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The provision of library and information services to the visually impaired (VI) users by the Msunduzi Municipal Library (MML)

By

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Declaration

I, Namhla Marwexu, declare that:

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…………………………………………… Date ………………..
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Dr Z. Nsibirwa
…………………………………………… Date ………………..
(Supervisor)

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful mother Bongiwe Nongcinile Marwexu who encouraged and supported me throughout my studies.

Abstract

Public libraries have a moral obligation to make information available to all categories of users regardless of their gender, age, race, political affiliation or disability and therefore the library's potential user group is the entire population. However, more often than not, people living with disabilities, particularly visual impairment found themselves wondering if this statement is ever be a reality. This thesis investigates the provision of library and information services to the visually impaired library users by the Msunduzi Municipal Library (Bessie Head) (MML). This study is not suggesting that the MML should divert its services towards the VI, as it is not specialised in this regard, however, as a public library MML should be able to respond to the needs of its community without discriminating against any form of disability.

The study's research questions tried to understand: when/how often do the VI users use the MML and what are the services they use and why?; what are the accessibility problems experienced by the VI users with the resources offered by the MML?; what policies does the library have in order to promote inclusivity and equality with regard to the VI?; what challenges are experienced by the MML in seeking to provide services to the VI and what, if necessary, needs to be done to improve the services?; what kind of training do the library staff receive in relation to services to VI, what kind of training is needed?

The Human Rights Model of disability guided the present study. This study sought to solicit as much information/data as possible and thus qualitative research approach was employed using semi-structured interviews in order to better understand the experiences of VI users. The sample consisted of 17 VI registered library users, seven library assistants, the librarian, the senior librarian as well as the principal librarian.

The main barriers to accessing the resources offered by MML are the lack of transport to and from the library, information in an appropriate format and in the preferred language, limited number of computers and outdated software. As for the MML staff, they experienced challenges when it comes to the functioning of the devices used by the VI users, lack of awareness of the service itself, and lack of skills on how to serve the VI. Workshops were conducted by representatives from the South African Library for the Blind (SALB) but the staff is still finding it difficult to

serve the VI with confidence. The MML has not used/explored the platforms that are available to the library in order to market and publicize the services they have available for the VI.

This study concludes by making recommendations for improving the library and information service to the VI. The MML is one of the public libraries identified by the Department of Arts and Culture to bridge the information gap thereby keeping the VI abreast of what is going on in the province, country and the world at large. Therefore, the recommendations offered in this study could be useful to other public libraries offering services to the VI.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to:

Table of contents

Contents

List of tables

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ALA: American Library Association

CILIP: Charted Institute of Library Professionals

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DAISY: Digital Accessible Information System

DbSA: Deafblind South Africa

DPME: Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

ICIDH: International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps

IFLA: International Federation of Library Association

INDS: Integrated National Disability Strategy

JAWS: Job Access with Speech

KZNBDS: KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society

LIASA: Library and Information Association of South Africa

LIS: Library and Information Studies

LISU: Library and Information Statistics Unit

LS: Library staff

MML: Msunduzi Municipal Library

NCLIS: National Council for Library and Information Services

PAIA: Promotion of Access to Information Act

PEPUDA: Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act

PRCBD: Pietermaritzburg Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind and Deaf

PwDs: Persons with Disabilities

RSA: Republic of South Africa

SA: South Africa

SALB:	South African Library for the Blind
UN:	United Nations
UNCRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPIAS:	Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation
VI:	Visually Impaired
WHO:	World Health Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

World Health Organisation (2011) estimates that 10 percent of the world's population consists of people with disabilities, with the majority of these in developing countries. The Disabled World Report (2017) states that, majority of people in Africa acquire impairments through malnutrition and illnesses, natural disasters, traffic accidents, industrial disasters and violent wars/conflicts. Naidoo, Jaggernath, Ramson, Chinanayi, Zhuwau and Overland (2015:1) states that vision impairment causing vision difficulties, is the leading cause of disability in South Africa to access education and labour market which may force the VI to poverty. Visual impairment is also known vision loss. According to Naipal and Rampersad (2018) visual impairment is a condition of reduced visual performance that cannot be remedied by refractive correction (spectacles/contact lenses) surgery or medical methods. Consequently, it results in functional limitations of the visual system that may be characterised by irreversible vision loss, restricted field and decreased contrast sensitivity, increased sensitivity to glare as well as decreased ability to perform activities of daily living such as reading and writing. Amedo, Adade, Koomson and Osae (2016) states that individuals who are visually impaired experience a significant impact on their quality of life. For instance, some people with visual impairment may suffer problems including but not limited difficulty in recognising faces and inability in reading standard-sized prints. For some people visual impairment may deprive of them their ability to pursue leisure.

This study is motivated by the need to gain a better understanding of the needs of the visually impaired (VI) (Note the acronym VI will refer to both blind and visually impaired people) as well as the challenges they encounter when it comes to accessing information particularly at the Msunduzi Municipal Library. This chapter outlines the background of the study, the research problem, research objective and key questions, broader issues to be investigated, significance of the study, scope of the study, definition of key terms conceptual framework, briefly, the research methodology adopted for the study, delimitations, site of the study, ethical consideration. The chapter concludes by outlining the components of the subsequent chapters in the dissertation followed by the summary of the chapter.

1.1.1 Why libraries should provide information services to the VI?

In the world today, information is the driving force for educational and economic development. It is all important that public libraries provide services and resources that will enable the VI person to have access to its collection in the appropriate format that will suit them to meet their information needs (Uzohue and Yaya 2016). Majinge and Stilwell (2013) emphasised that information is essential to all human beings and it is every library's responsibility to provide the right information at the right time and in the right format to its patrons regardless of race, religion, age, gender, nationality and language. The main reason why libraries particularly public libraries should provide this service is that they receive virtually all their funding from government. Thus they act as agents for cascading any kind of government or non-governmental information to the citizens of the country. Secondly, a public library's purpose includes but is not limited to providing books, it has to enrich and improve the quality of life of its users. It does that by offering users appropriate technologies, and resources to help succeed in their endeavors. In other words without libraries information is limited to its creators and mainly fully sighted individuals. The implication is that the VI are excluded and are left unable to make informed decisions. The information gap between the fully sighted and the VI may result into issues such as loss in educational and employment opportunities, economic gain for individuals and an impaired quality of life. For instance, Section 27 on the Daily Maverick (2014) reported that most of the VI don't even pass matric, and there is absolutely no chance of them being employed. They have no way of contributing to society and it's because of a sensory disability.

1.1.2 Prevalence of disability

The African Disability Architecture according to Oyaro (2015: 351) estimates that people with disabilities constitute about ten percent of Africa's total population. This figure however, does not sufficiently reflect the prevalence of disability in the region, and evidence suggests that prevalence rates are higher than actually reported. According to the White paper on the rights of persons with disabilities (2015), in South Africa there is a serious lack of reliable information on the nature and prevalence of disability. This is because, in the past, disability issues were viewed chiefly within a health and welfare framework. The census report by Lehohla (2016) measured six types of disabilities namely, seeing, hearing, communicating, walking, remembering and self-care. Of the six types of disabilities, sight disability was more prevalent compared to the other types of disabilities. The results show that:

- Approximately nine in ten persons (89.7%) had no limitation in seeing. On the part of those who reported some difficulty, about 9% reported some difficulty, about 2% reported a lot of difficulty whilst less than 1% were unable to see at all.

- The results also showed that slight variations exist between males and females with the latter having three percentages points higher than the former (approximately 10% and 7% respectively).

- Population group dynamics showed that disability in seeing was more prevalent among the white population group where slightly more than a tenth (12.4%) reported some difficult in seeing.

The province of KwaZulu-Natal reported an increase of 8.6% in 2016 when compared to 8.4% which was reported in 2011.

1.1.3 Research problem

History reflects that the VI have been excluded from accessing information compared to their fully sighted peers. According Adetoro (2010:50), materials (alternative format) transcriptions and provision by other stakeholders which include public libraries, non-governmental organisations libraries, libraries for the visually impaired including government operated ones, have not taken them into consideration. South Africa is not exempted from these problems/challenges facing its neighboring countries. There is one professional public library for the visually impaired (VI) situated in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province. Despite the statutory duty of public libraries as contained in the South African community library and information services bill (2010:6) on section 5(b) special measures must be taken to ensure equitable access to library and information services, including measures to ensure access to library and information services by PwDs and other categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination; (d) library and information service must facilitate and promote the development of information literacy and electronic communication and technology skills of library users, especially PwDs, woman and young children. Up until 2013, the Msunduzi Municipal Library (MML) in Pietermaritzburg offered very little to no service to the VI users. VI users were faced with many challenges when it came to accessing and using the library material, given that both print and digital materials housed in the library were generally designed for visually abled persons. The VI relied on services provided by the Pietermaritzburg Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind and Deaf (PRCBD). These

services comprised, in the main, skills training through Optima College, the training wing of the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society (KZNBDS).

Library and information services have not been the PRCBD's main concern. Recognizing the paucity of library-related services to the VI, in 2012 the Department of Arts and Culture opened seven mini-libraries for the blind in various KwaZulu-Natal districts and one of those mini-libraries was made available at the MML. This was to give the VI people in Pietermaritzburg opportunities to better themselves by furthering their studies and keeping them informed of what is going on in the province, country and the world at large (Sibhidla-Saphetha 2012). The MML is a public library providing a full library service from the main Bessie Head Library and its eight branches, housebound and travelling library services. Its mission is "to improve the quality of life of the people of Msunduzi municipal region by anticipating and meeting their information needs and by providing an appropriately substantial and supportive contribution towards their needs" (Msunduzi Municipal Library 2007). The assumption or responsibility for the service to the VI thus was in accordance with the mission of the Library.

The library service to the VI officially began in 2013 and has thus been running for just over four years. The resources of this service comprise the following:

- Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) reader which according to Kearney (2011) refers to the emerging world standard for digital talking books for people who are blind or have a print disability; tactile books which are a new project from the South African Library for the Blind designed for young blind children to convey ideas, concepts, shapes and vocabulary through touch; a document reader which is a device which scans in a printed text A4 page and reads in a synthesized voice in English;

- Job Access With Speech (JAWS) is a screen reading program which allows VI computer users to access today's most popular computer software applications and the internet; and:

- Zoom Text, which is a computer access solution, designed for the visually impaired and allows them to see and hear everything on the computer screen providing complete access to applications, documents, emails and the internet.

Currently only the Librarian in the Lending Section is responsible for rendering library and information services to the VI by making sure that these resources are available at all times. The

service in terms of the number of resources at its disposal (including human resources) and its extent is a limited one. This is, of course, problematic for a flagship library such as the MML, especially now that it is under the municipality that is supposed to serve the needs of its entire community regardless of disability.

MML statistics do not reflect the statistics of the use of the VI section, however, anecdotal evidence, observations and informal conversations held with colleagues (the researcher is employed at the MML) suggest that that library service offered to the VI is both limited in scope and under-utilized by the VI of Pietermaritzburg. In addition, there has been no formal assessment of the service since its inception in 2013. The researcher is mindful of the obligation that library and information services have to provide a wide range of basic services such as education for self-development, personal growth, lifelong learning and cultural and recreational activities (Babalola and Haliso 2011: 141) to the community it serves, including the VI. The above thus provides a springboard for this study which will investigate the provision of library and information services to the blind and VI users at MML from both a user and staff perspective.

1.1.4 Site of the study

The study was carried out in Pietermaritzburg, located in the Midlands of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It is the capital city of the province. The Municipality comprises 37 wards and has a population of about 750, 845 making it the biggest city in KwaZulu-Natal (Msunduzi war maps 2016). It is located -29.62 latitude and 30.39 longitude and is situated at elevation 636 meters from the sea level (World Atlas). The MML is named after the local municipality of Pietermaritzburg, the Msunduzi Local Municipality. It is situated in the central business district of the town. A more detailed description of the MML is provided in Chapter 2 Section 2.3.

1.2 Research objectives and key questions

In order to respond to the problem outlined above the main objective of this study is to assess the provision of library and information services to the VI by the MML. It is anticipated that the issues which impact on the services will be identified and how best these can, if necessary, be responded to.

Table 1: Research objectives and data collection methods for the provision of LIS to the VI users by the MML

Research objectives	Data source	Methods	Research questions
Assessing the current LIS services to the VI	VI library users	Interviews	How often do the VI users use the MML and what are the services they use and why? What are the accessibility problems (barriers) experienced by the VI users with the resources offered by MML?
Examining the thoughts of the VI with regard to the current LIS provision.	VI library users	Interviews	What are perceptions of the VI about the quality of service of the MML? What are the information needs of the VI and are these being met?
To establish and to determine the extent to which the MML is has included everyone in its services.	MML respondents	Interviews	What policies does the library have in order to promote inclusivity and equality with regard to the VI? What are the challenges experienced by MML in seeking to provide services to the VI and what, if necessary, needs to be done to improve the services? What kind of training did the staff receive in relation to the services to the VI and what kind of training is needed?

1.3 Broader issues to be investigated

One of the broader issues that will be examined is that of the financing of LIS for the VI. This will be examined from both a local and national perspective. In terms of the former, financial assistance in terms of buying assistive technology for the VI from both the municipality and Provincial Library Services will be discussed. The MML was previously privately owned by the

Natal Society (known as the Natal Society Library) and the funding for the VI was very limited. According to Phoenix (2015), the only funds that the library had was for material used by the able-bodied users which included only the large print and audiobooks that could be used by some VI users.

1.4 Significance/importance of the study

According to Davis (2009:132) there is little evidence to suggest that public libraries have put programmes in place to uphold the Batho Pele principles (People first). The idea of Batho Pele is to form partnerships between government and civil society. The South African government's idea of partnership building goes across services such as education, health, housing, policing, and general service delivery including libraries. The White Paper on Transformation Public Service Delivery put forward eight principles/guidelines for Batho Pele which are:

- Consultation;
- Service standards;
- Courtesy:
- Access;
- Information;
- Openness and transparency;
- Dealing with complaints and;
- Giving best value

This study is significant firstly because, MML's core function includes but not limited to providing access and or to information. Secondly, it is the first time the provision of library and information services to the VI users is being assessed since the service began. Thirdly, in a bid to successfully influence policy makers in all levels of government as well as stakeholders particularly those in the information sector, it is of importance to get an insight on what the information needs of the VI as well as their alternative preferences of accessing information. Lastly, the study recommendations provided at the end of this study can be used by other public libraries providing similar services to the VI.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study seeks to assess the provision of library and information services to the VI users by the MML. The MML is made up of nine branch libraries namely Alexander, Ashburton, Ashdown, Eastwood, Georgetown, Northdale, Slangspruit, Sobantu,Vulindlela, and Woodlands, as well as the housebound and travelling library.

The study will concentrate on the main library (Bessie Head Library) only and data will be gathered from both the staff at the main library as well as from the registered VI users at the MML. The reason for choosing the main library is that the branch libraries do not have the necessary equipment to assist the VI users.

The study covered aspects such as accessibility of the library in terms of the layout, inclusivity and the MML policy as far as the VI users are concerned.

1.6 Definition of key terms

This section discusses key terms and concepts of the study.

1.6.1 Information

Information can simply be defined as "ideas, facts imaginative works of the mind and data of value potentially useful in decision making, question answering, problem solving etc" (Kaniki 1989: 191).

1.6.2 Information need

According to Moore (2000: 6)

> Information need is the lack of appropriate information on which to base choices that could lead to benefits or services that may improve people's wellbeing.

For Lucky and Achebe (2013: 19):

> Information has been observed as knowledge communicated to the recipient. Information may also be seen as a processed data into a meaningful form that is understood by the user. Information service can be viewed as messages, opinions, facts, ideas, symbols, signals, images and processed data that are capable of increasing the knowledge.

1.6.3 Visual impairment

In this study, the term visual impairment refers to low vision, print-handicapped and blind. Visual impairment can be defined legally and educationally. The legal definition describes visual impairment by considering the visual acuity of a person. It describes a blind person as the one having visual acuity of 20/200 or less than that, even by using optical devices. This means that a person with blindness can see an object at 20 feet whereas a sighted person can see at 200 feet. A legal definition considers a person with low vision as having visual acuity of 20/70 meaning that a person with low vision can see an object at 20 feet whereas a person with normal vision can see it at 70 feet (Spungin, 2002 in Mwakyeja 2013: 4).

In this study, the definition adopted is the one by Sotolov and Clowers (2000: 377) that defines visual impairment as a loss of visual function of such magnitude that special aids and the use of the other senses are necessary to achieve performance ordinarily directed by visual clues. According to the Fred Hollows Foundation (2006: 130), people who are visually impaired include those who are blind, who have vision significantly less than normal (which is usually taken as acuity less than 6/18) but are not classified as blind.

1.6.4 Public library

IFLA/UNESCO (2001: 1) provides the following definition:

> A Public library as an organization established, supported and funded by the community either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment.

1.6.5 Assistive technology

The Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (2008: 6) defines assistive technology as a term for any device, piece of equipment, system or software that allows an individual to perform a task they would otherwise be unable to do.

1.7 Rationale for the study

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 14), a rationale serves to indicate how researchers developed an interest in a particular topic and that they believe their research is worth conducting. Recognising the role of libraries in development, Ministers and country representatives from Angola, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote Devoir, Lesotho, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan and Swaziland signed a declaration in 2015 in support of providing the resources and enabling environment necessary to support the contribution of libraries in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in support of the Africa everybody wants. One of the key contributing factors in that declaration is to promote library policies on access to information as part of a universal human rights approach as well as the rights of people to knowledge. Furthermore, the National Development Plan (NDP) a vision 2030 aims to ensure that all South Africans attain a descent standard of living through the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality.

The researcher started working at the Msunduzi municipal library in 2009 when the library was providing information services to the visually abled persons only and had relatively few large print books. However in 2013 a visual impaired section was established, but the library staff got little exposure on how the section operates. This got the researcher interested in finding out, getting the views of those affected with visual impairment, and services being provided. I wondered if the Msunduzi Municipal library staff were proficient enough in serving the VI. Anecdotal evidence shows that it is also unlikely to see blind and VI persons employed in government institutions, this too, gave the researcher even more reason to conduct this study.

Since the VI section is still in its early stages of operation, the researcher hopes to contribute on how best the library can provide for the VI users as well as identify where the library can improve in terms of policy.

1.8 Conceptual framework

According to Babbie and Mouton (2011), a conceptual framework can be defined as a system of ideas and objectives that lead to the creation of a consistent set of rules and standards. Conceptually, this study is based on the human rights framework, the conviction that people with disabilities (such as the visually impaired) have the same rights as those who are able-bodied.

There are various manifestos, charters, legislation and the like which provide support for this conviction from both a general and a library and information services perspective and the main ones will be briefly outlined below:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA), through the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No 4 of 2000, specifies several instances of unfair discrimination on grounds of race, gender and disability (RSA Constitution). This Act endeavors to facilitate the transition to a democratic society, united in its diversity marked by human relations that are caring and compassionate and guided by the principles of equality, fairness, equity, social progress, justice, human dignity and freedom.

According to the Constitution of Deafblind South Africa (DbSA) as amended on the 23rd of August 2008, the Disability Rights Charter of South Africa, Article 14 "*communication*", states that the disabled shall have the right to communicate freely and have measures designed to ensure the full enjoyment of this right and these shall include the provision of Braille and/or audio recorded material for blind people, and the recognition and the use of sign language for people with hearing and/or speech disabilities.

1.9 Research methodology

Methodology refers to the coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the "goodness of fit" to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose (Henning, 2004: 36). Research methodology according to Leedy and Ormond (2010:12) is the researcher's general approach in carrying out the research project. For Mouton (2001:56) research methodology is focusing on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used.

1.9.1 Research method

A research methodology comprises two approaches, according to Neuman (2003: 13) and these are quantitative and qualitative approaches.

This study used the qualitative method, which is compatible with the interpretive paradigm. By using this method, the researcher got the opportunity to know the respondents personally and saw them as they were and experienced their daily struggles in real life situations. This study employed a case study approach. According to Creswell (2014: 14), a case study is a design of inquiry found

in many fields, especially evaluation in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case often a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. The population of this study consisted of the 17 registered VI library users, seven library assistants, one librarian and one principal librarian in the Lending section of the library where the visually impaired corner is. Since the population was small, there was no need for sampling. The researcher opted for semi-structured in-depth interviews to solicit as much information as possible from both the VI users as well as the library staff. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data gathered in the study. To ensure that there were no ambiguous questions on the interview schedule; students who belong to the Disability Unit at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus were used to pretest the interview schedule.

