

# **An analysis of Print Media information and its accessibility to people with visual impairments**

**By**

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***in the***

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## DEDICATION

### TO MY LATE MOTHER MARY MARGRET NG'AMBI

Mom I know that this day makes you the proudest mom on earth. I know that though you are physically gone, spiritually you have been with me from day one of your departure and I could and still see all signs of your presence in my life. Nothing will ever make me forget your sorry words in your sick bed

**“My daughter if I can die who will look after you, you haven’t done any course, you are not working and not married, I cannot see anyone amongst my relatives who can take care of you. How are you going to survive? Your father died when you were just a baby. For now, you are my main worry at least if you were educated and working”**

I was 23 but I could not really understand what you meant. Life has never been easy at all without you mom. I realised that you were indeed my only pillar in this world. However, something happened after your demise, I decided to fully dedicate my life to God. Prayer became my number one weapon. I just saw myself going back to rewrite my MSCE which saw me through to the University of Malawi after passing my university entry exams. From there I saw myself going to Rhodes University and pursued my Postgraduate Studies and an Honours Degree. I got picked to Wits University to pursue my master’s degree and here I am with a PhD. I cannot help but feel that it has been your spirit guiding me all the way to this level for which I never dreamt to reach. And I know that you are still walking with me. I dedicate this achievement to you my beloved mom knowing that wherever you are, you are now a happy soul than how you were prior to your death. Thank you so much for your presence; you shall still remain the best mom in the whole world, not even a single day has made me not think about you. May your soul continue to rest in eternal peace.

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To my Bishop the Zion Christian Church Spiritual reader DR. BARNABAS LEKGANYANE. My father and my Lord I do not have any single word to qualify to my thanking you for being there for me. You picked me up from the village of Chiputula when I cried to you that “Jesus Son of God if only you were still on earth, I should have borrowed money to follow you in Nazareth and join the crew following you wherever you went preaching the word of God than suffering like this as a helpless orphan”. You heard my prayer papa and called me into your holy church the ZCC of which I am so proud to be a member. Bishop Lekganyane there is no one like you in this entire world. You are our saviour the Son of the most high. Without you, there is no way that I should have been where I am now my Lord. May your name continue to be praised, glorified and worshipped.

To my best friend and the father of my children Brian Bobby. Up to the time I met you I never knew there are such angels of men still existing in this world. As for me God just blessed me with what He saw I mostly lacked as an orphan. You my Brian. Whatever God blesses supersedes whatever any man can bless in this world. What God has put together no man can separate no matter what worldly position they place themselves on (Mark 10:9). Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17). And that is who you are to me and the girls dear Brian. I cannot thank you enough for putting me on this level and I shall always love and adore you. You are my mentor.

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To my beloved children Ninamwabi Mary and Nasangwa Elizabeth Bobby you mean the world to me and thanks for your understanding and giving space to mom as she

perpetually left you to feed yourselves while she locked herself in her room for her studies. You are my angels. And love you both a lot. You have been so amazing.

## ABSTRACT

Media is considered as one of the most powerful tools in disseminating information thereby shaping people's lives. While there have been various studies about the relationship between media and people with disabilities, much of the emphasis has been on the media's representation of people with disabilities than accessibility of print content in formats friendly to people with visual impairments. This research is a qualitative study which looked at the accessibility of online published print media information to people with visual impairments in terms of format. This was done by analysing content in online newspapers and magazines to determine its accessibility to them. Online interviews were also conducted to find out how print media is accessible to people with visual impairments. The Uses and Gratifications and the Social Responsibility theories were selected to frame the study on how media satisfies their specific needs and desires as well as having certain social obligations to society respectively. The findings of this study were that print media was inaccessible to people with visual impairments both in terms of formats and content. There is no print media known to people with visual impairments producing information in Braille format. The electronic version of printed media proved to be inaccessible due to the lack of media adherence to the Web Accessibility Guidelines. The research also established the underrepresentation and lack of representation in some print media due to print media's lack of interest to cover disability issues. To respond to these needs, a framework was developed to ensure that people who are visually impaired are able to access print media information.

*Keywords: print media, disability, visual impairment, accessibility*

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## ACRONYMS

ARIA	Accessible Rich Internet Applications
AT	Assistive Technology
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CMDA	Computer-mediated discourse analysis
CREATE	Community based Rehabilitation Education and Training for Empowerment
COVID	Coronavirus
DSU	Disabled Student Unit
DPOs	Disabled Peoples' Organisations
DFL	Doctors' For Life International
EARL	Evaluation And Report Language
GUI	Graphic User Interface
HTML	Hyper Text Markup Language
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
IBM	International Business Machines
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDA	International Development Association
INDS	Integrated National Disability Strategy
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITV	Independent Television
LOFOB	League of Friends of the Blind
NABB	National Association of Blind Bowlers
NDP	National Development Plan
NDA	National Disability Authority
NDP	National Disability Policy

NFB	National Federation of the Blind
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner
RIA	Registered Investment Advisors
SABGA	SA Blind Golf Association
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SANCB	South African National Council for the Blind
SONA	State of Nation Address
SNA	Social Network Analysis
UAAG	User Agent Accessibility Guidelines
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Social Economic Affairs
UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
VIPRIMA	Visual Impairment Print Media Accessibility Model
WAI	Web Accessibility Initiative
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WPRPD	White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WWW	World Wide Web
W3C	World Wide Web Consortium

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Media play a significant role in reflecting public attitudes and values pertaining to disability as well as shaping them (Happer & Philo 2013; Gold & Auslander 1999:709). Various studies have established the under-representation/absence of the minority groups in the media. This is apart from problematic issues related to the discourses and ideologies, language, narratives and images of media as forms of media texts surrounding the minority groups (Ingrid 2016; Kuhar 2006). Such presentation of news and information by the media has a particular bearing on and implications for the real world. They are primarily manifested as a classification of or discrimination against particular social groups and the legitimisation of the practices of power-holders (Kuhar 2006). Discriminatory language, regardless of it being outright verbal use or thoughtless stereotyping, can lead to forms of marginalisation and also operate on a deeply individual, stigmatising level (Gottlieb 2001).

Stadler (2006) asserts that when viewing media and disability relationships, various aspects including media policies, media technologies and media content need to be considered. All this carry information about disability that construct people with disabilities in a manner in which disability is framed and perceived in society. Policies of the media address issues of language used in the media, content and presentation and technology, whereas media technologies deal with accessibility matters as well as technological assumptions with media content focusing on representations, stereotypes, absences etc. (Ingrid 2016). The language used in the media to describe disability often position disability as an abnormality, an illness or a tragic loss of normal, healthy functioning. Generally, the media according to Penas (2007) portray people with disabilities based on shared stereotypes like being pitiful and having valour, a societal type of a situation often known as “pity/heroism trap” or “pity/heroism dichotomy” by disability advocates.

There have been various studies on how the media continue to play a part in prolonging stereotypes of people having disabilities by using negative and demeaning



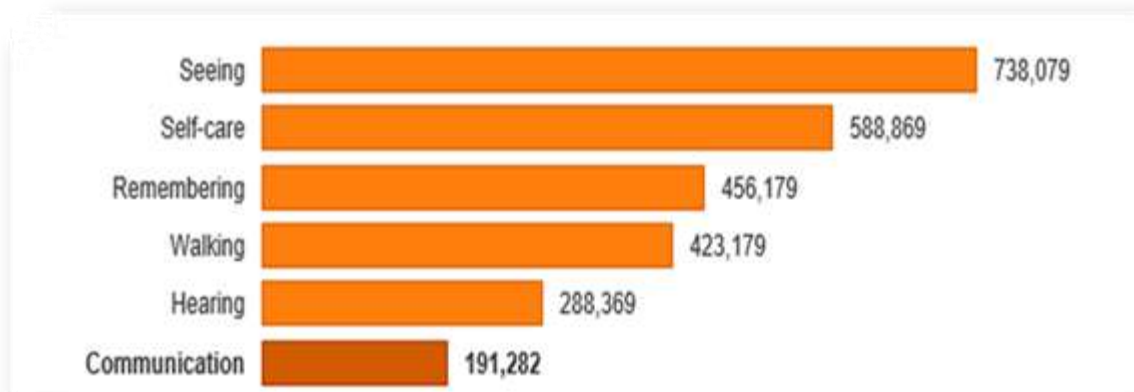
portrayals (Stadler 2007; Penas 2007). Such stereotypes are customarily the major facilitators of obstinate discrimination against individuals with disabilities, be it open or hidden, direct and indirect, subsequently affecting their right to equality. The focus of this research was on people with disabilities as one minority group which is the most apparent in all cross sectional forms of discrimination based on physical appearance, social, cultural and economic status (Oliver 1999; Mont & Cuong 2011).

## **1.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

This study focused on the inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments, in accessing information in print media. Visual impairment is among the three well-known broad categories of disability, the other two being cognitive disability and motor disability. Cognitive disability is one that causes mental disorder resulting in one's inability to perform mental tasks like communication, social skills and personal care. Motor disability, on the other hand, restricts one's ability in performing motor tasks concerned with moving and manipulating objects like running, walking, skipping, handwriting, shoe tying, sitting, and others (Hutton & Pharaoh 2002). Hakobyan, Lumsden, O'Sullivan and Bartlett (2013) describe visual impairment as any condition that hampers a person's ability to perform typical daily activities due to visual loss (not being able to see or incapacity to see properly). According to Colenbrander (2002), a person experiencing extreme difficulties to see things normally is said to have low vision, be visually impaired or partially sighted whereas blindness is defined by Maberley, Hollands, Chuo, Tam, Konkak and Roesch (2006) as total or almost total vision loss.

In this research visual impairment refers to people with low vision and those with complete blindness. According to research findings, visual impairment is the most prevailing disability in South Africa as opposed to other types of disability. More than 700 000 people are estimated to be visually impaired in the country as stated by the South Africa statistics report on people with disabilities (Census 2011).

Below are the findings of the prevalence of six types of disability in South Africa in numbers.



**Figure 1.1: South Africa rates on people with six types disabilities**

The major drawback of visual impairment is that it leads to a person’s inability to access information and execute everyday tasks (Binns, Bunce & Dickinson 2011). It is such shortfalls on the side of people with visual impairments that the media should try to accommodate them by disseminating information in a manner they find accessible. It has been predicted by several studies that the number of people with visual impairments, including blindness, is expected to be higher in developing countries due to poor health care services and poor availability and accessibility of eye care services with those living in rural areas the most affected (Mabaso & Odunta 2014; WHO 2009). This being the case, there is need for the continuation of research studies in search of more inclusion strategies for people with visual impairments both in areas in which research has already been done and other areas. Additionally, as the number one disability in South Africa, there is need to pay serious attention to it to either combat the problem or provide better solutions to the affected population.

The capability of the media to sway the masses makes it a very important tool in influencing opinions, ideas, and even choices in the society pertaining our civil, cultural, political, economic and aesthetic outlook hence the media bring about radical changes and improve social situations (Paul, Singh & John 2013; Jebiril, Stetka & Loveless 2013). The influence the media have on people is directly connected to additional aspects like the characteristic of a communicator, the type of media content,

and audiences' reactions (Paul et al 2013). However, all of these can only take place if information is accessible to all.

South Africa established the *White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (WPRPD) in 1997 and also adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007 to address the needs of people with disabilities in the country. Article 21 of the South African constitution in the WPRPD (2015) gives Freedom of Expression and opinion and access to information to people with disabilities. In collaboration to this article, article 9 of the UNCRPD orders States Parties to take proper measures to eliminate all accessibility barriers to ensure that people with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to everything including information and communications (UNCRPD 2015: xx). With all this effort taken by the South African government to promote the welfare of people with disabilities there is still very little that has been done in accommodating people with disabilities. Research has established that to this day South Africa fails to achieve the creation of equal access to plurality and diversity of the media (Berger 2002; Louw 2004; Duncan 2014; Kupe 2014; Omar 2014). This is due to the fact that the country is a society marked by growing socioeconomic inequality, poverty and high levels of unemployment (Kupe 2014), conditions which are more intense amongst people with disabilities.

For the past two decades South Africa has been promoting policies concerning media in relation to addressing the concentration of media ownership, commitment to freedom of expression and promoting diversity in order to have information needs of those underrepresented by the mainstream media (Berger 1999; Louw 2004; Kupe 2014; Omar 2014). Such people include those with disabilities (Du Toit 1992; Bagopane 2001; Howell, Chalklen & Alberts 2006; Priestly 2006). According to the former late president Nelson Mandela, "The new South Africa ought to be accessible and open all the people. We must see to it that there exist no obstacles, and it is only then, when the rights of people with disabilities to equal opportunities can become a reality" (WPRPD 2015:49). Hence, this study attempted to find out how print media are ensuring democracy through diversity and public participation by providing information accessible to people with visual impairments.

### **1.2.1 Problem Statement**

While there have been various studies about the relationship between media and the minority groups much of the emphasis has been on their representation in the media (Cumberbatch & Negrine 1992; Catlett 1993; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli 1994; Gold & Auslander 1999; LaCheen 2000; Norden 2001; Worrell 2018). However, representation of the minority groups in the media depends on how frequently the interests of that particular group are being covered by the media. Although numerous communication studies have proven the underrepresentation/absence of the minority groups in the media (Brune 1998; Cottie 2000; Downing & Husband 2005; Ingrid 2016), it is worth noting that people with disabilities are the most underrepresented/absent minority group (Murray 1986; van Dijk 1991; Gilroy 1992; Cumberbatch, Gauntlett & Lyne 2004). Additionally, most scholars have lamented the lack of media diversity due to commercially driven strategies. Such strategies are normally aimed at producing content targeting the educated, affluent and urban markets while in the process leaving out the less educated who are also mostly the poor and under privileged minority group such as people with disabilities (Blake 1997; Berger 1999; Kupe 2014).

Research findings have it that there is a bidirectional link between being poor and having a disability (Sen 1999; Mont & Cuong 2011). The World Health Organisation argues that disability may increase the risk of poverty and vice versa (WHO 2011:10). Certain mechanisms or assets such as education, access to information, health care and income are seen as key factors to enhance capabilities (Mitra, Posarac & Vick 2011; Mont & Cuong 2011). As most people with disabilities do not excel formal education, they are more likely to be jobless and therefore not earning any income (Sen 1999). Such scenarios help to create and sustain conditions for poverty and placing people with disabilities at greater risk of being deprived of access to information.

There have of course been numerous studies on the need for diverse media. However, the emphasis has mostly been on ownership and control which is market driven (Berger 1999; Louw 2004; Kupe 2014). Media owners have undue influence on what

the media may cover, thus targeting the educated, affluent and the urban markets, leaving out the poor (Kupe 2014). This tends to limit participation of the minority groups in the media who are mostly the poor, with those with disabilities being a distinct group. However, there is very little research conducted on the accessibility of information in terms of content format considering that people with visual impairments have their own formats to read and understand content. The findings of a study done by Astbrink (1996), who investigated the consumer information needs of people with visual impairments, revealed that these people preferred information formats based on their individual circumstances such as eyesight, onset of vision impairment, living arrangements, age, level of literacy and nature of the material or information to be accessed. A similar study by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (1999) focusing on the information needs in relation to suitable design features for financial information, found that a large proportion of people preferred to receive such information in larger print as opposed to the standardly used format.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY**

The main purpose of this study was to explore the accessibility of print media to people with visual impairments. According to Pal, Pradhan, Shah and Babu (2011) access to information is fundamental as it helps one to perform daily activities and engage him/herself in education and employment activities. As Fullmer and Majumder (1991:17) put it, there is power in information and being knowledgeable. Being able to acquire information and use it provides people with opportunities to make decisions from the choice of many alternatives rather than being confined to very limited and probably non desirable and impracticable options.

### **1.3.1 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1) Explore how print media news and information are accessible to people with visual impairments.
- 2) Examine the print media content concerning issues surrounding visual impairments
- 3) Develop a framework to be followed by the print media to ensure inclusivity of and accessibility to people with visual impairments.

### **1.3.2 Main Research Question**

This research aimed at answering the main question: Do print media promote public participation by making news and information accessible to people with visual impairments?

### **1.3.3 Research Sub-questions**

- 1) How accessible is print media information to people with visual impairments?
- 2) How do print media cover issues concerning audiences with visual impairments?
- 3) What measures should the print media take to ensure that people with visual impairments are able to access information in print media?

## **1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Since this study was examining how media accommodate people who are visually impaired, it was grounded on two theoretical frameworks: The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and the Social Responsibility Theory (SRT). The research was a two-way study that looked at both the audience and the media; the audience in the sense that people with disabilities need information to satisfy their various needs while the media were examined for how they present their information so that it is accessible to people with visual impairments. The two media theories were selected because they focus on the questions “what do people do with media?”, as well as “what do the media do to people?” The broader perspective of the UGT aims at providing a structure to

understand the processes followed by media participants in selectively seeking information or content, in relation to their desires and welfares (Katz & Blumler 1974; Dominick 2005). The SRT views the media as responsible for deepening and strengthening democracy by providing the public with sufficient information to enable them to make informed decisions and vice versa which can help to notify politicians about problems of the society (Dominick 2005). SRT views media to be for the people and society, responsible for ensuring that those without a voice have a voice and the establishment of diverse opinions where everyone has the right to speak, the right to express and the right to publish (Dominick 2005). People with disabilities fall under the voiceless category of people; in this approach the media are considered not an end but a tool for social development (ibid.). The SRT of the media operates on the following fundamental principles that;

- a) Media possess particular responsibility to society.
- b) Media have the duty to operate truthfully, accurately, objectively, and show balance in their reporting of news.
- c) Media must operate freely while being self-regulated, putting in place ethical guidelines and codes of conduct to guide their operations.
- d) Media must ensure that they promote pluralism: that there are diverse views from a diverse society through diverse forums.
- e) Finally, ensuring that the ownership of the media is a national trust.

These theories were used in this study in connection to how people with visual impairments seek information in relation to their needs and the media's role in giving the voice to the voiceless.

## **1.5 PROPOSED METHOD**

Since this study was about the accessibility of print media information to people with visual impairments, it therefore was emancipatory in nature. Emancipation starts from a standpoint of establishing knowledge that can be of benefit to the disadvantaged one of such being those with disabilities with which this research is concerned (Mertens 2015). It is a form of research that seeks to empower the subjects of social enquiry by taking into consideration the power imbalance in research (Noel 2016).

Hence the expansive research objective of emancipatory research is to generate emancipation and social justice (Noel 2016:2). Emancipatory study identifies the historical imbalances in the creation of research and knowledge that favour the elite and disadvantage many other (Mertens 2015). According to Danieli and Woodham (2007), some of the principles of the emancipatory research paradigm are openness, accountability, participation, reciprocity and empowerment. According to Stone and Priestley (1996) and Barnes (2001) research aimed at using an emancipatory paradigm in the field of disability must have the following core values:

- a) The research agenda should be based on a social model of disability.
- b) The researchers should show a commitment to the empowerment of people with disability.
- c) The research should contribute to self-empowerment or to the removal of disabling barriers.

According to Mertens (2015) emancipation research is described by some authors as transformative research emanated from the disability community born out of the motto 'nothing about us without us'. Studies aiming at emancipation have been conducted on other disadvantaged communities on issues such as race, gender, sexual orientation, economic background and many more (Noel 2016:1). Promoters of emancipatory research on disability argue that there should be some reasonable practical end result for people with disabilities since emancipation is mainly concerned with empowerment (Mertens 2015). But according to Barnes (2001:13-14) as all research produces data, it is obvious that such data generates knowledge and such knowledge is empowerment on its own. The outcomes of this research will benefit people with disabilities firstly by empowering them with knowledge in relation to how print media disseminate information concerning them. Secondly, the empowerment may come about based on the developed framework to have print media adjust its dissemination of information in order to accommodate people with visual impairments.

### **1.5.1 Data Collection Techniques**

The research design for this study was descriptive and interpretive, hence taking a qualitative methodological approach. Qualitative research techniques were used in



this study because the study was about studying human beings from social actors' viewpoint (Babbie & Mouton 2001). The main goal of qualitative research is to understand and describe as opposed to explain humanoid behaviour (ibid.). Therefore, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were employed in this research with the aim of exploring how individuals with visual impairments access print media information. In addition, content analysis was used to analyse stories relating to people with disabilities in the media.

### **1.5.2 The Population and Sampling Methods**

The population was drawn from people with disabilities, specifically those with visual impairments, as the key subjects. Ten people were purposively selected for interviews. The reason behind this choice is the ability of purposive sampling in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth, from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton 1990: 169). Hence, purposive sampling is usually used when a researcher needs to detect and select information cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Tongco 2007).

Content analysis was also used to collect data from English newspapers and magazines containing information relating to people with disabilities. Content analysis was used as an observational method and used when systematically evaluating representational content of all kinds of recorded communications (Kolbe & Burnett 1991:243). The method is used to analyse the existence, implications and associations of concepts and words, then constructing interpretations about the messages within the texts, the audiences and the writers, even including the time and culture of which all these are inclusive (Hayakawa 1941). The goal of content analysis is to produce valid measures of news content by identifying and presenting important aspects of content, describing characteristics of the content and to lessen huge amounts of unstructured content (Obaid 2011). The words "disability, blindness and visual impairment" were used to search for print media articles for the purpose of content analysis. This search covered the last five years from 2016. Content was explored in the newspaper using interview technique as stated by O'Leary (2014), in this case treating the content as a participant or subject providing valued information to the researcher. In doing this the recorded data was only that with information concerning

people with disabilities in general or and especially those with visual impairments while any other information irrelevant to the study was filtered out.

### **1.5.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse interviews because it describes data in a rich, detailed form and permits for further explanation of numerous facets of the study in question (Boyatzis 1998; Braun & Clarke 2006:79). Thematic analysis produces an insightful analysis that answers specific research questions (Braun & Clarke 2006:97) making it suitable for this research. The other reason for the choice of thematic analysis in this study was its flexibility in allowing the researcher to develop themes from the collected data. The research specifically employed Braun and Clarke (2006) step-by-step guidelines to using thematic analysis as a data analysis technique. The guidelines include 1) the researcher being acquainted with their data, 2) creating preliminary codes, 3) reading every transcript through to be engaged in the data, 4) revising themes, 5) naming and describing themes, and 6) reporting constructions. These stages are explained in detail in the data analysis chapter along with how they were applied by the researcher.

### **1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Since this research was concerned with investigating people and especially the vulnerable group it was vital for the researcher to observe the required ethical protocols in conducting this research. The ethics were observed according to the University of South Africa's ethical guidelines through which this research was conducted and for which the researcher is a student. Ethical principles hold that when researching human beings, it is always necessary for the researcher to ensure that all their human rights are observed (National Disability Authority NDA (2009). As Kitchin (2007) puts it, the general principles that guide ethical practice in research are the same whether online or offline as long as there is involvement of human beings. Patton and Cochran (2002) also put forward two key ethical issues that need to be considered in any project which are consensus and confidentiality. In this study, I informed all participants about the research purpose and what was expected of them as participants prior to the interviews. The university's ethics letter containing all research

details was also emailed to them and read by the participants who then signed it acknowledging their acceptance to participate in the research.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

This research sought to assess media as promoters of public participation in the diverse society in South Africa in relation to the accessibility of print media to people with disabilities particularly those with visual impairments. The assessment was achieved by analysing print media content in both newspapers and magazines focusing on published stories concerning people with visual impairments. The research also established the experiences by people with visual impairments in accessing print media information by conducting interviews with them. Both the content analysis and the interviews outcomes indicated that people with visual impairments are definitely not included as part of print media consumers. Drawing on the Uses and Gratification and the Social Responsibility Theories, the research further explored the availability of a measurement tool or benchmark against which print news and information should be validated by the media as accessible for people with visual impairments. This is to ensure that people with visual impairments are not left out in terms of accessing print news and information both physically and electronically.

## **1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

The rest of the research report will be presented as follows:

**2. Literature review:** This is chapter two of the thesis in which I review all the literature in relation to this research. Chronologically, I start introducing what is encompassed in this chapter, and then discussed studies on people with disabilities in the media followed by discussions about visual impairment, the prevalence of visual impairment in South Africa, discussions about Medical and Social Models of perceiving disability, the Social model and promotion and protection of human rights, the role of the media in promoting public participation, disability digital divide issues, universal design, access/ibility and visual impairment, Web Accessibility Design and then closed the chapter with a conclusion.

**3. Theoretical framework/conceptual framework:** Chapter three presents the theoretical framework/conceptual framework for the study. In this chapter I discuss the Uses and Gratification Theory and the Social Responsibility Theory, their history and principles and how they are related to this study and how they are applied in the study.

**4. Research methodology:** In chapter four I explain the research methodology undertaken in this study. I consider its usefulness to this study and how it is applied.

**5. Data analysis:** Chapter five carries all the data analysis for this research. It explains all the processes undertaken to analyse interviews and content analysis data. It also discusses the findings of this study.

**6. The proposed model/framework:** In chapter six of the thesis, I present a summary of the findings and develop the proposed model to be followed by the print media to ensure the inclusion of people with visual impairments in accessing print media information.

**7. Conclusions and recommendations:** Chapter seven is the last chapter of the thesis in which I present recommendations made based on the findings of this study including the possible future research. I also discuss the significance as well as limitations of this study. The chapter closed with a conclusion.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section discusses the reviewed literature underpinning this research in which I have discussed the existing knowledge as well as what other researchers have studied in relation to this study's subject matter. The research revolves around media and their relationship with people with disabilities focusing on those with visual impairments in South Africa in relation to their accessing print media; this is the focus of the literature review. In this regard I discuss the relationship between the media and people with disabilities in terms of portrayal and access. I also discuss the definition of visual impairment, challenges faced by those affected by the impairment, the existence of impairment in South Africa and possible solutions in aiding the situation including the country's effort to adopt and formulate policies and legal frameworks for the empowerment of people with disabilities. I also present literature on the social and medical models as predominant models of viewing disability as well as the role of the media in promoting human rights, the digital divide and Web Accessibility.

### **2.2 STUDIES ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE MEDIA**

The media affect society in various ways as sources of information, education and entertainment, agents of a socialising influence, carriers of culture and a vital instrument for participation in political communication in a democratic society; the media also serve as communicators of ideological values and norms, attitudes and beliefs (Stadler 2006). Consequently, the media are regarded as agents which exert an influence on identity formation and issues associated with stigma, self-esteem, social relations, economic and political positions (Stadler 2006; Ingrid 2016). In relation to disability, various research studies have identified the media's inability to serve as information disseminators for people with disabilities, thereby indirectly exacerbating the process of understanding, assessing and formulating behaviour in society towards them (Gold & Auslander 1999; Stadler 2006; Penas 2007; Sanchez 2010; Ingrid 2016; Falina 2017). Ingrid (2016) cited two main issues surrounding the media and people with disabilities namely portrayal and access. Portrayal issues are especially related to media content while access/ accessibility issues are related to people with

disabilities accessing media in terms of usage and benefits (Ingrid 2016). How people with disabilities are portrayed in the media and their frequency of appearance massively impacts on how society perceives them (Catlet 1993). Amongst core grounds for damaging societal attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, subsequent in the abjuration of their fundamental rights and values according to Ingrid (2016), is the manner in which disability is interpreted and portrayed in the media. When looking at media content, for example, various yet inter-related factors have been established which can be the basis of negative attitudes, discriminatory practices and misunderstanding of people with disabilities (Gold & Auslander 1999; Penas 2007; Sanchez 2010; Ingrid 2016). Media content coverage in relation to issues of disability, particularly in print media, is mainly through the use of disabling terminologies (Stadler 2006). Language that is disabling is described by Yost (1989) as language that

- a) propagates myths and stereotypes about individuals with disabilities,
- b) uses nouns rather than adjectives to describe people with disabilities,
- c) uses demeaning or archaic words or phrases to refer to people with disabilities.

Words are mostly known by their magical powers of being able to inflict both injury and remedying it (Smolla 2009). Language plays a key role in influencing perceptions of and attitudes towards people with disabilities as both mirrors and agents of change in social attitudes (Priestley 1999). According to Richardson (2003), the disabling language used in the media is capable of affecting almost everyone with a disability and insults are enacted by virtually every speaking person in our society. Discriminatory language, whether through the use of absolute verbs or inconsiderate stereotyping, has just as considerable a power to exclude as other forms of marginalisation and on an intensely personal, stigmatising level (Priestly 1999; Gottlieb 2001).

The social construction theory endeavours to explain the process by which knowledge is created and how it is assumed as reality (Quinn & Degener 2002). According to Quinn and Degener (2002) the social construction theory argues that meanings are generated, become learned and then shared by people. This then become reflected in their attitudes, language and behaviour. Through the processes of agenda setting,

legitimization and socialisation, the media, and particularly print, are directly involved in the construction of reality (Stadler 2006). According to Ingrid (2016), the social construction of disability by the media has been recognised as a barrier to social inclusion of people with disabilities. Hence while understanding social constructions of disability can be vital to understanding why people with disabilities have been marginalised and discriminated against, it can also draw attention to what needs to be done to eliminate negative attitudes (Ingrid 2016). Haller, Dorries and Rahn (2006) emphasise the significance of looking at terminologies used in the media in helping to create an understanding of whether there is a creation of a more knowledgeable society about disability due to behaviour changes in the media. The idea in this regard is that even something as ordinary as a word to refer to a group is important as it may have implications for both individual perception of people with disabilities as well as what people in general believe about disability. For example, according to Haller et al (2006) the language used to describe people with disabilities in the media usually connotes disability as something out of the norm, a sickness or a tragedy regarding their inability to physically function normally.

