission is granted on condition that research activities will not interfere with the normal teaching and learning programmes of the of the school. All research activities should be conducted after school.

The Directorate of Education Oshana Region wishes you all the best with your studies.

Yours sincerely,

26-04-11

MRS. DUTTE N.SHINYEMBA
THE DIRECTOR: OSHANA REGION

Appendix E: Research Participants' Consent Form

Dear Participant,

You are asked to participate in the Research Study that is aimed at research is **to explore the challenges experienced by school management in facilitating the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in mainstream school setting.**

You will receive no direct benefit for participating in this study. However, your participation may help the investigator to better understand the challenges facing the school management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments.

Any information obtained about you during this study will be treated strictly confidential to the full extent permitted by applicable research ethics. To ensure confidentiality, a code number will be assigned to you.

Please circle the appropriate choice beside each statement:

1. I agree to participate in the study as described above.
   YES
   NO
2. I agree to have the interview tape recorded.
   YES
   NO

Taking part in this study is voluntary where one is at liberty to withdraw at any point in time. I thank you very much for your time.

Participant's signature and date: _____

Person Obtaining Consent and date: _____

**In case of learners with visual impairments, their consent could be given by signature or thumb finger stamp or verbally (which could be recorded).*

Appendix F: Permission letter to Principal of WTHS for pilot study

LUKAS MATATI JOSUA
P.O Box 188
Oshakati
Republic of Namibia

Cell: +264 81 272 18 26
E-mail: mjosua@gmail.com/ljosua@unam.na

Date: March 13, 2011

The Principal

Windhoek Technical High School (WTHS)

Private Bag 12014

Windhoek

Dear Sir/Madam,

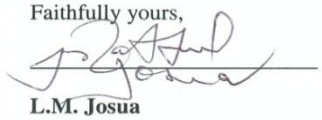
SUBJECT: Request for permission to pilot research instruments at WTHS

I am a registered Master of Education (M Ed) student with the University of Namibia; part of M Ed curriculum requires students to students to do a research after completing the course work. I am intending to carry out a research focusing on the challenges facing management of an inclusive school for learners with visual impairments. This research is purely for academic purpose and it is tailored to help finding these challenges and how to go about addressing them.

I am hereby requesting a permission to carry out a pilot study at WTHS, Windhoek' Khomas Education Region (with regards to dates see the attached minutes of the supervisory team meeting). Four members of the school management at WTHS will be interviewed in a pilot study. The research ethics will be adhered and for anonymity sake names respondents will be withheld in the report. Also, the interviews shall not interfere with the respondents' scheduled teaching time as well as their administration duties. The respondents will also be asked to sign a Consent Form and have every right to withdraw from the pilot research at any point in time.

I thank you very much for your earliest consideration to this request, I thank you.

Faithfully yours,



L.M. Josua

Student Number: 9803335

- *Included: minutes of the supervisory team meeting*

Appendix G: Response from Principal of WTHS for pilot study

On Fri, 15 Apr 2011 07:37 PM, HTS Principal <principal.hts@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Josua

I received your letter and would like to request that you visit our school during the 2nd week after that the school reopens. We are writing our examination until the last school day, we will be busy with the finalization of reports during the first week when the school reopens. You could however have an interview with some of the learners during the first week in the new trimester.

Thank you

Mr. C. Christoph

Principal

Appendix H: Permission letter to Principal of Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School

LUKAS MATATI JOSUA
P.O Box 188, Oshakati, Republic of Namibia
Cell: +264-81-272-18 26 **E-mail:**mjosua@gmail.com

Date: July 9, 2011

Dear Mr Eelu,

Re: Requesting a Permission to Conduct Research at Gabriel Taapopi SS

My request for the above refers.

I am a student in the Master of Education (Administration and Management) at the University of Namibia. It is mandatory that a Master of Education student should complete a research as part of the studies. The purpose of this research is **to explore the challenges experienced by school management in facilitating the inclusion of learners with visual impairments in mainstream school setting.**

It is against the above stated that permission is sought to enter the research site. The following sample categories will be interviewed: learners with & without visual impairments, teachers and members of school management (*Heads of Departments and Principal*). Observation will also be conducted on physical environment, curriculum and social activities in the school.

All research ethics will be observed and the research shall not interfere with the teaching and learning activities at the school.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soonest through the above contacts, I thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Lukas Matati **JOSUA**
Student No: 9803335

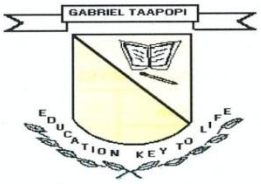
Attached: Letter from Permanent Secretary: Ministry of Education through the Office of Director of Education: Oshana Region and a Template of the Research Schedule

A TEMPLATE PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF CONDUCTING A RESEARCH AT THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

	Number of participants	**Estimated duration of the interview**	
• A group regular learners and learners with visual impairments (focus group discussion)	Preferred participants • All learners with visual impairments (LVIs). • At least 4 learners without visual impairments	About 35 minutes (per session)	
• Teachers(individually)	Preferred participants • Resource teacher • Teacher with Visual Impairments • At least 3 teachers teaching LVIs	About 35 minutes (per session)	
• All Member of School Management (individually)	Preferred participants • Principal • All Heads of Departments	45 minutes or so (per session)	
• Observation on the physical facilities, academic curriculum and social activities.	On the school premises		

NB! All interviews should not interfere with the teaching and learning activities.

Appendix I: Response from Principal of Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School



GABRIEL TAAPOPI SECONDARY SCHOOL

Tel No: (065) 230345(w)
Fax No: (065) 230394
Enquiry: SNN Eelu

Private Bag 5532
OSHAKATI
11 July 2011

To: Mr. Josua, L.M.

Re: Permission to do Research at Gabriel Taapopi Secondary School (GTSS)

Your request to conduct a research at GTSS has been positively considered. However, be advised that your research should not infringe with the rights of the respondents neither should it collide with teaching and learning activities. Any contradiction could lead to the immediate termination of the agreement.

The school wishes you all the best.

Yours sincerely,

PRINCIPAL

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
THE PRINCIPAL
GABRIEL TAAPOPI SEC. SCHOOL
2011 -07- 11
P/BAG 5532, OSHAKATI
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