1.10 Delimitations of the study

The present study was limited to the main library (Bessie Head) as the resources for the VI are only housed in the main library. The Lending section was the only section because the VI section is part of the Lending section. The population of the study comprised the registered VI library users, the staff working in the Lending section as well as the Principal Librarian.

1.11 Ethical considerations

The researcher conducted the research in terms of the ethical requirements of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and obtained ethical clearance (see Appendix 1). Permission to conduct the study at MML was granted (see Appendix 3 a). This deals with among other issues, obtaining informed consent from all the participants in the study before collecting data. Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of the respondents was clearly stated to them, and that they could withdraw from the study anytime they wanted to.

1.12 Layout of the study

Chapter 1 provides the background to the study and the outline of the research problem, including rationale. This chapter also contains the research questions, and objectives of the research as well as the definition of concepts.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature and outlines the conceptual framework; this section provided a comprehensive survey of the works done by other researchers on the same research topic.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and it describes the research process in depth, including the research design and methodology that was followed.

Chapter 4 presents the data collected and provides an analysis of and presentation of the results and the findings of the study.

Chapter 5 discusses the results, and the researcher summarizes the results of the study.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study.

1.13 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the background and the research problem of the study, which is the provision of library and information services to the visually impaired (VI) users by Msunduzi Municipal Library (MML), are presented. The research and key questions to be asked were outlined as well as the objectives. Furthermore the significance of the study, definition of key terms used in the study, rationale for choosing the topic, the preliminary review of the relevant literature as well as the conceptual framework for the study were discussed in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter highlighted the research methodology that will be used in the study, including ethical considerations as well as the layout of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provided a brief overview of the Msunduzi Municipal Library (MML), the framework adopted in the study, models of disability, legislation underpinning library services to persons with disabilities, the literature from previous studies related to and relevant to the present study. It organizes the literature into subtopics, and documents the need for a proposed study.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010: 390), a literature review is a systematic process that involves the identification of published and unpublished work from secondary data sources on the topic of interest, the evaluation of the work in relation to the problem and the documentation of the work. Creswell (2012: 80) argues that a literature review is a written summary of journal articles, books, and other documents that describes the past and current state of information on the topic of the research study. A good literature review according to Hofstee (2006: 61) shows that the researcher is aware of what is happening in in the field. In addition, reviewing literature enables the researcher to identify the gap in the literature therefore further justifies the need for conducting this study.

2.2 The structure of the literature review

In light of the preceding paragraph, this literature review is organised into seven sections as follows:

- Overview of Msunduzi Municipal library
- Definition of the word "disability"
- Overview of the models associated with disability in research
- Legislation underpinning library services to persons with disabilities
- The role of public libraries
- The range of availability of materials for VI users
- The library and information needs of the VI users

2.3 Overview of the Msunduzi Municipal Library

Pietermaritzburg's first public library was started in 1849, mainly through the efforts of David Dale Buchanan, editor of the local newspaper (Hattersley 2001). This library was initially known as the "Reading Room". The Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg, was founded in 1851 by

a group of prominent residents hoping to promote the Colony of Natal. The aim of the Natal Society was to promote the development of the physical, commercial, agricultural and other resources of Natal and Eastern Africa, including the general and natural history of the Colony. From 1851 to 1967, the Natal Society Library operated as a subscription library. In 1916, the Natal Society Library was granted Legal Deposit status. In 1967, the Pietermaritzburg Municipality signed an agreement with the Natal Society in terms of which the Municipality would provide an annual grant to the Natal Society to operate a free public library for Pietermaritzburg (The Natal Society Foundation N.d). This led to the Natal Society Library moving to new premises in Church Street and opening its doors to all race groups in 1975, being one of the first public libraries in South Africa to do so (Buckley, 1988). In anticipation of becoming a municipal library, the Natal Society Library was affiliated to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Public Library and Information Service (KZNPPLIS). On 1 April 2004, the Msunduzi Municipality took over the library from the Natal Society, and the former Natal Society Library became the Msunduzi Municipal Library Services. In July 2007, the library was named the Bessie Head Library. Mr. Mandla Ntombela presently manages the library.

The library comprises seven floors is made up of eleven different departments, which are briefly explained below.

2.3.1 Information and technical services

The material housed in this section includes the legal deposit collection, the adult reference library, periodicals and the cataloguing department.

Legal deposit is the statutory requirement that any organization, commercial or public and any individual, producing any type of documentation in multiple copies, deposit one or more copies to the designated Legal Deposit institution. The Msunduzi Municipal Library is one of the six Legal Deposit institutions in South Africa, it was accorded the Legal Deposit status in 1916 (Penzhorn 2007). This has made the MML one of South Africa's major research libraries. The legal deposit material housed in MML is in the form of newspapers, government publications, books published in South Africa, periodicals and pamphlets.

South African books, periodicals and pamphlets.

2.3.1.1 Acquisition

The acquisition department is on the third floor of the library; its work includes selecting, ordering and receiving library materials. The staff in this department consists of one librarian and two library assistants.

2.3.1.2 Cataloguing

The library acquires the library material through either donations, legal deposit or book buying. These materials however will not have the desired impact on the library users without them being catalogued and organised by the cataloguers in order to give easy access to the users. Therefore, the cataloguing is deemed the engine of any library. The staff in this department consists of two senior librarians, 10 librarians, one senior library assistant and six library assistants.

2.3.1.3 Periodicals department

The periodicals collection is housed on both the fourth floor and also two floors below ground level in the basement. There are approximately five thousand titles. All serial publications submitted under the Legal Deposit Act, together with a small range of publications purchased on subscription are received, recorded, catalogued and stored. These items are not for loan, but may be used by the public in the library. The periodicals department was expanded and refurbished in 2008. Staff in the periodicals department consists of one senior librarian, one librarian, one senior library assistant and eight library assistants (Singh 2017).

2.3.1.4 Adult reference library

The adult reference library is situated on the first floor of the library and contains an extensive collection of reference materials in various formats – quick reference, encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, academic books, tertiary textbooks, government publications, maps and pamphlets. The reference collection is greatly enriched by the material received under the Legal Deposit Act. Staffing consists of one senior librarian, one librarian, two senior library assistants and four library assistants (Naidoo 2017).

2.3.1.5 Internet café

The Carnegie Internet Cafe at the Bessie Head Library was established in 2006. This service was made possible due to the Bessie Head Library being a recipient of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Internet Cafe is housed on the first floor of the library and accommodates 140 users. Whilst the Internet services are free of charge, photocopying, printing

and scanning facilities all have a service cost. In addition to this, anyone wishing to use the Internet facilities must have membership of the library. Group bookings for schools and organisations can be also be arranged and basic computer training and assistance is provided by Internet staff. Four computer technicians manage the Internet Cafe.

2.3.2 Lending and Youth services

The Lending and Youth services are made up of seven sections that will be explained below.

2.3.2.1 Children's reference section

The Children's Reference section, previously known as Lambert Wilson, became part of the Bessie Head Library in December 2005 through a joint venture between the Carnegie Foundation of New York and the Msunduzi Municipality. This section houses reference material, grade 12 past examination papers, newspaper articles, a discussion room, six computers and a photocopying machine. The staff consists of one senior librarian, two librarians, two senior library assistants and five library assistants.

2.3.2.2 Children's lending section

The children's lending section is part of the new wing. It has an activities room where children come and enjoy doing crafts, listening to story-telling and watching movies after school and during school holidays. Material housed in the section includes toys, puzzles ranging from three years upwards, young adult's fiction and non-fiction, beginners reader books, intermediate fiction books as well as picture books.

2.3.2.3 Adult lending services

The adult lending services include the adult lending library, the music/audio-visual library, the registration department and mobile services. The adult lending library, situated on the ground floor, has a large and comprehensive collection of fiction and non-fiction, and a selection of the more popular magazines. Registered adult library members may borrow up to 12-library items books, magazines and audio-visual material free of charge. Pensioners and staff are allowed to borrow up to 14 library items. The adult lending library also offers a book reserve service that allows library users to place on reserve any popular non-fiction title. Library users are notified telephonically when the book is available. Loan periods are two weeks but two telephonic renewals are permitted. Staff in the adult lending department consists of one senior librarian, one librarian, three senior library assistants and six library assistants.

2.3.2.4 Large print collection

This forms part of the adult lending collection and is located in a separate area on the ground floor. This collection consists of fiction and non-fiction books and is for people who find reading ordinary print difficult, for example the aged and people with deteriorating or slightly impaired vision. As this section cannot accommodate all the large print books, the remainder is housed on the third floor in the mobile services department.

2.3.2.5 Music and audio-visual library

The music and audio-visual library houses collections of music CDs, audio books, DVDs and music scores for recreational, educational and cultural purposes. All items except DVDs may be borrowed for a loan period of two weeks and may be renewed twice. DVDs are lent for two nights and may not be renewed. Music reference books are also available. Members of the public, including school learners are permitted to make bookings to view subject videos and DVDs in the "sitting room" corner of the music/audio-visual library. Staff consists of one senior library assistant and one library assistant.

2.3.2.6 Registration department

The registration counter is situated in the adult lending library and deals with the registration of the public as members of the library. They also renew expired membership and receive payment for lost books. To register as a library member, applicants must complete the official registration application form and provide their identity document and proof of residential address. Membership is free to all living within the constituency of the Pietermaritzburg-Msunduzi Municipality. The registration department is managed by one senior library assistant and one library assistant.

2.3.2.7 American Corner

The American Corner is a miniature public library within the Bessie Head library situated on the ground floor. The Corner was established in terms of a partnership agreement between the Msunduzi Municipality, the Bessie Head Library and the Public Affairs section of the United States Embassy. The American Corner in the library was the first to be established in KwaZulu-Natal and the second in South Africa. The collection consists of fiction, non-fiction and reference books, periodicals, DVDs and CD ROMS on America and/or by American authors. Four computers are available with free Internet access for online research on and about America. The American Corner and the American Consulate in Durban run programmes, workshops and film

shows with many speakers brought out from the United States for this purpose. The education office from the Consulate in Durban visits the library regularly to meet with anyone wishing to study in the United States. One library assistant presently manages the Corner.

2.3.2.8 Visually impaired corner

The visually impaired (VI) corner is a fairly new section of the MML established in 2013 and was the initiative of the Department of Arts and Culture in trying to bridge the gap in meeting the reading and information needs of the people with visual impairment. It is situated on the ground floor and, as mentioned in Chapter one, comprises:

- The Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY Reader)
- Tactile books which are a new project from the South African Library for the Blind designed for young blind children to convey ideas, concepts, shapes and vocabulary through touch; a document reader which is a device which scans in a A4 page of printed text and reads it in a synthesized voice in English;
- Job Access With Speech (JAWS) a screen reading programme which allows VI computer users to access today's most popular computer software applications and the internet; and
- Zoom Text which is a computer access solution designed for the VI and allows the VI to see and hear everything on the computer screen thus providing complete access to applications, documents, emails and the internet.

Currently only the Librarian in the Lending Section is responsible for rendering library and information services to the VI by making sure that these resources are available at all times.

In the following section the term "disability" is discussed and defined, the prevalence of blindness in South Africa (SA) is described, and the various models associated with disability are put forward. This is followed by the conceptual framework adopted for the study.

2.4 Overview of models associated with disability which guided the study

While models are a useful tool to help one think about and discuss a topic, they can be simplistic and make things appear more clear-cut than they are. Over the years, only the Medical and Social Models of disability have been used in studies related to disability. In reality, most organizations sit somewhere between the Social and Medical Model and use aspects of both models in the way they interact with disabled people. The Human Rights Model which is a third model of disability

arose in response to the criticism of both the Medical and Social Model of disability (CUTS International, 2011). The three models are briefly outlined below.

2.4.1 The Medical Model of Disability

Until the latter part of the 1990s, disability was understood to be a problem entirely of the individual, with the focus of intervention thus being solely on the specific individual. This view is associated with the Medical Model of disability also known as the individualistic perspective (Schenider and Priestley 2006). The Medical Model focuses on the individual's medical condition and locates disability within the person. This model assumes that with medical treatment or intervention the individual can be helped to overcome their limitations. This according to Budoo and Gunputh (2014: 15) is the least preferred model as it creates dependency, marginalizes persons with disabilities from society and introduces barriers for persons with disabilities to access their fundamental economic, social and political rights. Persons with disabilities are not considered as rights holders, but instead as people living with an imperfection, thus focusing on the disability and not the person. Since the Medical Model of Disability has its focal point on the prevention and rehabilitation and ignores issues such as environmental factors that restricts people living with disabilities, it does not seek to change nor challenge policy makers to enforce policies that do not discriminate against people living with disabilities. The greatest threat is that the "experience" of disability is that of expertise from health expects who have not necessarily experienced the disability. Therefore, this model is deemed unsuitable for the present study.

2.4.2 The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model is generally the preferred model when thinking about disability and has been adopted by most disabled people's organisations. The Social Model emerged from the intellectual and political arguments of the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). According to the UPIAS policy statement (adopted December 1974) the aim of the UPIAS was to "replace segregated facilities with opportunities for people with impairments to participate fully in society, to live independently, to undertake productive work and to have full control of their own lives" (Priestley, Finkelstein and Davies 1997).

While Altman and Barnartt (2014) agree that both the Medical and Social Models are regarded as systems model, they situate the systems very differently. This Social Model of disability has many approaches to it; this may be confusing because each country has a different approach to it. The

issues affecting a particular country may not necessarily be the same for another country. According to Owens (2015: 394), there is a confusion surrounding the Social Model of Disability, that results partly from the presence of different forms developed at roughly the same time and they simultaneously take up diverse historical and political positions, which contribute to the muddle. Lastly, according to Owens (2015: 395) the Social Model is not regarded as a model as it stands, but the potential is there to develop a workable and usable model. Therefore, this model was also not suitable for the present study.

2.4.3 The Human Rights Model of Disability

Traditionally, disability was not considered a human rights issue as mentioned in the Medical Model. The Human Rights Model only emerged in the 1980s. In terms of this model, disability is viewed as a human rights issue and problems linked to any condition of disability are seen as inherent in external factors such as society's stereotypes, prejudices and perceptions on disability rather than from persons with disabilities. Consequently, according to this model the state has an obligation to tackle socially created obstacles in order to ensure full respect for the dignity and equal rights of all persons.

Withers (2012) attests that a human rights approach to disability acknowledges that people with disabilities are rights-holders and that social structures and policies restricting and ignoring the rights of person with disabilities (PwDs) often lead to discrimination and exclusion. A human rights perspective requires society, particularly government to actively promote the necessary conditions for all individuals to fully realize their rights. Furthermore, the World Report on disability by the World Health Organization (2011: 21) views disability as an important development issue and points to an increasing body of evidence showing that persons with disabilities experience worse socio-economic outcomes and poverty than persons without disabilities. According to the Centre for Consumer Action, Research and Training (2011) the Human Rights Model positions disability as an important dimension of human culture, and it affirms that all human beings irrespective of their disabilities have certain rights which are inalienable. This model builds upon the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, according to which, "all human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity''. The principle of diversity provides the foundation to accept disability as part of human variation. However, it is a sad reality that in practice our treatment of difference has been rather poor,

especially in the context of disability. The doctrine of differentiation is of particular importance to PwDs, some of whom may require specialized services or support in order to be materially equal to others.

The Handicap International (N.d), an aid organization working with people with disabilities, states that society has to change to ensure that all people including PwDs have equal possibilities for participation. According to the Handicap International (N.d), it is a fact that PwDs often face a denial of their basic human right. Michailakis (1997: 12) states that:

> A human rights approach implies legal reasoning. The human rights approach implies thus among other things, the creation of a legislation which shall give PwDs and their organizations the lever to ensure that there is effective advocacy for their rights.

Degener (2016:5) summarised a number of important differences between the Social Model of Disability and the Human Rights Model of Disability viz: firstly, while the Social Model helps people to understand the underlying social factors that shape our understanding of disability, the Human Rights Model moves beyond explanation offering a theoretical framework for disability policy that emphasises the human dignity of PwDs. Secondly, the Human Rights Model incorporates both first and second generation human rights in the sense that it encompasses both sets of human rights, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Thirdly, while the Social Model of Disability mostly fails to appreciate the reality of pain and suffering in the lives of some PwDs, Human Rights respects the fact that PwDs are indeed confronted by such challenging life situations and argues that such factors should be taken into account in the development of relevant social justice theories. Fourthly, while the Social Model does not pay adequate attention to importance of identity politics, the Human Rights Model offers room for minority and cultural identification. Fifthly, while the Social Model is mostly critical of public health policies that advocate the prevention of impairment, the Human Rights Model recognises the fact that properly formulated prevention policy may be regarded as an instance of human rights protection for PwDs. Lastly, while the Social Model of disability can helpfully explain why so many PwDs are living in poverty, the Human Rights Model offers constructive proposals for improving the life situation of the PwDs.

Since the Human Rights Model of disability is the closest fit for the present study, it was adopted as the conceptual framework. The key concepts namely, disability and visual impairment are presented below.

2.5 Conceptual framework

According to Savin-Baden and Major, (2013:138) a conceptual framework is a collection of general but related concepts from the literature that serve as partial background for the study and that support the need for investigating the research question. A conceptual framework is further defined by Marilla (2010: 5) as an interconnected set of ideas (theories) about how a particular phenomenon functions or is related to its parts. The framework serves as a basis for understanding the causal or correlational patterns of interconnection across events, ideas, observations, concepts, knowledge, interpretations and other components of experience. Conceptually this study is based on the human rights framework as well as various manifestos, charters, legislations which support its conviction from both a general and a LIS perspective viz.: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Public Library Manifesto 1994, The American Library Association, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Library and Information Services Transformation Charter, and legislation addressing the rights of people with disabilities.

The Human rights framework together with the Human Rights Model of Disability and the various manifestos, charters, legislations will form the conceptual framework of the study. This conceptual framework guides and provides the context and benchmark for assessing and determining the status of inclusivity and equality at MML concerning the VI. These elements were chosen specifically because they have the potential to influence policy makers and furthermore, they provide basis for removing barriers that hinder people with disabilities from fully participating in everyday societal activities

Presented below are the concepts being investigated, followed by Human Rights Framework and the various manifestos, charters and legislations.

2.5.1 Concepts being investigated

This section regards providing discussion of the concepts 'impairment' and 'disability' being investigated by the present study as important. Oliver (1993) differentiates between the two terms

by saying impairment and disability are terms used to promote an understanding of the Medical and Social models of disability, whereas impairment refers to structural changes in the body requiring medical intervention, while disability is related to social restrictions requiring changes within society. These two concepts are explored further shortly.

2.5.1.1 The concept of disability

It is important to define the term "disability" because definitions according to Whitfield (2012) enable us to have a common understanding of a word or a subject, and this will ensure that we are all understand each other when discussing or reading about an issue. The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) "article 1" (N.d) states that Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The VI persons are considered part of persons with disabilities. There is no one definition of the term disability. Berghs (2017: 1) states that:

> In Africa, there is a multiplicity of interpretations of 'disability' from: depictions found in oral histories, music, dance, ritual, (secrete) society practices of different ethnic groups; the colonial and postcolonial histories of medical segregation and prevention; how differing religions, evangelical and missionary services and their organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as how these institutions demarcate differences to diseases, illnesses and impairment ,the influence of the disability movements that ascribe to various definitions of disability and their advocacy on international and national policy agendas linked to human rights, development and now sustainability; the persons with disabilities' definition advocated by the United Nations (UN) and enshrined in legislation in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and how that becomes translated nationally and implicated bureaucratically in the machinery of the state; the theories and models of disability that international organizations, civil societies and non-governmental organizations are working with; how radio, TV, and social media are impacting on disability and how everyday popular culture, music, and the arts define and people understand what disability entails.

Berger (2013) in his book begins with a distinction between impairment and disability and points out that impairment refers to a biological or physiological condition that entails the loss of physical, sensory or cognitive function; and disability refers to an inability to perform a personal or socially necessary task because of that impairment or the societal reaction to it. Obonye (2014) in the African Disability Rights Yearbook and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2014) includes under the term disabled, those who have long term, physical, mental intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The background paper on disability in South Africa for the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) (1994 - 2014) states that:

> The new democratic government of South Africa inherited a society that understood disability to be a personal tragedy that required a health and welfare response to fix the person and the situation. Moreover, the ongoing difficulty and debate in measuring disability is reflected in the changing methodologies adopted over the past 20 years. This study has adopted the World Health Organization (WHO) (2001) definition of disability and defines "disability as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and the individual's contextual factors (environment and personal factors) (DPME 2014).