Perpetuating stereotypes is another issue in the portrayal of people with disabilities in the media. There has been much research on the media's continued role in perpetuating stereotypes of people with disabilities through disempowering portrayals that are negative (Priestly 1999; Gottlieb 2001; Ingrid 2016). Barnes (1997/1992) identified eleven such repetitive media stereotypes of people with disability, portraying them as pitiable and pathetic, "as objects of violence; as sinister and evil; as an atmosphere or curio; as super cripples, as objects of ridicule; as their own worst enemy; as a burden; as sexually abnormal; as incapable of participating fully in community life and as normal" (Barnes 1992: 7). In 2005, a study was conducted in Australia to evaluate the impact of film and television drama portrayals of mental illness on the lives of individuals with mental illness and their families. The study established that mental illness is depicted in dramas in a manner which has a major, negative effect on those living with it including feelings of distress, increased experiences of stigma and discrimination and self-stigmatization (SANE Australia 2005). A similar study was conducted by Wilson, Nairn, Coverdale and Panapa (2000) on the portrayal of mental illness in children's television in which it was established that in the six

animated characters who were chosen, characters whether comic or villainous, were stereotypically and blatantly negative and functioned as objects of amusement, derision or fear. Not disclosing the specific symptoms or diagnosis of the illness and the generic nature of the illnesses in the depictions were also found to encourage viewers to generalise all people with mental illness as having similar negative characteristic (Wilson et al 2000). Additionally, several studies on people with disabilities reported that much of the coverage repeated and strengthened prevailing discourses about those with learning disabilities, that they are mostly 'sympathetic' passive and needy people who are capable of courageously dealing with their disabilities and heavily dependent upon the help of other people (Carter & Williams 2012). Research that was conducted in 2007 on disability sport and the media contended that the continuation of labelling Paralympian champions in the media as 'supercrips' or 'exceptionals' who fight so hard to defeat their incapacity. Such stereotypes provide an overall view of people with disabilities negatively (Barnes 1997). They are regularly at the targets of overt and covert, indirect and direct and insistent discrimination against people with disabilities and subsequently capable of affecting their right to equality (Barnes 1997; Stadler 2006). Furthermore, negative stereotypes translate into practical laws, policies and practices that are destructive to people with disabilities (NDA 1996; Ingrid 2016). Hence the effect of negative stereotypes according to NDA (1996) is to deprive people with disabilities of equal access to their rights, knowledge, and enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. Terminology used in the media to categorise people as either non-disabled or disabled becomes problematic as they produce an illusory binary opposition between "us" and "them" (Oliver 1999). Amongst numerous disabilities for which people are affected by the operations of the media is visual impairment on which this research focused.

### **2.3 VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

Definitions of visual impairment are usually identified on the basis of visual acuity (Mandal 2013). Visual acuity refers to someone's ability to see images at specified distances (Salvin 2016). How well one can see is expressed as a ratio. The ability of a person to see images is measured by letting them read letters or identify objects at a distance of 20 feet (Mandal 2013). If one is able to do so correctly it means they



have normal vision expressed as a ratio 20/20 vision. The vision ratio of 20/90 means that a person needs to be 20 feet away to identify letters or images that a person with a normal vision could at 90 feet (Salvin 2016). This ability of seeing letters or objects differently at a different position is what differentiates between having normal sight and being visually impaired (Mandal 2013). The criterion to identify how poor visual acuity can be for one to be considered visually impaired was first implemented by the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1934 by describing blindness as

central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective glasses or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a visual field defect in which the peripheral field is contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye (Koestler 1976:45).

This definition was included in federal law and is still being used today. A person is considered to be legally blind when they position themselves at a 20 feet distance to be able to see what someone having normal sight is able to see while 200 feet away (Salvin 2016).

Another way of determining a person's visual state is in terms of field of vision, the ability of a person to see objects clearly by looking straight ahead within a particular range (Koestler 1976). A person who is able to see objects clearly by looking straight ahead within the range of 180 degrees is considered to have a normal field of vision. If someone has a field of vision of 10 degrees, they are not able to see a wider area at once and are said to have restricted field of vision even though such a person has quite good visual acuity in that area (ibid.). According to the AMA (1934) definition of visual impairment, one is also considered legally blind if they have a severely restricted field of vision. Having restricted visual fields, people equate how they see images to looking through a narrow tube or tunnel. Others might find it a problem to clearly recognise anything in the central visual field while able to see things easily in the peripheral field (AMA 1934).

Apart from visual acuity and field of vision there are other problems affecting a person's ability to see images, for example myopia. Myopia, also known as near-sightedness, is a condition whereby a person is not able to see images that are far away from them

but only those that are near them (Boyd 2013). The opposite of myopia is hyperopia, farsightedness, in which one is only able to see images at a distance as opposed to those that are near them (ibid.). A condition known as astigmatism is one in which eyes are unable to produce equally focused images while ocular motility condition is one which affects the eye's ability to be focused and move smoothly (ibid.). There is also a condition whereby a person fails to focus both eyes on an object at the same time which causes one eye to malfunction and vision to be disrupted. This condition is known as strabismus (Gunton, Wasserman & DeBenedictis 2015). Nystagmus is rapid movement of either one or both eyes, involuntarily, lateral, vertical, or rotary resulting into the eye(s)' failure to bring objects into focus (ibid.).

Therefore, basically visual impairment is a problem in seeing, and as stated by Barraga & Erin (1992) and Orr & Rogers (2002), it includes people with low visual functioning, inability to differentiate between light and darkness or those who are totally without a sense of vision. While people who have normal eye sight or almost normal vision can independently handle tasks with no special assistance, those who are partially sighted may find problems with comprehensively performing tasks that require vision; additionally, such tasks may be accomplished but be compromised because of speed levels and accuracy, and can only be accomplished with difficulty, even with the help of others (Orr & Rogers 2002).

Visual impairment has been identified as one of the major health problems worldwide. The impairment has crucial socio-economic drawbacks and proven effects on the quality of life of individuals (Yeo 2005; Serero 2010; WHO 2011).

### **2.3.1 Prevalence of Visual Impairment in South Africa**

According to the 2011 Census in South Africa, visual impairment was established to be the biggest challenge faced by the country. Statistics SA (2011) also did an analysis of the existence of a particular kind of disability which included seeing, hearing, communicating, walking, remembering, and self-care. According to the analysis South Africa has the highest percentage (11%) of people with seeing difficulties (visual impairments) followed by 4,2% with cognitive difficulties (remembering/concentrating),

3,6% hearing difficulties, and about 2% distributed amongst those with communication, self-care and walking difficulties.

Type of difficulty	Sex	Degree of difficulty				Total	Percentage				Total
		None	Mild difficulty	Severe difficulty	Do not know		None	Mild difficulty	Severe difficulty	Do not know	
Seeing	Male	19 293 437	1 504 318	279 553	11 450	21 188 768	91,1	7,5	1,3	0,1	100,0
	Female	19 771 350	2 481 581	458 526	11 912	22 723 368	87,0	10,9	2,0	0,1	100,0
	Total	39 064 787	4 985 898	738 079	23 372	43 912 136	89,0	9,3	1,7	0,1	100,0
Hearing	Male	20 461 507	545 433	127 271	10 179	21 144 389	96,8	2,5	0,6	0,0	100,0
	Female	21 796 259	706 475	161 098	10 613	22 674 444	95,1	3,1	0,7	0,0	100,0
	Total	42 257 767	1 251 907	288 369	20 791	43 818 834	96,4	2,9	0,7	0,0	100,0
Communication	Male	20 756 600	225 018	97 450	10 850	21 089 918	98,4	1,1	0,5	0,1	100,0
	Female	22 258 298	248 432	93 832	11 015	22 611 576	98,4	1,1	0,4	0,0	100,0
	Total	43 014 898	473 450	191 282	21 864	43 701 494	98,4	1,1	0,4	0,1	100,0
Walking/ climbing stairs	Male	20 559 261	426 317	172 044	7 836	21 165 458	97,1	2,0	0,8	0,0	100,0
	Female	21 759 194	673 818	251 135	8 504	22 692 651	95,9	3,0	1,1	0,0	100,0
	Total	42 318 455	1 100 135	423 179	16 340	43 858 109	96,5	2,5	1,0	0,0	100,0
Remembering/ concentrating	Male	20 343 787	570 561	187 085	18 470	21 119 914	96,3	2,7	0,9	0,1	100,0
	Female	21 522 772	834 537	269 084	17 224	22 643 617	95,1	3,7	1,2	0,1	100,0
	Total	41 866 559	1 405 098	456 179	35 694	43 763 530	95,7	3,2	1,0	0,1	100,0
Self-care	Male	19 877 403	389 097	288 597	31 756	20 586 852	96,6	1,9	1,4	0,2	100,0
	Female	21 326 855	448 266	300 273	31 408	22 106 801	96,5	2,0	1,4	0,1	100,0
	Total	41 204 257	837 363	588 869	63 164	42 693 653	96,5	2,0	1,4	0,1	100,0

**Figure 2.1: Prevalence of disability in the six specific types by sex and degree**  
**Source: Census 2011 (Pp. viii).**

With this challenge being faced by the country, various studies have been conducted in the country to establish causes and institute prevention measures and/or medical treatment as well as other solutions to aid people who are affected (Sacharowitz 2005; Mabaso & Odunta 2014). For example, the outcomes of the Statistics South Africa (2011) report on the six rated types of disability (seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, concentrating, self-care and communicating) which found visual impairment the major disability, led to the introduction of cataract surgery medical treatment and the use of spectacles as a solution specifically for those affected (Mabaso & Odunta 2014:14). These suggestions were made by Mabaso and Odunta (2014) from the research findings in the Mopani district on the causes and prevalence of visual impairment among adults aged 40 and having diabetes mellitus. Apart from finding medical solutions other studies have been conducted in relation to aiding

students affected by visual impairment in their education. One such an attempt was made through a study by Fraser and Maguvhe (2008) to teach learners with visual impairments life sciences in South Africa. The findings of this study were that learners with visual impairments encounter challenges in executing science skills' processes due to their lack of vision, confidence and motivation amongst other things. The suggestions of this study were that in order for students with visual impairments to perform well in social studies, an analysis of their needs should be conducted regularly. This should happen in order to determine their strengths and weaknesses in relation to learning mediation demands in all the tasks and activities the learner should perform well and successfully (Fraser & Maguvhe 2008:88). Other studies have dwelt on the use of ICT for teaching and learning purposes regarding people with visual impairments in schools (Mokiwa & Phasha 2013). Mokiwa and Phaka's (2013) findings of their study on the learning experiences of students with visual impairments using ICT revealed challenges being encountered by the students in mathematical, scientific and accounting signs, accessing graphic learning materials due to the incompatibility of software and the lack of timely access to electronic learning materials among other things. Their suggestions for the improvement of their learning experience using ICT were regular monitoring of their learning experiences and utilising the findings to develop best practices in the integration of ICT into educational practices (Mokiwa & Phaka 2013:147).

Although there have been several studies to aid people with visual impairments in other areas there is a deficiency of studies to establish how people with visual impairments access information and how the research findings could help them in this area. This angle of study is crucial bearing in mind the role knowledgeable citizens play in society (Lewis 2010) and especially if one is not able to see or use one's eyes partially or completely. Such a problem may prevent people from accessing certain things one of which being information. An employment survey concerning people with visual impairments conducted by Wright, McCarty, Burgess and Keeffe (1999) revealed that people with visual impairments (partially sighted) significantly reported more difficulty with reading newspapers. This was one of the very few studies in this area and only focused on partially sighted people and not those who are totally blind (Wright et al 1999). Hence there is need for more research in this area. Most of the

research on the accessibility of services concerning people with visual impairments has been in library services (Akin & Ross 2002; Creaser, Davies & Wisdom 2002; Bonnici, Matta & Wells 2009; Hill 2013). Research conducted by Chang and Chang (2010) to examine the information behaviour of 23 visually impaired users of the National Taiwan Library identified several barriers to accessing information of people with visual impairments, one of which being the deficiency of information media providing information in accessible formats to them. Furthermore, respondents mentioned using libraries to meet their daily life information needs citing the absence of proper media as their major obstacle in gaining needed information (Chang & Chang 2010:312). Another study carried on by Saumure and Given (2002) to investigate alternative formats and methods used by six college and university students with visual impairments to access academic literature in libraries, established that students were unable to access print resources on their own. Instead, they relied on the help of friends, the librarians and volunteers for access (Saumure & Given 2002:5). Saumure and Given's (2002) study was constructed on the supposition that technology has the capability to connect students with academic information. However, according to the findings students also sought the same help with accessing information on the internet (Saumure & Given 2002:5).

A study conducted by Duckett and Pratt (2001) on opinions of people with visual impairments on research concerning them, revealed that people with visual impairments wanted research findings on topic such as their access to the environment, access to information, civil rights, social and financial support as well as attitudes concerning them. In their research, participants were concerned about issues surrounding how and whether general information was disseminated to them regarding either local news or information on services and consumer products and more specific information like that produced by research and medical practice (Duckett & Pratt 2001). This research was conducted in one such area where people with visual impairments required some answers to determine how people with visual impairments access print media information. Unlike other studies that have only focused on people with partially sighted and on one type of print media like newspaper, this research focused on both partially sighted and total blindness. The research also considered both newspapers and magazines as the major print media information vehicles. The

aim of this research was not only to establish existing gaps but also to try to find ways on how the established gaps could be addressed to enable people with visual impairments to access information in print media both in hardcopy as well as electronic. Generally, disability is viewed based on two models; the social model and the medical model (Oliver 1990; Barnes 1992). This research focused on disability/visual impairment as a social problem and not a medical problem.

## **2.4 MEDICAL AND SOCIAL MODELS OF DISABILITY**

For the past few decades, organisations for people with disabilities around the world have endorsed a human rights approach to disability issues (Albert 2004). This approach is based on a social model of disability with the focus on the rights of people with disabilities and the need for a transformed society to be inclusive of everybody regardless of any differences (Oliver 2004). Addressing issues concerning people with disabilities based on the social model means moving away from viewing disability from the medical model perspective (Oliver 1990; 1999). Through the medical model individuals with disabilities are considered as sluggish/sick and therefore incapable of performing much independently, as such, they trust the help of others (Oliver 1990; 1996). In this case medical intervention becomes more control over disability (Smart 2007). Furthermore, the medical model localises problems associated with disability upon the person who has it hence sometimes the social model is understood as an individual model of disability (Oliver 1990:2). In this regard the medical model understands the causes of disability as emanating from the functional limitations or psychological losses assumed to be arising from disability itself (Oliver 1990; 1996). Problems of common stereotyped portrayals of people with disabilities in print media, television and other forms of media have been justified by several studies as emanating from the media's understanding of disability through the medical model (Barnes 1997; Ingrid 2016). The definition of disability from the medical model perspective has therefore received criticisms from the people with disabilities themselves based on two fundamental principles. Firstly, for its assigning of disability within the individual; at an individual level disability is seen as personal tragedy to an unfortunate individual (Oliver 1990; 1996). To consider that the disability exists solely within the individual is as good as privatising the source of the disability, consequently

also privatising the responsibility attribution for its treatment, resting exclusively with the individual and his or her family (Smart 2007:1). This mentality contributes to a discourse of disability that is disabling and disempowering (Stadler 2006). Secondly, it assumes that causes of disability emanate from disability itself rather than from society (Oliver 1990:2). The medical model was therefore challenged by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) arguing that it was a justification of their dependence and exclusion from the mainstream of life including education, work, mobility, housing, access to information and many others (UPIAS 1976: 15). According to the UPIAS these barriers are caused by the way the society is constructed and not by people with disabilities themselves, hence disability was better off being understood through the social model as opposed to the medical model of disability.

The social model holds that people with disabilities are restricted from participation within the mainstream of society as a result of being excluded by physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers including inaccessible education, information and communication systems, working environments, inadequate disability benefits, discriminatory health and social support services, inaccessible transport, houses and public buildings and amenities, and the devaluing of disabled people through negative images in the media – films, television and newspapers (Carson 2009:10).

According to Riley (2005) the way disability is constructed and how people with disabilities are perceived in the media is capable of yielding either positive or negative impacts on how society views disability. Furthermore, research has revealed terminology and language as key issues in the improvement of portraying people with disabilities in the media (NDA 1996). The findings from various studies established that the application and understanding of degrading terminologies concerning disability can change over time. Words which were once used to portray disability may stop carrying the same meaning or even be understood by future audiences (Ingrid 2016). Research has shown that the media's change of approach in viewing disability through the social model of disability standpoint has been capable of bringing about positive perceptions of people with disabilities (Penas 2007). Various researchers have argued that understanding disability using the social model would make it possible to eliminate all the social barriers being faced by people with disabilities (Oliver 1990; Barnes 1992; Penas 2007; Ingrid 2016). A number of scholars are in

agreement that the media's change of approach in viewing disability from the medical model point of view to the social model through its choice of words, images and stories may influence positive thinking and establish inclusive social norms (Barnes 1992; Catlett 1993; Farnell & Smith 1999; Inimah, Mukulu & Mathooko 2012; Smedema, Grist-Gordon & Ebener 2012; Lorenz 2016; Sanchez 2010). According to Barnes (1992), a change of approach by the media in portraying disability can help increase awareness throughout society about the realities faced by people with disabilities, lessen stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices, and promote awareness of their capabilities and contributions.

Farnell and Smith (1999) carried out a secondary analysis of data from the National Organization on Disability survey for their research to look at the relationship between viewing habits of specific television programmes and movies and perceptions of people with disabilities. The disabilities included people with blindness, deafness, autism, cerebral palsy, down syndrome and using a wheelchair. The findings were that exposing people to some positive images of individuals with disabilities on television and in movies was likely to produce positive perceptions of those with disabilities. An experiment to establish the impact of humorous media on attitudes towards people with disabilities conducted by Smedema et al (2012) having participants watch short films about individuals with disabilities established that after controlling for previous contact with people with disabilities viewers developed significantly more positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. Furthermore, Lorenz (2016) conducted an online survey of a television program *Glee* featuring characters with disabilities with the main character using a wheelchair. The survey was aimed at exploring the relationship between viewing habits and beliefs about individuals with disabilities. The findings revealed that the identification with the main character correlated with frequency of viewing as well as more positive beliefs about individuals with disabilities. This is an indication that viewing certain media content featuring individuals with disabilities can bring about positive perceptions and beliefs about disabilities.

Although some research has shown that the media's change of approach in viewing disability from the medical model to the social model of disability has been capable of



bringing positive perception of people with disabilities, other research has proven otherwise. A study by Briant and Watson (2013) established that using the social model the media in the UK have recently changed in the way of reporting disability from sympathetic portrayals to demonising them as a new 'folk devil'. According to their study such portrayal of disability is due to the need economic recovery in the country after the financial crises of 2007/8 and the ensuing global recession (Briant & Watson 2013:5). Hence one of the key steps towards this recovery was a reduction of the "burgeoning welfare burden" disability benefit schemes which sees people with disability getting financial support from the UK government (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development OECD 2009:5, 9).

The label of "non-deserving" 'folk devils' particularly refers to those with mental and other non-visible chronic illnesses as an objection to their receiving welfare support; those with a physical or sensory impairment are seen to be more deserving (Briant & Watson 2013:12). According to Stone (1984:28) disability as a social construct is different from other categories such as childhood, old age and parenting which are "totally independent of the will of the individual". It is historically contingent and "connected in the public consciousness with the possibility of deception" and this association means the category of disability requires "a benchmark for distinguishing the genuine from the artificial" (ibid: 32). The new labeling of a section of people with disabilities as a folk devil has been raised as a concern as it could lay the groundwork for removal of some of the support structures that benefit people with disabilities hence furthering the oppression they experience (Briant & Watson 2013:16). Finkelstein (1981) argues that the "barrier free environment" is an unsustainable myth. Abberley (1996) also points out this limitation claiming that it is impossible to create a barrier-free utopia in which all people with disabilities can get employment. He further argues that no matter how much can be invested and energy committed to create employment opportunities, there will always be a residuum of people who will be unable to work due to their impairments (Abberley 1996).

Although it has some weaknesses the social model possesses many devoted supporters and has been adopted by many countries including South Africa. Kercher (2008:30) asserts that

If we admit the concept of disability as any concomitant circumstance that complicates a person's ability to interface and interact with the environment and with other people (the 'social model' of disability), then it is straightaway clear that the right way of eliminating it is not by somehow expecting to alter the individual in question, but by removing the root cause: the obstacles to interaction that litter our environment.

The social model is also in line with the country's effort to eliminate possible societal discriminating barriers against people with disabilities according to the country's constitution (WPRPD 2015:18). South Africa embraced the model to promote human rights for people with disabilities which is also the essence of this research particularly in terms of their access to print media information.

#### **2.4.1 The Social Model and Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

The social model is an influential approach that connects all people with disabilities in their shared quest to fight for their rights and equality (Albert 2004). Within the social model the way society is organised to exclude people with disabilities is what is considered disabling and not impairment. Hence disability activists through their organisations have been increasingly coming together to fight for their rights on this basis (Albert 2004; Oliver 2004). Lindqvist (2000), at the UN Special Rapporteur on Disability made this speech:

Disability is a human rights issue! I repeat: disability is a human rights issue. Those of us who happen to have a disability are fed up being treated by the society and our fellow citizens as if we did not exist or as if we were aliens from outer space. We are human beings with equal value, claiming equal rights...If asked, most people, including politicians and other decision makers, agree with us. The problem is that they do not realize the consequences of this principle and they are not ready to take action accordingly.

The recognition of disability as a fundamental human rights issue is a recent phenomenon which has been developing slowly around the world during the previous three decades (Kirakosyan 2013). Until lately people with disabilities have not been explicitly acknowledged in obligatory instruments of human rights international law. According to Ray (2007) the concept of human rights entails natural rights of all humankind. Orend (2002:34) describes human rights as "general moral rights demanded by everyone and held against everyone, particularly those who run social

institutions”. There were several international and regional human rights norms and instruments specifically concerned with the population of people with disability, but these were generally insufficient to guarantee their rights (Beetham 1999). In fact, according to Mercer and Rhona (2007:548) even today, fewer than 50 countries around the globe have anti-discrimination laws to protect people with disabilities, and those nations are particularly located in the developed states. Even though efforts were made by civil society organisations internationally to push for a particular convention on disability rights, and numerous disability-related affirmations and treaties were instigated by the United Nations, people with disabilities were still not included in the UN’s Millennium Development Goals in 2001 (Albert 2004). About 80% of people with disabilities reside in developing countries and account for a substantial share of the poor in these states (UN Factsheet 2012). As Kirakosyan (2013), there is ample evidence of the degree of oppression and invisibility that millions of people with disabilities have long experienced worldwide.

The outcome of viewing disability using social model was the establishment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 (UN Factsheet 2012). All the underlying principles for the protection and promotion of the human rights of people with disabilities are contained in the Articles of the Convention. South Africa adopted the UNCRPD in 2007 and this was due to the culmination of long-term struggles of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide to secure a particular agreement on disability rights to start addressing this situation (Kirakosyan 2013). Since its adoption the South African government, under pressure from disability rights groups, has embarked on numerous steps to write policies to implement the UNCRPD. The adoption of the UNCRPD marked the beginning of the human rights approach to disability and the confirmation of the shift from the medical model of disability to social model (UN Factsheet 2012; Kirakosyan 2013).

The structure of the UNCRPD (2006) comprises an introductory set of requirements that outlines its purpose and key definitions, along with broad or cross-cutting applications. Among the obligations of the UNCRPD, states parties must

- a) Adopt legislative, administrative and other methods to implement rights;

- b) eradicate or amend existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against people with disabilities;
- c) adopt an inclusive means to protecting and promoting the rights of people with disabilities in all policies and programmes. With regards to economic, social and cultural rights, government parties must take measures to realise these rights progressively to the superlative extent of existing resources.

The UNCRPD (2006) sets forward explicit fundamental rights covering civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (articles 10-30). Disability rights advocates and African government delegations argued for a treaty that was inclusive in its approach, incorporating political, economic, social, civil and cultural rights. They likewise asserted that the embedded interrelationship between disability and poverty be exposed in the text, hence contributing references to disability-inclusive poverty alleviation programmes and creating overtly the right to an ample living standard (Lord & Stein 2013). The UNCRPD (2006) also institutes a system of monitoring and implementation (articles 31-40) and includes provisions that govern the operation of the treaty (articles 41-50). What is significant and attributable in part to African lobbying, is that particular obstacles that constrain the implementation of disability rights in the African context are predictable and accounted for in the text (Lord & Stein 2010). For example, the need to safeguard that international cooperation programming is inclusive of people with disabilities was included in article 32 as an implementation measure (ibid.). Similarly, persistence by African state representatives on the requirement of guidance to delineate the population of people with disabilities for whom the treaty was conscripted facilitated the creation of a definitional baseline in article 1 (Lord & Stein 2009). The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) became the framework for national level monitoring as stated in article 33 of the UNCRPD, a move that was facilitated by African national human rights institution participation in the UNCRPD negotiations along with several disability-specific African commissions (Lord & Stein 2010). The committee on the rights of people with disabilities is responsible for monitoring implementation by the state through obligatory state reporting and through making recommendations (UNCRPD 2006). An Optional Protocol to the UNCRPD, encompassed in 18 articles, offers the committee the capability to examine individual grievances and initiate inquiries regarding the alleged

violations of the convention by the state to the Protocol (Lord & Stein 2013). Lastly, it bears observing that the UNCRPD drafters desired and enumerated the active participation of people with disabilities and their organisations in the conception, implementation, and monitoring of every facet of the treaty (Lord & Stein 2008).

One of the most crucial human rights in relation to people with disabilities is their access to information which in return may equip them with yet another crucial right, the right to public participation (Rowe & Frewer 2000). According to Rowe and Frewer (2000) public participation entails the inclusion or the involvement of the public in activities such as agenda setting, policy formulation and decision-making processes in an organisation. It holds that people who are affected by certain decisions have the right to be part of decision-making processes (Rowe & Frewer 2000). Hence the implication is that the public's contribution will influence the decision (Marzuki 2015). The concept of public participation is synonymous with democracy, involvement, engagement, transparency and good governance viewed as a practice of empowerment (Bozo & Hiemer 2016). Just like everyone else, people with disabilities need an equal voice in democratic debates as well as the chance to advocate for change (Barnartt, Schriener & Scotch 2001). Such involvement and participation in public policy efforts can bring about an emancipatory outcome, as people who are marginalised are now able to feel part of something, and consequently become more knowledgeable of their civic rights and responsibilities (Lewis 2010). Research recognizes the significance of direct participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of civic engagement and policy debates as a means to creating or influencing change (Hahn 1985). Civic engagement can help people with disabilities to develop self-efficacy, develop personal interests and promote social integration (Hahn 1985; Barnartt et al 2001; Zola 2005). And as stated by Harris, Randall and De Ruiter (2012) fostering the engagement of people with disabilities will help to put an end to the continuation of new policies being based on the cycles of political marginalisation they had always experienced. Hence participation of people with disabilities in public decision-making processes will make it more responsive to their real situation, and enhance innovation and efficiency (Zola 2005).

This process of public participation can also lead to transformative social change as people with disabilities have more agencies (Hahn 1985; Zola 2005). Organisations of people with disabilities can contribute to good governance by holding accountable authorities consequently making them responsive to their needs (Bozo & Hiemer 2016). Government authorities themselves could also be benefitting from such contributions, which also provide an opportunity to witness the valuable contribution people with disabilities can make in society (Rowe & Frewer 2000). According to Estlund, (2002) and Held, (2006), access to information is the first basic and important right which is underlying the whole process of public participation. Hence for people with disabilities to be fully engaging in public participation the key role lies in the media.

## **2.5 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Raeijmaekers and Maesele (2015) assert that society is complex and heterogeneous. Society contains a multiplicity of groups with competing interests (Sjøvaag 2016). From such diversity in competing interests there is a possibility of the creation of one strong group dominating the system. Avoiding the dominance of one strong group can only be done primarily through negotiation (Jeffres, Cutietta, Sekerka & Lee 2000). For all the competing interests to be accommodated in the democratic society there is a need in that society for a mechanism to operate as a space through which members of the society should be able to encounter the expressions of other members (Keane 1991). In this case media become the central mechanism or sphere of public debate. Various interests seek access to the media to compete over ideas with the aim of attaining majority support so that their ideas can be transformed into political action (Sjøvaag 2016). According to the Consecutive UK government's White Paper on Media Ownership (1995:62);

A free and diverse media forms a crucial part of the democratic process. They offer the diversity of voices and opinions that informs the public, influences opinion, and engenders political debate. They promote the culture of dissent which any healthy democracy must have. If one voice becomes too powerful, this process is placed in jeopardy and democracy is damaged.