For the purposes of determining eligibility for a Disability Grant and Free Medical Heath Care, a more specific and purpose driven definition of disability was adopted by the Cabinet in 2006 as the loss or elimination of opportunities to take part in the life of the community, equitably with others, that is encountered by persons having physical, sensory, psychological, developmental, learning, neurological or either impairments, which may be permanent, temporary or episodic in nature thereby causing activity limitations and participation restrictions with the mainstream society.

2.5.1.2 The concept of visual impairment

According to Bailey and Hall (1989), visual impairment is defined as a term that technically includes all degrees of vision loss, including total blindness, that affect a person's ability to perform the usual tasks of life. The *Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine* (2008) defines visual

impairment as a severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses and reduces a person's ability to function at certain or all tasks. Baffoe (2013) argues that people with visual impairments are disabled by the fact that they are excluded from participation within the mainstream of society because of physical and organizational barriers. These barriers prevent them from gaining equal access to information, education, employment, public transport, housing and social/recreational opportunities, yet the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 states that equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. For Andreas and Kleynhans (2014), the terms 'visually impaired', 'partially sighted' and 'low vision' are often used interchangeably, indicating some level of residual vision.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued the following classifications of visual impairment:

- Mild Vision Loss or Near-Normal Vision – 20/30 to 20/60
- Moderate Visual Impairment – 20/70 to 20/160
- Severe Visual Impairment – 20/200 to 20/400
- Profound Visual Impairment – 20/500 to 20/1000
- Near-Total Visual Impairment – less than 20/1000
- Total Visual Impairment – no light perception at all

The WHO International Classification of Impairment Disability and Handicap (ICIDH) was published in 1980. It addresses the relationship between the concepts of impairment, disability and handicap as follows:

> Disability is described as a restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity within the range considered normal for a human being. For an example, one type of communication disability includes "seeing" which is described as a general loss or reduction of the ability to execute tasks requiring adequate distant or peripheral vision or visual acuity, or pattern recognition and other related activities such as comprehending written message, and reading written pages (ICIDH 1980: 143).

2.5.1.3 The Human Rights Framework

According to van Weele (2012:6) before the adoption of the adoption of the CRPD, none of the eight United Nations human rights treaties expressly protected the rights of the PwDs. Individuals with disabilities could in theory appeal to universal provisions or claim protection on the bases of

another characteristics such as gender or race. However, in practice, these legal obligations were, rarely applied to PwDs because they were not designed to address the specific needs and obstacles that the PwDs face on daily basis. Teranaka (2006) in Katsui (2008:6) states that the human rights based approach to disability is slowly replacing the Social Model of Disability at least in the discourse, to overcome the shortcomings and to change the paradigm of any intervention with various significances at least in theory. The human rights approach is often understood in the legal framework in a narrow definition. For instance, discriminated and awarded people file a court case when their rights are violated.

The human rights framework has the conviction that people with disabilities (such as the visually impaired) have the same rights as those who are able-bodied. According to the United Nations (UN) (2002):

> The rights of individuals with disabilities are grounded in human rights framework based on the United Nations charter, the universal declaration of human rights, International covenants on human rights and related human rights instrument.
>
> The rights of individuals with disabilities have been addressed more generally throughout the development of the international human rights law. The principle of the right to equality, addressed throughout the normative standards set out by the international human rights instruments is the foundation of the rights of individuals with disabilities. In order that the rights of persons with disabilities may be further realized, contemporary international law has increasingly recognized the need for all states to incorporate human rights standards into their national legislation. Although the means chosen to promote full realization of economic, social and cultural rights of persons with disabilities may differ among countries, there is no country exempt from the need for improved policies and laws for individuals with disabilities.

The purpose of drawing on the human rights approach in this study is to establish the extent to which the provision of library services by the MML is inclusive of the VI. To examine what extent the VI's democratic and human rights to access to information are being provided or discriminated against by the availability or lack of alternative formats in the MML.

There are various manifestos, charters, legislations that provide support for this conviction from both a general and a LIS perspective and the main ones will be briefly outlined below.

2.5.1.4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Public Library Manifesto 1994

At an international level, the 1994 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto states that

> Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials i.e. linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, or people in hospitals and prisons (IFLA 1994: 119).

2.5.1.5 The American Library Association

According to Mckook and Phenix (2006), the American Library Association (ALA) has always been a supporter of the human rights approach. The ALA recognizes that people with disabilities are a large and neglected minority in the community and are severely under-represented in the library profession (ALA Council 2009). The Association argues that disabilities cause many personal challenges. In addition, many people with disabilities face economic inequity, illiteracy, cultural isolation, and discrimination in education, employment and the broad range of societal activities. For people with impairments the American Library Bill of Rights compels libraries to have well-planned technological solutions and access points, based on the concept of universal design, essential for the effective use of information and other library services by all people. Furthermore, the ALA states that libraries should work with people with disabilities, agencies, organizations and vendors to integrate assistive technology into their facilities and services to meet the needs of people with a broad range of disabilities, including learning, mobility, sensory and developmental disabilities (ALA Council 2009: 52). Library staff should be aware of how available technologies address disabilities and know how to assist all users with library technology (ALA Council 2009:52).

2.5.1.6 The African Charter on Human and People's Rights

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1987) Article 9 (1) states that every individual shall have the right to receive information; article 13 (2) every citizen shall have the right of equal access to the public service of his country; article 18 states that the aged and people with disabilities shall have the right to special measures of protection in keeping with their physical needs. Many African governments have signed and implemented the United Nation's "The Standard Rules on

the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities." Rule 5, "Accessibility," in a section titled "Access to Information and Communication," that applies specifically to libraries says: "states should develop strategies to make information services and documentation accessible for different groups of persons with disabilities". Braille, tape services, large print and other appropriate technologies should be used to provide access to written information and documentation for people with visual impairments. Similarly, appropriate technologies should be used to provide access to spoken information for persons with auditory impairments or comprehension difficulties (UN 1993).

2.5.1.7 The Library and Information Services Transformation Charter

At a local level, The Library and Information Services Transformation Charter (Department of Arts and Culture 2014: 23), notes that there are two bodies that serve the interests of the South African library and information service across its various systems: The National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS) and the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA). The (LIS Charter: 16) states that LIS are within reach for all South Africans. The aim of the study was to determine the present situation concerning the provision of library and information services to the VI users by the MML. The level of inclusion according to the charters discussed was the core aim of the study.

In what follows, legislation advocating for PwDs is reviewed, some weaknesses and areas that still need to be further explored in the near future are highlighted.

2.5.1. Addressing the rights of people with disabilities through legislation

The provision of appropriate and adequate services to VI people is underpinned by several drivers, all of which to some extent are based on a philosophy of inclusion and adherence to best practice. Legislation in many countries creates a mandatory framework in which VI people have to be accommodated (Davies 2007: 788).

2.5.1.1. International arena

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 as a package of interrelated and interdependent rights, which include and further strengthen elements of three hundred years of development. The rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in a perfect world, would be enough to protect everyone, according to the UN (1993). However, in practice

certain groups such as the disabled amongst others have fared worse than other groups. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Concept Note, (N.d.)., there are more than 650 million people in the world living with disabilities, and these people encounter a myriad of physical and social obstacles that prevent them from:

- Receiving education
- Getting jobs, even when they are well qualified
- Accessing information
- Obtaining proper health care
- Getting around
- "Fitting in and being accepted".

The Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016) states that:

> While some countries have enacted comprehensive legislation in this regard, many have not. Because of discriminatory practices, persons with disabilities tend to live in the shadows and margins of society and as a result, their rights are overlooked.

According to a Research brief on disability and equality in South Africa 2013-2017 for the South African Human Rights Commission, South Africa signed the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol without any reservations on 30 March 2007 and it subsequently came into force on 3 May 2008. The CRPD's purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities. It covers a number of key areas such as accessibility, personal mobility, health, education, employment, habilitation and rehabilitation in political life and equality and non-discrimination. According to the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities Baseline Country Report (2013), the Convention marks a shift in thinking about disability from a social welfare concern to a human rights issue, which acknowledges that societal barriers and prejudices are themselves disabling. Article 9 of the CRPD specifically mentions "accessibility"- to enable persons with disabilities PwDs to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life:

> State parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to PwDs access on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in

urban and rural areas; 2*(d)* State Parties shall take appropriate measures to provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understandable forms (UN 2009).

The Disability Rights Charter of South Africa (1992), Article 14 "Communication" also states that:

> Disabled people shall have the right to communicate freely and have measures designed to ensure the full enjoyment of this right for blind people this shall include the provision of Braille and/or audio recorded material, the recognitions and use of sign language for people with hearing and/or speech disabilities and mentors/advocates for mentally disabled people.

However, Kotze (2012) notes that implementing the CRPD particularly in Southern Africa involves not only substantial financial commitment but major changes to legislation and government institutions. Moreover, such changes can come about only if the government officials are prepared to approach disability issues and PwDs in the manner required by the Convention, which makes disability issues a priority in all government activities.

2.5.1.2. South Africa

According to the LIS Transformation Charter (2014: 27) "the South African Library for the Blind Act No 91 of 1998. The focus of this act is on blind and print-handicapped readers and on improving access to library and information services by South African people with such disabilities. The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities referred to above, according to Seyama (2009: 27), compels South Africa as a member of the UN, to maintain the minimum requirements in meeting responsibilities towards disabled people. Seyama (2009:) goes on to state that the principle of equal rights implies that the needs of each and every individual are of equal importance; that those needs must be considered in the planning of society and that all resources must be employed to ensure that every individual has equal opportunities.

According to the Republic of South Africa (RSA) Constitution Act 108 of 1996 and its Bill of Rights, the rights of all people in the country, irrespective of race, gender, ethnic or social descent, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, faith, culture and language are protected. Chapter 2, Section 9 specifically mentions the equality clause and the right to freedom from discrimination

based on a number of criteria mentioned above. People with disabilities are thus guaranteed the right to be treated equally and to enjoy the same rights as other citizens. Sibanda (2015) argues that South Africa does not have specific legislation pertaining to the rights of people with disabilities, but rather, one may find protection for PwDs in legislation such as the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998 as well as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No 4 of 2000 (PEPUDA). The Act specifies several instances of unfair discrimination on the grounds of race, gender and disability, however, up until the current time, the focus of this Act has merely been predominantly on access in the physical environment thus focusing only on people with physical disabilities, therefore leaving people with visual impairments not catered for. Grobbelaar-du Plessis and Grobler (2013) also argue that South Africa does not have comprehensive disability legislation that deals with matters relating to disabilities or PwDs. However, Grobbelaar du-Plessis and Grobler (2013) state that South Africa has enacted different pieces of legislation that mention PwDs or deal with issues relating to disabilities in the legislation.

The Baseline Country Report to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), as approved by Cabinet in April 2013, highlights systemic inequalities and violation of rights experienced on a daily basis by persons with disabilities and their families. In addition, the Minister of Social Development through the White Paper on the Rights of PwDs acknowledges that there are "weaknesses in the governance machinery of the State, capacity constraints and lack of coordination within the disability sector that have detracted from a systematic approach to the implementation of the UNCRPD. The continued vulnerability of persons with disabilities, particularly children with disabilities as well as persons with psychosocial disabilities, residing in rural villages, requires more vigorous and better coordinated and targeted intervention" (Department of Social Development 2015). In a paper written for the Centre for Constitutional Rights, Sibanda (2015) points out that the attempts at meeting the needs of PwDs are inadequate and as a result, PwDs started to develop their own documents expressing the demands and needs of PwDs in terms of equal rights and mechanisms to address their challenges. One such example of those documents is the Disability Rights Charter of South Africa of 1992.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa through the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 guarantees the right of access to information in Section 16 (1). This however is not without challenges as the PAIA has its focus on government information. According to Schonwetter, Ncube and Chetty, (2009) the South African Copyright Act does not include specific provisions that deal with the needs of sensory-disabled people. Schonwetter et al,. (2009) noted this as problematic from an access to learning materials perspective because people with a sensory disability face additional barriers to accessing learning materials by virtue of their disability. McKinley (2003: 30), discussed the state of access to information in South Africa, pointing to one of the weaknesses of the PAIA, cited by most civil society organizations as being the lack of cheap and effective ways of resolving information requests without having to go to court. Without the assistance of civil organizations, which most of the VI have no knowledge of, resources and or means to access courts, the VI often give up hope of accessing information.

According to a paper prepared for the Legal Resource Centre by Mudarinkwa, Bernabeu et al., (2015) the South African government established the Department of Woman, Children and Persons with Disabilities in order to emphasize the need for equity and access to development opportunities for vulnerable groups in the society. However, in 2014 after the national elections this department was incorporated into the Department of Social Development without any explanation for the re-assignment of the portfolios. The Department of Health and the Department of Labour had to work together with the Department of Social Development to cater for needs of PwDs. But then again due to these three departments having separate Cabinet ministers exercising executive authority, their portfolios are dedicated to their mainstream subject matters thereby not prioritizing issues related to disabilities. Kamga (2013) assessed the implications of the White Paper on the rights of PwDs and argued that the South African policy needed to move from piecemeal regulations on disability to have a disability-specific policy and legislation. The latter is essential as it will not only provide guidance for implementation of the policy, but will also enhance its enforceability when policy considerations are enacted and adopted by the legislature (Kamga 2013).

2.6. Reviewed studies in relation to library services to the VI users

An extensive search conducted for this study revealed the paucity of studies on public library and information services to VI users particularly in South Africa; hence, the literature will be drawn from the continent as a whole and abroad.

As will be shown below there is evidence that VI users are disadvantaged not only in terms of education and employment opportunities but also in terms of public library services. This section begins with an examination of the role of public libraries.

2.6.1. The role of public libraries in society

According to Arko-Cobah (2006: 352), public libraries are one of the most successful cultural facilities with their audiences having a wider social base that cuts across social class. They support the growth of communities through the provision of services designed to meet local needs and are important tools for reducing disparity between the citizens with rich and poor information.

In their study Aabo, Audson and Varheim,. (2010: 22) on "how public libraries function as a meeting place", pointed out that different people visited their public libraries for different reasons. For example the older generation use their public libraries for public sphere meetings, whereas the younger generation use the public library for meeting with friends, acquaintances, colleagues or classmates. This correlates with what is stipulated by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions /United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IFLA/UNESCO) guidelines for development:

> The public library has an important role as a public space and meeting place. This is particularly important in communities where there are few places for people to meet and is sometimes called the drawing room of the community. Use of the library for research and for finding information relating to the user's education and leisure interests, brings people into informal contact with other members of the community (IFLA/UNESCO 2005: 29).

A survey conducted by Elbert, Fuegi and Lipeikaite, (2010) on six African countries found that most people believed public libraries have the potential to contribute to community development in important areas such as health, employment and agriculture. Lison and Reip (2016) state that public libraries are locations that can support the need for direct communication as they offer free public space without any pressure to consume and without any need to legitimize their utilization.

With regard to the UNESCO 1949 Public Library Manifesto, Changala (1974) contemplates that the public library is a living force of education, culture and information, and understanding between people and between nations and is concerned with the refreshment of a man's spirit by the provision of books for relaxation and pleasure, with assistance and with pro-vision of up-to-date technical, scientific and sociological information. Nkabinde (1988: 77) confirms this in her study, "The public library as a community service in developing society in Botswana", that one of the reasons that stood out was that reading for relaxation in particular cuts across all occupational groups. According to Ignatow (2011: 746), worldwide, public libraries, including rural and urban local and branch libraries, provide citizens of all ages with valuable cultural resources including access to books and other media, calm and quiet settings for reading, support for formal education and public spaces for community events. They provide the unemployed and underemployed with access to information about jobs, particularly during economic downturns. Public libraries with Internet connections provide citizens with access to e-government services and information on educational opportunities, business and health.

According to Singh-Handa (2012: 1), public libraries are primarily institutions of basic learning having a mission which involves providing collections and services to meet the information needs of the local community. These are seen as local gateways to knowledge and information and provide conditions for lifelong learning, community development and independent decision making by an individual.

It is evident from the above that public libraries in both developing and developed contexts have an important role to play and, given what has been said about those with disabilities, the VI should also benefit from this role. One role of the public library which is increasingly gaining prominence is its role in facilitating social inclusion and this is discussed below in relation to the VI.

2.6.2. The importance of libraries in facilitating social inclusion
In this section public and information services and their role in facilitating inclusion to VI users is discussed in depth.

Blindness and VI are common disabilities in all countries of the world. To reduce the sense of isolation caused by this disability and bridge the communication gap, reading for the blind has become a prerogative. Reading materials are provided in alternative formats, tactile formats (Braille and moon type), large print, audio (spoken word) and electronic text. It is pertinent to note

that despite all these facilities and formats, the visually impaired persons still face a number of challenges with regards to information accessibility (Adebimpe et al. 2014: 14).

Mansa (2007: 2) states that it is common knowledge that access to information is a prerequisite for enlightenment and meaningful development at all levels of human endeavor. Any part of society that denies a section from enjoying the benefits accruing from access to information is likely to suffer from exclusion and depravity in this modern society which is largely controlled and driven by information. According to Adetoro (2014: 48), public libraries provide information to all persons and its users are the inhabitants of the community it serves. Public library services should target all categories of persons, including the VI, and must scan their immediate environment to ascertain groups of persons resident in the community. In other words, the public library needs to be inclusive.

The concept of inclusion is based on human rights, equal opportunities and participation. According to UNESCO (2003), inclusion is controversial in the sense that it has varying interpretations; it means different things to different people such as poverty, ethnicity, disability, gender or membership of a minority group limited to certain services in terms of access. For the purposes of the present study, inclusion, as defined by Fourie (2007: 2) refers to all efforts and policies to promote equality of opportunity to people from all circumstances and from all socially excluded categories.

Muddiman et. al, (2000: 9) argues that at present, public libraries are only superficially open to all as they provide passive access to materials and resources and have service priorities and resource strategies which work in favor of existing library users rather than excluded or disadvantaged communities or groups. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto of 1994 compels public libraries to be inclusive by stating that:

> Specific services and materials must be provided for those who cannot, for whatever reasons, use the regular services and material, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prisons.

In the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) (2005), argues that inclusivity in LIS with regard to the VI can be achieved by integrating the service requirements of VI persons into mainstream services wherever possible and that library

services, whatever the type, must identify needs, develop policies, identify material resources and plan information services in such a way that persons with visual impairment have access to the same range of information materials.

In the South African context, the LIS Transformation Charter (2014) is intended to form the basis for the development of policy. Key aspects are that libraries are forces for justice and social cohesion; they are within reach of all and are places for everyone. The Charter embraces a fresh and vital vision for a bright and socially inclusive library and information services future (Stilwell, 2011). According to the charter, libraries are viewed as forces for justice and social cohesion and a socially inclusive future for LIS is envisaged. Inclusion means that all people have the right to participate and benefit from participation in typical community settings such as libraries where everyone irrespective of disability, participates (Muxe, et al. 2014).

However, Raju and Raju (2010: 2) argue that South Africa's democratic government has not demonstrated the necessary prioritization to eradicate illiteracy particularly to positively influence the lives of those excluded from the mainstream. According to Farmer (2013: 38), for libraries, inclusion tends to focus on physical and intellectual access instead of focusing on a rich collection of resources that meets the diverse user population's varied interests and needs, thus in a way denying people with visual impairment their basic human right to access information.

2.6.3. Research on library services to the visually impaired

According to Eskay and Chima (2013: 626), the path to providing quality library services to people who cannot read standard print with corrective lenses or who cannot handle printed materials has endured many advances, twists and setbacks. Kinnell, Yu, Creaser (2000: 9) conducted a study on services to the VI in public libraries in the United Kingdom and they found that despite the recommendations made by the National Guidelines authorities, in some of the libraries they were unable to identify full-time individual posts or staff hours dedicated to VI services. Furthermore, while most libraries had collections of music and spoken word cassettes, when compared with what was available to sighted-people, the range of reading and information for VI was very limited which has serious implications in terms of equality and inclusivity.

In a review article, Bernardi (2013: 10) summarized the results of research on library services in China for the VI and pointed out that libraries had been developing such services with poor service quality, low-budgets and a lack of professional staff.

Alemna (1993: 259) summarized the LIS to the VI in Africa and pointed out that although there are signs of improvement in educational and social services for the blind in Africa, there is little evidence that LIS for the blind are improving. However, he states that this is due to the lack of reliable statistics which makes it difficult to draw up a program based on specific targets.

More recently, a study conducted by Adetoro (2011: 265) on the availability and access to alternative formats by visually impaired adults and students in Nigeria, pointed out that principles underpinning library and information service provision to persons with visual impairment should be that of availability and equality of access to information materials. Also in Nigeria, Lucky and Achebe (2013: 21) investigated information service delivery to the VI and pointed out that "with the help of information technology, the VI have been rendered special attention to fully participate in the world by providing them with the best possible support necessary to bridge gaps between accessibility and literacy".

A study conducted by Rowland (2008: 85) found that out of all the countries in Africa, only South Africa has a well-developed, functional library service for the VI despite the fact that there are nearly seven million blind people on the continent. Different studies as far as technology is concerned have been conducted by Nassimbeni and de Jager (2014: 250) who found that out of all the assistive technology provided to the VI, the DAISY players in the Eastern Cape (South Africa) were preferred because they provided a vital link to the real world for users that often feel isolated.

Based on the above-mentioned literature it is obvious that the VIs preferences are diverse and therefore they need diverse services.

2.6.4. Situation of the visually impaired persons in South Africa with regard to library services

In South Africa, blind readers enjoy comprehensive library services, as provided by two well-resourced organizations (Rowland 2008:8 5). The model of delivery is one of centralized distribution through the freepost, supplemented by mini-libraries serving particular local communities or institutions. The South African Library for the Blind in Grahamstown is the only Library for the Blind on the African continent. It distributes both Braille and audio books and magazines. The Library also benefits from exchange agreements with several overseas libraries in English-speaking countries. The membership comprises 2 595 Braille readers and 2,923 audio

readers, and the collection includes 12,300 Braille book titles and 10,574 audio book titles (Rowland 2008: 85). Contrary to the above, the Briefing paper on the Marrakesh Treaty issued by the University of Cape Town (UCT) (2015) which according to the World Intellectual Property Organization was established to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled of which South Africa is signatory, argues that in South Africa it is estimated that while approximately 880 000 persons have no sight ability or are visually impaired, only 0.5% of books have been published in or converted to an accessible format. It is thus evident that much needs to be done in terms of making resources for the VI available and that only a small minority of VI are utilizing these resources. This situation is in obvious conflict with the human rights principles which state that materials must be made available for those who cannot read standard print.

2.6.5. The range of alternative materials for the VI users

Due to their special physical situation, the visually impaired and blind people need some special requirements to fulfill their need for information (Abdelrahman 2016: 94). The provision of alternative format reading materials and the exploitation of information technology are the obvious ways of removing the personal and societal barriers imposed by sensory impairment (Braizer and Owen 2007: 809). Carey (2007: 767) states that library services for the blind and VI users have been inextricably tied up with alternative format production which has never risen above four percent of standard-text publishing. However, Epp (2006: 146) argues that despite decades of promoting equity in human rights through legislation, the 95 percent in alternate format accessibility for people who cannot use print material is still hard to bridge. Vitzansky (1994: 23) reported that the greatest problem the Danish National Library for the Blind and Print-handicapped had in the production of specialized format material was that the demand was not big enough to make it attractive for the usual suppliers of information. This however was different when it came to the "talking books" (audio books) which have since gained a growing commercial market. IFLA (Kavanagh and Skold, 2005) also acknowledges that there is a vast disparity in resources between developing and developed countries, with many developing countries struggling to meet the basic means of subsistence for their citizens and thus not able to provide any type of library let alone a library for the blind. In his report "Sharing a vision to improve library services for visually impaired people in the United Kingdom" Owen (2007: 821) noted that of the 100,000 new titles

published every year in the United Kingdom only about 4000 are reproduced in one or more alternative formats and the most commonly reproduced titles were in the fiction category.

In Finland, Celia Library according to Maarno (2014: 15), was established to produce and provide literature in an accessible format for the VI. Their book production is based on Section 17 of the Finnish Copyright Act No 404 of 1961, which gives the Celia Library the right to produce accessible literature for the VI. It was however noted that although the alternative material was available, the librarians had little knowledge about the print disabled target group. The above is consistent with what was pointed out by Alemna (1993: 259) who argued that there are no reliable statistics for people with visual impairment. Adetoro (2011: 14) investigated the availability and use of information materials by persons with visual impairment in Nigeria. The study revealed that Braille materials were not readily available in the libraries surveyed.

Persons with visual impairments have consistently shown a preferences for one alternative reading format over another often because of factors outside their control (Adetoro 2012b: 91). Harris and Oppenheim (2003) echo Adetoro's words and state that the wide range of visual impairment affects the reading abilities and needs of VI users differently; all VI persons need to satisfy their information needs in an appropriate alternative format, this however can change over time due to their condition or information requirements (i.e. a VI person might have gone completely blind over the time and may not be able to use the large print thus be in need of Braille). For disadvantaged groups of people, particularly for those with disabilities, living in developing countries, access to information by means of modern information and communication technologies (hereafter, referred to ICT) is not always equally accessible and usable. Consequently, the opportunities to benefit from the ICT are limited. People with any form of disability are not included in certain spheres of life due to the socio-economic situation of the country they live in (Khachatryan 2012).

For Ejedafiru and Oghenetega (2014: 60), if the VI are to play their expected role as key participants in sustainable social-economic development and democratic culture, they must be mobilized and empowered to use adaptive technologies in our libraries. Therefore, disability should not interfere with any person's rights to access information.

2.6.6. Information and information/reading needs of the VI users

The information need (need for information) is a factual situation in which there exists an inseparable inter-connection between information and need. Information originates and is generated because there exists a need or an interest (Prasad 2000). It has already been established that access to information is one of the most fundamental of human rights: it allows the individual to develop himself/herself and participate actively within a democratic society, fully exercising his/her rights and duties (Todaro 2005).

According to Ng'ang'a (2003: 130), citizens armed with information are able to participate effectively in the national development of a country. Information is crucial for knowledge development which is necessary for maximum utilization of economic opportunities. With information, citizens are empowered to understand their environment and be able to interact with it effectively. Access to information is facilitated by access to libraries and can play a crucial role in the provision of library and information services to the VI users. This is in line with the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, as mentioned earlier in the study, which proclaims that specific services and materials must be provided for those who cannot for whatever reasons use the regular services and materials for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospitals and or prisons.

People in general need information to make decisions about many things and the VI are no exception.

Visually impaired people have the same information needs as sighted people. Just as sighted people might want to read a newspaper, listen to a CD or download electronic information from the internet, VI people also want access in their chosen accessible format (Kavanagh and Skold, 2005). Kinnell and Creaser (2001: 8) observed public library services for VI people in the United Kingdom (UK) and the observation revealed that the overall provision of reading materials for visually impaired is still carried out by a wide range of organizations including public sector and voluntary organizations, self-help groups, local society and commercial organizations. Moore (2000) has studied VI users in a review of research for the Royal Institute of Blind People (RNIB). Moore (2000), pointed out that in addition to the information needs that they share with everyone else, VI people need information that relates to their position as disabled people. Wheelchair users or people with hearing difficulties need information about specific rights and entitlements open to

disabled people and they need information that relates specifically to their status as VI people. Li and Li (2014: 45) conducted a study on the LIS needs of the VI users in different Chinese public libraries in order to increase the understanding of these users needs to help improve their services for them. The study observed that the participants paid more attention to the information closely related to their work and life. Their purposes for seeking information were mainly for learning, relaxation and intercommunication. However, the VI users noted some barriers in their access to library services such as a lack of time or the availability of a sighted companion who can accompany them on the trip to the library.

Gold and Simson (2005) investigated the needs of people who are blind and visually impaired in Canada and they identified that the primary needs of the participants were access to information and access to health. It was found that the lack of information about services and how to access them, constrained their ability to live independently, a finding underscoring the importance of access to information. Even after 25 years of progressive social policy goals, Canadians who are blind or visually impaired continue to live in poverty and remain socially isolated in many ways. This confirms what Ng'ang'a (2003: 130) pointed to in his study, that the VI users being the minority are inadequately represented in the realms of society. They are seldom considered as full citizens and participants in the national, political and economic life. According to Ng'ang'a, this trend can only change if this group of people have access to information.

Adetoro (2010: 51) conducted a study on the reading interests and information needs of persons with visual impairment in Nigeria. Findings revealed that respondent's reading interests included religion, general and specific aspects of faith, business and entrepreneurship, how to succeed in business, how-to-do-it manuals, biographies and stimulating works of poetry.

2.7. Summary of the chapter

This chapter began by providing an overview of MML. The chapter focused on the relevant legislation and charters adopted locally, in Africa as well as internationally. Though various Acts are available in South Africa to ensure that PwDs are not discriminated against, there is no single consolidated piece of legislation dealing exclusively with disabled persons and matters of disability. Models associated with disabilities were explored viz the Medical, Social and Human Rights Models. The chapter concluded that all three models were dependent on one another and none should be overlooked. Moreover, the reviewed studies in relation to the library service to the

VI users attempt to provide a broader picture of what is happening around the world in terms of new developments, challenges and opportunities. Based on the reviewed literature it is clear that there is still a lot more to be done in order to facilitate full inclusion of the VI people not only in library and information services but in mainstream activities of society in general.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines and discusses the methodology used in the study. The content is structured around the research design, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis. Ethical considerations and measures to provide reliability and validity are also discussed here.

In this study, methodology refers to how the research was done and its logical sequence. The focus of this study was the explanation of and the description of the experiences of registered, visually impaired (VI) users of the Msunduzi Municipal Library (MML). The research method was qualitative in nature.

In order to respond to the research problem outlined in Chapter 1 the main objective of this study was to assess the provision of library and information services to the VI by the MML. In order to respond to respond to the above, the study identified the following key research questions.

3.1.1. Key questions

- How often do the VI users use MML and what are the services they use and why?
- What are the perceptions of the VI users about the quality of service of the MML?
- What are the information needs of the VI users and are these being met?
- What are the accessibility problems (barriers) experienced by the VI users with the resources offered by MML?
- What policies does the library have in order to promote inclusivity and equality with regard to the VI?
- What are the challenges experienced by the MML in seeking to provide services to the VI and what, if necessary, needs to be done to improve the services?
- What kind of training did the staff receive in relation to services to the VI and what kind of training is needed?

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016:78) research questions determine how data are to be collected. In qualitative research they often identify areas of enquiry for what to observe in a field observation, or what topics to ask about an interview. Furthermore, research questions are not usually specific interview questions; research questions are broader, identifying areas to ask

questions about. Cohen et al (2007) states that a research questions shows the perspective from which the researcher intends to approach the research topic.

3.2. Research paradigm

Various scholars have understood the term paradigm differently. According to Connaway and Powell (2010), a paradigm is defined as a framework of basic assumptions with which perceptions are evaluated and relationships are delineated and applied to a discipline or profession. Bryman (2012) states that paradigm describes a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done and how results should be interpreted. According to Patton (2002), a paradigm refers to:

- Way of describing a world view that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (known as ontology – that is, what do we believe about the nature of reality?);
- Ways of knowing (known as epistemology – that is, how do we know what we know?), and ethics and value systems (known as axiology – that is, what do we believe is true?).

A paradigm thus leads us to ask certain questions and use appropriate approaches to systematic inquiry known as methodology. The net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm or interpretative framework, a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Neuman (2011: 96) loosely describes the paradigm as a whole system of thinking.

3.2.1. Interpretivism

This study adopted the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism has its roots in the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology and the German sociologist Max Weber (Chowdhury 2014: 433). It focuses on reality as a human construct, which can only be understood subjectively. Although it is possible and even probable that there is an independent, concrete reality out there, humans can only know it through the filtering lenses of their sensory organs and prior assumptions. We could never be one hundred percent sure that the world exists, as we perceive it. Social realities are even less concrete since they are created by cultural communities (Kroeze 2012). According to Dammak (N.d) interpretivists state that reality is multi-layered and complex. De Vos, Strydom and Delport (2013: 309) believe that people are creative and actively

construct their social reality. They further note that the social world should be studied in the natural world, through the eyes of the participants, without the intervention of the researcher. This approach maintains that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their worlds and continuously interpret, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalize daily actions. McRoy (1995:2009-2015) in de Vos et al. (2013:65) argues that qualitative paradigm stems from an antipositivistic, interpretive approach, it is idiographic and thus holistic in nature, and aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. Thus, the qualitative researcher is concerned with describing and understanding rather than explaining or predicting human behaviour; naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement and the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider, as opposed to the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative paradigm.

Based on the above, the interpretivist paradigm focuses on the understanding of occurrences, events and facts of people who share similar experiences on a daily basis. The main objective of this study was to assess the provision of the library and information services to the visually impaired users by the MML. Due to the nature of the respondents being visually impaired, they could not complete written questionnaires so instead interviews were used for this study. As the interpretive researcher, I do not aim to predict what the participants will do, but rather describe and understand how they make sense of their world and how they make meaning of their particular actions. The interpretive approach recognises that research results are not "out there" waiting to be found or discovered by the researcher, but they are created through interpretation of data Guba and Lincoln 1994 in (Bertram and Christiansen 2014). Interpretivist researchers aim to study reality subjectively, and as a result they use methods that are sensitive to the context and that will help them to gain in-depth understanding. These methods include focus groups, in-depth interviews, ethnography and narrative inquiry (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout 2014: 31).

3.3. Research design

A research design according to Kothari (2004: 27) is defined as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose. In fact, the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. According to Maree

(2012) a research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. A research design is further described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) as a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms, first, to strategies of inquiry, and second to methods for collecting empirical material.

According to Kumar (2011: 41), the selection of an appropriate research design is crucial in enabling a researcher to arrive at valid findings, comparisons and conclusions. Through a research design, the researcher is able to decide for herself and communicate to others her decisions regarding:

- What study design she proposes to use;
- How she is going to collect information from the respondents;
- How the respondents will be selected;
- How the information that is going to be collected is to be analyzed, and
- How the findings will be communicated.

Starman (2013: 31) states that a "case study is used to analyse and describe each person individually (his/her activities, special needs, life situation, life history), a group of people, individual institution or a problem, process, phenomenon or event in a particular institution in detail". Case studies are a design of enquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a programme, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake 1995; Yin 2009, 2012).

The research design for this study is a descriptive case study that is analyzed using qualitative methods. Yin (2003) in de Vos et al (2013:321) refers a descriptive case study to as an intrinsic case study that strives to describe, analyse and interpret a particular phenomenon. Extreme or unique cases may occur that justify a study in its own right. Therefore in this regard an intensive study of one instance or a small number of instances is undertaken in order to produce detailed descriptions of these cases. The purpose is not to understand a broad social issue, but merely to describe the case being studied. According Neuman (2014: 38) a descriptive study starts with a well-defined issue or question and tries to describe it accurately, they presents a presents a picture

of types of people or of social activities and focuses on "how" and "who" questions. A case study of the MML was conducted. The advantage of the case study according to Zainal (2007: 4) is that the detailed qualitative explanations often produced not only help to explore or describe the data in a real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research.

3.4. Research approach/method

Different researchers distinguish between two types of research approaches namely qualitative and quantitative research.

According to MacDonald and Headlam (2011: 8) quantitative, as the name suggests, is concerned with trying to quantify things; it asks questions such as "how long?', "how many?" or "the degree to which?". Quantitative methods look to quantify data and generalize results from a sample of the population of interest. They may look to measure the incidence of various views and opinions in a chosen sample for example or aggregate.

On the other hand, qualitative research is concerned with qualitative data, qualitative methods which help - attempt to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for actions and establish how people interpret their experiences and the world around them. Qualitative methods provide insights into the setting of a problem, generating ideas and/or hypotheses. The key difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is flexibility. Generally, quantitative methods are fairly inflexible. With quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires, for example, researchers ask all participants identical questions in the same order. The response categories from which participants may choose can be "closed-ended" or fixed.

The advantage of this inflexibility is that it allows for meaningful comparison of responses across participants and study sites. However, it requires a thorough understanding of the important questions to ask, the best way to ask them, and the range of possible responses. On the other hand, qualitative methods are typically more flexible that is they allow greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participant. For example, qualitative methods ask mostly "open-ended" questions that are not necessarily worded in exactly the same way with each participant (MacDonald and Headlam 2011: 8). With open-ended questions, participants are free to respond in their own words, and these responses tend to be more complex than simply "yes" or "no".

Denzin and Lincoln (2011:6) argue that qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctively its own nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nichols and Ormston (2014:3) state that despite the wide variation in approaches to qualitative research practice there are many key elements that are commonly identified as giving qualitative research its distinctive character. These are specific data gathering methods such as observational methods, semi-structured and in-depth interviews and focus groups

Despite its strengths, qualitative research is not without its limitations. For instance, Bryman (2008: 391) argues that because qualitative investigators are the main research instrument, it becomes practically impossible to replicate a study. Though qualitative researchers are not associated with an interest in replication; their interest lies in specific settings and they do not always wish to generalise findings. Furthermore, qualitative researchers have been inconsistent in articulating clearly the procedures they followed to select samples, collect data and analyse them. In other words, the audit trail has to be described so that readers can follow it.

The main objective of this study is to understand, explore or to describe people's behaviour; themes in behaviour, attitudes, trends or relations regarding people's actions. The present study will adopt the qualitative research approach. According to Dawson (2002: 14) qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. It attempts to obtain an in-depth opinion from participants. As it is attitudes, behavior and experiences which are important, fewer people take part in the research, but the contact with these people tends to last much longer. According to Degu and Tegbar (2006: 3) qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena: that is to say, it aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. It is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about:

- Why people behave the way they do;
- How opinions and attitudes are formed;
- How people are affected by the events that go on around them; and
- How and why cultures have developed in the way they have.

Qualitative research is concerned with finding the answers to questions which begin with: why? How? In what way? Quantitative research, on the other hand, is more concerned with questions about: how much? How many? How often? To what extent?.

3.5. Study population

The study population refers to the people or community from whom the required information to find answers to the research questions is obtained. For the present study, the population comprised of the 17 registered VI library users who were identified from their registration file kept in the library. Permission to use the file containing particulars of the registered VI users was obtained. Also included in the study were seven library assistants, two librarians as well as the principal librarian. These participants were included because the VI section forms part of the Lending section, only employees who work in the Lending section participated in this study.

3.6. Sampling

The aim of the present study was to assess the provision of library and information services to the visually impaired by Msunduzi Municipal Library. Participants for this study were determined by people who met the following criteria:

- Registered, visually impaired library users (which included partially sighted, totally blind);
- Library staff employed at Bessie Head Library (specifically in the Lending section), and;
- Library management.

Brynard and Hanekom (2006: 36) define sampling as a technique employed to select a small group (the sample group) with a view to determining the characteristics of a large group (the population), if selected discerningly, the sample will display the same characteristics or properties as the group. Creswell (2012: 208) states that purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research and that participants and sites that can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem of the study are selected. Babbie and Mouton (2008: 202) says that sometimes it's appropriate for the researcher to select his/her own sample on the basis of his/her knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of the research aims. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2013: 392) adds that, in purposive sampling one must first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample accordingly.

For the present study the sample was limited to the registered VI library users and the staff working in the Lending section at MML. Since the number of respondents was limited, there was no sampling frame from which a sample could be drawn to. Hence the researcher used purposive sampling.

In purposive sampling the researcher deliberately selects the subjects against one or more trait to give what is believed to be a representative sample (Gray 2004)

3.7. Data collection instrument

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the study is qualitative in nature. Various methods or techniques exist to collect data in qualitative research, and these include observations, focus groups and interviews. In social research, there are many types of interview. The most common of these are unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. Qualitative research instruments are designed to facilitate the examination of the world of the interviewee from their point of view: they give the interviewee the opportunity to answer a question or discuss a theme in depth and for the interviewer to ask follow-up questions. If the instrument is too structured, it will not allow interviewees to put forward their own point of views and experiences, while if it is too unstructured, the result may be too much data that are irrelevant to the study (Fountain 2004: 21).

3.7.1. Interviewing

An interview is a conversation between two people; it does not always have a structure but has a purpose. It is designed to elicit the interviewee's knowledge or perspective on a topic. Individual interviews, which can include key informant interviews, are useful for exploring an individual's beliefs, values, understandings, feelings, experiences and perspectives of an issue. Individual interviews also allow the researcher to delve into a complex issue, learning more about the contextual factors that govern individual experiences (Celano, N.d.). Interviews are a systematic way of finding the facts from the people through conversations. The main reasons for the research interview as noted by Gill, Steward and Chadwick (2008: 292) are to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires. Interviews are, therefore, most appropriate where little is already known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual participants. They are also particularly appropriate

for exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to talk about such issues in a group environment.