The general belief is that the media in a democratic society should reflect different interests, values and cultures and provide access to the widest possible range of

voices (Sjøvaag 2016). This key role of the media as promoters of democracy has been recognised since the late 17th century, and it remains a fundamental principle of modern-day democratic theory and practice (Holmes 1991). Marshall's (1964) theorisation of citizenship asserts that for citizens to exercise their political, cultural, civil and social rights in their society or country, the media landscape needs to be diverse. The diverse media provide citizens with diverse information sources, enabling them to distinguish fact from opinion in government and corporate handling of issues of public importance, and makes cultural rights easily achieved by ensuring that forms of cultural expression that are suppressed in the mainstream public find their way into the public domain (Duncan & Reld 2013). People exercising their citizenship rights effectively have a responsibility of becoming informed (Firestone, 2010). As access to information is crucial to public participation, one of the most important tasks faced by journalists is to write about people who are unlike themselves in essential ways (Whitten-Woodring 2009). Moreover, according to Whitten-Woodring (2009) whether a source is of different religious faith, social class or economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability, journalists are supposed to deliver accurately that person's viewpoint, ideas or worldview regardless of profound differences.

Fiorino (1990) argues that information signifies a basic and crucial element in participatory processes particularly when they are aimed at nurturing informed decisions. According to the 2007 International Association for Public Participation (IAP2 2007) one of the core values for the best practice in any public participatory processes is the necessity of informing participants. Hence as argued by the IAP2 (2007:1), public participation equips participants with necessary information to participate in a meaningful way. In a wider context adequate access to information is of paramount significance for democratic societies, and a lack of information impedes democratic dialogue and political discourse (Jaeger 2007). As a tool for informed dialogue, information can be denied by those in power of the selection and provision of information and the influence of this power on the content of a discussion (Abelson, Forest, Eyles, Smith, Martin & Gauvin 2003). Therefore, access to a practical means of information is one of the key principles in the assessment of participatory processes (Tuler & Webler 1999; Rowe & Frewer 2000; Edwards, Hindmarsh, Mercer, Bond & Rowland 2008).

For the whole community to be included, journalists must come up with ways to ensure the reflection of all community members in their coverage including the minority groups (Doyle 2002). From a sociological conception that focuses on power and problematizes discrimination, a minority is a group of people who, due to their physical or cultural characteristics, are isolated from the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore view themselves as objects of collective discrimination (Wirth 1945). The minority group existing in a society indicates the existence of a corresponding dominant group with higher social status and greater privileges (Wirth 1945; Picard 1985). The notion of minority carries with it the exclusion from full participation in the life of the society (Wirth 1945). As a minority group, people with disability, especially those with visual impairments, have been isolated from general society due to the lack of proper information sources (Chang & Chang 2010). Consequently, this has restricted their opportunities to participate in public debates (Donoghue 2003). Disability policies have classically been developed without the direct involvement or participation of people with disabilities (Braddock & Parish 2001; Garcia-Iriarte, Kramer, Hammel & Kramer 2008). Furthermore, elected officials seldom ask for the input of people with disabilities (Silverstein 2010). The lack of involvement of people with disabilities in public participation may have lesser self-efficacy than others (Braddock & Parish 2001; Silverstein 2010). Even by looking at the inequalities being experienced by people with disabilities in terms of access to information, education and employment, people with disabilities do not consider themselves as being able to impact the political system (Schur, Shields & Schriener 2003). Being unable to appear in the media as public participants may lead to people with disabilities viewing themselves as not belonging to the society in which they live (Sjøvaag 2016). The media's production of information must be done in such a way as to accommodate people with disabilities both in terms of accessing the information and appearing in the actual content coverage. For people with visual impairments in relation to print media this means the media working on both their print as well as their electronic vehicles of distributing information for the inclusion of people with visual impairments. Currently people with visual impairments are still facing challenges even in accessing electronic information.



A study conducted by Hollier (2007) in Australia on the impact of computing and Internet-related technologies established that while people with visual impairments possess a high level of computing and Internet expertise plus having the will power to be using these technologies, they are faced with barriers due to issues relating to the perception of disability in society in federal and state government policy, corporate policy, mainstream computing products, assistive technologies, real-time online communication, poverty and a lack of educational opportunities (Hollier 2007:47). This is despite the belief in the capability of digital technologies to break traditional barriers to interaction, communication, and access to information for people with disabilities (Raja 2016). Such challenges are the basis of the disability digital divide.

## **2.6 DISABILITY DIGITAL DIVIDE**

There is a disconnect between what we know can be achieved by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for people with disabilities and what is happening on the ground in the real life situation pertaining to the widespread adoption and delivery of accessible ICT (Raja 2016:20). The term 'digital divide' is widely used in the field of ICT to mean general barriers that are there in accessing ICT (Hollier 2007). The term disability digital divide refers to the barriers encountered specifically by people with disabilities to utilise ICT (Hollier 2007; Raja 2016). The exclusion and marginalization of people with disabilities in any form is both a human right and an economic issue for countries (Raja 2016). According to the World Health Organisation and World Bank (2011), when a substantial segment of society, projected at 15% of the global population, experience difficulties in attaining an education, transitioning into the labour market, and being economically self-sufficient, it does not only undermine their rights and dignity but also significantly adds to a country's welfare burden. The significance of technology to people with disabilities is reflected in a quotation from Mary Pat Radabaugh, the former IBM National Support Center for people with disabilities, when she says: "Generally technology makes things easier for most people but for those with disabilities, it makes things possible" (National Council on Disability 1993:2).

Information and Communication Technology is progressively enabling people with disabilities to level the playing fields in terms of access to lifelong education,

development skills, as well as employment (Broadband Commission for Digital Development, G3ict, IDA, ITU, Microsoft, The Telecentre.org Foundation & UNESCO 2013). However, as stated by Samant, Matter and Harniss (2012) technology advancements alone are insufficient to bridge the gaps in the socioeconomic inclusion of people with disabilities. Their operation, adaptation and readiness for inclusive development remain reliant on other factors within the ecosystem (Samant et al 2012; Jayakar 2012; Verma 2012). Evidence indicates that the success of using the internet for the inclusion of people with disabilities is greatly impacted by several factors. Firstly, stakeholders' acquaintance and awareness of available ICT solutions, laws and policies, and the capability of different stakeholders to support accessible ICT services (Samant et al 2012). Hence the consequences of the disability digital divide are mostly related to accessibility of devices in terms of accessibility and usability challenges of universally used electronic devices, and their not being compatible with the requirements of assistive technologies used by people with disabilities (Verma 2012). Secondly, the cost of devices in relation to expenses associated with the purchase and use of ICTs and broadband technologies such as computers and mobile devices (Jayakar 2012). Thirdly, accessibility of content itself such as inaccessible web pages, the complexity of new media applications, lack of alternative text and captioning (Hollier 2007; Jayakar 2012; Verma 2012). Finally, user demand, which concerns the discomfort that people have with technology, lack of awareness of the benefits of ICTs, and the lack of supportive legal and regulatory frameworks (Hollier 2007; Verma 2012).

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Commerce released data pertaining to computer and broadband penetration in households for people with and without disabilities (Jayakar 2012). According to the released data, of 119.13 million households, 16.38 million households were estimated to have at least one individual with a disability. Out of these 16.38 million households, 7.6 million (46.4%) did not have a computer or other access device; the comparable figures for households without disabilities were 20.2 million households (19.7% of total households without disability). In other words, approximately half of all households with disabilities had no computer, whereas only one-fifth of those households without disabilities were without computers. Correspondingly, higher percentages of households with disabilities among

households with computers had no internet connectivity, or only low-quality dial-up connections compared to households without disabilities. Thus, only about 80% of households with disabilities with computers had broadband, compared to nearly 90% of households without disabilities (Jakayar 2012). Another study by the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project on the technology profile of people with disabilities in the USA based on telephone interviews of about 3,000, adults established that people with disabilities subscribed to broadband at lower rates, and at slower connection speeds than those without disabilities (Fox 2011). These results were also confirmed through data analysis from the FCC's Broadband Service Capability Survey by Horrigan (2010) on broadband adoption and online behaviour. Horrigan (2010) found that 39% of people with disabilities did not have access to broadband while only 15% did. The analysis also found that people with disabilities used a smaller number of online services than users without disabilities: on average, 12% users with disabilities participated in fewer online activities. 37% of people with disabilities but non-users stated cost as a barrier. 25% of those with disabilities but non-users also mentioned digital literacy as a drawback (Horrigan 2010:38). Finance/income challenges as well as barriers from lack of technical training are also drawbacks for people with visual impairments (Wu 2018). These findings were established from a study done by Wu (2018) on the barriers that people with visual impairments encounter in accessing online information. The findings were that due to unemployment most people with visual impairments find assistive devices too costly with specialist software often costing hundreds of pounds, which is beyond the reach of most users with visual impairments (Wu 201). There are similar trends in South Africa. *News24* and *IOL* aired a report on the exorbitant cost of internet data in South Africa. A 2017 survey undertaken by Registered Investment Advisors (RIA) indicate that the majority of South Africans remain marginalised from the digital vision of the National Development Plan (NDP), affordability being the major contributing factor. People with disabilities constitute the majority of unemployed people it is most likely that access to information online is not an option to majority of them (RIA 2017). The lack of technical skills as a barrier to the use of ICT was also identified in an extensive investigation on the use of ICT in South African schools carried out by the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE). It was shown from this study that the

use of ICT in schools was unsuccessful due to the lack of proper training of teachers. There was a lack of experience in the usage of ICT among both educators and learners (SAIDE 2003). Serero (2010) also did a similar study in 2014 specifically focusing on schools for learners with visual impairments in Gauteng to determine if educators who teach these learners in these schools have the necessary knowledge and skills to use ICTs. Serero's (2010) research was based on the use of computers as assistive devices. His research outcomes also produced similar results on the lack of experience in using ICTs by teachers and learners (Serero 2010:107). These findings also correspond to the conclusions of research done by Nkosi (2007) on integrating technology into learning and teaching practice, showing that educators also lacked computer technology skills.

The inaccessibility of the World Wide Web (WWW) also remains a barrier to the accessibility of ICT to people with disabilities according to Adam and Kreps (2006) and this is due to severe lack of awareness on the side of web developers, companies, and institutions that purchase web-based products about accessible web design issues (Byerley & Chambers 2002). A study conducted in South Africa by the South African Journal of Information Management on accessibility of South African websites to users with visual impairments found that the majority of the respondents (63%) responded that the Websites were inaccessible to them while 12.5% did not know or had not given the matter any thought (Venter & Lotriet 2005:6). Reasons cited on the inaccessibility of the Graphic User Interface (GUI) and the WWW were the functional limitations of screen readers to only be able to read text that is printed (not painted). Braille embossers can only translate computer-generated text into embossed Braille output for users with visual impairments, but are unable to transfer graphics or any other non-textual elements (Byerley & Chambers 2002; Venter & Lotriet 2005). To enhance accessibility other commonly used techniques are applied like switching graphics display off in the browser and increasing the font size on a page. However, this can only be possible if both the browser and the website allow such changes (Venter & Lotriet 2005; Hollier 2007). Speech recognition systems which enable the user to give voice commands for entering data, as opposed to using a keyboard, need to be tuned in such a way to understand the language and grammar of the user which is time-consuming and usually delivers unsatisfactory results (Hollier 2007).

The lack of enabling legal and regulatory frameworks is another factor causing the disability digital divide and a challenge faced by people with disabilities (Venter & Lotriet 2005; Raja 2016:20). Legislation, regulations, and policies play a very important role in advancing availability, acquisition, and use of accessible ICT (Raja 2016). Policy barriers are usually related to a lack of awareness of existing laws and regulations that require programmes and activities for people with disabilities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020). Absence of policy implementation and/or nonexistence of implementation mechanisms that are effective and the deficiency of policies to nurture the extensive availability of ICTs were identified as the two other factors which reinforce the disability digital divide. These emerged from a survey of 150 experts on the challenges of ICT accessibility in inclusive education and employment conducted by the G3ict (Broadband Commission for Digital Development, G3ict, IDA, ITU, Microsoft, The Telecentre.org Foundation, and UNESCO 2013).

The findings of all these studies conclude that solutions enabling the full accommodation of people with visual impairments are still proving very difficult. The internet uses assistive devices such as modified computer keyboards, audio web browsers and screen readers with speech or Braille output to provide access to electronic text. However, providing a good response depends on the design of the web environment (Stewart & Narendra 2005). To try to address this problem focusing on the social model of disability and the promotion of human rights the South African government included the aspect of universal design as a strategy to enhance inclusion of people with disabilities in terms of access/accessibility (WPRPD 2015).

## **2.7 UNIVERSAL DESIGN**

According to the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (2020) the concept as the design implies the composition of an environment which can be accessed, understood, and utilised to the maximum extent possible by everyone despite their size, age, gender, ability or disability. The UNCRPD and the WPRPD (2015:15) define Universal Design as the “design of products, environments, programmes and services that should be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design”. The fundamental principle of Universal Design is the acknowledgment of diversity of humankind rather than the average individual

impression (Mace 1998). As such Universal Design is the essential tool for achieving universal access as it is a fundamental condition of good design (Mace 1998; Ingrid 2016). The implication of universal access is that all residents “have equal opportunity and access to use services, products, systems and environments regardless of their social and/or economic situation, religious or cultural background, gender or functional limitation” (UNCRPD 2015:57).

The WPRPD (2015:15) puts forth two aspects to universal access which are direct and indirect access

- 1) **Direct Access:** “Strongly linked to Universal Design, direct access represents direct adaptations of products, environments, services or system designs that significantly improve their accessibility”.
- 2) **Indirect Access:** “This is the actual use of assistive devices and technology such as wheelchairs and screen readers, and refers to product, environment (rural and urban), service or system interfaces that enable an add-on assistive **device** to provide the user with full access”.

South Africa has put in place directives for the development of standards of universal design for the country. The UNCRPD (2015) issued directives to the South African Bureau of Standards to accelerate the development of universal design access standards across all products that impact on the lives of people with disabilities. And these standards must reflect the key principles of the concept of universal design which are

- *Equitable use:* to be useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities
- *Flexibility in use:* To accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
- *Simple and intuitive:* The usage is easy to understand, despite the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level
- *Perceptible information:* Communicates necessary information effectively to the user, despite their sensory disability

- *Tolerance for error*: Minimisation of hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
- *low physical effort*: Able to be used efficiently, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue, and
- *Size and space for approach and use*: Of appropriate size and the provision of space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the users' body size, posture, or mobility.

The development and implementation of these guidelines, according to the UNCRPD (2015) directives, must be carried out and followed by not only all public institutions but also all those that are privately owned. The concept universal design is directly related to the concept of universal accessibility in that the application of universal design will achieve universal accessibility. "A universally accessible facility, environment, product, system or service will accommodate a wide variety of groups of society appropriately, safely, and with dignity, as well as optimizing their functionality in the system or environment in which they operate" (WPRPD 2015:57).

## **2.8 UNIVERSAL ACCESS/IBILITY AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

The term "access" means *inter alia* the capability and right to enter, use and benefit from something (Hill 2013; Ingrid 2016). The terms "access" and "accessibility" are interrelated and frequently used interchangeably (Ingrid 2016). The term accessibility is defined by Ingrid (2016) as a general term used in describing the degree to which a device, service, product, or environment is obtainable by as many people as possible. Accessibility can also be understood as the "capacity to access" and conceivable benefit of a certain system or entity. Hill (2013:138) describes accessibility as encompassing accessible formats and services both physical and virtual. Physical accessibility entails the ability to physically access facilities, goods and services by all sections of the population and specifically the vulnerable and marginalised, while accessing virtual environments involves being able to utilize online services such as websites (Hill 2013). The meaning of accessibility as held by the WPRPD (2015:53) under article 9 is that people with disabilities are able to access transportation services on an equal basis with others, and other services such as information as well as

communications services; also included are all amenities that are meant for public use in rural areas and in urban areas. Considering these literal interpretations with regards to print media the suggestion could be *inter alia* the ability, right, benefit or opportunity to access print media information. The implication of this article is therefore that people with visual impairments must be able to access print media services on an equal basis with others, as a pre-condition for participation in society and in the economy for people with disabilities (Raja 2016). Goldberg (2007) argues that access to media and services are not just desired, but also required to ensure that all people can work, learn and be entertained equally.

Accessibility of print media to people with visual impairments therefore entails their ability to access print media in terms of coverage, reading print media information as well as being employed in print media. The key findings of a study on representation of people with disabilities in the Flemish print media by Goethals, Mortelmans and Van Hove (2016) were that there was profoundly limited coverage, or even total lack of representation of certain disabilities in certain media sources. Visual impairment was among the disabilities rarely covered along with auditory, autistic, behavioural and learning impairments (Goethals et al 2016:114). Exclusion from employment is another major barrier faced by people with visual impairments in their endeavours to earn a living and to display and use their endowments of the benefit of society (Adams 2019). According to the research findings by Ashfaq (2007) although some people with visual impairments are already working in the media industry, very few blind individuals are able to go far in their media professional career. Accessing print media in terms of reading information has also been reported as a major challenge being encountered by people with visual impairments (Wright et al 1999).

Generally, people with disabilities are still facing enormous pragmatic and social barriers particularly due to the lack of information. Programmatic barriers are a result of limitations in the effective delivery of a public health or healthcare programmes due to the lack of information on people with disabilities who are patients or participants (Houtenville & Boege 2019). Social barriers are experienced by people with disabilities due to the lack of information about education and employment opportunities (ibid.). The World Bank 2020 asserts that there is a relationship between lack of information,



ill health and poverty. The lack of information on social need such as health, education and employment opportunities is a major cause of poverty (Houtenville & Boege 2019; The World Bank 2020). Ill health is a major cause of poverty due to the lack of information on appropriate health promoting practices (The World Bank 2020). Research affirms that people with disabilities particularly those with visual impairments are mostly at risk of being excluded from access to information (Brophy & Craven 2007). Consequently, in their ecological study on information-seeking by blind and sight impaired citizens study, Williamson, Schauder and Bow (2000) concluded that people with visual impairments deserve to be provided with a variety of ways of meeting their information needs, as they are available to people with normal sight. With the inevitable ongoing impact of the information age on people with disabilities and bearing in mind the challenges they face when using ICT, a more accommodating strategy needed to be found and implemented so that people with disabilities can participate equitably in the information economy (Abuaddous, Jali & Basir 2016; Raja 2016). This led to the introduction of Accessibility Design by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

## **2.9 WEB ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN**

Web Accessibility Design is an initiative introduced by WAI on the techniques and guidelines to be followed for the accessibility of internet and websites. WAI (2020) defines Web Accessibility Design as fundamentally designing the Web to work for everyone, regardless of their hardware, software, language, location, disability or ability. When the Web achieves this goal, it means it is accessible to people with a diverse range of vision, hearing, cognitive ability and movement (WAI 2020). For the past ten years, websites and technology have experienced acceleration in evolution; however, this evolution has never been paired with web accessibility (Hanson & Richards 2013). Since May 1999 WAI has published several guidelines and standards in relation to the web and internet with the purpose of achieving of Web Accessibility. Web accessibility means that websites, tools, and technologies are designed and developed so that people with disabilities can use, perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with as well as contribute to the Web as they desire (Baguma & Jude 2008; Venter & Lotriet 2008; WAI 2020). It is vital to provide equal opportunities for

all citizens, particularly people with disabilities, so that they also acquire online print media information relayed on websites as anyone else (Bakhsh & Mehmood 2012). In order for print media distributed on websites to be accessible to people with visual impairments, website owners need to adhere to these Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and standards. These accessibility standards are managed by an organisation known as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) (O'Reilly 2005).

Web accessibility according to the W3C (2002) refers to accessibility of content on websites by anyone irrespective of surfing technology. It entails that the accessed information is fully understood by users as well as users being able to interact with the websites as they please (W3C 2002). According to Bakhsh and Mehmood (2012) in order to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities, managers should pay attention to the design and implementation of their websites. These guidelines and techniques put forward by WAI to ensure Web Accessibility include Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) which addresses accessibility issues within a website (Harper & Yesilada 2008). Web Content Accessibility Guidelines deal with the information in a website, including images, text, forms and sounds and guidelines are grouped according to three priority checkpoints (WAI 2002). Priority one checkpoints are concerned with absolute barriers for users with disabilities priority two checkpoints are concerned with significant barriers for users with disabilities and priority three checkpoints are for providing additional accessibility support for users with disabilities (WAI 2002; Tania 2003; Wildemuth, Campbell & Haines 2005). The first ever introduced WCAG was WCAG 1.0 established in 1999 and in 2008 the WCAG 1.0 became upgraded to the WCAG 2.0 with recommendations by the W3C. The WCAG 2.0 encompasses 12 guidelines organised in four principles (Harper & Yesilada 2008; WCAG 2012). However according to Power, Freire, Petrie and Swallow (2012) although upgraded, the WCAG 2.0 still appears not to entirely address the accessibility issues in fulfilling the needs of users with visual impairments. The findings of research by Ferati, Vogel, Kurti, Raufi and Astals (2017) on Web Accessibility Requirements and design issues for people with visual impairments were that the application of WCAG is often insufficient for users with visual impairments. This was due to some overlooked factors, mainly regarding efficiency and satisfaction (Ferati et al 2017:81). Various studies on the evaluation of accessibility of websites to people with disabilities

have also been conducted focusing on government websites (Bakhsh & Mehmood 2012). According to Ivory and Chevalier (2002) government websites are crucial for the government-citizen relationship; however, most websites are not designed to be accessed by people with disabilities (Baguma, Wanyama, Bommel & Ogao 2007), the most affected ones being people with visual impairments (Ferati et al 2017). Apart from evaluations of usability of government websites, various studies have also been on domains such as library websites and universities' websites (Mustafa & Al-Zoua'bi 2008). However according to Mustafa and Al-Zoua'bi (2008) there is not much known of the evaluation of print media websites.

To ensure Web Accessibility WAI also put forward guidelines and techniques like User Agent Accessibility Guidelines (UAAG) which addresses assistive devices, media players and web browsers (Bureau of Internet Accessibility 2017). Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA) which explains a method to produce dynamic web applications (WAI 2016). Evaluation And Report Language (EARL) which is a language format to facilitate test results processing (WAI 2018) and Indie User Interface (Indie UI) which defines a system for user activities to be communicated to web applications (WAI 2002).

The excellence of web designs that are accessible are evaluated based on the browser independency, layout, colour scheme and some special requirements of using adaptive or assistive devices (W3C 1999; Bakhsh & Mehmood 2012). Web designs that are user friendly are those that are accessible, particularly to people with visual impairment and are said to have been designed using the above standards and guidelines (W3C 1999).

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter was positioned to discuss all the issues surrounding this particular study. The review established challenges being faced by people with disabilities in accessing information, be it through physical or virtual libraries and government websites. The gaps identified in the review is that not much research has been undertaken regarding how people with visual impairments access print media information both physical and virtue, as well as the lack of research to evaluate print media websites if they follow

the WCAG and/or if the followed guidelines are of helpful to people with visual impairments. Bearing in mind the social model of disability as a tool for promoting human rights for people with disabilities as well as the effort made by South Africa to adopt human rights policies for the benefit of people with disabilities, this research aimed at reinforcing the need for print media to act in a manner to fulfilling the country's vision by offering people with visual impairments information in formats accessible to them. The research achieved its purpose being grounded on two media theories, namely Uses and Gratification and Social Responsibility which are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the theories underpinning this research. As stipulated by Muredzi (2018:2), theories are there to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, mostly to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limitations of critical bounding suppositions. Yiannakis (1992:8) states that conducting a research without it being theoretically informed and is not grounded in the prevailing body of knowledge is incapable of raising and examining conceptually grounded questions, and will lead to outcomes that are narrow and with ungeneralisable value. Hence, a theoretical framework is a structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study (Muredzi 2018:3) and it guides the researcher in determining what things they will measure, and what statistical relationships to look for. Theories according to Muredzi (2018:4) also provide the researcher with guidelines for data analysis. Thus, as Eisenhart (1991:205) puts it, a theoretical framework consists of the selected theory/theories that guide the researcher's thinking on how to understand and plan the research topic, as well as identifying concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to the research topic. Furthermore, theories provide a framework on how to philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the research/study as a whole (Grant & Osanloo 2014:12). The theories underpinning this research are the Uses and Gratification and the Social Responsibility theories. In this chapter the histories of the two theories will be discussed, their useful principles and how they were applied in this research.

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and the Social Responsibility Theory (SRT) were selected to frame/support this research because this study looked at both the audience and the media; the audience in the sense that people with disabilities need information to satisfy their various needs and the media in the sense of how they play their role to ensure that such information is accessible to all people irrespective of their circumstances. The two selected forms of media were therefore selected to focus on the questions "What do people do with media?" and "What do media do to people?" In the following discussions I will first discuss the Uses and Gratification Theory followed by the Social Responsibility Theory.

### 3.2 THE USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

Studying the needs, motifs, and satisfaction of media users is of utmost importance (Ruggiero 2000). The Uses and Gratification Theory, also known as the need seeking theory, is one of the communication theories that focus on social communications and it acclimates a functionalistic approach to communications and media (Mahrad & Tajer 2016:2). It is regarded as one of the most powerful theories in media research (Roy 2009:878). The theory states that the most important role played by the media is to fulfil the needs and motivations of the audience and the more such needs are met, the more satisfaction is generated (Windahl, Signitzer & Olson 2008). When associated with communication in relation to the internet and their websites the UGT becomes an effective approach. The internet offers a new and profound field for exploring UGT (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade 2004). Research findings by Stafford et al (2004) identified three gratifications sought by audiences as below:

- 1) **Content gratification**; this applies when media consumers use a specific medium for the content it offers them. Hence, this gratification is gained from particular messages in the media like education or entertainment messages.
- 2) **Process gratification**; this is when media consumers use a particular medium because they enjoy the process of using the medium like surfing the web.
- 3) **Social gratification**; this is when media consumers obtain their gratification for social interaction such as keeping in touch with family and friends and interpersonal communications.

The broader perspective of the Uses and Gratification Theory therefore aims at providing a framework for understanding the processes by which media participants seek information or content selectively, in relation to their needs and interests (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch 1974). The two central questions on which the theory of satisfaction and gratification is based include 1) why are people enticed to certain media? And 2) what kind of satisfaction does the particular media provide for people? Audience members then integrate the content to accomplish their needs or to satisfy their interests (Lowery & DeFleur 1983). Basically, the Uses and Gratification theory focuses on how audiences seek media and to what extent they are satisfied with its type, content, and method of use (Amiri, Noori & Basatian 2012).

### **3.2.1 History of the Uses and Gratification Theory**

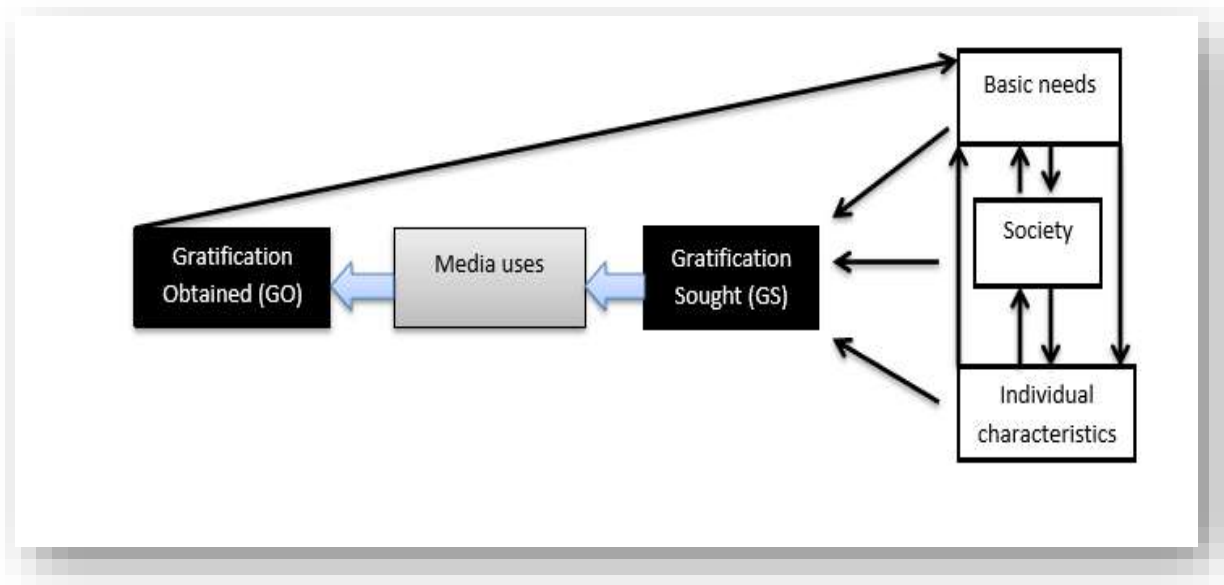
A theoretical framework is founded on theories developed around a research area over time (Muredzi 2018:3). The origins of the Uses and Gratification Theory dates back to early mass communication research over the past hundred years during which early researchers sought to study the gratifications that attracted and maintained audiences to the kinds of media and the types of content capable of satisfying their social and psychological needs (Cantril 1942). Since the 1950s and 1960s, the Uses and Gratification Theory then became an approach to study the gratifications that attracted and kept audiences to their preferred media and content responsible of satisfying their social and psychological needs (Cantril 1942; Schramm, Lyle & Parker 1961; Katz & Foulkes 1962; Klapper 1963; Mendelsohn 1964). In the 1950s, there was abundant research produced by uses and gratification researchers and psychologists to indicate how audiences interact with the media (Klapper 1963; Mendelsohn 1964).