In a qualitative interview, good questions should be open-ended (ie, require more than a yes/no answer), neutral, sensitive and understandable. It is usually best to start with questions that participants can answer easily and then proceed to more difficult or sensitive topics. This can help put respondents at ease, build up confidence and rapport and often generates rich data that subsequently develops the interview further (Gill, Stewart and Chadwick 2008: 292).

3.7.2. The interview schedule

An interview schedule is a formal list used in interviews to aid in the systematic collection of data through questions. The content, wording and sequence of an interview schedule are fixed in advance and serve as a guide for gathering information pertinent to the research (Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal 2008). The interview guide is an instrument for the researcher to ensure that none of the important issues to be discussed are left out of the conversation (De Clerk, et al. 2011: 12). When designing an interview schedule, it is imperative to ask questions that are likely to yield as much information about the study phenomenon as possible and also be able to address the aims and objectives of the research. The topics of a semi-structured interview are pre-determined, but most of the questions are formulated by the researcher in the interview setting. The researcher is attentive to what the interviewee says, and responds with follow-up questions and probes (De Clerk, et al. 2011: 12)

Given the nature of some of the respondents in the study, the semi-structured interviews were seen as the best means of getting the appropriate answers to the research questions. This type of interview as pointed out by Zohrabi (2013: 256) is flexible and allows the interviewee to provide more information than the other types of interview. This form of interview is neither too rigid nor too open. It is a moderate form in which a great amount of data can be elicited from the interviewees. This is a more commonly used interview technique that follows a framework in order to address key themes rather than specific questions. At the same time it allows a certain degree of flexibility for the researcher to respond to the answers of the interviewee and therefore develop the themes and issues as they arise (MacDonald and Headlam 2011: 39). The interview schedule for this study was adapted from the following studies:

- Library services provision for people with visual impairments and in wheelchairs in academic libraries Tanzania by Rebecca Majinge (PhD thesis 2013) and;
- Public library services for visually impaired people by Kinnell, Yu, and Creaser (2000), (Library and Information Commission Research Report 71 2000).

3.7.3. Pretesting the interview schedule

As in any research, it is often wise to first pretest the interview schedule on several non-respondents prior to the actual data collection. This allows the researcher to establish if the schedule is clear, understandable and capable of answering the research questions, and if, therefore, any changes to the interview schedule are required. The length of interviews varies depending on the topic, researcher and participant. Merriam and Tisdell (2016: 117) states that the key to getting good data from interviewing is to ask good questions; asking good questions takes practice. Pretesting the interviews are crucial for trying out the questions. Not only do you get some practice in interviewing, but the researcher quickly learns which questions yield useless data, and which questions, suggested by the respondents, the researcher should have thought to include in the first place. According to Babbie (2001: 250) in de Vos (2013: 242), no matter how carefully a data-collection instrument is designed, there is always the possibility of error, and the surest protection against such errors is pretesting the instrument.

Three interview schedules were designed: one for the VI library users; one for the library staff and one for the principal librarian. The two interview schedules for the VI and library staff were pretested. The interview schedule designed for the VI users was pretested on visually impaired students studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus, and the other interview schedule designed for the staff working at the MML was pretested on the library staff working in the branch libraries of MML. The main outcome of the pretesting of the instrument was from a VI library user who stated that even though he is totally blind, he preferred the word "visually impaired person" as opposed to blind person.

3.7.4. Conducting the interviews

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted in this research and they were recorded using a mobile phone device. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 349) point out that if the interviewer does her job well, establishes rapport, asks questions in an acceptable manner, and if the respondent is sincere and well-motivated, accurate data may be obtained. I did not experience any difficulties

establishing rapport with the respondents. However, I had to make prior arrangements via telephone to discuss when the VI were available for interviews. The interviews for the VI respondents started on the 4th September 2017 and ended on 14th September 2017. For the library staff the interviews were conducted between the 18th and 22nd September 2017. The VI respondents who live around town were given a choice of choosing where they were comfortable for the interviews and I travelled to their places of residence. For the other VI respondents who lived far from town, I had to wait for them to have a person to accompany them to town. For easy understanding, the interviews were conducted using English and IsiZulu (see Appendix 6a and Appendix 6b) since some of the VI respondents understood IsiZulu better. For the MML staff I communicated with the head of department to see when the staff were available and the interviews were conducted at the MML during working hours. Because I had to make sure that the interviews did not disturb the service to the patrons, the interviews took place over about two weeks. The issue of interpersonal and interactional elements reaches further, for the language of all speakers has to be considered in order to generate rich descriptions and authentic data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 210) suggest that it is important to maintain the interviewee's motivation; hence, the interviewer must keep boredom at bay. I showed interest in every response of the respondents by acknowledging their responses with "yes" "oh" and "ok" and made sure that they felt that I was paying attention to the details of what they were saying. At the end of the interviews, I explained to the respondent that the interview questions were finished and asked whether he/she wanted to add any further information regarding the interview.

3.7.5. Recording
All three lots of interviews with the MML management and staff as well as the VI respondents were recorded using a mobile phone. For the VI respondents, the consent form was read out to them to make sure that they knew and understood that the interview would be recorded. Permission from the respondents was asked before the recording of the interviews. The participants were given codes to protect their identity:

1) VI library users, VI (Visually Impaired) were called respondent 1-17.
2) MML staff, LS (Library Staff) were called respondent 1-10.

All data were transcribed at the end of the interviews.

3.7.6. Strengths and weaknesses of semi-structured interviews

Kajornboon (2005: 5) highlighted the strengths of semi-structured interviews and pointed out that the researcher can prompt and probe deeper into a situation. Hence, with this type of interview the interviewers are able to probe or asked more detailed questions of respondents' situations and not adhere only to the interview guide. In addition, the researcher can explain or rephrase the questions if respondents are unclear about the questions. The drawbacks are that inexperienced interviewers may not be able to ask prompt questions. If this is the case, some relevant data may not be gathered. In addition, inexperienced interviewers may not probe into a situation. Another issue raised by Greener and Martelli (2015) is the issue of time when conducting any type of interview, as data collected from the interview needs to be transcribed, coded and possibly translated. Furthermore, once the interview has started, the interviewer may find it difficult to stop the interview, as the interviewee enjoys the experience and begins to use it for personal self-reflection.

3.8. Data analysis

Savin-Baden and Major (2013: 435) describe data analysis as a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories. It often involves synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison and pattern finding.

The data that was collected in this study was of a qualitative nature. Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007: 537) note that there is no one single or correct way to analyze and present qualitative data; how one does it should be determined by the issue of fitness for purpose.

Data gathered from the research instruments was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns in the data. Different authors agree that there is no clear agreement for what thematic analysis is or how one does it, although it appears that much of what qualitative researchers do when analyzing data under the generalist term

of qualitative data analysis is actually thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006: 6). This type of analysis is highly inductive, that is, the themes emerge from the data and are not imposed upon it by the researcher. In order for the researcher to have the interview data captured more effectively, recording of the interviews was considered an appropriate choice. This also helped the researcher to focus solely on the interview and thus allowing transcribing of the interview to take place.

3.8.1. Dissemination of results

This thesis will be made available at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus and Msunduzi Municipal Library. The researcher will present the final findings to all MML staff.

3.9. Trustworthiness and credibility

There has been much debate about whether validity and reliability are appropriate criteria for application in qualitative research (Savin-Baden and Major 2013: 473). Qualitative research, ensuing from a variety of disciplines, paradigms, and epistemologies, embraces multiple standards of quality, known variously as validity, credibility, rigor, or trustworthiness (Morrow 2005: 252).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017) cited Lincoln and Guba (1985) who prefer to replace 'reliability' with terms such as 'credibility', 'neutrality', 'confirmability', 'dependability', 'consistency', 'applicability', 'trustworthiness' and 'transferability', in particular the notion of 'dependability'. A qualitative study is not concerned about the issues of validity and reliability of the instrument. However, it is concerned about the trustworthiness of the instrument to participants. This was achieved through pretesting the instrument at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus with students who have similar characteristics with the target group to check if the instrument will yield data that answers the key research questions. Trustworthiness, a concept adapted and promoted by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is considered the quintessential framework for evaluating qualitative research, but receives minimal attention from many institutional researchers, especially those predominantly oriented to quantitative methods. In fact, many researchers expect that the same principles of validity, reliability, and generalizability can and should be applied to qualitative designs. This is not typically the case, and understanding the evaluative criteria for assessing qualitative research is a necessary component in any institutional researcher's toolkit (Billups 2014). Lincoln and Guba have been cited by many researchers in their criteria for ensuring quality related to the research. The authors in Savin-Baden and Major (2013: 475) recommend four main criteria to help researchers think through issues

related to quality in qualitative research; "firstly, credibility which rests on the notion that study results should be convincing and, therefore, are to be believed, credibility implies that findings represents some sense of reality and in the qualitative researcher's case, the reality is the reality of the participants"; secondly, "transferability infers that findings may have applications in similar situations elsewhere. The responsibility of demonstrating transferability is believed to rest with the one who wishes to apply the results to different situations"; thirdly "dependability suggest that the research findings will endure overtime. This concept requires the researcher to document the research context, making clear the changes that occur while the research is ongoing" and lastly "confirmability which is a term that suggests that the researcher has remained neutral during data analysis and interpretation. The term leaves open space for interpretation on the part of the researcher, yet the interpretation must be confirmed by others which many scholars see as problematic. The term also implies that the researcher should demonstrate that results could or should be confirmed or corroborated by others".

3.10. Ethical issues

Social research is the means by which people find out new things about the social world, in order to do this, researchers engage with the theory in the field by undertaking a review of the literature, and observe the phenomenon under investigation systematically, by gathering data, and by using their imagination creatively. Researchers must be informed, organized and systematic. They must be sensitive to the people involved in the investigation and must engage with them, and with the entire research process in an ethical manner (Quinlan 2011: 316). When undertaking research, one represents him/herself and his/her institution/organization in the wider community and must consequently adopt in the research endeavor the highest ethical standards.

The main participants (VI users) of this study are regarded as sensitive due to their visual impairment and therefore it is of utmost importance that the researcher managed how ethical issues will be addressed in the study. Disability research ethics are located within the wider research ethics framework. Ethical principles require that any research involving human subjects is framed and conducted in a way that respects the human rights of the individuals concerned. For people with disabilities, research should respect their freedom to choose to participate or not, their privacy and their confidentiality. It should respect and accommodate their difference as research subjects, for example through choosing accessible venues for focus-group research, or through facilitating

alternative forms of communication that may be required (National Disability Authority 2009: 19). The researcher submitted the ethical clearance application through the supervisor from the UKZN Research Office requesting permission to conduct this study. The Ethical approval was obtained and that enabled the researcher to continue with the research process as well as the collection of the data (see Appendix 1).

3.10.1. Informed consent

The principle of informed consent arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination. Being free is a condition of living in a democracy. Consent thus protects and respects the right of self-determination but also places some of the responsibility on the participant to be as honest as possible. As part of the self-determination, the respondent has the right to refuse to take part or to withdraw even if the research has begun (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007: 52). Magnussen (2001) states that through a qualitative study with interviews as the main method for the collection of data, new insights throughout the process may emerge. Such new information can impact the outcomes and make it difficult to notify the participant about all relevant aspects in advance, and fully prepare them for what might come up during interviews. This study was deemed to be sensitive especially to the VI respondents as they live with the visual impairment and blindness. Permission was sought and granted by both the MML (see Appendix 5) director as well as the director of the Pietermaritzburg Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind and Deaf (see Appendix 1). Consent forms were explained thoroughly before being given to the participants, anonymity was guaranteed to all the respondents.

Even though the permission was granted by both organizations, informed consent forms were explained thoroughly before being given to the participants. For the VI participants the contents of the consent form were read out in English and IsiZulu for them to make sure that they understood and that they had a right to withdraw at any time if they did not wish to continue before signing the consent form using their thumb print as signatures.

3.10.2. Confidentiality and anonymity

The process of data collection caused no harm nor embarrassment to the participants as I employed collection instruments that ensured that the process was stress free. The participants were guaranteed that all of the information gathered for the research will remain confidential. This was confirmed by allocating the respondents numerical codes 1-17 as opposed to using their names.

Furthermore, participants were informed that the results of the study would be specifically used to improve the library and information services to the VI users as well as to inform further research and practice.

3.11. Study Limitations

The researcher anticipated challenges during the study and therefore devised some strategies on how to overcome them. Firstly, reaching the VI was a challenge given that they do not come to the library often. However, the researcher managed to set up the appointments with the VI respondents. The researcher found it necessary to visit the totally blind respondents who lived nearby in order to conduct the interviews. For those respondents who lived across the town the researcher had to wait for them to come to the library and then conduct the interviews. When it came to the staff at MML, some of the interviews had to be postponed since interviews were conducted during their working hours.

The person who pretested the interview schedule was totally blind and therefore could not answer some of the questions such as signposting and layout of the library. However, the researcher went through all the questions contained in the interview schedule and the respondents stated that all the questions were understandable. Lastly, since some of the respondents had only received primary education, they could not understand some of the questions. The researcher had to translate the questions from English to IsiZulu. However, there might have been cases of meanings lost in translation between the researcher and the interviewees. The employment of focus groups could have been useful in the collection of data for this study. The reason for considering this type of data collection is because in a focus group the participants actively engage each other with regards to the topic in discussion. Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nichols and Ormston (2014: 341) noted that focus group discussions have additional ingredients that are missing from individual data collection brought about through the interactions between group members. Furthermore, they also help in the understanding of diversity by engaging people with different perspectives in the debate, and thus can have additional explanatory power.

3.12. Summary of the chapter

This chapter described the methodology that was used in the study. It also described what the researcher intended to do in order to collect data to answer the research questions. The researcher

decided to employ qualitative research methods to gather data using in-depth semi-structured interviews as the data collection instrument.

The following chapter presents and analyses the findings of the study.

Chapter 4 Presentation and discussion of results

4.1. Presentation and discussion of results

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the semi-structured which were conducted with the VI library users as well as the staff at MML who were purposely selected. The following criteria was used to select the VI library users and the MML staff:

- Registered VI library users (which included partially sighted, totally blind users);
- Library staff employed at Bessie Head Library (specifically the Lending Section), and;
- Library management (Principal Librarian for the Lending Section).

The level of visual impairment when it came to the VI users varied from one respondent to the other. Using VI library users with varying level of impairment enhanced this study in identifying themes which will be used in anaylsing and reporting the findings from the VI respondents as well as the MML staff.

The following section represents and illustrates how main themes, sub-themes, research questions as well as objectives from both the VI respondents as well as the MML respondents relate to one another.

Table 2: The development of themes as the basis for data analysis

Themes	Sub-themes	Research questions	Objectives
Access and challenges of use of resources	- Transport - Information needs including print resources - Difficulty in title identification of audiobooks - Information and communication technology - Attitude of the staff towards the VI users	- How often do the VI users use the MML and what are the services they use and why? - What are the accessibility problems (barriers) experienced by the VI users with the resources offered by MML? - What are the perceptions of the VI about the quality of service of by MML? - What are the information needs of the VI and are these being met?	- Assessing the current LIS to the VI - Examining the thoughts of the VI with regard to the current LIS provision
Training and staff development	- Resources in Braille - Staffing - Education and training in serving people with disabilities - User registration database - Collaboration with other organisations - Financing the VI service provided by MML - Promotion and marketing of the services to the VI - Policy implementation	- What policies does the library have in order to promote inclusivity and equality with regard to the VI? - What are the challenges experienced by MML in seeking to provide services to the VI and what, if necessary, needs to be done to improve the services? - What kind of training did the staff receive in relation to the services to the VI and what kind of training is needed?	To establish and to determine the extent to which the MML is has included everyone in its services.

4.1.1. Results and discussion from the vi respondents

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the provision of library and information services to the VI by MML. This section reports on the responses of the VI respondents to the semi-

structured interview questions. It is important for the reader to note that the respondents are referred to as follows to ensure their anonymity:

- Visually impaired respondents – VI 1 – VI 17
- MML staff respondents – LS 1 – LS 10

It is imperative to note that the researcher concentrated on the level of impairment and not on the cause of visual impairment. Therefore, the following section represents the profile of the respondents as per their level of impairment.

4.1.1.1. Biographical data of the VI respondents

This section presents the gender, age and the level of impairment of VI respondents who were interviewed. Ten of the VI respondents were males less than 40 years old as compared to the seven female respondents. This is consistent with the findings of Adetoro (2010: 51) and Lucky and Achebe (2013: 22) who also in their studies reported that there were more males than females. Eight of the respondents were engaged in post matric qualifications in various tertiary institutions, while nine had only received primary education. The results indicated that, it is the younger respondents who were studying at tertiary institutions.

Table 3: Profiles of VI respondents

N = 17

Age	Level of impairment			
	Partially blind		Totally blind	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
23-30	0	1	2	1
31-38	0	1	4	1
39-46	0	0	2	1
47-54	0	1	0	1
55-62	0	0	2	0
Total	0	3	10	4

4.1.1.2. Access and challenges of use of resources

This study investigated accessibility problems/barriers/difficulties experienced by the VI with the resources offered by MML. The study tried to determine if the VI library users use the library and if they do how often they do so. It is evident from the results presented that the VI are not using the library as much as they would like to. There are different reasons why this is so and they are discussed below. The semi-structured interview schedule contained 28 questions. Of those, 20 pertained to library usage. Of the seventeen VI respondents only ten indicated that they used the library and the remaining seven stated that they don't use the library. In effect, the seven respondents were not able to respond to the 20 questions about library access and challenges of use of resources offered at MML.

The first theme namely access and challenges of use of resources offered by MML emanated from the semi-structured interview schedule for the VI respondents (see Appendix 6, section B question 5, 6, 7). For the purpose of this study library usage included but was not limited to access and challenges of use of resources offered by MML. The theme emanating from the first research question was transport.

4.1.1.3. Transport

The respondents were asked how they normally get to the library and whether they had experienced any problems getting to the library. This question emanated from the fact that some of the respondents, who do use the library were totally blind and would need assistance. Three of the respondents (VI 5, VI 8 and VI 10) stated that they used taxis and were able to come on their own and did not experience any challenges. Four of the respondents, (VI 1, VI 2, VI 3 and VI 4) indicated that they used taxis but experienced some degree of challenges when getting to the library. The remaining three said even though they had their own transport they did experience some challenges.

However, VI 5 stated that she did not have a problem with transport as she was partially sighted and did not need someone to accompany her to the library. Her reasons for not using the library were related to factors such as the library not having books that she was interested in such as large print religious books particularly the Bible, also the fact that books were to be returned by a certain date given by the library which may differ from the date she collects her pension. The VI

respondents who were using taxis stated that they would feel comfortable and safe if there was an arrangement made for someone to pick them up once they arrived at the taxi rank.

Below are some of the comments made by VI users regarding transport issues they face when visiting the library:

> *[VI 1] …Yes when I arrive at the taxi rank I get lost sometimes because I cannot tell which side the taxi has dropped me off as the taxis uses either of the two entrances.*

Upon being asked how he managed to figure out which way to go, this is what VI 1 had to say:

> *I ask the people in the taxi to take me to the right hand side which is the same side the library is on and then I know I just have to walk straight up. It would be better if we can form some kind of arrangement with the library so that a person comes and collects me at the taxi rank.*

Similar to the response of VI 1, also VI 2 experienced challenges despite the fact that he could come on his own to the library as he emphasises:

> *I only experience problems when I have to cross at the traffic lights, in most cases the street kids help me out by holding my hand and leave me on the other side of the road.*

However, VI 8 and VI 10 stated that:

> *I usually tell the taxi driver the stop where I would like to jump off and then I use my walking cane to get around and I have never experienced any challenges.*

> *I come on my own with taxis and I manage just fine.*

The responses of five VI respondents indicated that they needed someone/relative/friend to be available as they could not get into taxis on their own.

> *[VI 3] …I use taxis but I need someone to come with because I cannot manage on my own. Besides having to prepare the bus-fair two people, there are no other challenges at all.*

> *[VI 4] …I take taxis but I have to rely on someone with eyesight and I have never encountered any problems because I always have someone with me.*

> *[VI 5] …I come on my own and I use taxis.*

> *[VI 6] …I come with my own transport when there is someone to drive me.*

[VI 9] ...I usually go with my own car; the only problem is that the parking reserved for people with disabilities is not monitored and is used by everyone.

VI 9 was asked whether he could drive on his own and he stated that he had a designated driver.