Many social and psychological variables were sanctioned and operationalised by communication scholars to be the originators of dissimilar patterns of consumption of gratifications (Wimmer & Dominick 1994). Research done by Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961) established that the use of television by children was influenced by their personal mental capability as well as their relationship with peers and friends. Katz and Foulkes (1962) conceptualise the media as a means to escape while as for Mendelsohn (1964) as cited in Ruggiero (2000:7), “radio listening was identified as offering several gratifications including companionship, bracketing the day, changing mood, counteracting loneliness or boredom, providing useful news and information, allowing vicarious participation in events, and aiding social interaction”. Garson (1966) establishes that media use by adolescents was influenced by the race variable, however, as all these findings positioned audiences as passive media consumers rather than them being active (Ruggiero 2000), there was need for a more functional analysis of the Uses and Gratification Theory to place the audience at their rightful place as active audiences and this was first proposed by Klapper (1963). Noticeably, Geiger and Newhagen (1993) accredit Klapper as the leader of the “cognitive revolution” in the communication field.

Katz et al (1974) and Katz, Haas and Gurevitch (1973) state that people are encountered with social and psychological needs which create their expectations from mass media or other sources and eventually lead to altered forms of media use or tendencies, consequently bringing the gratification of needs. The heuristic value of the UGT as stated by Stanley and Dennis (2009) is that it provides communication researchers a viewpoint through which several ideas and theories about media consumption, media choice and even media impact can be viewed.

### 3.2.2 Uses and Gratification Initial Model

Katz et al (1973; 1974) took advantage of this description to outline the main elements of the UGT, aided by Rosengren's (1974) model as shown in the figure below.



**Figure 3.1: The initial and simplified uses and gratification model (Rosengren, 1974 in Lucas and Sherry, 2004 Pp.4).**

The uses and gratification model comprises of two components: gratification sought (GS) and gratification obtained (GO). However, Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985) argue that these two components should not be treated equally in research and theory. If people select a certain media in the hope that it will be useful to them, there is also the possibility that they might still not use or like it for some reason. The UGT is therefore, as stated by Lin (1996), one of the most influential theories of communication because



it can be useful in evaluating various psychological motifs and needs and communicational channels in multicultural contexts.

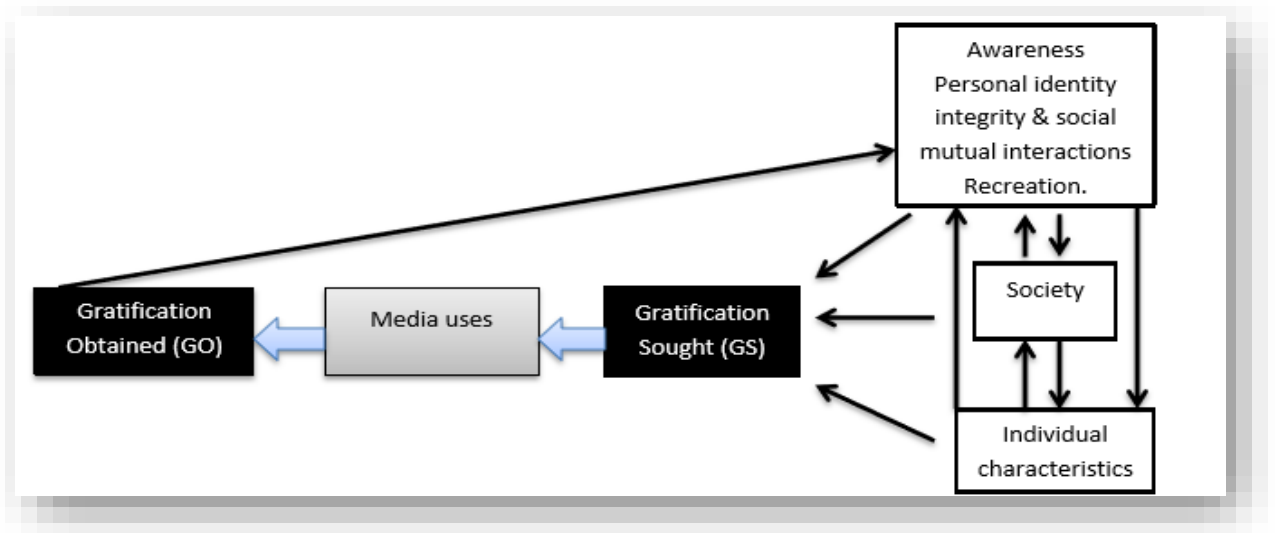
### **3.2.3 Main Components of the Uses and Gratification Theory**

The UGT has several components including: active audience, needs and motifs, gratification and use, and effects.

**Active audience.** According to Windahl et al (2008) the main idea of the UGT is that the audiences are actively looking for information that provides them the utmost level of contentment. Generally, the extent of gratification audiences get from content depends on their needs and wishes. The more the content is capable of fulfilling one's need, the more the possibility that people will select that particular content (Mahrad & Tajer 2016). The audience's activeness is a variable construct acknowledged by them and indicated by diverse degrees and kinds of activity. The UGT has since brought a great change in the quality of how researchers in communication fields started paying attention to the audience. Windahl et al (2008) and Amiri et al (2012) argue that the researcher's assumption is that the audience possesses knowledge of their own motives for using media content and can express them.

**Needs and Motifs.** According to the uses and gratification researchers, motifs are entrenched in needs and encompass their action aspects. In other words, the needs create motivation (Mahrad & Tajer 2016). The needs and motif component established a revised model of the UGT from the initial model in which needs were considered to be only those as listed in Maslow's hierarchy of basic human needs. In the revised model, the needs are no longer limited to the five basic needs; they also include such needs as guidance, mutual interaction, security and relapsing from tension and stress (Windahl et al 2008). There have been different categories suggested for motifs, however, the most well-known is that described by McQuail (1984) which includes categorisation of motives such as awareness, personal identity, integrity, social mutual interactions, and recreation (Windahl et al 2008).

### 3.2.4 Uses and Gratification Revised Model



**Figure 3.2: The Uses and Gratification Theory revised model (Mahrad & Tajer, 2016: Pp 5)**

**Gratification.** McQuail (1984) introduced two important models of the UGT over and above different other models presented by other researchers. The two models which are cognitive and cultural models provide a better understanding of the UGT if their differences are well studied. While in the cognitive model, motivation comprises of collective interests and curiosity, in the cultural model, motivation involves the general anticipations and preoccupations of an individual. Hence, when considering these two models, they indicate that people use media for various reasons that do not necessarily relate to their intentions. An example would be having some individuals using certain types of media mainly due to a sense of dependency and belonging (cultural model) which has nothing to do with the message depicted by that media (cognitive model) (Windahl et al 2008). The UGT usually emphasises gratification outcomes from media use without the consideration of media use as a goal (Mahrad & Tajer 2016). Media researchers have identified two different types of gratification: “content gratification, in which receiving certain messages is more important while in process gratification participating in the use process is of much higher value” (Windahl et al 2008 cited in Mahrad & Tajer 2016:5. At best, getting messages from media should be gratifying (McQuail 1984).

**Use and Effects.** The emphasis by the pioneers of the UGT was on there being different reasons for media preferences by different people alongside their possible effects. According to Windahl et al (2008) the uses and gratification pioneers had two major goals; firstly, to focus on audience needs in relation to audience cognition which they had already achieved; secondly, to assess media effects as seen in most models of the uses and gratification models. Researchers' belief is that individuals make use of media for various purposes; as such it is possible to recognise the accurate effect of media by only identifying the purpose for which the media are being used (McQuail 1984). There is a belief that some people may like a TV programme to forget their problems, while others may like the same programme to acquire information on how a particular group lives in society. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the two different audiences can yield the same media effect from watching same the TV programme. Different types of media use yield different outcomes and the nature of use content, amount and mode of use are significant factors in using content for predicting outcomes (McQuail 1984).

The UGT also known as “the need seeking” theory remains the most important theory in communication sciences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as any theorisations in communication science is dependent on the UGT (Ruggiero 2000). This theory is based on social communications, adapting a functionalistic approach to communications and media which states that the significant role played by the media is to fulfil the desires and incentives of their consumers. As such, the more these needs are met, the more satisfaction is gained (Windahl et al 2008). As already stated, there are two core questions on which the theory of satisfaction and gratification is based 1) why are people attracted to certain media? and 2) what kind of satisfaction do the media provide for people?

Primarily, the theory of uses and gratification focuses on the audience's motifs (Ruggiero 2000; Seekhiew 2009) and then later analyses the message and social system (Sarkisian, Nikoo & Saeedian 1997). In other words, this theory aims at looking at how users seek media and to what extent they are satisfied with its type, content, and method of use (Amiri et al 2012). Therefore, as the two questions posed by the UGT were being answered in this research, the researcher used those answers to

determine the positive and negative outcomes of how print media relays information with regards to it being accessible to people with visual impairments.

### **3.2.5 Limitations of the Theory**

Early audience-based research conducted in the social psychological mode was what was later developed into the UGT (McQuail 1994). Basically, early uses and gratification studies were descriptive, wanting to categorise the responses of audience members into meaningful classes (Berelson, Lazarsfeld & McPhee 1954; Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955; Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet 1948; Merton 1949). However, lacking in was the failure to explore the associations that were there between the perceived gratifications and psychological or sociological effects of the satisfied needs (Ruggiero 2000:5). Also identified in early research was the little theoretical coherence they had plus being predominantly behaviourist and individualist in their methodological predispositions (McQuail 1994). Additionally, all researchers employed qualitative approaches by trying to classify gratification statements into labeled categories thereby largely disregarding their frequent distribution in the population.

Katz (1987) alludes to four main reasons for the weaknesses of the early research using the uses and gratification approach in studying mass communication. Firstly, such research profoundly depended on self-reports, secondly, they were unsophisticated about the social origin of the needs that audiences brought to the media, thirdly, they were too weak to criticise the possibility of the dysfunction for both self and society of a particular audience gratification, and fourthly, they were too enchanted by the innovative diversity of audiences to focus on the restrictions of the text. Basically, in the 1940s and 1950s, mass communication researchers paid more attention to approaches concerning the influence of media on the audience as opposed to the uses and satisfaction with the media, as mass media aimed to change the course of people's activities (Ruggiero 2000).

Despite the initial limitations of the UGT, two studies on the effect of media on political behaviour were conducted by the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University, studying voters during the 1940 election between Roosevelt and Wilkie in

Erie County, Ohio (Lazarsfeld et al 1948) and in Elmira, New York, during the 1948 Truman–Dewey election (Berelson et al 1954). In both studies it was established that the media played a weak role in influencing voters behaviour compared with individual influence and that of other people. These results called for the need to amplify the two-step flow theory, diverting from the concept of “atomised” media consumers toward the impact of personal influence (Katz 1960).

Regarding this research, the UGT was appropriate and effective because as a researcher I was able to identify information needs of people with visual impairments, their preferences as print media consumers, their experiences in using print media – both hardcopy and electronic – as well as their expectations concerning print media so that their gratification motives were met.

### **3.3 THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY**

The second theory that is going to frame this study is the Social Responsibility Theory. The theory was selected on the basis of it being an ethical theory (Pachamama Alliance 2019). Ethics is mostly a moral philosophy concerning the standards of how people conduct themselves either in a bad or a good way, and how one’s behaviour or actions become wrong or right (Dean 1992). Ethics according to Okunna’s (2003) emphasis is a self-legislation rather than an official or government legislation through exterior compulsion, which is characteristic of law. The introduction of the Social Responsibility Theory was what led to the rise of professional journalistic associations who then started generating codes of ethics and official journalistic standards designed to increase responsible behaviour by their members (Moemeka 1991). As stated by Moemeka (1991) the Social Responsibility Theory therefore places due emphasis on the moral and social responsibilities of individuals who, and institutions which, operate the mass media. In the light of Social Responsibility Theory, this research was fashioned to view the responsibility of print media operating under particular principles of the Press Code of Ethics in South Africa, for the public’s needs and interests rather than how they please (Press Council South Africa 2020).

The South African Press Council (2020) has designed several codes of ethics under which journalists should be operating. Within them there are those that are directly

linked to the purpose of this research. Chapter One of the press media code of ethics under “Gathering and reporting of news”, section 1.2 states that the media should employ impartiality in disseminating information, with no intention out of negligence to depart from the actualities whether by alteration, amplification or misrepresentation. Section 5 of Chapter One under “Discrimination and hate speech” states that the media should refrain from using unfair or denigratory speeches of any sort including of people with disability and not refer to such statuses in a prejudicial or pejorative context and only refer to such statuses where it is strictly relevant to the matter reported, and if it is in the public interest. Section 10.1 of Chapter One states that the headlines, captions, posters, pictures and video / audio content must avoid misleading people and provide an equitable consideration of the contents or picture being reported (Press Council South Africa 2020).

As this research is concerned with people with disabilities, the Social Responsibility Theory in relation to the South African press codes of ethics was used to relate how print media conduct themselves morally and ethically concerning the inclusion of people with disability in their information coverage.

### **3.3.1 History of the Emergence of the Social Responsibility Theory**

Prior to 1947, the press in the UK was widely faulted for lack of social responsibility. Government had exclusive power and control on the operations of the media (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm 1956). The issue of the government controlling the media arose in the 16th century in England about the time when the print media was just being introduced in the country (Dominick 2005:448). During this period, scholars and philosophers attempted to describe the relationship between the media and the government and its implications with regard to freedom and control (Dominick 2005; Patterson & Wilkins 2005). Various theories were then developed to explain this relationship and the Authoritarian Theory became the first theory to describe this period when the UK government controlled the media. The control of the media (press by then) was in terms of licensing, censorship of material before publication, the granting of exclusive printing rights to favoured elements of the press, followed by the swift, harsh punishment of government critics (Dominick 2005:449). Under the authoritarian system the dominant belief was that the ruling elite should guide the

masses, whose intellectual ability was held in low esteem. Public dissent and criticism were considered harmful to both the government and the people and therefore not tolerated (ibid.). Various devices were used by the authoritarians to force the press to comply with government orders.

Later on in the 19th century, newspapers were commonly using news as a political weapon; at times news items were distorted, biased, and suppressed to meet the needs of the moment (Siebert et al 1956; Dominick 2005). Due to economic factors, growing professionalism and self-righting process, newspapers began to confine their opinions to the editorial page; they strove to practice objectivity in their news reporting, without personal intrusion and comment, and presented both sides of the story (Siebert et al 1956). It is during this period when the relationship between the press and the government began to be described under the Libertarian Theory (LT). LT was in direct opposition to the authoritarian theory (ibid). Libertarians assume that human beings are rational and therefore capable of making their own decisions and that the government exists to serve the individual (Bittner 1989; Dominick 2005). According to the LT, human beings have the right to hear both sides of the story to distinguish truth from falsehood; as such, the government does not need to control the media since such controls or interferences on the expression of ideas by citizens infringe on their rights (Siebert et al 1956; Dominick 2005:449).

However, according to Siebert et al (1956), even though newspapers were trying to be objective in their news reporting during the LT era, this objectivity became questionable as there was an element of half-truths, incompleteness, and incomprehensibility. Secondly, there was also lack of a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism on what was written; the press used to carry views representing their own ideas rather than the society. Thirdly, there was lack of diversity in such a way that there was no portraying of various social and ethnic groups in their reporting. The fourth shortfall was the lack of responsibility by the press in presenting and clarifying of the goals and values of society and furthermore, there was also lack of pluralism (Siebert et al 1956; Gunaratne & Hasim 1996). These issues needed to be addressed.

By the mid-20th century media industries had become big business and broadcasting was capable of reaching millions of people instantaneously. This was against the backdrop of World War II and a depression which changed world politics (Siebert et al 1956; Dominick 2005). In the 1940s with instructions from the President of Chicago University, Robert M. Hutchins, a group of well-known intellectuals and writers assembled a commission. Established in 1942, the commission usually known as the Hutchins' Commission after its chairman was named a committee on a Free and Responsible Press. This committee became the first to vocalise in a comprehensible and methodical manner the Social Responsibility Theory of the press. In 1947, the commission published a 50-page report entitled A Free and Responsible Press that delivered an edifice for numerous following researches on the responsibility of the press and ethics. In the report, the commission addressed all the shortfalls of the press prior to the 20th century as stated above; Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) then designed the SRT in 1956 which quickly gained prominence as an improvement of the LT (Siebert et al 1956).

While the Authoritarian Theory gave exclusive power to the government to control the operations of the media, the Libertarian Theory stipulated that the media must exclusively be free from such control (Hocking 1947). Unlike the Authoritarian Theory which said no to the media critiquing the government, the SRT holds that the media has that freedom to criticise the government and other institutions (Dominick 2005). And unlike the LT that states that the government must not interfere in any way in the way the media operates, the SRT states that government's interference in the media is paramount by regulating and holding the media accountable if they fail to fulfil the rights of the citizens (Siebert et al 1956; Sandaman, Rubin & Sachaman 1976; Dominick 2005).

### **3.3.2 Principles of the Social Responsibility Theory**

As stated earlier on the SRT incorporates several principles to promote inclusion of the vulnerable and the voiceless such as people with disabilities as part of their audience (Siebert et al 1956). However, for this study the focus was mainly on those principles that are directly linked to the purpose of this study including media promoting democracy – this is in relation to promoting human rights in terms of public participation

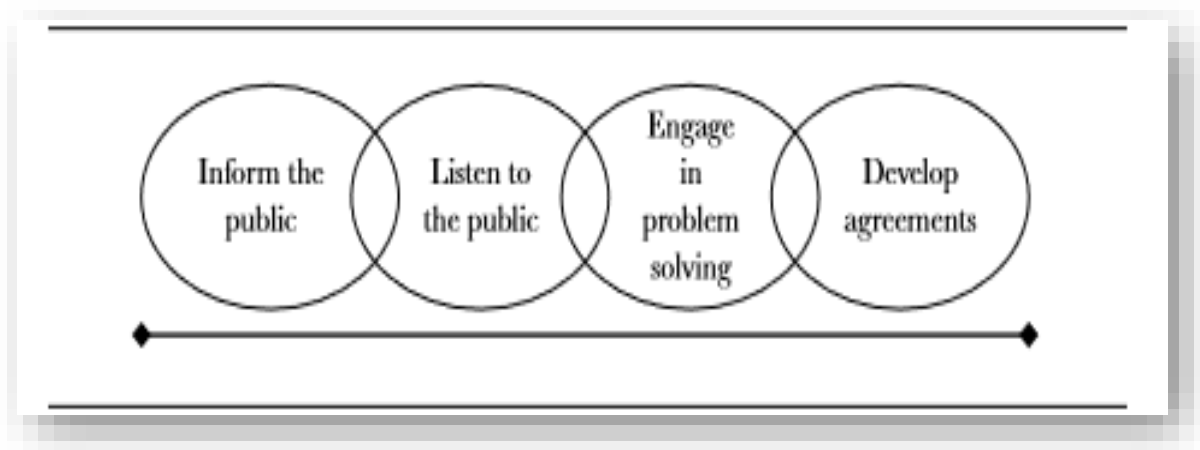


which is achieved when media encompasses diverse views. These views include those from the marginalised groups, in this case people with visual impairments. The research dwelled much on public participation as this aims at empowering people with disabilities in decision making processes, an act which would result in them being able to be part and parcel of formulation of their own policies on issues that affect them (Rowe & Frewer 2000). Hence, promotion of human rights and public participation were the most vital SRT principles for this research. Although these principles are mentioned in isolation, to a very large extent they are interrelated and may sometimes overlap in their meanings.

The media keeps people knowledgeable about public affairs enabling them to make knowledgeable choices when it comes to taking part in the process of self-government; they also offer an opportunity for transparent debate and can act as watchdogs to hold government officials to account; lastly, the media can represent the public's voice by airing views from citizens (Randall 2000; Dominick 2005). Randall (2000:3) argues that it is the reporters' responsibility to "comfort the troubled and distress the comfortable, becoming a voice for who are normally unheard in publically". According to Berman and Witzner (1997) the free flow and access of information is vital to the notion of democracy; hence media is key in promoting democracy.

### ***3.3.2.1 Media as promoters of public participation***

Public participation is a concept that may be defined differently by different people and in a variety of contexts. This study dwelled on those definitions that were suitable to the purpose of this research. Rowe and Frewer's (2000) definition of public participation is the practice of involving the public in the setting of agendas, formulation of policies as well as in making decisions. According to Bozo and Hiemer (2016), public participation is a concept that is synonymous with democracy, involvement, engagement, transparency and good governance. Bryson and Carroll (2002) define public participation as the act of involving people in a problem solving or decision-making process that may interest or affect them. Participation is best understood as a continuum in which a number of points are listed as it moves along, but for the purposes of this research, only the four major ones as stated by Creighton (2005) were used (see Figure 3.3 below).



**Figure 3.3: Continuum for public participation Creighton (2005: 136)**

A strong and a sound public participation process critically recognize the public as the engines and spokespersons for formulation of policy and decision making (Bryson & Carroll 2002). The international association for public participation put in place core values for the practice of effective public participation, without which the process of public participation may be thought of as being flawed in its implementation (Creighton 2005) – these core values include:

- Enabling the public to speak out on decisions and actions that affect their lives.
- Assuring the public that their contributions will influence the decisions.
- Communicating the interests and meeting the needs of all participants.
- Pursuing and facilitating the involvement of those potentially affected.
- Directing participants in defining how they need to participate.
- Participants are provided with all the needed information to participate in a meaningful way in the process of public participation.
- Participants are communicated on how their input affected the decision in the process of public participation.

As per the requirements of this research the interest was how the media communicates with people with disabilities particularly with visual impairments to make sure that they are also part of this public participation process. Debatably, the effectiveness of information strategies to the general public determines the practical

achievement of public participation (Rowe & Frewer 2000). Such effectiveness is attained through communication platforms that are reliable (Randall 2000) and this research was concerned about print media as a communication tool for people with visual impairments and how effective it is in reaching out to them and incorporating them as part of policy formulation and decision making. The media must promote public participation by involving audiences including people with disabilities to comment, respond, write and get involved in all aspects of media's work. The press media have indispensable roles in promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of the voiceless (Creighton 2005) for which people with disabilities are inclusive. This research in the light of the SRT of the press, focused on the accessibility of print media to people with visual impairments to determine whether people with visual impairments are well represented in the media in terms of coverage and representation and even as employees of the media.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has explained the two theoretical frameworks of UGT and SRT and how and why they were suitable for this research. The UGT helps to understand the choice of media by audiences and how their uses are able to fulfil their motifs. Using this theory, I was able to understand and explain the choice of media by people with visual impairments, their information needs and their experiences using print media sources. On the other hand, the SRT enabled me to understand and explain the operations of print media in relation to people with visual impairments morally and ethically, how the media view people with visual impairments and how they represent them in the media. Following is the methodology approach applied in this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

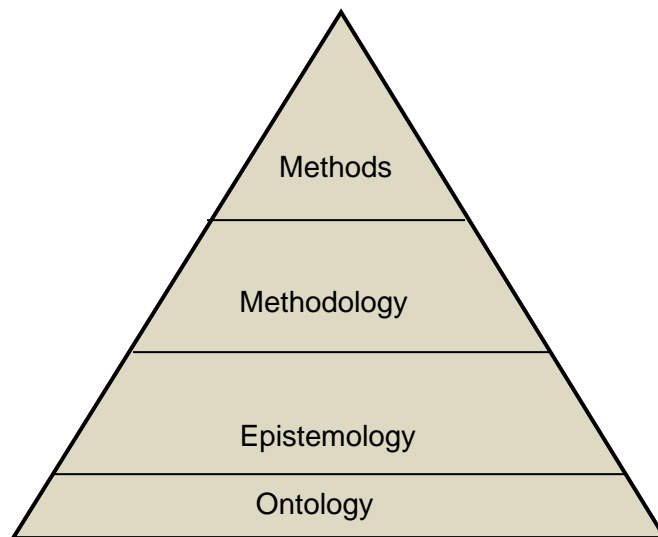
This chapter discusses the overall methodology underpinning this study by starting with the relation between ontology and epistemology and how the two are linked to the methodology approach as well as methods undertaken by research studies. The justification of the research paradigm and design underpinning this study will be followed by justifying the selected methodological approaches and the opted data collection and analysis methods selected for this study. The validity and reliability of this study will also be discussed, followed by ethical considerations taken in pursuing this study.

### **4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

This research had the purpose of examining if print media relay news and information in a manner which is accessible to people with visual impairment. Every research project must be grounded on the ontology (Flew 1984). Flew (1984:255) describes ontology as the branch of metaphysical enquiry about the study of existence itself. It makes distinctions between 'real existence' and 'appearance'. According to Gutman (1963:196), the role of ontology is an "investigation into that-which-is". Ontology refers to the nature of reality (Hudson & Ozanne 1988). Having established the ontology (the purpose of the study), epistemology becomes a crucial philosophical concept for social scientists as it concerns questions to do with the theory of knowledge (Bryman 1989:248).

Epistemology therefore refers to the relationship between the researcher and the reality, or how this reality is captured or known (Flew 1984). According to Stroud (1989:31), epistemology "pursues to comprehend what human knowledge is and how it comes to be". As argued by Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006:17) the manner in which we perceive ontology feeds into our perception of epistemology and is more mirrored in a methodology approach (extensive considerations grounded on our perception of philosophy and practical issues). Therefore, logically, epistemology is what determines the methodology to be applied, which then determines the methods

to be followed. By looking at how we view ontology based on this association, the ontology then becomes the base of our research approach. This is after considering our epistemological stand as well as the chosen methodology. The connection is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.



**Figure 4.1: Relationship between methods, methodology, epistemology and Ontology (Henn et al 2006:190)**

This then means that our methods preference or choice will eventually be determined by our philosophical perspective therefore meaning that any compromise on methods reflects a shift in our philosophical viewpoint on the world (Henn et al 2006).

### **4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Paradigms, are sets of beliefs that influence scientists in a particular discipline on what should be studied and the way the study should be conducted – and on how results of the study should be analysed and interpreted (Henn et al 2006). A paradigm is described by Guba (1990:17) as “a basic set of beliefs that guides action”. According to Kuhn (1970:175), a paradigm symbolises the total assemblage of beliefs, values, and techniques shared by the members of a particular scientific discipline. Oakley (1999) asserts that paradigms have a distinct culture that defines the set of tools researchers can apply or methods to adopt, hence basically, a paradigm offers a

cluster of assumptions about how the researcher must approach the issue of their concern. Positivism and interpretivism epistemologies are two dominant and apparently irreconcilable approaches to what counts as knowledge within the social sciences (Lauri & Sullivan 1990). The choice of research paradigm determines the type of knowledge to be derived from the research question; hence to ensure this achievement, the research question and tools need to be compatible with the ontology and epistemology of the preferred paradigm (Henn et al 2006). A systematic process of generating knowledge is certain when knowledge is understood for what it is (Babbie & Mouton 2001; Deacon et al 1999). The ways something can be known influences the choice of research methodology and the selected research methodology needs to be harmonious with the chosen research question and research paradigm (Henn et al 2006; Deacon et al 1999). There are two broadly well-known research paradigms and these are positivist and interpretivist paradigms (Henn et al 2006:10). This research falls under the interpretivism paradigm since it is concerned about human behaviour.

#### **4.3.1 Interpretive Paradigm**

To some researchers, using positivist principles in studying the complexities of the social world does not seem quite right, as human behaviour is not determined by external factors and processes that can be measured by researchers but instead is shaped by the meanings people have of the world (Jones 1993). Weber argues that in order to acquire vast knowledge of the social world, we must seek to understand it from the point of view of the people we are studying, as opposed to explaining human actions by means of cause and effects (Weber 1949). Understanding human behaviour and the intentions behind it demands a degree of empathy with our participants, whereas explaining their behaviour due to some external cause does not (Von Wright 1993). The interpretive paradigm as stated by Holloway and Wheeler (1996) emphasises interpretations of phenomena and human interactions, and their meanings and subjectivities that are brought to the interpretation. According to Creswell (1998:19), the assumptions of knowledge with regards to the interpretive paradigm is that knowledge is within the meanings people make of it; it is acquired through people talking about their meanings; knowledge is mixed with subjective

biases and values; it is written in a personal, up-close manner; and changes surfaces. Knowledge is indissolubly tangled with the context in which it is studied.

The main purpose of this research was to determine the accessibility of print media to people with visual impairments with the goal of understanding and interpreting the meanings in human behaviour. The aim of this research was not to generalise and predict causes and effects, but to understand human experiences. This makes the interpretive paradigm the most suitable research paradigm because this study concerned people with disabilities and their experiences in relation to print media. An interpretive paradigm is associated with qualitative research designs (Henn et al 2006) as opposed to quantitative research design/strategies which fall under positivist research approaches.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Hakim (1987:1) defines design as primarily dealing with aim, purpose, intentions, and plans within the practical constraints of location, availability of staff, money, and time. Likewise, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:166) apprehend a research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research locations, and data gathering processes to answer research questions.

##### **4.4.1 Exploratory Research design**

This research falls under the exploratory research design which is normally applicable to research problems for which there are only a few or no previous studies on the topic (Michael 2002) for references or to depend upon, in order to predict an outcome (Christoph 2010). The emphasis of an exploratory research design is to gain an insight on the issue being investigated (Michael 2002). Usually, exploratory research designs are used to establish an understanding on better ways of progressing in studying an issue or what methodology of gathering information would be best suited to pursue the research problem (Taylor, Catalano & Walker 2002).

The design of this research was exploratory because the topic is somewhat new and there is no data available on how blind people access print media, and very inadequate

data is available on how print media is accessible to the partially sighted especially in terms of hardcopy print media.

Research designs that are exploratory focus on gathering secondary or primary data through un/semi structured formal or informal procedures to interpret the data; hence, they mostly use qualitative methodology of data collection (Sykes, Gani & Dullabh 2016). Exploratory research design is flexible and can address all types of research questions (*what, why, how*) (Sykes et al 2016). According to Michael (2002) and Taylor et al (2002), the goal of exploratory research design is to enable the researcher to familiarise themselves with basic details, settings, and concerns and to generate new ideas and assumptions in order to develop tentative theories. Additionally, exploratory research gives direction for future research and techniques get established. Issues get refined for further systematic investigation and creation of new research questions. Mostly exploratory research uses small sample sizes, as such, their findings cannot be generalised (Sykes et al 2016). The nature of exploratory research design is such a way that they are only able to provide an insight but not to make definitive conclusions about the findings (Michael 2002; Sykes et al 2016).

This research explored both newspapers and magazines to determine their accessibility to people with visual impairments, as there is no apparent research that has considered both magazines and newspapers in relation to people with visual impairments. Regarding electronic media, the situation is the same where there is very limited data available on this angle of the study. Additionally, there is no research that has taken the Social Responsibility Theory approach or that is based on the Uses and Gratification Theory approach to examine the relationship between print media and people with visual impairments. Finally, this research dwelled exclusively on participants who were members of the blind mailing list hence the findings cannot be generalised; furthermore, the sample of magazines and newspapers were narrowed down to those in South Africa who exclusively had English as their publication language – this meant that those that were exclusively being published in other languages other than English were not considered, hence the findings cannot be generalised to all print media.



## 4.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

While research design deals with the structure/design of the research project itself, the methodological strategy is the work plan of the research and is the logic by which the researcher goes about responding to the research questions (Mason 2003:30). Methodology refers to the entire research strategy towards achievement of a research objective (Kothari 2004) and it encompasses political, theoretical, and philosophical implications on the choices of methods when conducting a research (Seale 1999:3). Mason (2003:30) describes methodology as a systematic approach followed by the researcher in answering a research question.

For this research I followed qualitative research methodology to respond to the research questions. My intention was to study the experiences of people with visual impairments with print media. In this research I was looking for answers to a particular question (what are the perceptions or experiences of people with visual impairments with the mainstream print media) by gathering evidence from participants involved (people with visual impairments) to establish findings. Researchers using the qualitative method always tend to study human actions from the perspectives of the social actors themselves, also referred to as the 'emic' perspective by anthropologists (Babbie & Mouton 2001). The primary goal of qualitative research is to understand and describe as opposed to explaining human behaviour (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). Through the use of qualitative research, I was able to understand the participants' beliefs, history, and context and to describe their actions in great detail (Kvale 1996; Mack et al 2005).

Qualitative researchers have an opportunity to see things from an insider's point of view (Babbie & Mouton 2001) and being an insider, means they are conducting the research with populations of which they are also members (Kanuha 2000) – in this case, the researcher shares experiential base an identity and language with the study participants (Asselin 2003). What made me an insider researcher is being a member of the blind mailing list for which participants also belonged to. Although the mailing list was established for people with visual impairments, not all members on the mailing list are with visual impairments, there are those who interacts a lot with people with

visual impairments. I was introduced to the group through such interactions and it is a community of people I feel belonging to hence an insider researcher.

There are also others work for the organisations of people with visual impairments but are also not with visual impairments. Qualitative research focuses on the process and not the outcome and the researcher is interested in studying the actions as they transpire as opposed to having to restructure them in recollection (Babbie & Mouton 2001). This gives researchers the chance to put themselves in other people's shoes and to appreciate the individual experiences of the participants (Smith, Jarman & Osborn 1999). I was and still am a member of the blind mailing list and this gave me an opportunity to put myself in my participants' shoes as an insider researcher. Being placed in this position, I was able to understand my research participants' experiences, concerns, actions, decisions, behaviours, and practices (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270).

As this research was conducted with participants who were on the blind mailing list, being a member of the list made it easier for me to achieve objectivity in this research. In the qualitative research methodology approach, objectivity is firstly achieved by attaching the importance of the researcher in the research process (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270). The researcher is given the central place and role in the research giving them an added responsibility to be unbiased in their descriptions and interpretations. According to Mehra (2002), the belief of the qualitative research paradigm is that the researcher is an important part of the process; they cannot separate themselves from the topic and the research participants they are studying. It is in the interaction between the researchers and the research participants that the knowledge is generated (Mehra 2002). According to Mehra (2002), such relationships are capable of making the researcher biased. In order to avoid bias, the researcher needs to be aware of their power in the dynamics of the relationship (Babbie & Mouton 2001; Mehra 2002). In my case, I ensured not being bias by asking my participants open ended questions, enabling them to explain their answers without being steered in a certain way to appear to endorse a particular response. Participants also responded to the questions without my approval as to whether their responses to questions were right or not, or if it was what I needed to hear or not. Additionally, all responses from participants were put together in a word document and saved and the continuous

reviewing of the data also helped me to be as objective as possible as I was able to see the multiple possible perspectives/interpretations (Mehra 2002). Objectivity in qualitative methodologies is also obtained by the researcher gaining trust and establishing rapport with the participants, given that the main challenge of a qualitative researcher is to access or get close to participants in order to generate legitimate and truthful descriptions (Babbie & Mouton 2001; Henn et al 2006). At the time of conducting this research, there was already an established rapport between the subjects and myself. Achieving research objectivity in this manner is different from how quantitative research methodology achieves its objectivity. Quantitative research methodology involves maximum control of extraneous variables while there is less of such control in qualitative research methodology.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), qualitative research as a type of scientific research concerns studies that look for answers to a particular question and systematically use a predefined set of qualitative processes to answer questions by gathering evidence and establishing findings that were not predetermined. In this study, the focus was on the inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments, in accessing information in print media with the research topic “an analysis of print media information and its accessibility to people with visual impairments”. The primary goal for this research was to understand the research topic/phenomena and try to build up an explanation of it. Since this research topic was just a general research problem, in the process of gathering and analysing data, I looked for common themes or patterns in the data with the aim of drawing conclusions about the research problem and then developing a tentative theory. This inductive approach to investigation is associated with qualitative methodology (Henn et al 2006). Rather than beginning with the theory, as quantitative methodology handles enquiries, this research started with a general problem to come up with a theory (Babbie & Mouton 2001). Qualitative research normally takes an inductive approach to their object of study. Apart from connecting people’s actions to their beliefs, Brown (2005:485) adds that “one of the great strengths often cited for qualitative research is its potential for forming hypotheses”. The qualitative researcher starts by immersing themselves in the natural setting, describing events as perfectly as possible as they happen or have happened, and slowly but surely builds second order constructs which

are a theory and a hypothesis that will make sense of the observations (Bryman 1988:11; Brown 2005:485). It stresses the development and construction of inductively based first order new theories and interpretations of the description of events, rather than deductively based approaching the social actors with research hypotheses (Bryman 1988: 15; Brown 2005:485). Hence it follows that in an interpretive paradigm the approach is to first come up with a research question/topic from which the theory would be build.

The qualitative research approach was useful in this research as it enabled me to discover in depth the way people with visual impairments perceive and relate to print media. Consequently, enabling me to fully describe the experiences of people with visual impairments with print media. As stated by (Silverman 2000:122) the strength of qualitative research is its capability to deliver intricate textual explanations of the way people experience a particular research problem. Qualitative researchers have a “contextual interest” as they prefer to understand events in their contexts since their aim is to describe and understand events within the concrete natural context in which they occur (Bryman 1984:78; Moores 1993:33; Henn et al 2006). Geertz (1993) coined the phrase “a rich detailed description” which is different from just making a summary as is the case in quantitative studies. A thick description normally captures the sense of actions as they happen and is usually lengthy in nature. The descriptions position events in such contexts that are understandable to the participants themselves (Bryman 1984). Qualitative studies typically apply qualitative methods to gain access to research participants, gathering data as well as analysing the data (Babbie & Mouton 2001; Mack et al 2005).

#### **4.5.1 Data Collection Methods**

The nature of this research was to find out how print media presents information. The idea was to find out if print media is able to deliver information in a format accessible to people with sensory disabilities particularly visual impairments – those who are unable to normally access standard written text; as such, this research involved both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary source of data were one-on-one interviews with people with visual impairments while the secondary data were derived from print media sources found online (Hewson 2010).

According to Mack et al (2005) and Babbie and Mouton (2001) qualitative research as a type of scientific research pursues answers to questions by means of predefined sets of techniques. Qualitative data techniques can be understood as three categories: textual, visual, and audio.

**Table 4.1: Examples of qualitative data techniques categories**

TYPES OF DATA	EXAMPLES
Textual	Fieldnotes, reflective journals, newspaper articles, memos, transcripts, email, or text messages.
Audio	Interviews, speeches, naturally happening talk, radio broadcast, music.
Visual	Television, cinema, photographs, paintings, sculptures, video recordings of focus groups, observations, video diaries.

**Source: Henn et al 2006:190**

The research used textual data collection techniques for both interviews and analysing content from online published newspapers and magazines. Hence, the sources of data for this research were basically one-on-one online interviews and online/web content analysis. Interviews were chosen given their benefits of eliciting narrative data that permit researchers to investigate people’s opinions in greater depth as compared to questionnaires (Kvale 1996; 2003). In this research I was interested to learn about the experiences people with visual impairments have in accessing print media information. Interviews were the best way of exploring general perceptions of people with visual impairments concerning the subject matter. Considering that interviews are a type of

formal conversation, through interacting with participants individually in this manner I wanted them to explain to me their experiences and perceptions of print media in great details. I opted for one-on-one interviews as this made it easier for me to track down responses from each individual and make follow ups on anything that was needed to be checked. It also made it easier for me to compile all the data collected from an individual participant together. This would have been a bit difficult if I used the mailing list for general interviews. And also due to the fact that in this research the number of participants were limited to 10 people, one-on-one interviews became even more suitable for that purpose. Interviews for this research were conducted using online tools for primary internet-mediated research (IMR) that is, gathering original data using the internet for the purpose of subjecting them to analysis to deliver new evidence in relation to a particular research question (Hewson 2010).

Online interviews were recommendable as a safety precaution for both the researcher and the prospective participants due to the fact that this research was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to contain the spread of the virus the South African Government declared the country's lockdown levels from the 27 March 2020 and the interviews for this study were being conducted during that period. Apart from restricted movement, the observation of social distancing, the wearing masks etc would have been too much for all of us, especially my participants – hence, online interviews became the best option to carry on this investigation. Apart from the advantages presented above, online interviews were convenient to recruit prospective participants as they were subscribers of a blind mailing list, an online mailing list for people with visual impairments of which I am also a member.

On the other hand, the suitability of content analysis for this study was that it was used to analyse articles presented in the newspapers and magazines with the focus on checking the format in order to determine its suitability for people with visual impairments to access the information. The objective of content analysis was to examine the print media content concerning issues around visual impairment. According to Haller, Rioux, Dinca and Laing (2012), studying the content of the news media permits disability studies to understand the media norms in representing people with disability and their concerns. Furthermore, research on news media helps assess

the perceived societal status of people with disabilities and whether there are changes in the social culture around disability (Haller et al 2012). Content analysis is a research method that is observational and used when systematically evaluating representational content of all kinds of recorded communications (Kolbe & Burnett 1991: 243). Holsti (1969) broadly defines content analysis as the application of scientific research methods to document evidence and Krippendorff (1980) states several advantages of content analysis including it being unstructured, unobtrusive, context sensitive and capable of coping with a large amount of data. It examines communication products itself such as texts, images, etc., and does not deal directly with individuals (Krippendorff 1980). Content analysis also has the flexibility of being applied to both physical documents/information or softcopy documents (McMillan 2000).

For this study the content analysis method was used to analyse softcopy content distributed online. Content analysis of this nature is referred to as online/web content analysis. Online/web content analysis in this case therefore refers to a collection of research techniques used to describe and make inferences about online content through systematic coding and interpretation (Herring 2004; 2006). It is a form of content analysis of internet distributed content or information (Herring 2004). According to Herring (2006:2) the phrase “web content analysis” is in fact equivocal. It can be interpreted in two different senses: “The first definition of web content analysis written as [web [content analysis]] is the application of traditional content analysis techniques, narrowly interpreted, to the web. The second definition of web content analysis phrased as [[web content] analysis] is the analysis of web content, extensively construed, using various (traditional and non-traditional) techniques” (Herring 2006:2).

It should be noted that this research was not necessarily looking at the depth of how online news is generally delivered on the internet in terms of design, or how stories are arranged on a particular website or uses links or hyperlinks for readers to access different stories for example. The nature of this research was to find out how print media delivers information that is supposed to be accessed by people with visual impairments considering the writing style in terms of format. The online nature of this research took advantage of media convergence by accessing online versions of print

media published on the internet in the same tabloid format. Hence, in terms of online content analysis, this research falls under the first definition of web content analysis by Herring (2006) [web [content analysis]] as opposed to [[web content] analysis] which deals typically with online originated news as previously explained.

#### **4.5.2 Data collection tools**

In this study, for interviews, asynchronous instruments specifically emails were used for data collection. According to Hunt and McHale (2007), researchers who select asynchronous methods like email or posts to a discussion forum have reported high-quality exchanges that are a result of participants having a chance to think about the responses, or gain new experiences with the research topic, between questions. For this research, emails were particularly selected bearing in mind that all prospective participants had email accounts. These participants were subscribers of a blind mailing list for which emails are the only source of subscription and communication. Email interviews proved to be a very effective method of data collection for this research, both for participants as well as to me as a researcher. First and foremost, as already stated data collection for this research was being done during the lockdown period due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, email interviews provided the much needed safety precautions to both parties. Secondly, considering that participants were members of the blind mailing list they had better experience in using emails. Their familiarity and comfort with email communication made it easier for them to respond to the questions. Accessibility features such as Speaking Email and Screen Readers can transform the abilities of visually impaired people to perform everyday computing tasks reading documents, producing letters and reports, sending and receiving emails, browsing the web, communicating through social media and others (Creswell 2007; McCoyd & Kerson 2006). It is due to these benefits to people with visual impairments that made interview data collection for this research possible through emails.

For content analysis print media websites were used as data collection tools for this research. I focused on print media websites of media companies which produce both magazines and newspapers in both hard and soft copies. Print media producing in both hardcopy and softcopy have the tendency of reproducing the same hardcopy



media into softcopy, hence the focus on their websites to derive data for this research. The printed versions were only accessed on authenticated websites within the mainstream media ownership (Stuart 2004; Hasan & Hashim 2009). These websites are mostly accessed by subscription. Additionally, these websites operate under strict legal restrictions regarding libel, privacy and copyright, just as it is in print media published offline (Malemi 1999). The online printed versions of print media make them different from any news published in only soft copies online or stand-alone online news versions which people with visual impairments could also easily access using Assistive devices such as audio.

#### **4.5.3 population and sampling method**

A purposeful sampling technique was used to select interview participants for this study, as well as for selecting units of analysis and units of observation for content analysis. The reason behind this choice of sampling technique is the ability of purposeful sampling in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study, from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton 1990:169). Hence, purposeful sampling is usually used when a researcher needs to detect and select information cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Tongco 2007).

For interviews, Salmons (2010) points out two options for pinpointing credible research participants online, which are nomination and existing sample frames. Nomination relies on having other people verify the identity of the prospective participant while in existing sample frames, participants are verified by membership in an organisation, a reliable administrative list, or a group. This research used the existing sample frame in the form of a mailing list to recruit participants. The mailing list is called a blind mailing list belonging to people with visual impairments where they discuss various issues. There are also a few members who are not with visual impairments– some of them working with organisations of people with visual impairments. To recruit participants, I emailed them directly using their emails attached to their names on the blind mailing list asking them if they were interested to participate in the study. Once they responded showing an interest, I then re-emailed them the questions plus the consent form that they had to sign to formalise our agreement. Their first responses

to questions were accompanied by the signed consent letter and were mostly detailed and lengthy answers to the open-ended questions. I also made follow up questions based on their responses. As a subscriber, therefore an insider, this worked to my advantage as I already had access to prospective participants (Salmons 2010). An insider status helped me build trust or rapport with the participants based on our shared experiences or values from the mailing list forum (VanDeVen 2007:269-270). 10 participants immediately responded to the invitation expressing with enthusiasm their interest to participate in this research. Since this research was about people who are partially sighted and those with total blindness, out of the 10 participants only one was partially sighted. Individual interviews took place over a four-week period of exchanging emails and throughout the interview process. Many participants responded to follow up questions within 24 hours, with most of them surprisingly responding with lengthy and in-depth answers. A few participants attached supporting documents including website links to some organisations for the blind to further explain their responses. Overall, all 10 participants in my research were extremely responsive and seemed enthusiastic to share their experiences. They were willing to be contacted if I needed any clarity on anything. At the end of the interviews, data were compiled into a single word document and saved as a file.

For content analysis, the sampling units for this research were developed from two kind of print media, newspapers and magazines published from 2016 to 2020 (a five-year span). In both print media I was interested in articles concerning people with disabilities in general or specifically those with visual impairments. The unit of analysis for this research was print media published in its print version online. The print media in question was different from all other online published news versions even if they could be published by authenticated publishers but were originally exclusively published online with no any other versions outside the online or softcopy version. I subscribed to the print media websites and used search portals to classify content. The concerned content was one that carried stories about people with disabilities, particularly those stories that were either concerned with general disability issues or specifically with visual impairment. This meant that all other stories aimed at a particular disability other than visual impairments or general disabilities were excluded. On the website the search words “disability” “blindness” and “visual impairment” were

used for the purposes of content analysis. Stories for data collection were those published only in the English language rather than in any other languages, as English is the language which I am more comfortable with. There were some publications in more than one language but as long as English was one of the languages these were also considered. These were stories where the distribution format was examined for suitability to be accessed by people with visual impairments.

261 newspapers were selected for content analysis for this research and 218 magazines were also selected for content analysis to give publications at least a fair chance of assessment. Magazines have a slightly different publication style from newspapers in that there are some that are specified such as only focusing on tourists needs, i.e. wildlife magazines, while others publish general stories just as in newspapers. For such specified magazines the idea was to find out if their publication formats are aimed at making the information accessible to people with visual impairments. But for all other unspecified magazines it was to find out both the format and how issues of people with visual impairments are being handled. Out of the 218 magazines 15 articles were selected from magazines for analysis. (see appendix 1 Page 251).

In making sure that all newspapers were covered, I used newspaper categories in terms of it being a daily newspaper, weekly newspaper, weekend newspaper, local newspapers and free newspapers, formulating five categories of newspapers (See appendix 2 from pages 253). The daily newspapers were considered due to their characteristics of offering straight/hard news. Most people with visual impairments cited politics as part of their story preferences in print media and these stories are normally reported in daily newspapers according to Roberts (2016). On the other hand, weekly newspapers just as weekend newspapers were opted for as they mostly carry feature stories. Feature stories according to Roberts (2016) carry more in-depth stories providing a detailed discussion of profiles of people, places, organisations and ideas. Among the most common subjects of profiles in feature stories are celebrities, athletes, individuals who overcome challenges and high-profile executives (Roberts 2016). From Roberts' (2016) argument, it follows that if there might be more stories concerning people with visual impairments in terms of overcoming challenges, it

definitely has to be in either weekly or weekend newspapers. Free newspapers were selected for distributing news at no cost. According to some participants during interviews, one of the challenges faced by people with visual impairments is finances and this has also been reported through various research including the Census (2011:116). It is an undeniable fact that the employment rate for people with disabilities is very low yet according to Sen (1999), it is employment which is a key mechanism through which people may earn an income. With such a situation faced by people with disabilities, there is a possibility that many people with visual impairments may utilise such free newspapers to access information for their needs. Local newspapers were preferred due to their proximity with the community, as such; these newspapers act as watchdogs for communities (The Bangor Daily News Editorial Board 2019). Local newspapers cover all serious issues affecting the community in which they operate, hence, issues or problems concerning everyone and anything within that particular community may be well known through local newspapers. Such proximity therefore ensures that local newspapers are capable of even reporting issues concerning people with disabilities as part of the community in which they operate. From these 261 newspapers, I sourced 71 articles that were regarded as being vital to the purpose and objectives of this study. (See appendix 3 Page 258).

The internet made it easier to access huge amounts of data for content analysis for this research in a way that would take ages or would even be impossible if it was physically done (Holsti 1969; Karlsson & Sjøvaag 2015). The internet has changed delivery systems of newspapers so that newspaper publishers can now deliver the very same hardcopy tabloid published newspaper editions in a digital form to be accessed as softcopies on the internet. Additionally, newspaper companies are also producing many other online based editions of news that are mainly produced exclusively as online news and do not have a print outlet (Robertson 2005). Where we once read a newspaper and turned the pages, we can now 'select and click', but also subscribe to digests, watch, listen and even contribute by commenting on comment pieces (Holliman 2010; Latzer 2013). It is not only newspaper companies that have taken their printed newspapers online, but many large magazine print-publishers are also reproducing their printed versions in electronic format and even disseminating them for free using various online platforms. These magazines which are being

distributed online are also referred to as online or digital magazines by their service providers (Pogue 1995). These print version magazines are published in multiple digital or dual digital formats that may include both an HTML version with the appearance of traditional web pages, and flash versions that appear more like traditional magazines with digital flipping of pages (Holliman 2010; Pogue 1995). Media researchers have also embraced such a development for research purposes particularly in analysing content published on online platforms (Holsti 1969; McMillan 2006). The advantage of online distributed print media for content analysis is that User Generated Content can be accessed without having to physically meet with users (Karlsson & Sjøvaag 2015). Additionally, conducting content analysis using online distributed print media is fairly simple and more economical than other techniques. In most cases, the necessary data for content analysis is readily available and even large quantities of data are considered as advantageous as it can be used to examine tendencies and patterns of web/online based content (Holsti 1969).

#### **4.5.4 Data collection strategy**

This research made use of interviews that were semi-structured and used open ended questions to investigate how people with visual impairments access print media information. These interviews were on a one-on-one basis as I was individually speaking to participants through their private emails. Semi-structured interviews allowed depth to be achieved by providing me with opportunities to probe and expand on the participants' responses (Salmons 2010; 2014). According to Rubin and Rubin (2005:88), a semi-structured interview, which is a more flexible type of the structured interview provides balance to the preplanned questions of a structured method. Open ended questions were used in this research to enable respondents to include more information, such as their feelings about the subject matter, attitude, and their understanding of the subject (Gubrium & Holstein 2002). Using open ended questions participants were able to explain if they did not understand the question or if they did not have an opinion on the subject matter (Dörnyei 2007:136). According to Gubrium and Holstein (2002), open ended questions have the capability of yielding more information and unique insight for the researcher as respondents may find them less threatening than scaled questions. Participants were able to even explain their own

experiences of the phenomena as examples to the questions asked. The open-ended questions provided them with enough room to explain how they felt while giving examples to emphasise their points.

For content analysis content was explored in the newspapers and magazines using interview technique as stated by O'Leary (2014), in this case treating the content as a participant providing valued information to the researcher. Taking advantage of the nature of content analysis as being unstructured and unobtrusive as stated by Holsti (1969) and Krippendorff (1980), as researcher I asked questions and highlighted answers within the text. This was in a similar strategy as I used in interviews that was asking questions that were semi-structured and open ended. In so doing I was able to record data both from magazine and newspapers that were directly related to the purpose of this research. Information that was recorded was specifically that concerning people with visual impairments from where I described characteristics of the recorded content (Obaid, 2011; Hayakwa, 1941).

#### **4.5.5 Data analysis**

This research firstly analysed interviews data followed by data from print media (newspapers and magazines). In analysing data for this research, I was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step thematic analysis guidelines and the traditional content analysis approach as suggested by Macmillan (2004). The choice of using thematic analysis to analyse data for this research was based on its theoretical freedom as a useful and flexible research tool, with capabilities to provide complex but rich and comprehensive data accounts (Braun & Clarke 2006:4). The flexible nature of thematic analysis is that it is principally not connected to any theory or any epistemology and it can be useful for a wider range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke 2006; Bennett & Gough 2013; Leeming, Williamson, Lyttle & Johnson 2013; Niland, Lyons, Goodwin & Hutton 2014; Clarke, Braun & Wooles 2015; Frith 2015; Neville, Adams, Bellamy, Boyd & George 2015; Terry & Braun 2016). This study was not knotted or originated from a particular theoretical framework and secondly it sought to deliver a comprehensive and rich, but complex account of data (Braun & Clarke 2006:4).

In this study, content analysis conducted on print media distributed online was partly meant to confirm or dispute the findings from the interviews. Content analysis according to Leites and Pool (1942) has four functions: 1) to confirm what is already believed 2) to correct the “optical illusions” of specialists 3) to settle disagreements among specialists and lastly 4) to formulate and test hypotheses about symbols. Online print media content was analysed using the traditional content analysis approach. An informal examination of content analysis articles published in the *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, between 2004 and 2007 revealed that online content analysis is certainly grounded in traditional methods (Singh & Baack 2004; Waseleski 2006). McMillan (2000), who embraces traditional content analysis, argues for the traditional content analysis which follows a particular set of procedures and their traditional realisations which need to be adhered to as closely as possible when analysing web content. The “new tools for communication should not be an excuse to stop using traditional techniques in communication research” (McMillan 2000:20). The six steps of traditional content analysis approach undertaken to arrive at the data findings of this research were: 1) organising research questions or objectives 2) choosing the sample and communication content 3) formulating categories of content 4) finalising units of analysis 5) organising a coding scheme 6) analysing the collected data (Stempel 1989; McMillan 2004).

#### **4.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

A qualitative researcher must be self-assured that their data were generated after every precaution has been taken against known distortions, impurities and biases, intentional or accidental, and that the generated data does not differ if used by anyone is in a similar research. This assures the reliability of the data (Kaplan & Goldsen 1965; Bloor & Wood 2006). According to Kaplan and Goldsen (1965:83-84) reliable data are data that remain constant throughout variations in the measuring process. Accordingly, the reliability of research procedure depends on its responding to the same phenomena in a similar way irrespective of the circumstances of its implementation (Krippendorff 1980) hence the need for researchers to determine their data dependability by assessing their reliability. In qualitative research trustworthiness of the research is ensured by focusing on credibility, transferability, dependability and

confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, Babbie and Mouton 2001). Credibility looks at how compatible the created realities within the respondents' minds are to those realities that are accredited to them (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Credibility in this research was achieved through persistent observations, triangulation, referential adequacy, peer debriefing and member checks. The degree to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents is what is referred to as transferability (ibid.). Transferability for this research was achieved by my being able to provide a detailed, rich description of the settings studied in order for readers to have sufficient information to be able to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings that they know (Seale 1999:45). I gathered adequate detailed descriptions of data in context and reported them, with adequate details and exactness to permit judgement to be made about transferability by the reader. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) a dependable research needs to be consistent and accurate. The dependability of this research was achieved especially in the manner I conceptualized this study. I clearly presented how I collected data for both interviews and content analysis, how participants and content for observation was selected and analysed as well as interpreting the findings and reporting results. Guba and Lincoln (1984) define confirmability as the degree to which the findings of the enquiry are not any of the researcher's biases but the product of the focus of the enquiry. The confirmability of this research is that all the findings were based on participants' narratives other than my own. In analysing data for this research, I explained and justified how coding was done and how themes emanated as well as explaining them.

#### **4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

For this research I followed all the ethical principles required when conducting research especially with people who are vulnerable, such as those with visual impairments, for which this research was about. It is a requirement for both researchers and their participants to be knowledgeable about their expectations, as well as the reasons why and when. When a consent form is signed the researcher and participants by then should be aware of the purpose of the study, how the research data will be used and the limitations of the data collection (Salmons 2010). The general ethical principles include respect for autonomy, which refers to the understanding that



each person has rights to dignity and privacy which need to always be respected (Flicker, Haans & Skinner 2004). Patton and Cochran (2002) also put forward two key ethical issues that need to be considered in any project which are consensus and confidentiality. This means that the availability of subjects is voluntarily upon agreement. In this study, I made sure to inform all participants about the research purpose and what was expected of them as participants prior to the interviews. Participants voluntarily decided to participate in this study and had their consent confirmed by signing the consent form. I also ensured that all research participants' identities were well protected by using numbers instead of their names so that their identity could not be deciphered. The ethical principle of justice implies that every research participant should be treated equally and fairly for the entire progress of the research process (Kitchin 2007). I also ensured that every participant received the same treatment according to the acceptable standards of ethical principles. The beneficence principle necessitates that researchers weigh every psychological, physical, medical, social harm or risks that their research participants may encounter by virtue of participating in the project, and then doing their best to try and minimise these harms and maximise the benefits to them (Flicker, Haans & Skinner 2004; Kitchin 2007). As this research was conducted while fully observing the university's research ethics, there were no problems from either side from the start to the end of the interview process.