The most common challenge that was mentioned by the majority of the respondents was transport. They mentioned that they had to budget for themselves and for the person who was to accompany them to and from the library. The issue of transport being a problem for the VI was also highlighted by Nassimbeni and de Jager (2014: 250) who conducted a similar study in the Eastern Cape. Likewise, Makondo and Akakandelwa (2011: 296) reported that most of the VI failed to access the library due to the lack of transport in Zambia. However, Ng'ang'a (2004: 6) highlighted that the lack of transport also referred to transporting information materials to the VI in their homes and or designated service points. According to Lister and Dhunpath (2016: 29), people with disabilities in South Africa still face challenges when it comes to transportation despite the fact that policies and legislation aimed at guaranteeing their inclusion are in place. These policies include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) and the signing and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRDP) and its Optional Protocol in 2007.

4.1.1.4. Information needs including print resources

To determine and understand the level of user satisfaction about the fulfilment of their information needs, the VI were asked to state what their library and information needs were and whether the MML was able to respond to them. Five (VI 1 – VI 5) of the respondents who were students at various tertiary institutions stated that their library and information needs were reference materials which were available at the library but there was no document reader in the section where the materials were kept. This section asked if the library had information resources in the language they wanted or not. Four of the respondent (VI 5, VI 6, VI 7 and VI 8) stated that the audiobooks were not made available in isiZulu and only one said the library had information in the language she preferred which was English. The large print books that they could read were only in English and Afrikaans; most of them were fiction. One respondent (VI 6) stated that there were no audio-books written by African authors. Furthermore, this section probed whether the collection held by MML was relevant and up to date was asked (Appendix 6, section B, question 28).

Below are selected direct mixed quotes from some of the VI respondents about their library and information needs:

> *[VI 1]* *…My library and information needs include looking for job opportunities in the newspapers which are not really accessible to the blind people.*

> *[VI 2]* *…Usually I come to the library to find information related to my studies. It's just that I have noticed that the information is available at the library but not in conducive format for a blind person.*

> *[VI 3…I think they know and understand us. Because the minute you enter the door they attend to us and they ask how they can help us and we tell them that we would like to use the VI corner and they take us to the section.*

> *[VI 4]* *…Yes the library staff are able to respond to my information needs*

The respondents who felt that the library was able to respond to their information needs were asked to elaborate more on how MML was doing this and they had the following to say:

> *[VI 4]* *…Yes usually, I come to get some books for myself and my grade 12 leaners, the only challenge is that most of the books are written in the normal print and that makes it a bit difficult on the learners who are partially sighted.*

> *[VI 5]* *...The information is not available in isiZulu, even in Grahamstown there is very limited material, but there is a guy by the name of Lungisani Mavundla who has them in IsiZulu and sells them for R150.00. But this is expensive for us, we are expecting the library to buy the books for us as we are also patrons in this library.*

Upon being asked how he came to know about Lungisani Mavundla, VI 5 said:

> *You know, we know each other and we always meet each other at our social gatherings so whenever anyone of us has something new or interesting to say, that's where we get the platform.*

However, VI 6, VI 7 and VI 8 stated that:

> *It would be better if they had audiobooks isiZulu such as Impi yaseSandlwana, Inqolobane yesizwe as well as history of our political leaders (Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Harry Gwala etc.).*

> *[VI 9]… I think they are doing their best, because they are showing that they are willing to meet us halfway by providing us with the audiobooks.*

[VI 10]....Well, when we joined the library we were asked to indicate the genre we would like to read but I haven't come across with what I would love to read in the language of my choice.

Overall, the VI users felt that they could not access the information they were looking for as much as they would like to even though some of the information was available in the library. Firstly, the size of the print in textbooks for those who are partially sighted was mentioned as a barrier in accessing the information, as the library does not have a magnifier that the VI can use. Secondly, the textbooks kept on the first floor Adult Reference Section are not supposed to leave the section meant that they had to ask one of the library assistants on the ground floor where the VI corner is, to accompany them and explain that the book is not going outside the library, but to the VI corner where the VI user will use the document reader machine to access the information they needed. The VI were met with the same situation in the Periodicals section; the newspapers for the general public are available for use, a reader is only given 15 minutes to read it if there is a queue for other users waiting to read the same paper. However, an exception is made for the VI in this section and they are allowed to read the newspapers for as long as they wish to inside the department. The challenge is that the library does not have a magnifier and unlike the books at the Adult Reference, the newspapers are kept inside the department and not to be removed from the section as they are kept in accordance with the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997.

Some of the issues raised in as far as information needs are concerned were related to the shortage of material in the preferred language which is IsiZulu. All ten respondents were Zulu speakers and thus isiZulu was their most preferred language. The audiobooks kept at the library are in English which is the language least preferred by the respondents, leaving them with no choice but to borrow what is available and not necessarily what they wanted to read. In the Eastern Cape where the project for the mini-libraries for the blind began, the VI were provided with books in their preferred format and in the languages spoken the most in the province (IsiXhosa, English and Afrikaans). The VI expressed dissatisfaction with the range they had to choose from. According to Jayce Nair, the CEO of Blind South Africa less than 10% of published works in developed countries were made in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, DAISY or audio. This number however, has dropped to less than 1% in developing countries while in South Africa (SA) it was just about 0.5%. Furthermore, the majority of published works in SA were in English, a limited number in Afrikaans and very few were in the African languages (Nqola 2017). This

indicates that a lot more still needs to be done in terms of identifying what their preferences are, and libraries should not assume that they know what the VI needs are. According to Raju and Raju (2010: 9), the provision of appropriate reading materials for the new adult literates must be viewed against the backdrop of a progressive constitution, which guarantees everyone the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural activities of his/her choice. However, this right is denied if individuals are not able to access adequate, current information in the language of his/her choice.

4.1.1.5. Difficulty in title identification of audiobooks

The respondents were asked to state which format/s were they comfortable with when it came to reading. Their first preference was the DAISY reader, followed by Braille then the document reader. All ten (VI 1- VI 10) respondents stated that the DAISY reader was their first choice when it came to alternative formats of reading. Of the ten VI respondents, three (VI 5, VI 7 and VI 10) relied only on the DAISY reader, followed by three (VI 1, VI 2 and VI 3) who said that apart from the DAISY reader they also used Braille and four (VI 4, VI 6, VI 8 and VI 9) who were partially blind, stated that they were able to read the large print books.

VI 6 when asked whether the library understood and responded accordingly to their library and information needs had this to say:

> *I don't think the library people understand us.*

The respondent added that:

> *I told them so many times that the audio-books are for blind people yet they too are not user-friendly. Usually I come with my mom when she comes back from work to the library and she has to read out the titles for me before I choose what I want and sometimes she is also tired because of the long hours she works.*

Audiobooks are designed mostly for people who cannot read print text and often use Braille to read. Title identification on the audiobooks was quoted as one of the barriers in accessing one of the sections the VI used the most which was the audio-visual section. None of the audiobooks held at MML have titles written in Braille. This makes it impossible for the VI to exercise their full right to access information as they are compelled to rely on someone (library assistant) who is fully sighted to read out the titles for them. This is problematic not only for the VI users but for the staff as well, particularly when the section becomes busy, as it is not only used by the VI users but the fully sighted as well. Other users become impatient because the library assistant has to

take extra time when assisting the VI. The VI need to be given opportunities to be independent and where they are able, do things such as choosing their own audio-books themselves as opposed to always relying on other people. This means that even though the VI are being catered for at MML, their level of independence is reduced resulting in them not being able to exercise their right to access information fully as citizens.

4.1.1.6. Information and communication technology

This section probed the interviewees on whether they used the information and communication technology offered at MML and if they did use them, they asked to state if the computers were user-friendly and what could be done to make them more user-friendly. Seven of the respondents (VI 1 – VI 7) stated that they used the computers to find information. However, they had challenges such as JAWS software being outdated and that made it difficult to use computers.

The following are selected comments made by the VI respondents regarding information and communication technology offered by MML.

VI 1 stated that there was no Open-book (software) which he could put documents on and the machine reads it for him. Furthermore, he indicated that the library did not have transcriber/embosser, voice teller or Pac Mate which were the devices that enabled him to use computers without being assisted.

> *[VI 1] ...It is very difficult to use the computer available for VI because the JAWS software is outdated and there are no earphones. The computer does not have a voice-teller; there is no open-book where I can put my paper/document and the computer reads for me; also there is no Pac Mate.*

The researcher asked VI respondent 1 to explain whether he was referring to the computer game Pac Mate or was it some sort of a programme:

> *"Laughs" no, no it's a small computer that comes with installed software but is a bit expensive than the usual laptops.*

He adds:

> *Even the Braille that the library had when they started the service was very old and no one uses it anymore. There is a new Braille model which the library can order for you, it recognises the voice and has a quad keyboard that we can use and print in normal print or Braille and it comes free from Australia.*

In addition, VI 2 said:

> *The library computer is not user-friendly so I prefer to use my own computer.*

The respondent was asked to elaborate on the how the computer kept in the library differs from the computer he preferred to use (own). This is how VI 2 answered:

> *Each computer is different and therefore has different settings so it becomes frustrating to figure out the setting of another computer. That's why I prefer to use my own because I don't have to re-adjust it when I want to use it. The last time we spoke with the library there was an agreement that we were gonna be taught how the VI computer works, but up until now that has not yet happened, we are still waiting.*

In response to the computer provided in MML VI 3 said:

> *I went to the library (Eastwood library) and I wanted to find information on Racer after registering with SAMRO and yes I was able to get the information I wanted but I had to rely on the library assistant as the computer had no JAWS software.*

VI 3 continues to state that:

> *You see the other blind guy I came with, he is my business partner and we just came back from registering our company (studio) and we are now waiting for our certificate. We have been doing Hip-hop music since 2003. The help we got from the library assistant was very useful.*

VI 6 and 7 said:

> *There is only one computer available for the VI at MML and that means you have to wait for one another to finish his/her business and this is a big challenge because there is no specific time given to the user.*
>
> *I did not know that there is a computer that is user-friendly for blind people in the library.*

The VI respondent 7 was asked whether the library conducted library orientation when the KZNBDS introduced them to MML. She stated that:

> *Maybe it's because I joined the library while I was still in high school and that was before I lost my eyesight. So I've never really thought of coming for the orientation.*

According to Adetoro (2009: 4), there is a strong belief that the rights of the VI for equal access to information and greater role in the development process will be secured with the use and implementation of information and communication technology (ICT). ICT enhances the ability of the VI people to satisfy their library and information needs on their own. The continuous

developments in ICT are supposed to narrow the gap in accessing information between the VI and the fully sighted library users, this however is not the case at MML as the VI users reported that computers are not as helpful as they would like them to be. While the fully sighted library users had more than 100 computers with internet access, the same could not be said for the VI library users. Forty-seven percent, of the VI respondents who were able to use computers reported that the JAWS software on the computer they used (second most used after the DAISY reader) was outdated. There was no internet access in the VI section and there was only one computer. They perceived these as barriers for them in using the ICT to the maximum. Findings from different studies (Bernardi 2004; Moore 2000 and Venter 2005) indicate that not much has been done to exploit this initiative in order to render a better service to the VI. This correlated somewhat with the findings of Makondo and Akakandelwa (2011: 295) who reported that the Delta library had only acquired a demo JAWS software copy which only allowed the VI users to use it for 40 minutes at a time. Results of a study conducted by Kinnell, Yu and Creaser (2001: 8) indicated that most libraries in the UK had collections of music and spoken word cassettes but, compared with what was available to sighted people, the range of reading and information for blind people was very limited. Chatapula and Mapulanga (2016: 3) advise that concerted efforts be made to ensure that people regardless of their disabilities are able to access the information resources that others are able to access.

4.1.1.7. Attitude of the staff towards the VI users

This part discuss whether the library staff's attitude had a bearing on the VI using the library. Fifteen VI respondents stated that the library staff were open, helpful as far as possible and in most cases available to spare some extra time for them. However, one reacted negatively and stated that the library staff members were impatient and did not know how to react when they saw a blind person. One respondent indicated that the library staff had problems in understanding their needs, lacked skills to use adaptive technology and were relatively firm in respect to general library rules.

The attitude of any library user regardless of disability is largely shaped by how he/she perceives the library service as well as past experiences. The researcher noted different views, feelings and perceptions during the interviews. As far as the library staff is concerned, most of the VI users said the staff are very helpful and they fully understand the library and information needs of the

VI, however, the issue was in the implementation of processes that will enable the VI to access the library with ease.

Below are confirmations of the mixed views regarding attitude of the library staff:

> *[VI 1] ...The staff's attitude is not so good, they are impatient, and some of staff members do not understand or are not sure how to react when they see a blind person. I think the library should have awareness campaigns on disability at least twice a year.*

> *[VI 2] ...I think the library staff is well trained and professional even when communicating.*

> *[VI 3] ...The attitude is ok but there is always a room for improvement, as for me I am a self-taught individual and I don't like special treatment.*

> *[VI 5] ...The staff's attitude is very good to the extent that they understand disability. This one time I was to meet with my friend at the library and when I arrived they took me to the VI corner where my friend was waiting for me.*

> *[VI 6] ...I wouldn't really know because I don't come to the library on my own, I always have someone accompanying me.*

> *[VI 10] ...They are very good, when I went to collect my DAISY reader, I arrived very late and the library was about to close but a staff member attended to me and gave me what I came for.*

The main purpose of this section was to discuss reasons from the VI's perspective for not using the library in order to answer the research questions

4.1.2 Results and discussion from the mml staff respondents

This section presents a results gathered from the MML staff respondents, and as with the VI respondents, the responses do not necessarily follow the order of the interview schedule. A total of 10 staff members completed interviews.

4.1.2.1 Background information

The interview schedule consisted of 19 open-ended questions for the MML library assistants. Questions 1 to 6 were intended to solicit background information about the MML staff. The data collected in this section included the age, gender, highest level of education as well as their designation. The respondents were asked to specify their knowledge of the services to the VI users in questions 7 and 8. Questions 9 to 12 solicited information about their training (in-house or other) in order to provide services to people with special needs (the VI in particular). The questions

13 to 17 focused on provision of the library and information service to the VI. Lastly, questions 18 and 19 were designed for library staff to state whether there were any challenges they experienced when serving the VI.

4.1.2.2 Demographic information of MML staff

When it comes to the MML respondents, the majority of respondents were eight females while the males were only represented by 2 respondents. Five of the MML respondents had qualifications in LIS. One had a diploma, one other had a post-matric certificate and the other 2 had matric.

Table 4: Profiles of the LS respondents

N = 9

Codes for LS respondents	Age	Gender	Years of experience	Level of education	Position
LS 1	26	Female	2 years	Diploma in LIS	Library Assistant
LS 2	30	Male	2 years	Post graduate diploma in LIS	Library Assistant
LS 3	35	Female	13 years	Public Management N6	Library Assistant
LS 4	43	Female	13 years	B-tech Degree in LIS	Senior Library Assistant
LS 5	43	Female	1 year	Public Management N6	Senior Library Assistant
LS 6	37	Female	14 years	Honors Degree in LIS	Senior Librarian
LS 7	47	Female	5 years	Matric certificate	Library Assistant
LS 8	50	Male	13 years	Honors Degree in LIS	Librarian
LS 9	50	Female	5 years	Matric certificate	Library Assistant

4.1.2.3 Training and staff development

In order to provide a high standard of customer service in any library, staff must have the appropriate level of disability awareness. This helps staff to break down any barriers to accessing library facilities and to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against (Robertson, 2002: 63).

4.1.2.3.1 Staffing

The LS respondents were asked to state whether they had been to the VI corner and, if they had, what equipment was housed in the section in question 6 and 7. Five respondents (LS 1, LS 2, LS 3, LS 6 and LS 7) stated that they had never been to the VI corner and thus could not say what devices were available in the section. The other four respondents (LS 4, LS 5, LS 8 and LS 9) said they had been to the section, they mentioned that there was a computer with JAWS, a file with the VI records, Braille magazines as well as the DAISY reader. According to Lucky and Achebe (2013: 19), the vocational rehabilitation of the VI cannot be realized without adequate training and equipment and this can only be learnt through demonstrations and practice with appropriate devices that are fashioned to meet the needs of this user group. The MML respondents stated that the challenges they are faced with in delivering information services to the VI library users included the lack of knowledge on how the devices/adaptive technologies work. All these respondents had reasons as to why they did not have information/knowledge about the VI section and the devices kept in the section.

The following respondents had this to say:

> *[LS 6] … I have never been told/introduced to the VI corner formally so I don't know anything about it and I have never thought of visiting it either, I just know about it because I am working here.*

> *[LS 2] … I just happen to know that there is VI corner because I am working here at the library but I have never been inside the section. As for the devices I've had my supervisor two or three times mentioning that the VI are coming to collect their DAISY readers.*

Upon being asked whether LS 2 has never asked herself what the DAISY readers and the VI users were all about, this is what she had to say:

I have never really thought about it because they (librarian and the supervisor) usually sort out everything, so I figured it's the senior's job to see to everything concerning the VI users.

Moreover, even though MML does have a librarian dedicated to the VI library users, having just one person to serve the VI proved to be a challenge for the other staff members as they sometimes had to attend to the VI when the librarian was not available (leave, tea breaks and lunch times). The lack of staff to handle the VI library users is consistent with what was noted by Ng'ang'a (2004: 6).

This is well put by some of LS respondents:

> **[LS 7]** *...The VI corner is always locked and I have to go and ask where the keys were and that is very frustrating, I think we should all be able to assist the VI at all times without referring them to the librarian who sometimes is not at work.*

In agreement with the response above, LS respondent 1stated that:

> *I have never been to the VI corner because it is always locked and I have to go and ask for the keys. I find that very frustrating, I think we should all have access to the section.*

Contrary to what the other respondents have stated, LS 8 and 9 had different responses from the other respondents and detailed as follows:

> **[LS 8]** *... I have been to the section, there are adaptive devices and they include a document reader, Braille magazines, a computer with zoom-text, JAWS software as well as a Victor/DAISY reader.*

> **[LS 9]** *...Yes I have been to the section, we have specialised equipment for the VI and they include a document reader DAISY reader and a computer with JAWS.*

These two respondents were also asked how they got to know about the devices when some of their colleagues did not have much to say. They mentioned that they were already working at the library when the service began, thus whatever devices were given to MML were given in their presence.

4.1.2.3.2 Education and training in serving people with disabilities

Question 4, 7 and 8 (Appendix 7, section B) sought to find out from the what qualification did the LS respondents acquired and whether they had qualifications in or had received training on how to serve people with special needs, particularly people with visual impairments. The majority of

the respondents (LS 1, LS 2, LS 4, LS 6 and LS 8) at MML had received qualifications in LIS from different tertiary institutions, but none of their qualifications had dealt with how to provide library and information services to people with special needs particularly those with visual impairments. As far as any other training is concerned, the manager on one side thought the training provided by the representative from the South African Library for the Blind was sufficient for the library staff to attend to the needs of the VI library users. The staff however had different views concerning this and they acknowledged that they were not confident in serving people with visual impairment and the workshop conducted on 2nd May 2018 by the representative from South African Library for the Blind was not sufficient.

These were the comments made by the MML respondents regarding the challenges they face when serving the VI as far as training and qualifications are concerned:

> *[LS 1] ... I do not have any qualifications on how to serve the VI. The only training I attended was the one provided by a representative from the Department of Arts and Culture in collaboration with the South African Library for the Blind. The training was about how to assist the VI library users, we were told about the devices the VI use and the importance of communication.*

LS 1 adds:

> *During the workshop we were told about the material that the VI use, importance of communication but still there was no demonstration of how the devices work, as a result I still don't know how they work and I feel this is a setback.*

LS 3, 4, and 6 expressed the same feeling expressed by LS respondent 1 when it came to the training:

> *[LS 3] ... I do not have any qualification or training on how to serve the VI. I am not sure of the terminology and some of them are very sensitive and whenever I come across them I feel sorry for them and judging by their reaction I think they can sense that because they just become uncomfortable.*

> *[LS 4] … I don't have any qualification on how to serve the VI but I have attended a workshop which was very basic, it was about how to communicate with the VI, ways of assisting them when they want to use the bathrooms. I think the training was ok but the facilitator did not demonstrate how the actual devices work and personally I feel this is a set back because even though we were trained on what to do and how to conduct ourselves when assisting the VI as I have never seen any of the devices and do not know how they work.*

[LS 6] ... The lack of knowledge about the devices is a huge problem for me, I don't even know how the devices work and I think they become disappointed when I don't help assist them because they believe that as a person who is working here at the library I should know how their devices work and be able to assist them.

Meanwhile LS respondents 5, 8 and 9 had a different view from the other respondents:

[LS 5] ... Here at the Music section the only challenge I have come across is that they need more attention compared to the fully sighted users as they are unable to choose the audiobooks on their own. I have to read the titles to them and in most cases I find out that they have already listened to most of the audiobooks. This takes a lot of time and the fully sighted users become irritated sometimes. So the lack of training is not really a problem for me because I use my own discretion and understanding of their situation i.e. if it becomes busy in the section I usually call one of my colleagues to come and attend to the other users while I deal with the VI.

[LS 8] ... I have attended two trainings which were conducted by the project coordinator and they helped me a lot because they helped me to be confident and equipped me with basic communication skills. I can say I now have confidence in myself when serving the VI so I think it was enough.

[LS 9] ... I have been workshopped when the service began in 2013, the social workers from the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society came and they gave us some kind of orientation by putting blind folders on us, this was just to get a feel of what it's like to be blind. Then again they came and provided a mini-workshop on how the Braille machine works. The other two workshops were on communication skills.

In his survey, Lee (2001: 68) pointed out that there is nothing more important than knowing the characteristics, problems and needs of people with disabilities in library services. However, most librarians nowadays have not been taught or had experience in dealing with disabilities and consequently this leads librarians to be uncertain and apprehensive when dealing with the VI users. The finding is consistent with that of Makondo and Akakandelwa (2011: 296) who reported that there were no courses about the disabled in the Zambia library and information service curriculum. Bonnici, Maatta and Wells (2009: 512) also conducted a study with a focus on Library and Information Studies (LIS) graduate programmes and noted that graduate LIS programmes were not preparing students with the insight and tools necessary for providing services to people with disabilities. The researcher argues that libraries particularly public libraries in consultation with disability associations should lobby tertiary institutions across the country to review their LIS curriculum and accommodate people with special needs. The whole of society has previously

placed people with disabilities as needing charity and did not design for inclusivity in mainstream life, so they have been discriminated against in many ways.

The responses above suggest that some respondents are more in need of the training than others. Nonetheless, all the LS respondents were in agreement that none of them had a formal education on serving people with special needs and it would be ideal if the LIS schools could provide training on people living with disabilities in their curriculum.

4.1.2.4 User registration database

With regard to the registration database, a question of whether it was possible to identify the VI users from the other users was asked. This question was intended to find out what criteria was the library using when deciding how and what to buy as far as the VI users are concerned. Two of the respondents (LS 7 and LS 8) working at the registration desk reported that there was no way of identifying who was a VI users from a fully sighted use, and as a result whenever the management asked for statistics they relied on a registration file with the personal details of the VI users. The study found out that MML is unable to identify the VI users from the fully sighted library users on their database at the moment. They are basing statistics on the file which mainly reflects users registered through the KZN Blind and Deaf which should be used as a backup file. The researcher argues that it would be very difficult to determine what equipment and in terms of quantity to request from SALB (computers, language preferences) and whether the 10% of the MML budget (not more than R50 000) set aside for audiobooks is enough. This problem is not faced by MML only, Todaro (2005: 259) and Atinmo (2000) surveyed library services for people with disabilities in Argentina and Nigeria respectively. They reported that none of the libraries could produce accurate figures of how many VI library users used the library as the statistics they produced included the general public using the library.

The respondents working at the registration desk expressed that they cannot identify the VI users from regular library users. Below are comments made by the respondents:

> *[LS 7] The registration database does not have a class for people with disabilities including visual impairments. I think this is a problem when it comes to statistics because when they need statistics for the report they rely on the file kept at the VI section and it may not be up to date.*

Similarly, LS 8 also confirmed what was said by LS 7 and added that:

We cannot identify the VI users from the fully sighted library users on our SLIMS database but there is a file in the VI corner that all requests/registration forms for all the VI who have registered as members of the library.

4.1.2.5 Collaboration with other organizations

Whether the MML had a relationship with organisations such as the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB), South African Library for the Blind (SALB), Blind SA and Kwa-Zulu Natal Blind and Deaf Society (KZNBDS), or not was asked. It was reported by LS 10 that MML had a relationship with the SALB and the KZNBDS. It was stated that SALB did the monitoring and evaluation of the service, purchasing of the equipment, they also provide VI users with DAISY readers, and the KZNBDS brings the VI users who want to use computers/document reader to the library. With regard to SANCB and Blind SA, it was reported that there was no relationship or partnership, however, good prospects of forming such a relationship was stated by the respondent.

The results from the interviews showed that the MML was not utilising the already established organisations which have been responsible for the needs and for the benefit of the VI for decades. The researcher saw this as a major concern because unlike other African countries, South Africa has the longest history of providing services to the VI. The VI users like their sighted peers are in need of information for various reasons and it is the duty of MML as the public library to ensure that this particular user group's information needs are well catered for, and in format appropriates for the VI. Both Blind SA and SANCB amongst other organizations for the blind are responsible for advising on issues affecting the VI, as well as the provision of current information for the VI in alternative formats. The finding here is consistent with the surveys conducted by Kinnell (2000: 20) who noted that there had been inadequate formal co-operation between public libraries and other agencies, although informal contacts and referral relationships did exist in the United Kingdom. Kinnell (2000: 20) further noted that, this issue is, therefore, likely to remain a major concern of policy makers and the different organizations serving visually impaired people.

These views are also expressed in what is quoted from LS 10 below:

The library only has a relationship with SALB and there is also an agreement with the Department of Arts and Culture and SALB, the VI users request and receive their DAISY readers through MML VI corner.

The SALB come and does the monitoring and evaluation of the service and also provide the VI users with the DAISY readers, while the KZN Blind and Deaf Society transports/brings the VI users who wish to use devices kept at the library. As far as the South African National Council for the Blind and Blind SA goes, we have no relationship at the moment but we would like to form a partnership with the organizations in terms of them contributing towards us providing a better service to the VI.

The importance of cooperation is in accordance with the IFLA guidelines for libraries for the Blind (Kavanagh and Skold, 2005: 23).

> Blind and print disabled people require access to public library type services for the general blind public in their communities which also interfaces with other types of libraries such as school or academic libraries. The roles of these community based library services should be developed in co-operation with other national and local agencies. The community based public library, for example, has the best opportunity to become a major access point for all print-disabled readers. All libraries should ensure that their collections and services complement and integrate with national agencies to provide access to as wide a range of materials and services as possible (Kavanagh and Skold, 2005).

The implication is that, due to the lack of cooperation between these organizations, there are missed opportunities for improving this service. Another example of such an organization is the Tape Aids which has been providing a free national audio library service for the blind, VI and print handicapped members for more than 50 years. It is located in Durban 45 minutes away from the MML (Pietermaritzburg). The following are some of the local institutions responsible for catering for the needs of the VI in the Msunduzi region that MML can use to enhance the library and information services to the VI:

1. Magaye Visually Impaired People's Association (Imbali)
2. Madrassa An-noor for the Blind (Cedara)
3. Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind (Mountain Rise)
4. Bawinile School for the Blind (Elandskop)
5. KZN Blind and Deaf Society (Northdale)

Blindness agencies according to the IFLA Guidelines for Libraries for the Blind (Kavanagh and Skold, 2005: 22):

Are likely to be on top of the latest vision aids and technologies and are already providing training to clients or assisting in troubleshooting adaptive devices. Since many people who are blind use both a library service and the services of these agencies, there are substantial opportunities for partnership in supporting adaptive technologies.

4.1.2.6 Financing the VI service provided by MML

In terms of the budget allocation, a question about how much was allocated for buying library material for the VI users was asked, and the respondent stated that there were no cost implications to MML as it does not purchase equipment for the VI users, however, 10% of the total budget for the Adult Lending section is set aside to purchase audio-visual materials and a portion of the book budget is used to purchase large print.

Below are comments from the library management with regard to financing the VI section:

> *[LS 10] … As the library we do not purchase the equipment so there are no cost implications from the library budget grant although 10% of the budget is set aside to buy audio-visual and a portion of the budget is used to purchase large-print books.*

Interviewer: "With regard to computers and devices how does the library budget work?"

> *[LS 10] …In terms of purchasing the equipment for the VI, SALB takes that responsibility by supplying us with the computer, JAWS software as well as the DAISY readers.*

The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Public Library Services and the Department of Arts and Culture, who are responsible for public libraries in KwaZulu-Natal, identified MML as one of the 10 libraries in KZN to offer an extended library service to visually impaired people through a mini library (Minilib) service. An MOU was signed between the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Public Library Services, and the South African Library for the Blind in Grahamstown. The MOU stipulates that all the required materials, furnishings, computers and special equipment to run the Minilib service will be provided by the South African Library for the Blind. In effect the Msunduzi Library does not set aside a budget for the VI section per se. The outcomes of this study revealed that a supplementary budget for the VI section would be justified to meet the information needs of the VI users. This will be discussed under recommendations of the study in the next chapter.

4.1.2.7 Promotion and marketing of the services to the VI

With question 16 (Appendix 8, section B), the assumption was that the registered VI users who also belong to KZNBDS already have knowledge of the service offered by the MML, the researcher wanted to find out if the other community members who are visually impaired were aware of the service since the MML is a public library. LS respondent 10 stated that the library had only visited Bawinile School for the Blind in Elandskop and Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind to promote the service.

Some responses by a library respondent highlighted the lack of active implementation plans on how to promote this service. Examples hereof are:

> **[LS 10]** *...As far as outreach goes, we visit schools such as Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind and Bawinile School for the Blind.*

Interviewer: "Do you think that you able to reach all the VI people?"

> **[LS 10]** *...Not really, because we have been unable to reach all the VI people in the city but more especially those who leave in the rural areas, we have been kind of relying to the KZNBDS to bring the VI people into the library.*

Interviewer: "Are there any plans of letting the people aware of the service?"

> [**LS 10**] *...We really do need to increase our publicity of the services that we offer to the VI people. For now, we are planning to go to old age homes and market the services.*

> Responses as far as any other challenges that were recorded included:

> **[LS 10]** *… One of our biggest challenges is the lack of understanding what the content contained in the Braille material received in accordance with the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997, as the library does not have a person who can read Braille. This means that for the staff responsible for cataloguing this very material also experienced challenges as the titles, authors and dates which are deemed to be important for this purpose are in Braille. Which adds to the lack of confidence in doing library promotion as the staff does not know what is written in the Brailled documents.*

In this section, the strategies that the MML has explored in trying to promote the service to the VI are explored. The results in this study indicated that there has been no formal strategy to date on how to publicize that this service exists. This is partly due to the MML staff not being confident in themselves as well as the lack of understanding of what services/equipment are available for the VI users. The lack of knowledge about the service was confirmed by two of the VI users who said

they did not know about the VI corner; they found out by chance when they came to the library for other reasons. Moreover, there has been very little marketing for promoting the service, especially the Braille materials contained in the library. The library does not get patrons coming in to use Braille journals in the Periodicals section as they are not aware that these publications exist in the library. This is because of a lack of poor marketing of the service. Furthermore, since the library staff is not aware of what it is that they are receiving as it is written in Braille, it is impossible to market/promote the service as it is difficult to make available what they do not know about.

The results revealed that at the moment, the MML has only been targeting schools for the blind (Bawinile and Arthur Blaxall Schools for the Blind) which in the researcher's view is not enough as there are other people who are in need of this service who are not in schools and therefore not aware of it. It is no secret that the VI users have been sidelined from the mainstream of most social activities and have been treated as charity cases who only needed financial support from the government. If the MML is to make a difference in their lives, community and needs profiling of the VI is an important issue to consider. The finding is in agreement with Ejedafiru and Onghenetega (2014: 61) who noted that barriers experienced by the VI in the Delta region, Nigeria, which included the lack of awareness about available technology as well as the lack of sufficient and accurate data on the VI. Makondo and Akakandelwa (2011: 296) in a study on the Zambia National Library and Cultural Centre also noted the lack of publicity of the available library service to the VI.

4.1.2.8 Policy implementation

The extent of MML's willingness to implement a policy that deals with people with special needs, particularly the VI users was probed in question 17. LS 10 indicated that MML had no policy yet but had guidelines on how to go about serving people with special needs. The MML has been functioning under the general municipal policies and has just started drafting its own policies. As a result, at the moment the MML, has only written guidelines on how to serve the library and information needs of the VI which is a move in the right direction. The lack of library policies is not only a problem at the MML but also at many other libraries serving the VI. Research by the Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU) in Loughborough, published in 2000, also reported that service provision varied considerably and that the majority of public library authorities (PLAs) did not

have policies nor did they use the management information available to them (Owen 2004: 60). Eleweke and Ebenso (2016: 115) reported that in as much as Nigeria has endorsed various international declarations, implementation of the provisions in the policies were still lacking. There were inconsistencies in Delta libraries, Nigeria when it came to library policies for the VI; some of the libraries could not differentiate their policy on disabled people from other policy statements and some had no written policies at all for the VI (Ejedafiru and Oghenetega 2014: 61).

4.1.2.9 Challenges regarding VI users

Question 18 asked the respondent what the MML considered to be the main challenges in offering services to the VI.

From the management perspective:

- The first challenge was that the library was unable to reach all the VI people in the city as many rural areas were not identified by the library.

- Secondly, was the issue of the transport. The VI people live in different part of Msunduzi area which makes it difficult to render the service to all the individuals.

- The MML management is aware of Braille publications that are received by the library in accordance with the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997, but the challenge is that the publications are not readily available for use due to very little information being provided on the cataloguing records. In order to be able to do proper cataloguing for easy information access and retrieval, access points such as: Title, name of publisher, date of publication, subject of a work, author, etc. are needed. The braille journals received by the library have very little printed information concerning these aspects.

- The lack of Braille reading training for sighted employees in order to be able to assist the patrons. The challenge here is that there is a possibility that the information needed for cataloguing (stated above) might be provided on the journal in Braille language which employees are unable to read as well as the lack of proper Braille resources such as: Braille embosser (impact printer); proper Braille translation software; etc.

4.2 Summary of the chapter

As stated by the IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for development (2001: 2):

The primary purposes of the public library are to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and

personal development including recreation and leisure. They have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions.

In this chapter data gathered from all the respondents; VI library users, MML staff as well as management, were analyzed using themes that emerged from the data from all the respondents during the interviews. Demographic profiles of all the respondents outlining the gender, age, educational qualifications as well as occupations of the respondents were discussed. The challenges that MML staff face in providing the service to the VI as well as the challenges that VI users face in accessing the library were also discussed. Lastly, the chapter looked at issues such as the policy, promotion and marketing of the service as well as collaboration with similar institutions since they play an important role in serving the information needs of the VI.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, conclusions about the study are drawn and recommendations are made based on the presentation and discussion of the findings in Chapter 4. To begin with a summary of the study is provided. This will be followed by a brief overview of demographic characteristics of the respondents. This in turn will be followed by the conclusions related to each of the research questions underpinning the study. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research.

5.2 Conclusions as per the research questions

The literature presented in this study indicates that there are very few studies conducted when it comes to the provision of library and information services to the visually impaired population by public libraries. As stated earlier, the researcher is working for the MML and since the service to the VI was established she has had the opportunity of observing that the VI were not frequenting the library even after they had been introduced to the service through the efforts of the South African Library for the Blind and the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society. It was anticipated that the study would shed some light with regard to the challenges faced by public libraries in serving people with visual impairment as well as challenges experienced by the VI in accessing services offered by the library.

Looking at the medical, social and human rights models adopted for this study, it can be concluded that people with disabilities have come a long way in wishing that they also be treated and accommodated equally as they have the same rights as their sighted peers in every aspect of life. The findings of this study revealed the VI are still not fully integrated in the library services at MML and this will be elaborated through answering the research questions for this study which follow below:

5.2.1 How often do the VI users use the MML and what are the services they use and why?

Based on the results shown in this study the VI users are not using the MML as often as they would like. They are faced with challenges just leaving their homes let alone frequenting the library. The VI needed to have someone to accompany them to and from the library. Those who are able to come to the library met with challenges such as not finding parking even though there is a parking spot designated for the disabled users. However, no one was monitoring that the disabled parking

was only used by the rightful users. The services used by the VI included the computer with JAWS software and the audio-visual section in order to satisfy their information needs. However, this was not always successful.

5.2.2 What are the perceptions of the VI users about the quality of service of the MML?

Findings of the study revealed that the VI do not perceive the resources offered by MML as easily accessible. In addition, the technical resources aiding them to access the information held at the library were inadequate and thus most of their information needs were not met by the library.

5.2.3 What are the information needs of the VI users and are these being met?

The majority of the VI respondents stated that they were students in tertiary institutions and therefore needed to access information held in the reference section to do their assignments. They stated that the information was inaccessible for them as it was only in print format. The Marrakesh Treaty has been ratified however it has not yet been implemented by the South African government thereby still infringing VI people their basic right to access information. Furthermore, some of the respondents information needs included looking for employment opportunities in the newspapers which are also inaccessible to the VI users. Much of the audio material is not in languages of preference such as IsiZulu.

5.2.4 What are the accessibility problems (barriers) experienced by the VI users with the resources offered by the MML?

Having information in a preferred format and language of your choice is a basic human right in South Africa. Public libraries provide opportunities to all citizens regardless of disability to fully exercise this right. The VI indicated that, there were some serious issues facing the MML and all other stakeholders who are producers of the information that need to be addressed. The audiobooks being made for people who cannot for whatever reason read standard print were still not accessible to them because of their titles being written in normal print. As a result, they still had to rely on someone with eyesight to read out the titles for them. While they are proficient in reading Braille they could have read the titles themselves had they been written in Braille. The results also revealed that the majority of the respondents were Zulu speakers and therefore preferred reading in their language and there was little material available.

5.2.5 What policies does the library have in order to promote inclusivity and equality with regard to the VI?

The results revealed that MML does not have a policy but has been providing the service using guidelines agreed upon by the MML, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture and the South African Library for the Blind. The implication of not having a policy is that the guidelines do not compel the library to provide the service to the VI users.

5.2.6 What challenges are experienced by the MML in seeking to provide services to the VI and what, if necessary, needs to be done to improve the services?

With regard to the challenges facing the MML staff in serving the VI, the results revealed that the VI needed to be given extra attention while using the library which was a challenge while the other users had to wait. Reading the titles on the audiobooks until the VI got what they were interested in took time. It was the same at the registration desk because they could not fill in the registration forms. Furthermore, the fact that the VI section is always locked was a challenge as there was no central place where the key was kept.

5.2.7 What kind of training did the staff receive in relation to services to the VI and what kind of training is needed?

It is very important to note the need for the continuous development of staff through organized workshops and trainings. The majority of the staff respondents at MML had received a qualification in library and information studies from different tertiary institutions but none of them indicated that their qualifications featured issues of how to serve people with special needs/disabilities. The absence of any knowledge on how to read Braille was also mentioned by the MML respondents as a challenge. The effectiveness of cataloguing, processing and locating library material depends on the extent of the knowledge and information presented by the books, journals etc and when it comes to the material received by MML. In most cases, everything needed for this is written in Braille and there is no one who can decipher the Braille for the cataloguers. Furthermore, the library assistants who are dealing directly with the VI stated that they were not confident in serving the VI as they did not know how the equipment used by the VI works.

5.3 Recommendations

- At the moment MML has only been receiving Braille material acquired through the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997 and has not purchased any of devices used by the VI library users.

The MML should employ a VI person on a contractual basis. This will make a huge improvement in the collection development for the VI as the input will be coming from a person who is directly affected with the visual impairment and thus can relate to the other VI persons. Ogbebor (2011) states that:

> The development of collections should be based on the principle of access for all and includes access to formats appropriate to specific client groups, such as Braille and talking books for blind people. Information communication and technology (ICT) should be used to allow access to the library's collections and those of other information sources, both from the library or from remote sites.

- Relationships with non-governmental organizations such as Magaye Visually Impaired People's Association (Imbali), Madrassa An-Noor for the Blind (Cedara), KZN Blind and Deaf Society, Arthur Blaxall (Mountain Rise) and Bawinile Schools for the Blind (Elandskop) are pivotal (all these are in the vicinity of the Msunduzi area). By partnering with these organizations MML will be able to reach more VI people. There are also other means available to the library such as getting slots on the UMgungundlovu FM Radio, the library's Facebook page, the library can also form partnerships with relevant non-governmental organizations in the Msunduzi area.