## **4.8 APPLYING ANALYSIS GUIDELINES**

### **4.8.1 Getting Familiar with the Data and organising research questions or objectives for content analysis**

Interviews data for this research was textual and done through emails hence there was no need to transcribe data into written text as it happens in other interviews which are conducted in a form of videos or audios (Lapadat & Lindsay 1999). Instead, the transcription that took place was to transfer all the interviews from emails to a word document grouping them by names of participants and dates. This was the same process I used in content analysis. All the stories in both print media about visual impairments and general disabilities that were directly related to the purpose of this research were copied and pasted on a word document. Here I screened out all those

that were not suitable and left with those that were more suitable to the purpose of this research and transferred them to a different word document. This process of repeatedly reading the data both from interviews and print media content helped me as it enabled me to become deeply immersed in it. Data were read in an active way while searching for meanings and patterns so as to identify possible patterns for coding (Braun & Clarke 2006). Going through the data repeatedly also helped me to identify and fix grammar and spelling mistakes from interviews. This was done in such a way to make sure that the data retained the needed information and its original nature (Poland 2002:632) as well as being practically suited to the purpose of the analysis (Edwards 1993). As Braun and Clarke (2006) state at this stage, it is important to make notes and jot down early impressions. From the interviews data for this research, I jotted down the below early impression rough notes:

Participants said they were not sourcing news and information in hardcopy print media as the mainstream print media do not provide news and information in Braille format. They all made it very clear that electronic media is their most preferable means of accessing print media as they are able to do so independently with the help of assistive technology devices.

From the content analysis point of view my interest was in answering the main question: how do print media cover information about people with visual impairments? With this question my objective was to establish what issues concerning people with visual impairments get published in the media and how are they published. The objective of content analysis is to convert recorded raw data into data, which can be treated in essentially a scientific manner that may build up a body of knowledge (Stempel 1989). Hence, the purpose of using content analysis for this study was to describe the characteristics of content (Berelson 1952) by asking questions such as what, why how and who. After establishing my objectives and the questions I was interested in answering them by analysing print media content.

#### **4.8.2 Generating initial codes and developing content categories**

To generate initial codes for interviews, I used splitting approach as stated by Saldana (2008:18). The split approach involves scrutinising the data carefully while identifying possible codes from the data extracts (Saldana 2008:20). A code is a short-term explanation of whatever is being said in the interview and is a manner in which data

can start being organised into meaningful groups (Mortensen 2019). Saldana (2008:3) describes a code as “mostly a word or phrase that is short and representatively allocates a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data”. According to Boyatzis (1998:63) codes refer to “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon”. They identify a feature of the data that is interesting to the analyst or researcher.

In this research I only coded data from 10 participants which was manageable to code them all manually. As stated by Kelle (2004) and Seale (2000), the coding of data can be done either manually or electronically through software programmes like NVivo. Electronic coding is normally associated with quantitative research which involves huge chunks of numerical data (Basit 2003). Furthermore, the intention of qualitative research is not to know how many people feel positively or negatively about something, but rather to ascertain ‘what’ they feel, and ‘why’ they feel that way. This also incorporates ‘who’ feels the way they do, and ‘where’, ‘when’ and ‘how’ and such a detailed scrutiny clearly cannot be carried out by using numbers, percentages and statistics which are/can easily be done by computers (Brisit 2003:152). Hence however manual coding was opted for and more convenient for this research.

I developed a three-column table and coded data by data items. A data item is each distinct piece of data gathered, which when put together creates the data set or corpus (Braun 2005). The first column which I labeled ‘Raw Data’ was where I located all the collected data from all the 10 participants by putting it in segments by number of participants. The second column I labeled ‘Data Extracts’ and this was where I placed the data, I extracted from the first column. I looked at all activities participants mentioned they were engaged in and their perceptions relating to their access to print media and then extracted those that I found to have interesting points. In this second forum the extracted data was grouped in a memo form as Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that sometimes a name with a few words is not enough to describe an entire concept. In such a scenario, the researcher can write notes against a concept that is known as a “Memo”. A memo can contain a paragraph or even more if needed (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Data extracts in a memo form helped me to further focus on

what was significant to be initially coded. I ended up with 104 data extracts from the raw data of the entire data set. Then I proceeded to finally fill in the third column which I labelled 'Initial Codes' to generate my initial codes. The split approach method helped to ensure that I had coded all the data and I ended up with 258 initial codes from the entire data set (see appendix 4 page 264). It should also be noted that these codes were formulated or identified considering specific questions as stated by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995:149) which are:

- “What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish?”
- How, exactly, do they do this? What specific means and/or strategies do they use?
- How do members talk about, characterize, and understand what is going on?
- What assumptions are they making?
- What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes?
- Why did I include them?”

For content derived from print media I developed content categories for coding the content. The heart of content analysis is developing the category system to classify the body of text (Berelson 1952:147). Prasad (1994) defines content categories as compartments or “pigeonholes” with unequivocally definite borders for the coding of content units for analysis. Content categories flow from the research question and should be supported with relevant literature review and related studies (Prasad 1994:12). In developing content categories, I looked at what classifications were most capable to produce the needed data to answer the research questions raised for this research. It should be noted that these content categories were classified by looking at the entire storyline including both the heading used and the body text. The content categories were developed as follows: -

**Table 4.2: Developed content categories**

<i>Developed content categories for this study</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stories about people with disabilities/visual impairments,</li><li>• Type of stories covered,</li><li>• Which type of stories are covered most,</li><li>• How these stories are reported, as well as</li><li>• The representation/portrayal of disability in the stories.</li></ul>

#### **4.8.3 Searching for themes and finalising the units of analysis to establish themes**

This phase re-focuses the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes. It involves sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). Themes for this research emanated from data itself. This is so because this research was an exploratory research design whereby there was little or no previous knowledge about the research topic (Michael 2002) to reference or depend upon in order to predict an outcome (Christoph 2010). Hence, themes for this research came out of an in-depth exploration of the data and thus were data-driven (Braun & Clarke 2006). An inductive approach was used to identify themes meaning that the themes were strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton 1990) as opposed to being driven by the researcher's theoretical interest in the topic (Braun & Clarke 2006:12). Inductive analysis is described by Braun & Clarke (2006:12) as a process of coding data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. Furthermore, the themes identified from the data specifically collected for the research did not really relate to the specific questions that were asked of the participants during interviews (ibid.). Participants made it clear that they did not use hardcopy print media which was the focus for this research, most of the responses

given by participants were therefore from their experiences of using electronically distributed print media, a replica of the hardcopy distributed print media. So, to identify themes I focused solely on the data provided by participants, examining the codes of which some clearly fitted together into a theme. As stated previously, there were so many codes related to participants' interaction with print media in electronic format in sourcing news and information. I collated these codes into an initial theme called "Theme VI excluded from hardcopy print media". By the end of this step, I had organised codes into broader themes that seemed to say something specific in relation to the collected data for this research. In total 13 themes were identified from the entire data set as listed in (See appendix 5 page 282).

After developing my content categories for content analysis, I finalised my units of analysis. The unit of analysis is the smallest unit of content that is coded into the content category. These vary based on the nature of data and the purpose of research (Prasad 1994). Thus, according to Prasad (1994), the unit of analysis might be a single word, a letter, a symbol, a theme (a single assertion about one subject), a news story, a short story, a character, an entire article, or an entire film or a piece of a programme. At this stage, the content analyst asks two interrelated questions: 1) what unit of content is to be considered for classification under the categories? 2) what system of record will be used? According to the data, I developed or established units of content under each category as follows.

**Table 4.3: Unit of content to be considered for classification under each category**

<b>Content Categories</b>	<b>Unit of analysis</b>
Stories about people with visual impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Blind</li> <li>• Partially sighted</li> </ul>
Type of stories covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness</li> <li>• Challenges faced by people with visual impairment</li> <li>• Success stories</li> <li>• Empowerment stories</li> <li>• Community Based Organisations</li> </ul>
Which type of stories are covered most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness</li> <li>• Challenges faced by people with visual impairment</li> <li>• Success stories</li> <li>• Empowerment stories</li> <li>• Community Based Organisations</li> </ul>
How these stories are reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Format</li> <li>• Style</li> <li>• Details</li> </ul>
The representation/portrayal of disability in the stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of words</li> <li>• Use of phrases</li> <li>• Use of pictures</li> </ul>

I classified disability, blind and partially sighted under visual impairments because these three categories sometimes appeared differently in different stories. For example, there were some articles differentiating visual impairment from blindness but aligning it to partially sighted. Hence, visual impairment for this research was used to mean sensory disability classified under disability of senses such as sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste (Australia Achieve 2019). The unit of content – “types of stories covered” – was used to determine what types of stories about people with visual impairments were being covered in media. This was to identify gaps between stories that were covered and those that were not. Identifying this gap would help in suggesting types of stories which might also need media attention. “Which stories are mostly covered” was to help me understand why such stories were being covered the most and with what impact to people with visual impairments as the subjects and the media itself as an information disseminator. To find out about the stories mostly covered, I looked at how many similar stories were being covered by a particular print

media i.e., a particular newspaper or magazine, how many times a year and if it was a similar trend in all magazines and newspapers. There are two kinds of units of analysis and these are recording units and context units (Nachmias & Nachmias 1976; Prasad 1994). The recording unit is the particular segment of content in which the occurrence of a reference/fact is counted or the unit can be broken down in order to be able to place the reference/facts in different categories, for example, by counting the number of times a word, sentence, news item, etc. appears (Nachmias & Nachmias 1976). Consequently, there are different categories for news items with a group of facts that could be coded.

In the unit of content “How these stories are reported” I was interested to know whether they were reported so that they could also be read by people with visual impairments, in this case talking about format, and the style that was being used by the media in reporting – in other words, whether it was for the purpose of promoting the affairs of people with disabilities or serving their own purposes as a media “business” company. In terms of details, my interest was to understand if “facts” provided in these stories were anything to go by or not i.e., did they have errors or not.

And then finally, the content of unit “representation/portrayal of disability in the stories” was to determine the language or terminology used in reporting these stories i.e., stereotyping, degrading etc. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1976:135), content analysis has five main recording units that are usually used by researchers: words or terms, paragraphs, items i.e. an article, a speech or entire book, themes and characters. For this research I used both recording and context units’ themes as recording units. Guided by categories under unit of contents I developed these themes. I ended up coming up with three themes instead of five and four subthemes. All the discarded themes were embedded in these established;

**Table 4.4: Established themes**

Print media coverage of visual impaired stories	Representation of disability in print media	Rhetoric analysis
-------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	-------------------



As stated by Nachmias and Nachmias (1976), where units cannot be inferred solely in terms of frequency, context unit becomes appropriate. Berelson (1952) defines a context unit as representing a bigger part of content, ably examined to characterise the recording unit. For instance, if a word is a coding unit, the paragraph or sentence in which the word appears may then become the context unit which characterises the recording unit (Prasad 1994). Units of analysis for this research as said earlier on were articles/stories about people with general disabilities or specifically visual impairment. I then looked at the number of times a similar article appeared in print media in order to determine which stories were appearing more than others. Recording unit was also used where articles contained different interesting facts suitable for different categories. Some articles were searched as a whole to characterise recording units where units could not be inferred in terms of their frequency of appearing in the articles. Additionally, the idea of using recording and context units was to avoid missing the context (Morgan 1993). According to Morgan (1993), exclusively using frequency of codes to find significant meanings in the text may create a loophole of missing the context (Morgan 1993), hence removing meaning from its context. In this research, I used the frequency of articles rather than words because while a word or coding category may occur more frequently in the article, it could be for different reasons (Loffe & Yardley 2004). According to Loffe and Yardley (2004) frequent occurrence could indicate greater importance, but it might simply reflect greater willingness or ability to talk at length about the topic.

When it comes to the coding system, the counting of units in content analysis is achieved by the application of three methods of enumeration: frequency – the number of times a given unit or theme figures in a body of text or is recorded; space/time – the amount of space or time assigned to a news story, greatness or course; and the dimension of the bearing of the emblematic meaning comprised in the information i.e. negative, positive, favourable, unfavourable, neutral (Prasad & Kumar 1991). For this research, the counting of the units was in terms of frequency for reasons as mentioned above and intensity or direction, other than the space or time delegated to an article. Frequency was about how many times similar articles were reported while intensity or direction was to determine the effect or implication of coded units.

#### **4.8.4 Reviewing Themes and preparing coding schemes**

This phase starts when a researcher has developed a set of candidate themes, and involves the refinement of those themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) this stage is based on two levels of reviewing and refining themes. At level one which involves reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts, I firstly read all the collated extracts for each theme and considered whether they formed a coherent pattern. I saw the need to rework some themes; dissolving and creating new and broader ones that were able to accommodate some of the dissolved themes. For example, I decided to replace the first theme I had initially identified as “VI excluded from hardcopy print media” to “Mainstream print media inaccessible to the VI”. This I did to make the theme broader to encompass more other dissolved themes such as “Provision of print media by Blind organisations” and the theme: “Smartphones simplifying electronic print media access”. The new created theme would also be able to explain the themes: “News and information of interest”, “Web accessibility issues”, “Accessibility tools” as well as the theme: “Access to digital devices”. This is also true for some other themes which had been dissolved at this level as seen in the box. I restored the theme: “Disability issues in print media” to be a broader theme to encompass dissolved themes like “Blind people greatly neglected during Covid-19”, “Promoting inclusion” and the theme: “Advocating for disability related issues”. I also created a new theme: “Alternative formats” to house the theme: “Hardcopy Braille print media not feasible”. Once I finalised reviewing the coded interviews data extracts, I then went to the second level of reviewing themes but this time in relation to the entire data set considering the validity of individual themes. Here I also checked whether my candidate thematic map truthfully reflected the meanings evident in the entire data set (Braun & Clarke 2006). By the end of this stage, I was satisfied with my thematic map which comprised of three broader themes as placed in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.5: Broader themes**

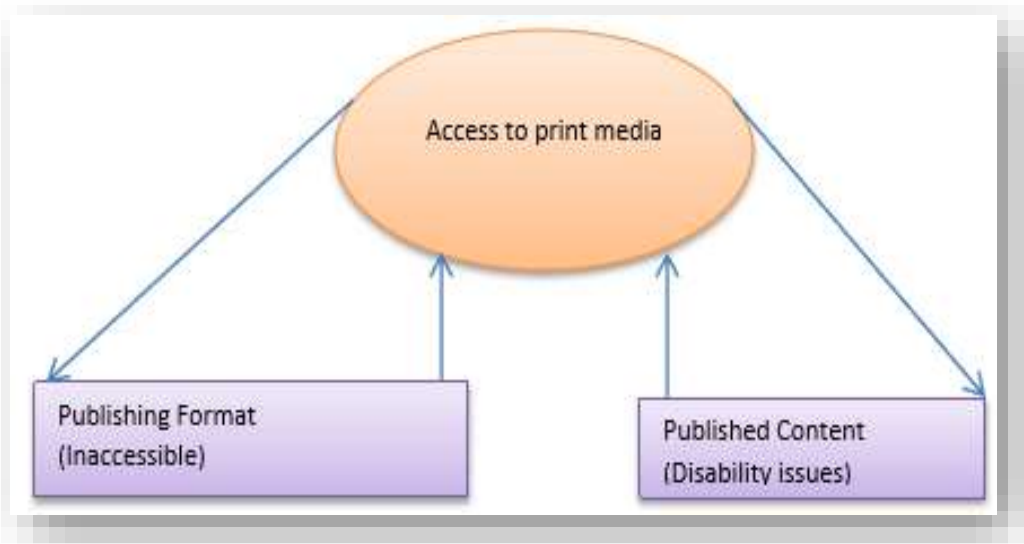
THEME: Accessing print media	THEME: Preferable print media format	THEME: Disability issues in print media.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using electronic means to read mainstream print media.</li> <li>• They use assistive technology devices to read online information.</li> <li>• People with no option have their family/friends read them print media.</li> <li>• Partially sighted use magnifier to read hardcopy printed news.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some visually impaired people would prefer print media in hardcopy Braille formats.</li> <li>• Some visually impaired people prefer print media in both hardcopy and electronic Braille formats.</li> <li>• Some prefer standard electronic print media to Braille formats.</li> <li>• Electronic print media possess some challenges to be accessed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blind people greatly neglected during the Covid-19 pandemic.</li> <li>• Print media showing no interest to cover disability issues.</li> <li>• Information about disability issues rarely covered.</li> <li>• A few published disability stories have issues within them.</li> <li>• The need to cover more disability related issues.</li> </ul>

At the end of the reviewing themes stage, I clearly had a good idea about my different themes and how they fit together and the entire story they told about the data. I was satisfied that the reworked candidature themes adequately captured the contours of the coded data (Braun & Clarke 2006:20) and therefore I was ready to go to the next stage of the thematic analysis.

For print media content derived from newspapers and magazines I had to prepare a coding schedule/scheme. A coding scheme is a classification of key themes used to categorise the observed data into expect thematic areas for qualitative data analysis (Saldana 2016). According to Prasad (1994), a coding schedule looks like a survey questionnaire and comprises various communication dimensions of content to be coded. Describing categories and organising the analysis' coding schedule as well as content coding of steps work simultaneously (Krippendorff 2004). I developed a coding scheme by locating key themes to cover the findings as to the purpose and objectives of this research. This was also to explain the themes in chronological order in a clear manner as possible without unnecessary misunderstandings.

#### **4.8.5 Defining and naming themes and coding the text according to the coding scheme**

At this stage an analyst defines and further refines the themes to be presented in the analysis and analyse the data within them (Braun & Clarke 2006). This final refining stage is about recognizing the basic nature of what each particular theme is about as well as determining the aspect of the data captured by each theme (Braun & Clarke 2006: 22). In doing this I revisited the collated data extracts for each theme, and structured them into a comprehensible and internally consistent account with corresponding narrative. Each theme was considered in relation to other themes. I identified one overarching theme: “Mainstream print media inaccessible to the VI” – this central theme was embedded in other themes which were useful for giving it its structure demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data. I then drew an interrelated final thematic map illustrating the relationships between the central theme and its subthemes.



**Figure 4.2: Thematic map**

After coming up with the overarching theme and three subthemes to accompany it when writing the report, I was then ready to produce the report, marking the last stage of thematic analysis.

For content analysis in order to code the text, I went through each print media story and recorded all the relevant data in the appropriate categories. This coding scheme can be done manually or aided by a computer programme (Prasad 1994). Just as for interviews i opted for manual recording so that I could identify key themes that were formulated after revisiting the categories. From the observed data I classified categories in key themes as follows.

**Table 4.6: Established key themes**

Representation of disability in print media	Print media coverage of visual impaired stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stereotypes</li> <li>• Lack of representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of stories covered</li> <li>• Story headings</li> <li>• Story details</li> <li>• Rhetoric devices presence</li> <li>• Reasons behind the coverage</li> <li>• Impact of the coverage</li> </ul>

#### **4.8.6 Producing the Report and analysing the collected data**

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), producing the report stage starts when the researcher has a set of fully worked-out themes. For content analysis once coding was completed, the collected data were examined to find patterns and draw conclusions in response to the research questions underpinning this study. Having had established the necessary themes I produced a report first by presenting the findings from the entire data then discussing the findings. I have discussed interpretations of what the results meant, and made inferences about the creators, context and audience of the texts (Prasad & Kumar 1991).

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In chapter I have presented my research findings and discussed the findings in details simultaneously from both interviews and content analysis. Below are th research findings that would be followed by the discussions.

### 5.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

After going through what the participants said I identified four themes. The main theme was:

- a) Print media inaccessible to People With Visual Impairment (PWVI) (as the main theme) in terms of:
  - a. Format of the print media (subtheme)
  - b. Content in terms of disability issues (subtheme)
  - c. Assistive techonological devices (subtheme)

According to Hill (2013), when something is inaccessible it means it is unable to be reached or used. By systematically checking and rechecking the data items I discovered that most of the responses provided by participants revolved around issues of format and content. Participants said that print media were inaccessible to them both in terms of formats and covering disability issues. *Format* and *disability issues* then became the two identified themes. Participants also emphasised the use of technology as their enabling factor to accessing online distributed print media, *assistive technological devices* therefore became another identified theme from the provided data. Although technological devices enabled participants to access electronic print media, they also had their own challenges as the devices were not able to interpret every text particularly those with graphics. Participants suggested possible solutions to these inaccessibility issues on how print media should ensure their inclusion in hardcopy publications, how print media should ensure their inclusion in their online publications and how print media should ensure their inclusion in terms of their published content. Hence the three themes namely: *format, disability issues and technological devices* responding to the questions: what? why? how? were able to capture the essence of the point being demonstrated without unnecessary complexity (Braun & Clarke 2006: 23).

As per the data collected from the interviews it is obvious that people with visual impairments feel excluded in print media both in terms of accessing information and the content in the published information. According to their knowledge, there is not one mainstream print media that is printed in Braille format, the only format that enables them to access hardcopy print information. Information both in hardcopy print media and electronically is published in a manner that is user friendly for the fully sighted, but not for those with visual impairments. While people with visual impairments can access print media information electronically, they face so many challenges in terms of layout which leads to the failure of screen readers transferring information into voice for their understanding. Graphics and adverts are the most destructive elements in electronic print media preventing people with visual impairments from finding pleasure in accessing information.

According to participants, print media can help people with visual impairments to access information by publishing their hardcopy print media in hardcopy Braille and publishing their online print version in electronic Braille and MP3 audios, text format, emails, RSS and twitter but not in PDF. Above all, people with visual impairments suggested that all print media should follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to enable them to read electronic information without a problem. Participants also cited their being excluded in print media due to their published information which has very little information about people with disabilities. The information that is published contains various faults such as it using the old model of describing disability, degrading terminologies, stereotyping, untrue information, generalisations among others. Also raised was a concern about how the media fails to publish crucial issues concerning people with disabilities, with some participants quoting the Covid-19 pandemic situation during which the media has not been doing a lot to educate them on how to be safe. Being blind and partially sighted already makes them vulnerable to the pandemic and not being provided with the needed precautionary measures makes them doubly at risk of contracting the virus. Participants therefore suggested that print media should work more on publishing issues about disability awareness, human rights and advocacy; issues capable of making an impact on the disability community. Most of what participants said in the interviews were also confirmed in the analysis of both print media.

In analysing print media content, I focused on the representation of people with disabilities in the media and the coverage of stories about people with disabilities. The coverage of stories I focused on the type of stories that were being covered, their headlines, story details, rhetoric devices present, reasons for covering the stories and the impact of coverage. The findings also suggest that to a very large extent newspapers articles about people with visual impairments are written to persuade readers other than just to inform or serve the interests of people with visual impairments. And although these articles concerned people with visual impairments these subjects were not being considered as part of the audiences for their own stories. The style used to publish these stories was by the ordinary newspaper standards, small letters which are unreadable to the partially sighted and in standard newspaper typed words for which people who are blind are unable to see and read. I had no problems accessing these articles because they were all not in Braille format. Additionally, the stories were being accompanied by graphics meaning even if a person with visual impairments was to access these stories electronically, they would not be able to understand the pictures that were being depicted in their stories. This confirms about what participants said about print media being inaccessible to them due to its presentation format.

My observation in magazine stories about people with disabilities in general, is that there was not much coverage as there were in the newspapers. This was also stated by participants themselves. Just as in the newspapers, there were some stereotypes in stories covered by magazines articles but most of the stories also had very positive impactful messages aimed at promoting the affairs of people with visual impairments. Unlike in newspapers, the magazines' styles of covering stories of people with visual impairments meant that they gave such stories a good amount of coverage, hence, issues were covered at a much more detailed level. Although there were some newspapers with some persuasive headings, from my observations most of the magazine stories aimed at informing people as opposed to persuading them to read the story. I can say that those magazines that covered issues in relation to people with visual impairments took a more serious approach and were helpful to people with visual impairments, compared to the approach taken by newspapers' coverage – what Barnes (1992) calls an accurate portrayal of disability.



## 5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 5.2.1 Publishing Format

Publishing formats for print media are not compatible with formats that can be accessed by people with visual impairments according to participants. From the analysed content, all analysed print media were published in standard print media format with no publications in Braille. There was an article in *Fresh Living Magazine* on 25 June 2019 published about producing a similar magazine in Braille. The same story was produced in *The Weekend Argus* newspaper. However, there is no evidence of the existence of this magazine as participants clearly mentioned of not knowing any mainstream print media coming in Braille. Out of interest I visited about three Pick n Pay shops in Johannesburg and spoke to managers about this magazine, who but despite them working in Pick n Pay they were also not aware of it. The magazine, according to the article was said to have been established in the Eastern Cape regions however I can say that the whole truth about this type of magazine is not yet known.

Due to inavailability of mainstream print media in required formats, people with visual impairments use alternative ways/formats to access print media information. Alternative formats are used by people with visual impairments to meet their reading needs and are the means of providing equal access to information to them (Craven 2003; SeeWriterHear 2020). In the first part of the findings, I have discussed issues around format, followed by issues around content.

#### 5.2.1.1 Alternative formats

Due to the inaccessibility participants opted for other alternative ways to access print media information. These were either by asking for help from their family members as stated by participant nine:

*Fortunately, my wife is a sighted person. She is always willing to read out to me any article that may interest me. She has her own interests and I sometimes may have to wait a while before I get to hear the article.*

Research conducted by Williamson (1998) established that family members were ranked highest of the 12 important sources of information for everyday life of people with visual impairments. Similar findings were made by British studies (Todd 1984; [Tinker, McCreadie & Salvage 1993](#)) where it was established that family members and friends were at the top, or near to the top of important sources. Using a magnifying glass to access information was also cited by some participants as another alternative way used by people with visual impairments to access information.

Participant five:

*If a partially sighted person has enough sight left to read small print letters with ease, then this person has no accessibility issues. ...You will get sometimes that a partially sighted person buys a newspaper at his nearest supermarket and then uses a magnifier to read.*

According to participant five there are certain people who are partially sighted and can only read information in print media using magnifying glasses. Magnifying glasses are glasses with lens that focus print at short viewing distances (Legge 2016). People with presbyopia, especially older people, will require such lens to access hardcopy print media. According to Sloan (1977), enlargement of the characters in a local region of text by a magnifier brings about the need to move the magnifier across the lines of text. This process also known as *page navigation* imposes demands on eye or head movements and manual dexterity.

Apart from using magnifying glasses most participants cited electronic print media as an alternative format they use to access information.

Participant three:

*We have no known newspapers or magazines in Braille. Most of our print media news we get by electronic ways.*

According to participant three there seems to be no print media to their knowledge in a form of newspapers and magazines that are in Braille format. As such people with visual impairments access print media information through electronic ways; that is

distributed online. The absence of print media in Braille is also in accordance with my observations of content analysis. There were no print media in Braille format to be accessed by people with visual impairments.

Participant seven:

*I cannot read print media as I cannot see the letters, I use electronic media as print media excludes Braille.*

According to participant seven, being with visual impairments makes someone not to be able to see letters hence unable to read hardcopy print media. As a result, electronic media becomes an option for such people to access print media information. This is also what was concurred by participant one that a blind person can not read hardcopy print media but electronic media.

Participant one:

*I believe that hardly any blind person read paper media. Many of us read electronic newspapers.*

Research findings have it that the internet has improved access to information for the fully sighted as well as those with visual impairments (Leonard, Jacko & Pizzimenti 2006). People with visual impairments can now read information from original sources, those available on the WWW at the same time as anyone else (Golub 2002). The digital age has expanded the world of those with visual impairments and to a great extent supported them in eradicating their challenges to accessing information as well as further environmental barriers (Bradley & Poppen 2003). Access to the internet permits people with visual impairments to read news articles more independently without having to wait for others to read for them (Williamson et al 2000). This important role of the internet of being able to read for oneself cannot be overstated, it is liberating, allowing independent access to the mainstream world where previously none existed (Leonard, Jacko & Pizzimenti 2006). Additionally, it has improved how people with visual impairments are able to evaluate themselves against others in terms of communication proficiency (Bradley & Poppen 2003). According to Golub (2002),

people with visual impairments have been empowered by the internet and electronic information to come to a more equal level with the rest of the world.

#### **5.2.1.2 Assistive devices**

Participants mentioned using assistive devices to be able to read electronic version print media.

Participant four:

*I generally read print media via electronic channels - online services like their websites using various forms of speech software.*

According to participant four, people with visual impairments read print media electronically on print media websites. They use assistive devices such as speech softwares which translate written words into speeches. These are also referred to by people with visual impairments as screen reading softwares as stated by participant six and ten.

Participant six:

*I only access online distributed print media through assistive devices like screen-reading software.*

Participant ten:

*I access print media through electronic means using screen reading software.*

There are also computers and smartphones with synthesised speech as assistive devices for people with visual impairments to access print media distributed online.

Participant two:

*I read mainstream print media electronically I use computer with synthesised speech and smartphone with speech to read mainstream paper media online.*

IPhones were also mentioned as assistive devices that help people with visual impairments to access online news.

Participant five:

*As a totally blind person I use electronic gadgets like my iPhone to source news.*

Assistive devices are special programmes and equipment in computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones adapted for persons who have visual impairment that helps them overcome the challenges of their disability (Gerber & Kirchner 2001; Griffith-Shirley, Banda, Ajuwon, Cheon, Lee, Park & Lyngdoh 2017). For those who are blind, the main devices are screen readers, Braille displays, and speech recognition software (Belay 2003; Foley & Ferri 2012). A screen reader is a programme that analyses the layout and content of a website and provides a text to speech translation (Foley 2019). Screen readers enable people with visual impairments to skim or surf websites to reach content sections of their interest just as can be done by those who are fully sighted provided that the content on the websites has been coded accordingly with header tags (Johnsen, Grønli & Bygstad 2012). Assistive devices can help individuals feel less stigmatised or labelled (Babinszki 2010). Participants cited downloading newspaper apps on their electronic gadgets and specific news apps were mentioned by some participants as being popular amongst people with visual impairments.