- A mobile library should be assigned to the areas/venues where the VI usually hold their gatherings on certain dates where audiobooks can be issued and the VI's be given a due date that will be closer to their next gathering/meeting. Ogbebor (2011) states that:

> A fundamental principle of the public library is that its services must be available to all and not directed to one group in the community to the exclusion of others. Provision should be made to ensure services are equally available to minority groups who for some reason are not able to use mainstream services, for example linguistic minorities, people with physical and sensory disabilities or those living in remote communities who are unable to reach library buildings.

- One of the critical points in serving the VI library users facing MML is the lack of reliable statistics about people who are blind or visually impaired, and this is not unique to MML. Statistics for people with disabilities in general are underestimated. For MML to be in a better position when it comes to serving the VI, there has to be reliable system in place to identify the VI users from the sighted because at the moment they are not distinguished.

- For MML to be able to serve the VI library users, the information needs of the user group must be identified and this can be done by conducting community and needs profiling of the VI.

- Collaboration with all stakeholders particularly those that have been serving people with visual impairments prior to the 1994 elections is critical as people with disabilities are now being integrated into the mainstream activities of society such as library services. This however will not be achieved overnight.

- All stakeholders who play a role in making information available such as newspaper publishers, authors, subscriptions at a discounted rates and those who design the assistive technology (vendors) to arrange some discounts. In addition, the supply of electronic/digital newspapers is an option that needs to be explored further.

- The Library and Information schools around the country may consider redesigning the curriculum to accommodate people with special needs. Libraries who serve people with special needs should be compelled to send their staff members on relevant short courses.

- Policy implementation is a key to any organization. At the moment, MML has taken the initiative and has developed guidelines which however do not compel it to serve the VI. IFLA (Kavanaghh and Skold, 2005: 21) advises that:

  > Governments must ensure that legislation that requires public libraries to provide a service that is accessible to all citizens including those with disabilities. Furthermore, clear written policies on services to disabled people including those who are print disabled based on the assessment of the local needs, service development required and way of delivering services in the most accessible way for all readers are to be undertaken in consultation with the target group.

- A supplementary budget to that provided by the South African Library for the Blind is justified considering that VI users have indicated that the services they receive could be greatly improved.

5.4 Conclusion

Vulnerable groups often lack information that is vital to their lives such as information on basic services and entitlements, public services, health, education and work opportunities. The present study set out to investigate the provision of library and information services to the visually

impaired by the MML. The main objective of the study was to assess the current library and information service provision to meet the VI needs and to determine the extent to which the MML is willing to go, to ensure equality and inclusivity in its services.

5.5 Future research

This section makes suggestions for further research on library services to the VI users. The present study focused on the provision of the library and information services to the VI users by the MML. The researcher believes that the first step should be profiling the VI community and their information needs so that the MML can render appropriate services to the VI. MML has shown that it has started including people with special needs. However, it will be unrealistic to think that the MML can do this on their own. Inclusion of training on dealing with persons with disabilities in the LIS curriculum is another area that needs to be researched. The present study was unable to provide a holistic picture of what the information needs of the VI were, as well as the preferred alternative formats for information due to the limited number of the VI users in the Msunduzi region registered with the MML.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

09 February 2016

Ms Namhla Marwezu (214584324)
School of Social Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Marwezu,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1561/015M
Project title: The provision of Library and Information Services (LIS) to blind and Visually Impaired Users (VIP) at the Msunduzi Municipal Library (MML)

Full Approval – Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 23 October 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
/ms

cc Supervisor: Mr Athol Leach
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Sabine Marschall
cc School Administrator: Ms Nancy Mudau
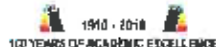
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
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Appendix 2 (a): Request for permission to conduct research with VI users

P. O. Box 415

Pietermaritzburg

3201

The Manager

The Pietermaritzburg Blind and Deaf Centre

1 Newholme Way

Northdale

3201

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Namhla Marwexu, currently registered for a Masters Degree in Information Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. One of the requirements for the Information Studies Masters Programme is to conduct a short dissertation therefore; I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct a research study at the Msunduzi Municipal Library.

The study will focus on investigating and identifying the library and information services to the visually impaired by the Msunduzi Municipal Library and other services offered by the library, which will lead to a better understanding of their needs as well as the provision of the best service in line with the Batho Pele principles. The research findings and recommendations will be made accessible to the Msunduzi Municipal Library management and its staff as well as the Pietermaritzburg Blind and Deaf Centre for the benefit of both the organizations. In compliance with the UKZN ethical regulations, participation to the study is voluntary and participants may withdraw anytime they want. If permission to conduct this study be granted, kindly respond with a signed letter acknowledging your approval.

Thanking you in advance

Regards

Namhla Marwexu

Appendix 2 (b): Request for permission to conduct research at MML

P. O. Box 415

Pietermaritzburg

3201

The Library Manager

260 Church Street

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Namhla Marwexu, currently registered for a Masters Degree in Information Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. One of the requirements for the Information Studies Masters Programme is to conduct a short dissertation therefore; I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct a research study at the Pietermaritzburg Blind and Deaf Centre and Msunduzi Municipal Library.

The study will focus on investigating and identifying the library and information services to the visually impaired by the Msunduzi Municipal Library and other services offered by the library, which will lead to a better understanding of their needs as well as the provision of the best service in line with the Batho Pele principles. The research findings and recommendations will be made accessible to the Msunduzi Municipal Library management and its staff as well as the Pietermaritzburg Blind and Deaf Centre for the benefit of both the organizations. In compliance with the UKZN ethical regulations, participation to the study is voluntary and participants may withdraw anytime they want. If permission to conduct this study be granted, kindly respond with a signed letter acknowledging your approval.

Thanking you in advance

Regards

Namhla Marwexu

Appendix 3 (a): Permission to conduct research at Msunduzi Municipal Library

Msunduzi Municipality
Community Services & Social Equity
Bessie Head Library
Office No. 2
P. O. Box 415
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Telephone/Ucingo: 033 392 2629/83
Facsimile/isikhahlamezi: 033 394 0095
E-Mail: mandla.Ntombela@msunduzi.gov.za

Enq:	Our Ref:	Your Ref:

PIETERMARITZBURG
M S U N D U Z I

Dear Ms Marwexu,

Research Permission Letter

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I give permission to conduct the research that focuses on investigating and identifying the library and information services to the visually impaired by the Msunduzi Municipal Library and other services offered by the library.

For further information or any other queries please do not hesitate to contact me on the above mentioned details.

Thank you,

Yours truly,

Mandla Ntombela
Manager: Library Services
Community Development
Business Unit of Community Service

Signature_____   Date: 15/07/15

Appendix 3 (b): Permission to conduct research with visually impaired users

1 Olympia Way
Northdale
Pietermaritzburg
Kwazulu-natal

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KwaZulu-Natal
Blind and Deaf Society

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3207

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Donations to the Society is tax deductible in terms of Section 18A(1)(a) Income Tax Act

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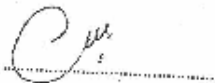
Member of: • SA National Council for the Blind • DEAFSA •

12 October 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Permission is hereby granted to Marwexu Namhla, a student of UKZN Pietermaritzburg Campus, to interview Visually Impaired Clients of the organization to assess the level of services offered by the Msunduzi Library Services to Visually Impaired persons.

Yours sincerely

A.NAICKER
Director
Pietermaritzburg & Midlands Region

Appendix 4: Letter of consent for the VI users

The Msunduzi Municipal Library Services
260 Church Street
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Natal Blind and Deaf
Corner Olympia and Newholmes Way
Newholmes
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Title of the study: **The provision of library and information services to the VI users by the Msunduzi Municipality**

I ……………………………., hereby consent to participate on the above mentioned research study.

I acknowledge that I have been clearly informed about the purpose of the study and what it will involve. I have been informed that should I agree to participate, my participation in the study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any given time should I feel uncomfortable with the way the study is conducted.

As far as the interviews go I have been informed that code names will be assigned for the recording and interview transcriptions will be locked away.

I ………………………….., understand and acknowledge the contents of this document and I am giving consent to participate.

Participant   **Researcher**

Signed …………………………..   Signed ………………………

Date …………………………..   Date …………………………..

Appendix 5: Letter of consent for Msunduzi Municipal Library staff

The Msunduzi Municipal Library Services

260 Church Street

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Title of the study: **The provision of library and information services to the VI users by the Msunduzi Municipality**

I ……………………………., hereby consent to participate on the above mentioned research study.

I acknowledge that I have been clearly informed about the purpose of the study and what it will involve. I have been informed that should I agree to participate, my participation in the study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any given time should I feel uncomfortable with the way the study is conducted.

As far as the interviews go I have been informed that code names will be assigned for the recording and interview transcriptions will be locked away.

I ………………………….., understand and acknowledge the contents of this document and I am giving consent to participate.

Participant

Signed …………………………..

Date ……………………………..

Researcher

Signed …………………………..

Date ……………………………..

Appendix 6: Letter of consent for Msunduzi Municipal Library management

The Msunduzi Municipal Library Services

260 Church Street

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Title of the study: **The provision of library and information services to the VI users by the Msunduzi Municipal Library**

I ……………………………., hereby consent to participate on the above mentioned research study.

I acknowledge that I have been clearly informed about the purpose of the study and what it will involve. I have been informed that should I agree to participate, my participation in the study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any given time should I feel uncomfortable with the way the study is conducted.

As far as the interviews go, I have been informed that code names will be assigned for the recording and interview transcriptions will be locked away.

I ………………………….., understand and acknowledge the contents of this document and I am giving consent to participate.

Participant

Signed …………………………..

Date ……………………………..

Researcher

Signed …………………………..

Date ……………………………..

Appendix 7: Request for permission to pretest the research instrument

The Msunduzi Municipal Library Services

260 Church Street

Pietermaritzburg

3201

04 August 2017

Dear Ms Bhim

Request for permission to pre-test my research instrument

My name is Namhla Marwexu from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus. I am registered for a Masters Degree in Information Studies and my research topic is **"*The provision of library and information services (LIS) to the visually impaired (VIP) by the Msunduzi Municipal Library (MML)"*.** I would like to ask for permission to pre-test my research instrument to ensure consistency, validity and clarity to about any five library staff members working at the branch libraries.

Attached is my ethical clearance certificate.

Yours truly

Researcher: Namhla Marwexu

School of Social Sciences (Library and information Studies)

Email: namhlamarwexu@gmail.com marwexu.namhla@msunduzi.gov.za

Contact numbers: Cellphone 0815474233

Work: (033) 392 2647

Supervisor:	Humanities & Social Sciences Res. Ethics (HSSREC)
Dr Zawedde Nsibirwa	Mr Premlall Mohun
Email: nsibirwa@ukzn.ac.za	Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
(033) 260 5685	(031) 260 4557

Appendix 8 (a): Interview schedule for the VI participants (English)

A.   DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1.   Gender:

Male {…}

Female {….....}

2.   Could you tell me how old you are?

3.   What is your highest level of education?

4.   Do you consider yourself a VI person or blind?

B.   VISUALLY IMPAIRED USER'S PERCEPTIONS AND USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

5.   Do you use the library? If yes, how often do you do so?

☐   Everyday

☐   Once a week

☐   More than once a week

☐   Once a month

☐   Less than a month

Please elaborate

6.   If you no longer use the library could you tell me the reason/s why you no longer do so?

7.   If you use the library, which section/s do you use the most?

8.   In the section/s you said you visit/use the most i.e. the Lending section and visually impaired corner/Reference section/Periodicals or internet café, do you experience any difficulties with the service provided in terms of accessibility? If so, what are they, and what could be done to improve the service?

9.   Do you ever use computers to find information in the library?

10.   If the answer to question 9 is no, could you please give reasons as to why you do not do so?

11.   If the answer to question 9 is yes, are they user friendly for a VI person? Please elaborate.

12.   If the answer to question 11, is no could you please elaborate?

13.   What would make using computers more accessible/user-friendly for you?

14. Do you think that the library staff understand and are able to respond to your library needs as a VI person? Please elaborate

15. How would you describe the library staff's attitude towards providing library services to people with visual impairments? Could you please tell me why you say that?

16. How would you describe the library staff's attitude towards providing library services to people with visual impairments? Could you please tell me why you say that?

17. How do you normally get to the library?

18. Have you encountered any problems in getting to the library? If yes, please explain.

19. When you first joined the library how did you find the process of registering?

20. Do you think that the process of joining the library could be improved? If so, could you please explain how?

21. How do you prefer to read/which format are you comfortable reading?
    Talking books/ large print/Daisy reader
    Could you tell me why that format in particular?

22. Do you ever use the library to find information relating to a problem or questions that you have? If yes, what is your usual method of finding information in the library? If not, do you think that the library is not satisfying your information needs? Could you please explain your answer?

23. What would you say your library and information needs are as a VI library user? Are they being satisfied?

24. Does the signposting and layout of the library makes it easy for you to find what you are looking for?
    Please elaborate

25. How appropriate is the general layout of the library in terms of finding and use of the sections/services you need?
    Please elaborate on your answer

26. Does the library have information and reading resources in the language that you want? Please elaborate.

27. Does the library offer in-house transcription and enlarging services?

28. Overall how satisfactory is the collection of material for people with visual impairment held at the library? Is it up-to-date? Is it relevant?

29. As a VI library member and user, what improvements (if any) would you like to be made to the services offered by the library in terms of meeting your own library and information needs?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 8 (b): Interview schedule for VIP Participants (IsiZulu)

A. **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. Ubulili

a. Isilisa

b. Isifazane

2. Mingaki iminyaka yakho?

3. Lithini izinga lakho lemfundo?

4. Ngabe wena uzithatha njengomuntu oyivip?

B. **VISUALLY IMPAIRED USER'S PERCEPTIONS AND USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES**

5. Ngabe uyawusebenzisa yini uMtapo Wolwazi? Nxa kunjalo, kangaki

   a. Nsukuzonke

   b. Kanye ngeviki

   c. Isikhathi esingaphezu kweviki

   d. Kanye ngenyanga

   e. Ngaphansi kweyanga

6. **Chaza kafushane**

7. Kungani ungawusebenzisi lo Mtapo Wolwazi?

8. Nxa uwusebenzisa lo Mtapo, yiyiphi ingxenye oyijwayele?

9. Empendulweni yakho oyinike ku-7, ngabe zikhona yini izinkinga obhekene nazo. Nxa kunjalo yikuphi ocabanga ukuthi kungenziwa ukuveza isixazululo nokuthuthukisa izinga lokusebenza?

10. Ngabe uyawasebenzisa amakhompuyutha angaphakathi eMtapweni Wolwazi?

11. Nxa impendulo eku-9 ngenhla ithi cha, nika isizathu sokungawasebenzisi?

12. Nxa impendulo yakho ithi yebo, ngabe amakhompumyutha akhona akulungelwe ukusetshenzisa amaVI? Chaza kafushane?

13. Nxa impendulo eku -12 ithi cha, yenaba kafushane.

14. Yini engenziwa ukwenza amakhompuyutha asebenziseke kalula kumuntu oyIVIP?

15. Ngokwakho ukubona ngabe basebenzi baseMtapweni Wolwazi bayaqonda izidingo zomuntu oyi-VI?

16. Yini ekusizayo ukufinyelela lapha eMtapweni Wolwazi?

17. Ngabe uke waba nenkinga yokungena nokwamukeleka eMtapweni Wolwazi?

18. Wazizwa kanjani mhla ujoyina lo Mtapo Wolwazi?

19. Ngabe kukhona ongakuveza ukusiza ukuthuthukisa indlela amalunga amasha ajoyiniswa ngayo lo Mtapo Wolwazi?

20. Yiyiphi indlea engcono kuwe ukufunda imibhalo yakuloMtapo Wolwazi?

    a. Incwadi ekhulumayo

    b. Incwadi enemibhalo egqamile emikhulu

    c. Icwadi efundwa ngemishini

Sekela ukuthi kungani uncama le ndle oyikhethe ngenhla ku -20.

21. Kungabe uyawusebenzisa uMtapo ukufuna izixazululo zezinkinga obhekene nazo.Uma kunjalo yiyiphi indlela oyisebenzisayo ukuthola isixazululo senkinga obhekene nayo. Uma kungenjalo, uchaza ukuthi lo Mtapo awulusizo ekutholeni imibhalo engasiza uthole izixazululo zezinkinga onazo. Chaza kafushane?

22.

23. Ngabe izimpawu eziseMtapweni Wolwazi nendlela owakheke ngayo ikusiza ukuthola okudingayo ngaphakathi eMtapweni?

24.

25. Ngabe lo Mtapo wolwazi uqukethe yini izincwadi ngolimi ozidinga ngalo?

26. Ngabe uMtapo Wolwazi unalo yini usizo lokuhumusha umbhalo nosizo olukhulisa umbhali ngendlela ecacile?

27. Ngabe iqoqo lezincwadi nezinsiza zakulo Mtapo kumsiza yini umuntu oyiVIP odinga usizo. Ngabe konke kusezingeni elifanele futhi kuhambisana nesikhathi sempilo?

28. Njengelunga lalo Mtapo eliyiVI kukhona ongafisa ukukupawula okungathuthgukisa indlela yokusebenza kulo Mtapo Wolwazi? Ungenzenjani loMtapo ukuhlabezana nezidingo zakho ngendlela eyanelisayo?

Appendix 9: Interview schedule for the library respondents

Information service delivery to the VI library users

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age {…}
2. Gender

   Male {…}

   Female {…}
3. How long, in terms of years, have you been working at the library?

B. TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

4. Please state your highest level of education in library and information studies

   No qualification

   National Diploma {…}

   Degree {…}

   Masters Degree {…...}

   PhD {…}

   Other {…}
5. What is your designation?
6. Have you ever assisted VI library user?

   If yes, please elaborate i.e. the kind of assistance they needed and if you were able to provide it.
7. Do you have any qualification/training in special needs particularly that which may be of assistance for people with visual impairment? If yes, what kind of training did you receive and who provided it?
8. If the answer to question 6 is no, is this lack of training a problem in terms of your providing assistance to VI users? Please explain your answer
9. If you have a qualification/s in LIS, does it sufficiently prepare you for how to serve people with special needs, particularly those with visual impairment? Please elaborate.
10. Would you recommend that library schools include services to people with special needs (such as VI) as part of the training?

11. What kind of assistance do the VI users need and are you able to provide it? Please explain your answer.

12. Are there any challenges you experience when providing assistance to the VI library users? Please explain your answer

13. To your knowledge, how do people with visual impairments locate items in the library?

14. Are you able to identify VIP users in the Integrated Library Management System or other user databases/records?

15. Is there anything you would like to add regarding the VI user?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 10: Interview schedule for MML management

A.   DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1.   Age {…}

2.   Gender {…}

3.   Please state your highest qualification in library and information studies

    National Diploma {…}

    Degree {…}

    Masters Degree {…...}

    PhD {…} Other {…}

4.   What is your designation?

5.   Do you have any qualification/training in special needs in special needs particularly that which may be of assistance for people with visual impairments? If yes, what kind of training did you receive and who provided it?

6.   How long, in terms of years, have been working in the library?

B. LIBRARY SERVICES DELIVERY TO THE VI USERS

7.   Are any specialized services or adaptive equipment provided by the library for people with visual impairments? If yes what kind of equipment and services?

8.   Are there services to the VI which you think the library could provide but doesn't? Please elaborate.

9.   Does the library have experienced staff to provide or assist users with visual impairments? If yes, what kind of training did they receive and who provided it?
If no, do you envisage some form of training being provided? Could you please elaborate?

10.   In terms of budget allocation, how much is allocated for buying library material for VIP? If possible please provide the amount/percentage {----------------}. Do you consider this sufficient?
Please elaborate.

11.   Does the library have any kind of relationship with the following organizations serving the VI?

a)   South African National Council for the Blind

b)   South African Library for the Blind

c)   Blind SA

d)   Kwa-Zulu Natal Blind and Deaf Society

What is the nature of the relationship?

12.   If you do not have a relationship with the above mentioned organizations, are there any future plans of doing so?

13.   If the answer to question 13 is no, do you not think this is important for resource provision/acquiring for VI users? Please elaborate.

14.   What alternative formats are available for VI users in the library?

15.   What was the rationale for the library offering services to the VI library users?

16.   Which methods have you used to promote/market the services available for VI users?

17.   Does the library have any written policy with regards to the VI? If yes, what does it cover? If not, do you intend developing such a policy? Could you please elaborate.

18.   What do you consider to be the main challenges the library faces in offering services to the VI? Is the library doing anything to address these challenges?

19.   Are there any plans for improving services offered to the VI users?

20.   Would you like to say/add anything more concerning library services to the VI?

Thank you for your participation