Participant five:

*The following newspaper apps are popular among blind and low vision users: News24, IOL, Eye Witness News (EWN). The following news agencies I love: Google News, ENCA (Electronic News Channel for Africa).*

Participant one:

*Very regularly I read electronic media like News24, Eye Witness News apps or Daily Maverick news website.*

Recently newspaper apps have gained popularity among people with visual impairments due to their portability, cost, easy access to information and ease of use (Griffith-Shirley et al 2017:308). Many newspapers on mobile devices support an independent app that contains one or several daily editions (Hallin & Mancini 2004). The use of technological devices (PCs, laptops, smartphones and tablets) by people with visual impairments is all possible due to assistive devices. Although participants cited using electronic print media to access print media, this access does not mean a comfortable alternative format as they face a number of challenges while surfing the news websites using assistive devices.

Participant four:

*While experimenting with OCR scanning software/technology, the biggest issue with print media is layout of things like newspapers.*

According to participant four the layout of newspapers on print media websites makes it difficult for people with visual impairments to smoothly access information.

Participant nine:

*There are however some web pages where one is able to read headlines and news summary. This is a schlep, because the web pages are so cluttered with advertisements and junk, that it is more of a battle to get to the news, than what it is a pleasure. Always bear in mind the fact that screen reader software, in most cases, cannot read graphics. It seems like most sighted people still cannot get a grip on the fact that a screen reader can only read text. The mere fact that one can see the text in a file, is no guarantee that a screen reader can read it, if the file is an image file. It must be understood that, for example a jpeg file, containing text may seem like a text file to the normal eye, and while in fact it is an inaccessible graphics file.*

Participant nine said that the many adverts and other imagery stuff on online print media websites make it so hard for people with visual impairments to enjoy reading print media content online. The challenge is due to inability of screen readers to read

images. Files like jpeg are also inaccessible by a screen reader. Some participants citing a similar problem added that the many adverts accompanying online news stories are annoying to them.

Participant five:

*Visually impaired readers find all the many ads between articles annoying. Ads that appear in articles complicate the listening experience. When we hear there is an ad or more than one, we must first stop the screen readers on our smartphones and computers and swipe past them to continue reading.*

Participant five further stated that adverts interrupt the screen readers' capability to interpret texts. When the screen reader reaches where there are adverts, one must first stop the screen reader and swipe through the graphics and then switch it on once they reach texts that is readable by the screen reader.

The layout of print media on websites is in such a way whereby texts are accompanied by pictures/graphics. According to Necasek (2004), the use of graphics to represent information reduced most existing assistive devices relying on text output, effectively useless. The screen reader is unable to read graphics hence graphics on texts become a disruption to the visually impaired while reading information online (Necasek 2004). In a study with 100 blind web users, conducted by Lazar, Allen, Kleinman and Malarkey (2007), participants recorded top causes of frustrations in using screen readers such as (i) page layout causing confusing screen reader feedback; (ii) conflict between screen reader and application; (iii) poorly designed/unlabeled forms; (iv) no alt text for pictures; and (v) 3-way tie between misleading links, inaccessible PDF, and a screen reader crash. Hence as stated by Dobransky and Hargittai (2006), technical accessibility problems are regarded as one of the extra barriers that people with a visual disability encounter when using the internet websites. And apart from technical problems, on the side of print media itself, some participants cited technical skills and financial constraints as challenges preventing them from accessing websites.

Participant eight:

*My reason for not using websites unless there is no other way is quite simply because I am not the most proficient person in surfing the internet. Being self-taught means that I have missed a trick or two along the way.*

According to participant eight, some people with visual impairments may not use information distributed on print media websites due to them not being acquainted with using the internet. Being taught by themselves how to use internet, they end up missing one or two tricks. While others may fail to use the internet due to financial problems.

Participant six:

*VI population in S.A. has very few people with access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial constraints. Subscribing is sometimes expensive, as a vast number of VI do not have well-paid employment, or do not have access to assistive devices.*

According to participant six, despite having so many people with visual impairments in South Africa, very few of them have access to electronic devices including internet services and assistive devices. This is mostly due to financial challenges as many people with visual impairments are not employed while those employed earn very little.

Internet skills and usage issues may fall under one umbrella known as digital literacy, defined as the being able know how to use internet ably access information from a wide range of Information and Communication Technologies (Gilster 2007). A study by Penney and Associates (1996) found that non-existence of proper and available training, attitudinal glitches, language, and speedy pace of change in web designs were found as significant barriers to acquiring enough technical skills to using the internet websites. The same study also found that the biggest barrier to internet connection was access to the basic equipment needed to get connected. Furthermore, the findings were that for people with disability who are unemployed or those living on a fixed income, such an investment in computer equipment may be unrealistic (Penney & Associates 1996). The next greatest barrier was the cost of the adaptive equipment. Unemployment is one of the major challenges affecting the majority of people with disability and their families in South Africa (Houtenville & Boege 2019). Employment



and occupation are key mechanisms through which people may earn an income (Sen 1999). Research conducted by the Census 2011 on the employment status of people with and without disabilities established those with disabilities as having a slightly lower proportion of employed people than those without disability. Hence being unemployed is one of the major factors contributing to the exclusion of people with disabilities with regards to access to information (Census 2011:116). Although accessing print media electronically possesses challenges to people with visual impairment, some participants still preferred it as their best way of accessing mainstream print media.

### **5.2.1.3 Electronic print media as the best alternative format**

Participants cited electronic print media as the best alternative format for people with visual impairments to be accessing print media information.

Participant five:

*An electronic format is the answer to the best access of print information by the visually impaired.*

This was also concurred by participant seven:

*Electronic media is a better way of accessing information for blind people.*

Participant four spoke about the world going electronic. Therefore, accessing information especially for people with visual impairments, becomes more convenient if it is also done electronically.

*Primarily since the whole world has gone electronic, including/especially the youth of today, I will stick to saying that electronic formats are the way to go. Electronic text would by far be the most convenient format.*

The challenges being faced by people with visual impairments in accessing online distributed print media are all mostly related to noncompliance to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) by the mainstream print media. But because

participants still felt that electronic media was the best way to access mainstream print media version, their suggestion was for print media to improve their electronic print media publishing style. This was to make it more accommodative to people with visual impairments.

Participant nine:

*For me it would be much more of a pleasure to be able to read an article on my laptop or phone, without any interference or interruption from advertisements and other junk. Accessing info should be a much less cumbersome process than having to soldier and fight through pages of non-related links. Text must be available as a text file, e.g. .docx. If it is a picture, thus graphics, at this stage, it would help if the file is accompanied by a detailed description of the picture in text format. It is also possible to link a sound file, with a complete description of the picture, to the file. Sighted persons do not have to click on the descriptive file.*

According to participant nine accessing print media online should not be something difficult to achieve. It can be pleasing to people with visual impairments to smoothly access online print media without the problems of encountering adverts and other junks unreadable by screen readers. Their suggestion is texts should be presented as text file or if there are some graphics they should be followed by their descriptions.

Participant four:

*Publications should make sure their electronic offerings, and, the access channels should stick to/maintain accessibility standards. Another possibility that might work at times would be to include something like QR codes printed alongside normal content, since those offer methods to embed at the least, summarised versions of content. The origin of the WCAG is the W3c themselves, and, this relates to what almost all forms of assistive technology rely on when they interpret content.*

Suggestions by participant four are that online print media owners should adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines when managing their websites. This is due to the fact that almost all assistive technological devices rely on WCAG when interpreting content. Including QR codes alongside texts could also be helpful as these assist to summerise content.

Participant seven highlighted that using accessibility standards on headings, naming columns, naming buttons are some of the strategies of making electronic information accessible to people with visual impairments.

Participant seven:

*If all media houses would follow the normal rules for accessibility standards (which is available for all platforms), like using headings, naming columns, naming buttons etc. all electronic media, news and articles will be accessible to people with visual impairment.*

WCAG are standard guidelines that were developed by World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) under Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) to ensure compatibility with AT products (World Wide Web Consortium 2002). The reason why the guidelines are necessary is because to some extent most AT products that are used for accessing the internet are the same AT products used to understand and interpret the Graphic User Interface (GUI) on a computer. If WCAG are followed by web designers, the AT product can generally deliver accessible productivity to the users with visual impairments, but not following the WCAG may result in the failure of the AT to interpret the page consequently letting users struggle in accessing their needed information (Hollier 2007).

#### **5.2.1.4 Braille format**

Although electronic print media was rated as the best alternative format to accessing mainstream print media, participants' views were that print media needed to be producing their content in every needed alternative format including Braille. They stated that that was how their organisations make sure they have access to a variety range of information.

Participant two:

*Mainstream print media should also be producing information in Hard-copy Braille, electronic text via e-mail or download link, MP3 audio just as it is done by the SA Blind services.*

Participant two suggested hard-copy Braille and print media information that can be accessible through emails or downloadable through print media links as well as being accessible through MP3 audios. Similar suggestions were made by participant three:

*Print media can improve my readability via the following methods: Either by providing it in word format for electronic reading in audio and Braille. The reason for making this suggestion is that that none of the print media news is provided in audio and in both hardcopy and digital Braille.*

Producing hardcopy print media was also suggested by participant six.

*Print media particularly mainstream magazines should also be published in hardcopy Braille.*

While participant five suggested that every information in print media should be made available to people with visual impairments just as it is to the fully sighted.

*My suggestion is that print media should ensure that any and all information in mainstream print that is available to the general public must be equally accessible to, and by, persons with visual disabilities by also providing all information in format we can also read.*

The provision of information in alternative format materials to people with visual impairments remains worrisome to producers and providers, such that only a few materials ever get altered to alternative formats (Adetoro 2009). According to the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and National Library for the Blind (NLB) on Track, (2006), only five per cent of books published in the United Kingdom (UK) get converted to an alternative format. However, without alternative formats, people with visual impairments will not have access to information and will thereby fail to function well as members of society (Houtenville & Boege 2019). This is why it is crucial for every country to have a well organised arrangement for the production and utilisation of information materials for its visually impaired citizens (Adetoro 2009). While some participants had the suggestion that print media needed to be published in all the accessible formats including hardcopy Braille, others had different perceptions about hardcopy Braille.

#### 5.2.1.4.1 Braille newspaper production challenges

Participants cited challenges that could arise in trying to produce newspapers in Braille.

Participant one:

*Although I am passionate about Braille and a strong proponent, I just don't think it is even remotely feasible to have a regular newspaper also coming out in Braille. People tend to hugely underestimate the complexity of the process, skills and equipment required, the time needed to do the conversion and the cost involved.*

According to participant one although people with visual impairments may wish to have hardcopy Braille print media, for a regular newspaper to be produced in Braille would not be that possible. He/she cited complexity of the process in terms of required skills, equipment, costs as well as time to convert standard print newspaper to hardcopy Braille. The challenge of producing hardcopy Braille newspapers was also mentioned by participant five citing the requirements of large sized newspapers if produced in Braille. Time frame was also mentioned that it would be impossible to produce breaking news stories.

Participant five:

*I should have suggested that print media should be producing newspapers in Braille format but unlike magazines Braille newspapers will never work. First of all: It will be a very large book and a newspaper in Braille can even contain 2 or 3 volumes if you want to insert all articles plus Sport, Weather, Science, health opinion etc. Furthermore, you will not be able to get breaking news as breaking news as it happens on time.*

As for participant one even the organisation for people with visual impairments would not think of producing hardcopy Braille newspapers due to the complexity of the requirements to do so.

*Blind SA would not even dream of producing Braille newspapers.*

Other participants like participant nine also cited the deteriorating of the hardcopy Braille materials due to the introduction of electronic assistive devices:

*With the introduction of electronic aids, I believe Braille is slowly but surely starting to die. Consider the space and time taken to produce and store Braille material. A staunch Braille user will differ vastly from this point of view.*

To participant four hardcopy Braille is not necessarily relevant bearing in mind that even all study materials for people with visual impairments were being thought of being switched from Braille to electronic materials. Such changes were also considered especially due to the covid 19 pandemic.

*Am going to sound odd, but, right at the moment, hard-copy/print is not that relevant, what with COVID-19, etc. while I think the library for the blind may offer some Braille renditions of media, I honestly don't think that would be too feasible, or necessarily valuable in the long run but, honestly don't think physical paper is too important nowadays. For example, I know that, even here in South Africa, and, before the COVID-19 issue arose, they were trying to find ways to switch over even student study material to primarily electronic media.*

The problem of conversion of information materials into alternative formats is that the process is not only time consuming but also expensive (Adetoro 2009). As a result, information materials in Braille format may be available to people with visual impairments after several months (if at all) later than to everyone else (Adetoro 2009). Although the legislation in some countries (i.e. the Equality Act 2010 in the UK) supports people with visual impairments having access to materials in their preferred format, the availability of Braille material is affected by such extra expense that the production of Braille materials may not occur (Khochen 2011). According to Khochen (2011) this is not a small matter for service providers as well as for people with visual impairments, especially those residing in developing countries where the available services for people with visual impairments are few as well as where equality legislation is almost non-existent. To convert normal print materials to Braille, special machines, Braille presses and computer software are needed (Adetoro 2009).

#### 5.2.1.4.2 Braille literacy

Braille literacy is defined as one's ability to read and write in Braille (Miller 2002). Some participants cited not being very literate in Braille skills and hence uncomfortable using Braille.

Participant Nine:

*There could be some blind people who may prefer Braille print mainstream media like magazines. But for me bear in mind that I became blind later in my life and that I do not read Braille. It is a clumsy, cumbersome way of writing.*

According to participant nine some people with visual impairments especially those who became visually impaired at a later stage may not be very keen to learn Braille. Such people find writing in Braille challenging. Some participants who might know basic Braille could write faster than reading it but cited not being comfortable and not often using it.

Participant four:

*I myself know basic Braille, but, honestly, don't use it too often, and, am not all that comfortable with it - can write it faster than I can read it.*

According to Khocheni (2011) some negative attitudes to learning or using Braille as expressed by participant nine above are categorised as emotional downsides. Emotional downsides can either develop in children who reject being educated in a different medium to their peers or can also be found in adults who have first struggled to acquire print literacy before transferring to the learning of Braille (Khocheni 2011). Additionally, emotional downsides are also experienced by those who have lost their sight at a later stage of their life (ibid.). For these people, their frustration may get aggravated by having to "start again" but this time in a different format unfamiliar to them. For others, learning Braille signifies the final recognition or comprehension of having gone blind and therefore a 'profoundly emotional issue' spawning hostility towards it and its proponents (Rogers 2007). Globally as argued by Khocheni (2011), Braille has been and still is the primary reading method for blind people to access

information independently. Braille helps people with visual impairments to visualise text through feeling every word of it and learning how these words are written (Schroeder 1998; Maha 2011). Schroeder (1998) argues that many people with visual impairments relate their knowledge of Braille to their competence, independence and equality.

Hundreds of thousands of people with visual impairments have found Braille an indispensable tool in their education, their work, and their daily lives and for those who know Braille and use it they find success, independence, and productivity (National Federation for the Blind (NFB) 2009). A recent survey by the NFB Jernigan Institute of 500 participants revealed a correlation between the ability to read Braille and a higher educational level, a higher likelihood of employment, and a higher income. This study produced similar findings with the research conducted by Ryles (1996) from the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness. In a comparison between two groups of blind people, one consisting of Braille readers and the other of print readers, the study established that those who learnt Braille from the beginning had higher employment rates, were better educated and more financially self-sufficient, and spent more time engaged in leisure and other reading than the print users (Ryles 1996). Additionally, Ryles' (1996) work showed a remarkable difference between those who had grown up learning Braille and those who had primarily relied on print; 44 per cent of the Braille-reading group as compared to 77 per cent of the print-reading group was unemployed. In other words, the unemployment rate for the print group was actually higher than the generally reported unemployment rate among the blind as a whole (70 per cent) (Riccobono, Blake & Chwalow 2006), while the unemployment rate among Braille readers was much lower. There is therefore no doubt that the ability to read and write Braille proficiently and efficiently is the key to education, employment, and success for the blind (NFB 2009).

#### **5.2.1.5 Provision of print media by blind organisations**

To fill the gap of not accessing mainstream print media in Braille, participants cited accessing print media only through their own organisations.

Participant six:



*Visually impaired (VI) make use of Braille magazines produced by certain organisations to access info in the print media, e.g. Nuwe Pioneer by Pioneer Printers, a number of imported Braille magazines distributed by the SA Library for the Blind in Grahamstown and 4 monthly magazines from Blind SA, as well as the bi-weekly edition of Vuk'uzenzele, produced under tender by Blind SA for GCIS (Government Communications & Information System).*

#### **5.2.1.5.1 Blind SA Services**

Blind SA was established in 1946 as a national organisation of the blind and for the blind in South Africa (Blind SA Annual Report 2015/2016). Participants one, two and six spoke about services offered to them by the Blind SA;

Participant one:

*Blind SA's Braille Services publishes our own magazines in Braille, for example, Braillorama, a monthly magazine which contains articles lifted from mainstream newspapers or magazines and The Braille Trumpet which is a similar monthly magazine but with a distinct African flavour. The SA Library for the Blind in Makhanda distributes some Braille magazines that they get from the US and some other countries.*

From Blind SA Services according to participant one, people with visual impairments get Braille monthly magazines with articles taken from mainstream print media. Similar magazines are from the US and gets distributed to people with visual impairments by the South African Library. This was similar to what was said by participant two adding that some magazines are accessible through refreshable Braille.

Participant two:

*Braille Services of Blind SA produces various monthly and bimonthly magazines comprising articles from various media. I access these through hardcopy Braille display and refreshable Braille.*

A refreshable Braille is an electro-mechanical device for displaying Braille characters normally used by those who can not use a standard computer monitor.

Participants six:

*We have Blind SA which provides us with print Information which is accessed through hardcopy Braille and electronic Braille and audio formats through assistive devices. A number of publications are also produced in MP3 and Daisy format (human narration and TTS text-to-speech computer-generated speech) by Pioneer Printers, Library for the Blind, Tape Aids for the Blind and Blind SA.*

Other distribution formats as stated by participant six are hardcopy and electronic Braille, MP3 and Daisy as well as those that can be accessed with screen readers.

Blind SA has the mission to promote the interests of all blind people by combating poverty; empowering blind people by, amongst others, the provision of Braille; the distribution of information; and the provision of other developmental services as well as acting as a pressure group with regard to any matter concerning blind people (Blind SA Annual Report 2015/2016).

#### **5.2.1.5.2 Pioneer printers**

Pioneer Printers is a literature production unit for people with visual impairments (Pioneer Printers 2015). According to Pioneer Printers, one of the greatest barriers faced by people with visual impairments is gaining direct access to everyday reading matter/written text. Hence, Pioneer Printers specialise in reproducing school textbooks and examination papers of any learning area in Braille, audio sound and large print (ibid.). With the link I was provided by some participants I decided to get in touch with Pioneer Printers to get an understanding of what they do or how they operate as a print unit for materials meant for people with visual impairments. According to their information from a separate interview:

*Pioneer Printers compiles and prints an Afrikaans Braille magazine on behalf of Innovation for the Blind called 'Die Pioneer'. This magazine is produced 6 times per year in Braille, large print and electronic formats and distributed to about 85 VI readers in SA for free of charge.*

Worcester Standard is another magazine produced by the Pioneer Printers also on behalf of the Innovation for the Blind organisation. But this magazine is in MP3 format.

*Worcester Standard in audio MP3 format service for 350 VI readers in SA was also financed by Innovation for the Blind until the start of the lockdown, and because of the financial crisis all audio magazine production has stopped. The audio magazines and local newspaper e.g. Huisgenoot are narrated and recorded in full every week/month.*

Information from these magazines is compiled from some of the mainstream print media as well as from other sources.

*The Braille magazine is compiled from mainstream magazines, newspapers and newsletters of Pioneer School for the Blind, Innovation for the Blind and Pioneer Printers.*

According to Pioneer Printers, it is possible for the mainstream print media to also produce magazines in formats accessible to people with visual impairments if they have the means. Otherwise, Pioneer Printers can be hired to do so for them.

*Yes, I am not sure if they have the means to produce Braille magazines, but if they provide us the funding, we'll be able to produce their magazines in an accessible format for VI people.*

Pioneer Printers also raised a concern about the cost and expertise needed to produce Braille materials:

*Normally the problem is finance and the expertise to do the production.*

However according to Pioneer Printers, these challenges need not be a hindrance to mainstream print media from producing information in formats in which the visually impaired can read them. Not doing so means excluding people with visual impairments from accessing information, especially those who have no access to electronic print media.

*If we do not produce it, it is just not available for VI people. If production is not funded, a production unit such as Pioneer Printers cannot produce accessible magazines for VI people and that means they are excluded except for those who are privileged to have online access and knowledge.*

## **5.2.2 Disability Content Issues in Print Media**

Apart from publication formats, people with visual impairments also raised concerns about how issues with disability were reported in the mainstream print media as well as their lack of interest to cover disability issues.

### **5.2.2.1 The concept of representation**

Scholars have created and studied the concept of representation within the cultural-critical paradigm of media studies (Fursich 2010). By studying the concept of representation, they have shifted their understanding of media messages from simply portraying or reflecting reality and began to understand representations as embedded in the 24-hour saturated media stream and institute norms and common sense about people, groups and institutions in contemporary society (Hall 1997; Fursich 2010). According to Hall (1997), the media generate representations as dominant signifying practices for constructing shared meaning. Fursich (2010) argues that representations in the media such as in print, film, photography and television, go beyond just mirroring reality, they create reality and normalise particular world-views or ideologies. Furthermore, the world in which we live is described by Hall (1997) as the world of representation, and constructions of disability have no essential, fixed or true meaning against which coverage and distortion can be measured.

#### **5.2.2.1.1 Representation of people with visual impairments**

It has been argued that although the news media present reality “the way it is”, news writers and editors construct a subjective picture of reality by selecting and organising information in a way that makes sense to them and their audiences through framing (Ryan 1991). According to Raab (2007) and Jacob, Köbsell and Wollrad (2010), reality is way more complex and the social world cannot be neatly divided into binary categories. Hence, “the media do not just represent the reality that exists out there, nor do they simply reproduce or distribute knowledge: they are active producers of knowledge and construct and constitute the very core of our social existence and dominant discourses on disability” (Kunz & Fleras 1998: 34). In agreement with this

view is Schudson (2003:33), who argues that news is not a mirror of reality but a representation of the world and that all representations are selective.

The focus of how the story is told in the media is also decided by journalists. Dobkin (1992:27) explains that “news stories are organized according to standard production formulas; news audiences apart from being informed they need to also be seduced, entertained, and in the manner for which to satisfy advertisers”. News stories according to Dobkin (1992:27) are further grounded on the intuitive, professional assumptions of news journalists and producers. These news characteristics are vital determinants in the telling of the news stories and the way these stories are likely to be interpreted by audiences.

#### **5.2.2.1.1 Usage of degrading terminology**

Experts and other professionals have labelled people with disabilities with technical names such as ‘the disabled’ instead of ‘disabled people’ or ‘people with disabilities’. This is like placing all people with disabilities in one great metaphysical category ‘the disabled’ (Brisenden 1993). According to Brisenden (1993), the effect of this is a depersonalisation, a sweeping dismissal of their individuality, and a denial of their right to be perceived as people with their own uniqueness, not but as belonging to the anonymous constituents of a category or group. Such words like ‘the disabled’, ‘spina bifida’, ‘tetraplegic’, ‘muscular dystrophy’, that lump people with disabilities together, are like terminological rubbish bins into which all the important things about people with disabilities are thrown away (Brisenden 1993:2). Terminologies like ‘the disabled’ and ‘the handicapped’ still quite regularly appear despite campaigns by disability organisations to raise the awareness of journalists (Ingrid 2016).

Participants mentioned the use of degrading terminologies in publishing issues of disabilities.

Participant four:

*My concern is the way disability issues are published in print media. They mostly use degrading terminologies from the old disability schools of thoughts.*

Participant four's concern was describing disability using the old school of thoughts; viewing disability as a medical problem other than a social problem.

The degrading terminology concern was also raised by participant one:

*When there is information, it often contains degrading terminology*

Although this is the case, the findings through content analysis of this study were that terminologies like spina bifida', 'tetraplegic', 'muscular dystrophy', 'the disabled' and 'the handicapped' are mostly no longer used in print media especially in newspapers. There was only one story covered by the *Business Brief* magazine on 30 Sep 2019. The story titled "The disabled – the South African conundrum?" was about a certain doctor questioning companies as to why they are not employing people with disabilities or doing business with them when doing so is actually beneficial to their own businesses.

*Is it prejudice? Or fear of what it is a person with disabilities truly represents, namely the vulnerable in society? Those people who for the most part are hidden, out of sight and therefore who in our minds only exist in fantasies and maybe even horror stories? Their lives are an abject misery. They are not able to make a living to support themselves and so they are totally dependent on Social Grants from a Government that does not have the necessary resources to make those meaningful Social Grants. Looking at the breadth and scope of just how many categories of disabilities there actually are, and how many people are therefore classified into those disability categories, no business person has the luxury of looking the other way.*

Despite this story using the phrase "the disabled" – a phrase which people with disabilities say is degrading (Barnes 1992) – the story is capable of changing people's mind-set to one of wanting to employ people with disabilities. Furthermore, some people with disabilities still prefer to use the word "disabled" as opposed to words such as "handicapped," "differently-abled," "crippled," "retarded," or "special needs" (Twain 2006). And the fact that, no degrading terminologies such as 'spina bifida', 'tetraplegic' or the 'handicapped' were used in the featured articles, it signifies the changing approach of print media to representing people with visual impairments.

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2 Promotion of negative stereotypes**

Usually when people with disabilities appear in the media, they are portrayed in a stigmatising and stereotypical way (Oliver 1990, Penas 2007). According to Barnes

(1992), people with disabilities have identified 10 of what they call commonly recurring disabling stereotypes in the mass media. These include: media portraying the disabled person as pitiable and pathetic; as an object of curiosity or violence; as sinister or evil; as the super cripple; as atmosphere; as laughable; as their own worst enemy; as a burden; as non-sexual; and as being unable to participate in daily life. These stereotypes are predominantly evident in the press, on television and in advertising (Barnes 1992:3). According to Barnes (1992), stereotype suppositions about people with impairments are based on superstition, myths and beliefs from earlier, less enlightened times. They are intrinsic to our culture and persist partly because they are continuously being reproduced through the communications media; books, films, television, newspapers and advertising (Barnes 1992). Such stereotypes are habitually at the very core of overt and covert, direct and indirect and tenacious discrimination against people with disability and consequently can affect their right to equality (Penas 2007). They filter down into practical laws, policies and practices that cause harm to people with disabilities (Ingrid 2016).

Participant eight spoke about the media using stereotype descriptions when publishing issues about people with disabilities. People with disabilities are either portrayed as above average or those who depend on others.

**Participant eight:**

*Although the print media tries to publish disability issues I think in my own opinion, issues that are focused on sometimes are those that have little impact to the disability community. Generally speaking, there is a tendency to stereotype people with disabilities, portraying them as above-average achievers or persons who are always dependent on others.*

The problem of stereotyping was also mentioned by participant ten:

*I have a problem of stereotyping news concerning people with disability. I must make the point that being blind does not make you an angel. There are some unpleasant blind persons, some bad ones, even some evil ones. Blind people are in all respects normal, except that they (we) have visual problems. Just like there are sighted persons in jail, there are also blind persons in jail. Some blind*

*people can be rude and offensive when you try to help them. Some have an attitude. Again, when we achieve something it does not make us special just because we are blind but because we are hard workers just as anyone else capable of achieving goals.*

According to participant ten blind people are just as any other sighted person, with bad and good characteristics. Hence being blind does not make one an angel. Furthermore, when a blind person achieves something, it is all due to their hardworking just as it is for a fully sighted person. Analysing content for this research also established that most of the stories about people with visual impairments achieving something were being presented in a super cripple stereotype.

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2.1 Super cripple issues in the analysed print media**

Too often, the news media treat a person with disability who has attained success in their field or profession as though they were one of a kind – the notion referred to as super cripple (Clogston 1990; Barnes 1992; Haller 1999). According to Barnes (1992), super cripple stories in print media account for over a quarter of all news stories. While this one-of-a-kind aspect might make for a better story angle, these representations have several negative implications for disabled people (Barnes 1992; Haller 1999). It perpetuates in the mind of the general public how rare it is for an individual with a disability to succeed (Clogston 1990; Haller 1999) and the repercussions of such misguided assumptions can result in them being denied essential services (Barnes 1992). The media have been cited as a key site for the reinforcement of negative images and ideas pertaining to people with disabilities through various research studies (Barnes 1992; Oliver 1999; Penas 2007). Research findings on a case study conducted by Hertog and McLeod (1988) about media coverage of radical protests revealed that the media when covering news stories of achievements by people with disabilities do it from a pro-establishment bent and focus on their disabilities rather than the achievement itself. Print media look to super cripples as sources and as subjects of stories because they fit with the infotainment format – with the intent of both informing and entertaining (Heller 1999).



Almost every story that was about some sort of achievement made by people with visual impairments was presented in a form of super cripple ideology as stated by Barnes (1992).

*Taking charge of his own fate and maintaining a proactive attitude towards his own education has made him a proficient computer user. Despite being unable to see for the past 10 years, he can keep up with his favourite newspapers, type his own documents and even finish a novel (City Press 2018).*

The above statement may imply that without taking charge of his own fate this particular person would not have attained their computer skills. This statement is different from saying that a person's hardwork made them attain their computer skills. While the second statement may imply that people who can not see can not have an interest in reading newspapers. As if it was expected of this person to stop his habit of reading their favorite newspapers once they had gotten blind.

*His blindness doesn't hold him back. He lost his eyesight and still found strength and courage to live life to the fullest (Zululand Observer Monday, 2017)*

This statement as the above also implies that a person who has become blind automatically losses strength and courage to carry on their lives. Blindness has been described as something that hold someone from excelling in life. This is similar to the implication of the below statement for which a 30-year-old mother was said to have refused to let her blindness hold her back from making difference in her community.

*Mum refuses to let blindness hold her back. A 30-year-old mother of one is determined not to let her blindness stop her from making a difference in her community (Carletonville Herald 2017).*

Similarly, to the below two statements; blindness stops someone from realising their dreams.

*Losing his sight in 2009 while in grade 9 did not discourage him but encouraged him to bring hope to the disadvantaged (Rekord East/Oos 2019).*

*Rare brain condition that left her visually impaired did not stop her from realising her dream. The University of the Western Cape (UWC) student graduated with a Bachelor of Laws degree (Northern news - Kraaifontein, Brackenfel, Kuils River 2018).*

*The boundaries are all the same therefore it's incredible to see a person that can't see, hit a boundary (Queensburgh News 2019).*

The above statement for a fully sighted person hitting the boundary is normal but for a blind person to do the same it becomes incredible.

*Blind authors launch book. No disability should deter you from pursuing your dreams (Maritzburg Sun 2019).*

The heading above starts by describing once condition instead of the book title. Such writing is aimed at alarming people to look at a story as unique (How can a blind person write a book?). Hence aimed at coercing readers to read the story.

*Despite losing his sight to measles at the age of two, Gonese completed his education and trained as a teacher for visually-impaired children (Sedibeng Ster 2016).*

The same with the above statement; it is not expected of people with no sight like Gonese to complete their education and become teachers. People are being thought of or described for their disability than their hard-working spirits portraying them as super cripples.

Although people with visual impairments meet so many challenges in their educational endeavours, they do not like people to portray them as supper cripples. According to the article in the *Pretoria News* of the 13<sup>th</sup> September (2019) people with visual impairments do not want others to romanticise the fact that they do achieve academically. The newspaper wrote about a person with visual impairment who had obtained an LLB degree and he was reported as saying:

*People tend to romanticise a certain achievement because a person has a disability. I don't think of it as having conquered but instead I worked hard and I'm not apologetic about it.*

According to the above statement when people with visual impairments excel in their education, it is all because of their hard work and nothing else.

Kama (2004) argues that “super cripple” signifies either someone who has a disability who is able to achieve what ordinary people achieve in their daily life or to disabled people who really excel. For Berger (2008:648) super cripples are “those individuals whose inspirational stories of courage, dedication, and hard work prove that it can be done, that one can defy the odds and accomplish the impossible”. This kind of stereotyping according to Garth (2016) does the work of instituting ‘othering’. The interpretation of disability as ‘otherness’ as argued by Silva and Howe (2012:177) is normally “a tactic to mask the transience and brittleness of onlooker’s own body and to confirm one’s ‘normality’ by increasing distance in relative to the ‘outcasts’”. Super cripple narratives can be viewed as an expression of society’s low-level expectation placed upon people with disabilities, which ultimately perpetuates the understanding of their existence as a ‘problem’ (Silva & Howe 2012).

Apart from the stereotype of the super cripple the findings of analysing content for this study were the presence of several stereotypical practices in representing people with visual impairments. In some stories, people were presented as burdens; as people who could not operate independently resulting in some of them not finding employment, some were represented as objects of violence. Some were depicted as pitiable; narrating their stories about how difficult it is for them to handle their disability; others were being described as object of atmosphere or curio whereby their disability was being used to stress a point.

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2.2 Disability as burden**

The stereotype of disability being depicted as a burden is associated to the belief about people with disabilities being helpless and exclusively under the care of those who are without disabilities (Barnes 1992).

*Government has finally responded to the request of a 35 visually impaired man who lives alone in N’wamankena village in Giyani. In 2011 the man asked government to build him a house that would cater for his special needs as a blind person (Capricorn Voice 2016).*

In the above statement the 35-year-old man may be regarded as a burden for asking government to build him a house due to his blindness. According to the article the blind

person could not manage to built himself house to cater for his own needs and burdened the government to do that for him.

There are however other entities who feel the need to assist organisations for people with disabilities. *PositionIt* magazine published a story entitled “New partnership to benefit NGOs” on 4 May 2017. The article is about a partnership between SMEC South Africa and the Disability Empowerment Concerns (DEC) Trust with the Kapela Holdings Group for which more than two million disabled South Africans stand to benefit – ranging from blindness to mental health and epilepsy. While this may be regarded as a good gesture to some, to others it might indicate disability as a burden requiring assistance from well wishers.

Barnes’ (1992) suggestion for print media is to avoid depicting people with disabilities as receivers of charity. The media should try to show that the interaction of people with disabilities with the non-disabled depicts them as equals; giving as well as receiving. This is because usually, people with disabilities are presented solely as recipients of pity (Barnes 1992:21). Two stories stood out following Barnes’ suggestions. One was the story in the *Forbes Africa* (2020) magazine about two brothers who are blind and running a clothing company and donating funds to help cure blindness. Another story was about a 53-year-old woman who during a Christmas party donated pencil bags filled with back-to-school goodies to children from the feeding scheme she voluntarily works at. This story was published in *Valdevie* magazine (2020).

*We care a lot more about curing blindness than putting another dollar in our pocket. It has been incredibly tough to launch this project, but it’s done out of a sincere passion for the cause and the work. We are on the 5-yard line to curing blindness-* (Forbes Africa, 2020)

These two stories signify the change of approach for some media in portraying people with disabilities as Barnes (1992) states, from beggars to givers. The stories did not dwell on the negativity in terms of the two struggling with their blindness as is presented in other print media like newspapers where they emphasise more on how someone struggles with their impairment. Even the title itself “My blindness inspired my company” reflects what the story is about. It is also presupposition but as a factive

verb. Factive verbs presuppose the factual actuality of their objects (Haji & Mohammed 2019:48).

*The young woman from Batswaneng Section says she currently cannot go anywhere or do anything without the help of a family member. She spends most of her days at home doing very little. 'It is a painful experience as I used to be able to do things on my own' (Carletonville Herald 2017).*

The woman from Batswaneng may be thought of being a burden to others. According to the article as a blind person she can not go anywhere without being accompanied by her relatives.

*I found myself alone in a dark world, unable to do anything for myself. I am forever dependent on other people to help me move around. Killing myself is constantly on my mind (The George Herald Newspaper 2017).*

Depicting a person with disability suffering as stated in the George Herald Newspaper already indicates how a burden a person with visual impairments could be. According to Kimble (2015), by exposing readers to stories that show the fears that people with disabilities have or the hardships they go through for being physically impaired, tells readers that one has to be very strong to live with such conditions

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2.3 Incapable of participating fully in community life**

From the analysed news stories there was some portrayal of such stereotypes in some newspaper articles for example

*if you look for a job they will be impressed with your CV but as soon as they see that you are blind, their whole attitude changes (Daily Dispatch 2017).*

The attitude towards an individual changing after discovering their disability in the above statements, as written by the Daily Dispatch, clearly indicates doubt on the person's capabilities to be competent at work.

*It's hard for a blind woman to find employment. The sad thing is that nobody wants to give me a chance. So instead of trying to find employment, she started her own business which she hopes will get improve and grow once she starts finding clients (Weekend Argus 2018).*

Not being able to be employed as a person with a disability sends a message that employing people with disabilities may not benefit any organisation rather such people are better off being unemployed.

People with disabilities observe that the media rarely portrays them as integral and productive members of the community, as students, as teachers, as part of the work-force or as parents. Instead, they are portrayed as people who are somehow incompetent (Barnes 1992). According to Barnes (1992), such portrayals feed the notion that people with disabilities are inferior human beings who should be segregated.

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2.4 Object of violence**

Newspapers also reported about people with visual impairments who experienced sexual assault as objects of violence. In a story about two women who were raped and turned back by the police officers without help published in the *Cape Argus* newspaper of 7 September 2020, the reporter only managed to frame the victims as objects of violence and ridicule. Instead of focusing on what was necessary, some of the points stressed in this story portray the victims as weak and careless.

*These women said that there was no respect given to victims (who are disabled) when reporting a case of sexual assault.*

The implication of this message may be that sexually assaulted people especially with disabilities do not deserve any respect.

*The women recalled how they were told they could not be assisted because they were unable to identify their alleged perpetrators.*

The above statement implies that there is no justice rendered to people with visual impairments as sexual victims since they can not visually identify their perpetrators. Such reporting may put people with visual impairments at a more risk of being sexually assaulted as the perpetrators may guarantee themselves some safety on the possibility of not being identified.

*They get asked questions like 'how will you identify the perpetrator?' Some would ask how do people like you get raped?*

The question “how do people like you get raped?” implies that people with visual impairments are not human enough to be engaged in sexual activities.

*The police stations don't have resources to help blind people report the cases and police are not trained to help people with sight disabilities.*

The above statement implies that people with visual impairments are not considered part of the justice system. No resources allocated to the justice system for handling their cases and no training assigned for that purpose.

According to Barnes (1992) apart from contributing to the misconception that people with disabilities are entirely helpless and needy, such images of people with disabilities sometimes perpetuate the violence. In this story, the media portrays that people with visual impairment are incapable of looking after themselves and are then subjected to violence. Perpetrators of such violence, when learning from these articles that people with visual impairment cannot identify them, may justify that they are safe to continue harassing people with visual impairment. The media is also telling the general public that it is justifiable for policemen to not deal with such cases; they do not have the resources to do so and are not trained to handle such cases. Furthermore, questions such as “how do people like you get raped?” infer the misguided assumption about the sexuality of people with disabilities, implying that they are incapable of sexual activity (Dhemba & Dhemba 2017).

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2.5 People with disability as pitiable and pathetic**

People with disabilities also pointed out that media report stories about them in a manner that yields sympathy from the general public. According to Barnes (1992), such an approach to news stories about people with disabilities carries negative connotations about disability. Besides having to pity them, this stereotype helps to divert the public attention from the social factors of disability (ibid.).

*Accepting being blind has been very difficult; every morning I wake up hoping I will see gain (George Herald 2017).*

This statement implies that someone with visual impairment lives a sad life.

*Life as a sighted person is easy and life as a blind person is difficult. Blindness is the hardest thing I have had to cope with. It doesn't get easier; the world is designed for sighted people (Weekend Argus 2018).*

The above statement indicates how bad blindness is; something so hard to handle hence one can not help but to feel sorry for those who are blind.

*Senzo who is blind, was allegedly ordered out of a taxi for his disability. According to the aggrieved Mbonambi, he was ejected from a taxi by the driver who told him that he didn't transport blind people. I paid my fare like everyone else in the taxi. The driver told me that he doesn't pick up blind people in his taxi at which I asked for an explanation. 'He then handed back my R20 and told me to get off the taxi'. A woman passenger stood up for him and reminded the driver that Mbonambi was also someone else's child and that he shouldn't be disrespected because of his blindness. The woman demanded that the driver also return her fare. The sympathetic woman left the taxi with Mbonambi while the other commuters continued to their different destinations (Sowetan 2018).*

Being sent out of the taxi for having a disability is a sad situation. The way it has been said as to how the driver spoke to the person who was visually impaired to some extent indicated that people with visual impairments are pathetic. Therefore, not deserving to board particular taxis. The newspaper stated how a certain woman became sympathetic to the victim, this indicates how pitiable people with disabilities are.

Barnes (1992) argues that usually the language used in these emotive stories creates a mood of sentimentality which is both patronising and offensive to people with disabilities.

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2.6 Object of ridicule**

As objects of ridicule, disability is portrayed in the media as a source of amusement (Barnes 1992). This was also my observation on how certain stories were published by newspapers. One such story was by the *Sedibeng Ster* published on 26 June 2020. In this story the reporter visited people with visual impairments at their residence who spoke to her about their Covid-19 experiences. She writes her story taking on an angle of amusement.

*Further along the dark graffiti-filled corridor, Enock occupies a cramped two-bedroom flat with his wife (also visually impaired) and four grown children.*



The above statement a couple of both people having visual impairments is already problematic. This problem of being blind adds to the second problem about the couple being also poor i.e by living in a cramped two-bedroom flat located along the *dark graffiti-filled corridor*. Worse still the couple is not living such an apartment by themselves but with their four grown children for which the couple has to feed.

*Strict confinement measures and vulnerability to the virus have forced these sightless breadwinners to remain indoors.*

The above statement implies that people with blindness are always outdoors people; moving around and begging. But the lockdown forced them indoors. To say sightless breadwinners, it's even in a more mockery manner.

*Mukanhairi, 57, went back to his usual begging spot last week, encouraged by a gradual easing of lockdown restrictions since the start of May. He struggled to find his bearings around people who spoke through face masks and kept a distance.*

People with visual impairments rely on voice to identify or communicate to individuals. When Mukanhairi went to his usual begging spot he could not manage to communicate well with people or identify them. Firstly, due to the wearing masks lockdown rule which hinders one's true voice to be clearly heard. Secondly due to the social distance rule. This means that Mukanhairi struggled to beg people in this situation.

*'I am very worried about catching coronavirus, but not as much as getting food'. Tazira nodded as she stared up at the ceiling, knitting a white scarf without missing a single stitch. She has not yet dared to resume her own begging.*

As many people may fear catching the deadly corona virus to people with visual impairments who are beggars the disease is not that dangerous as sleeping in an empty stomach.

Covid-19 is a dangerous pandemic and research has indicated that people with visual impairments are the most vulnerable to the disease (WHO 2019; Abodunrin & Abodunrin 2020). During this time, the media needed to play a serious role in trying to assist those with visual impairments in terms of equipping them with awareness information for their safety. However, this reporter approached the story from an

amusement angle, for example, calling a couple with visual impairments who are beggars and raising four grown children, “sightless breadwinners”. The reporter went on to describe their situation focusing on how they looking forward to resuming begging because the husband regards the lack of food as scarier than catching the virus. The reporter also comments about how the wife is knitting without missing a stitch even though she is blind. The entire story does not mention anything about how these seemingly poor people who are visually impaired could be assisted but rather how amusing their life is during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Barnes (1992), laughing at disability is not new; disabled people have been a source of amusement for non-disabled people for centuries. He continues to say that such humorous approaches to issues concerning people with disabilities have negative implications for them. This is a kind of abuse which needs to not be undermined as it seriously demoralises what little opportunities people with disabilities have to be taken seriously by non-disabled society (Barnes 1992:13).

#### **5.2.2.1.1.2.7 Objects in creating atmosphere or of curiosity**

Sometimes people with disabilities are included in the storylines of various media to enhance a certain atmospheric mood (Barnes 1992). In the *Soccer Laduma* newspapers of 19 April 2017 and 2 May 2018 the stories used blind people to emphasise a point in relation to soccer.

*It's between Wits, Downs and Cape Town City. SuperSport and Chiefs are out, and they must just focus on the Nedbank Cup. As for Chiefs, I don't know where this hype is from ... whether it's the media or their camp because even a blind person can see that Chiefs have no chance of winning this league (Soccer Laduma 2017).*

*Following Jali's departure from his club KV Oostende last month, the midfielder's immediate future is yet to be decided. There have been ongoing reports of where the 28-year-old could land up next season, since leaving the Belgium outfit in April. Even a blind person can see that Jali has a position at Naturena (Soccer Laduma 2018).*

In both stories they reporter used the statement “even a blind person can see.” Cobbinah (2013) argues that when we use labelled words about people with disabilities, even if we are referring to acts or ideas and not to people at all, we perpetuate the stigma associated with disability. By using labels which are commonly

associated with people with disabilities to signify deficiency or an ill-conceived view, we reproduce the oppression of people with disabilities. According to Moshe (2005), we might not think that such labels are harmful but in actual fact they are because they carry strong meanings that stigmatise people with disabilities. Some words may not mean to cast a slur on people with disabilities but they eventually do (Moshe 2005).

### **5.2.2.1.1.3 Lack of interest to cover disability issues**

Participant one:

*There is very seldom anything about disability in newspapers. We have tried to get media exposure for serious and even dangerous situations at two schools for the blind, but the media simply did not show any interest.*

According to participant one very rarely do newspapers cover disability issues. And there have been instances where the media has openly shown no interest to cover events concerning and organised by people with visual impairments even after being alerted.

The concern about limited information on disability issues was also made by participant three and nine. Participant three feels that print media need to change towards producing more disability issues.

Participant three:

*Mainstream print media should be producing more information or news on disability matters. The reason for making this suggestion is that there is very limited information about disability in print media.*

According to participant nine when information is relayed on print media it already has its own targeted audience and nothing or very little about those with disabilities.

Participant Nine:

*To the best of my knowledge the day to day print media does not do a heck of a lot to relay info to and about the disabled community. Info gets printed in*

*newspapers and magazines. Once it appeared in print, it becomes the onus of the relevant institutions, organisations, associations, societies, etc. to relay the message to their members.*

Being excluded in the media participant two feels that people fail to understand disability hence perceiving those with disability differently.

Participant two:

*Usually, we are excluded in mainstream print media. I feel that people have their own perception about us. Many people do not still understand what disability is.*

#### **5.2.2.1.1.3.1 Lack/underrepresentation (insufficient or disproportionately low representation) from analysing print media content**

The lack of enough coverage of issues concerning disability was also found in my observation of print media content. While analysing newspapers and magazines, the discovery was that there were just a few stories about people with visual impairments being covered per print media. In some instances, there was completely no representation of people with disabilities. The most striking discovery from this study is the lack of representation of people with visual impairments in the *Taxi Times* newspapers for commuters. As written on their advertisement website <https://www.taxitimes.net/advertise/>, *Taxi Times* ranks as one of the biggest three newspapers in South Africa according to the ABC – Q2 (2019). When going through newspaper articles, one of the most outstanding stories was about the unsound relationship between people with visual impairments and taxi operators. Two incidents were stated by two different newspapers highlighting this relationship one of which was published by *The Star* newspaper in October 2018. In this article it was stated that during the time when people with visual impairments were supporting the International White Cane Day, they invited various taxi associations to join them. This was to educate the associations on how to handle people with visual impairments when using their taxis. Another article was published by *Dobsonville Urban News* (2018) about one man who was refused to use a particular taxi because of being blind. One's expectations of the aftermaths of this meeting was to see stories in relation to

people with visual impairments using taxis in the *Taxi Times* newspapers but ironically there was nothing. Raising awareness and challenging negative attitudes are usually the first steps towards creating more positive attitudes and accessible environments for people with disabilities (Ingrid 2016).

There were also some sports stories in certain newspapers and magazines involving people with visual impairments. As stated by Chang, Crossman, Taylor and Walker (2011) and Tynedal and Wolbring (2013) print media sports articles have the ability to define, inform, educate, and influence people's values, thoughts, behaviours, and attitudes about sport for people with disabilities. One such story was about the Blind Bowler sport published in the *South Coast Herald* of 10 September 2016. In this article, the Port Shepstone Lions Club had hosted the National Association of Blind Bowlers' (NABB) tournament at the Riverside Bowling Club. The *Bedfordview & Edenvale News* of 12 October 2019 also published an article about the Glendower Golf Course for the International Sports Promotion Society, Handa. Handa was hosted by the SA Blind Golf Association (SABGA) for which 11 golfers with visual impairments from South Africa took part. The *Bolander Newspaper* of 16 March 2019 published an article about the Cape Town Cycle Tour in which one lady who was blind was taking part. Apart from these sports, we are also informed about cricket for people with visual impairments in the *Overport Rising Sun* of 21 March 2017 and the *Queensburgh News* (2019) of 19 March. In the *Overport Rising Sun* the founder of KZN Blind Cricket, the current honorary vice president and the co-ordinator of blind cricket activities, organised a cricket event which took place at Reservoir Hills Sports and Recreation Club in KZN. The challenge match was between a Gauteng selected team against the KZN squad. The children were stunned to see some blind people and others with very limited sight playing a game of cricket.

*Visually impaired cricketers opened the eyes of the youth of Reservoir Hills by showing them that a serious disability such as blindness will not stop them from achieving their goals. The children were stunned to see some blind and others with very limited sight playing a game of cricket (Overport Rising Sun 2017).*

In the *Queensburgh News* the article was also about a cricket game between KZN Blind cricketers and the Northdene Prep's 1st team which took place at Northdene Preparatory School. The event was aimed at raising awareness for blind cricket.

*The ball has small ball bearings in it which help the blind cricketers to hear where it is. The boundaries are all the same therefore it's incredible to see a person that can't see, hit a boundary (Queensburgh News 2019).*

While there exist sports involving people with visual impairments in South Africa, we also have a sport magazine, *Sports Club Magazine*, which publishes stories about sports. Ironically, none of these stories about visual impairments' sports activities have been featured in this magazine. We also do have our own cricket magazine the *SA Cricket Magazine* specialising in cricket, but there was also nothing published about the South African Blind Cricket Sport in this magazine. These are print media which in one way or another should have been carrying information concerning people with disabilities. Content analysis also revealed that children with disabilities were not considered in children's magazines or any other specialty magazine. The implication of this scenario for the young readership of these magazines is that children and/or adolescents with a disability are virtually non-existent (Goethals et al 2016:113). Hence I can say that in some of the magazines in which people with disabilities were also supposed to be featured, there was a lack of or absence of representation. According to Ingrid (2016), research conducted in various jurisdictions has acknowledged the underrepresentation or absence of people with disabilities particularly in broadcast content. While some general mainstream print media have been able to cover issues concerning people with disabilities/visual impairments, some specific newspapers have never reported such stories.

A research toward a more balanced representation of disability also by Goethals et al (2016) revealed greatly limited or even total absence of representation of certain people with disabilities in Flemish print media sources. The findings by Goethals et al (2016) also revealed no coverage of children and/or adolescents with a disability in certain children and youth magazines. Certain disabilities such as visual impairments, auditory impairments, behavioural, autism and learning problems are regarded as relatively difficult to portray (Saito & Ishiyama 2005). In contrast, people with chronic health conditions, physical or intellectual disabilities are much easier to depict and dramatise (Haller & Ralph 2001; Saito & Ishiyama 2005). This stress on people with physical impairments sheds more light, and agrees with earlier studies on the

importance of images in print journalism (Auslander & Gold 1999; Haller & Ralph 2001; Saito & Ishiyama 2005). Furthermore, the observation by Barnes (1992) is that people with disabilities are rarely depicted in mainstream adverts. This demoralises the role they play as customers in the very marketplace with those who are not disabled (Barnes 1992). The lack of interest by the government let alone the media on issues concerning disability was further emphasised by some participants during fighting through the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **5.2.2.1.1.4 Visually impaired people greatly neglected during Covid-19 pandemic**

Coronavirus is a global health pandemic which has affected more than 1.2 million people and caused close to 70,000 deaths by the 5 April 2020 (Public Health Emergency of International 2020). According to participants, while all other parts of society are being taken care of, the disability community which is much more vulnerable to the virus is being left behind as is always the case, which some participants have called scandalous.

Participant five:

*Blind people in South Africa are greatly neglected; especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. So many companies and private individuals manufacture masks and sanitisers and distribute them to the public for free. My question is: Why did homeless and even working blind people not receive masks and sanitisers. Scandalous actions. The most heart breaking thing is where are media people to talk on our behalf? Do we have a say as blind people? As it seems no.*

According to participant five, while the sighted educators are being provided with precautionary measures those with visual impairments were not. And the most devastating thing is the media being no where to expose the malpractice. Participant five continued to say that there is nothing also being done even by the government to assist people who are blind:

*For sighted learners, school subjects were made available online, but the Department of Education did almost nothing to help visually impaired children. No accessible devices. So many blind people are trapped in small rooms with no hope of getting a job. The government and private sector these days do*

*nothing to empower blind people. No funds for training are made available and visually impaired people are left to their own devices.*

Participant five also pointed out that people with visual impairments are the most vulnerable to covid-19 as they require to explore surroundings with their hands. Hence the most needful people to be provided with free sanitisers and even masks. All these issues were supposed to be covered by the media but they were not.

*Covid-19 causes visually impaired people to be at greater risk than sighted people. We must, through our hands and fingers, explore our surroundings. We often deal with stair railings and doorknobs. That is why it is so essential that sanitisers and masks be made available to all visually impaired people. Visually impaired people should be able to obtain these items freely at their nearest spaza shop or grocery store. All these issues are very vital issues that the media should have been perpetually talking about when it comes to disability issues but is that the case? No.*

According to this participant the media need to change their attitude towards publishing information about people with disabilities.

*I believe that at a time like these when we are the most vulnerable people the media should be publishing more and more information on how we can be kept safe. There is need for change of attitude towards people with disability in the media*

Although some participants cited the lack of information on covid 19 in relation to people with visual impairments, analysing content for this research the discovery was that there were a few newspapers that wrote articles about such issues. As the whole world is undergoing challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic we are informed about specific challenges being faced by people with visual impairments during this period. The newspapers which covered such stories were the *Sedibeng Ster* of 26 June 2020 and the *Cape Times* on 11 June 2020.

*Touch is what we call the queen sense. It enables us to recognise and identify most things ... the texture of surfaces, your skin or your hand. It is very central in our lives. It is dangerous for us to shake hands or touch any surfaces because you might contract the disease. So communication has been very difficult for us ... because we are afraid to touch things. (Sedibeng Ster June 2020).*



Just as stated by participants, the above paragraph also explains about the challenges faced by people with visual impairments during covid 19 pandemic. As touch is the most vital sense organ used by people with visual impairments, it becomes dangerous to shake hands as well as feeling surfaces during the pandemic. This makes them vulnerable to contacting the virus.

*If you are putting a mask at times we cannot hear your voice properly. Some people cannot even release the voice tune which we are used to so it affects how quickly I can identify (a person) (Sedibeng Ster June 2020).*

According to the story in the Sedibeng Ster putting masks prevents people with visual impairments from hearing one's voice as well as identifying those that they are already used to.

*The pandemic and the lockdown has created new challenges for the blind, It was difficult for the visually impaired or the blind to practise physical distancing as they rely heavily on touch to, for example, navigate their way through a shopping centre. The correct way to assist someone who is visually impaired is to put a hand on their shoulder and ask if they need assistance (Cape Times 2020).*

During the pandemic people with visual impairments find it hard to practice social distancing as well as having to navigate their way in places like shopping malls.

Social distancing is one of the methods recommended by the World Health Organisation (2019-20) and other stakeholders to curb the further spread of the disease. People with visual impairments are confronted with complications in sustaining and keeping social distancing guidelines in the fight against the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak due to their peculiarities (Abodunrin & Abodunrin 2020). In a recent study by Abodunrin and Abodunrin (2020) on Covid-19 and social distancing on challenges faced by people with visual impairments in south-west Nigeria, the findings were that the Covid-19 pandemic contributes more to the challenges faced by them. Social distancing measures increase the challenges faced by people with visual impairment in Nigeria. Although this study was conducted in Nigeria, the situation appears to be the same in South Africa according to the information relayed by the *Cape Times* reporter. Lifestyle requirements expose people with visual impairments to potentially be at a higher risk of contracting the virus (Abodunrin & Abodunrin 2020).

The WPRPD, under the section on protection of people with disabilities, note that when people are faced with high risk situations and disasters, people with disabilities are more affected by these natural disasters and other catastrophes (WPRPD 2015). This situation, according to the WPRPD (2015:15), “requires that all emergency and disaster management services be staffed with personnel who have immediate access to the required reasonable accommodation support systems and who have been trained in assisting people with disabilities”. However, this seems not to be the case in reality. Various reports from disability advocates, the media and disabled peoples’ organisations point to several emerging impacts; including primary and secondary impacts (Disability Inclusion Helpdesk 2020). Primary impacts are impacts directly from the Covid-19 virus itself, while secondary impacts are the broader ramifications of the response to the virus pandemic (Meaney-Davis, Lee & Corby 2020). There are several reasons that may put people with disabilities at greater risk of contracting Covid-19. Some of these reasons are: the lack of provision of public health information on prevention measures provided in accessible formats (Barlozzari 2020; AlterPresse 2020; Ansah 2020; Beijing Daily Client 2020; McQuigge 2020; Nkhoma 2020; Ogwu 2020; Strother 2020; Von Hammerstein 2020); inaccessibility of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to some people with disabilities (WHO 2020; United Nation Department of Social Economic Affairs UNDESA 2019); social distancing and self-isolation measures are unfeasible for some people who depend on care to provide for their essential needs (Bernhard 2020; Independent Television (ITV) 2020; United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner OHCHR 2020); and people with disability in residential institutions and some humanitarian contexts often live in close proximity to large numbers of people, sometimes in unsanitary conditions, and they rely on carers or officials to prevent and respond to outbreaks (Minkowitz 2020).

The primary impact of inaccessible public health information to people with disabilities may include increased risk of infection, increased risk of severe illness or death and increased prevalence of exacerbation of mental health illness (Guan, Ni & Hu 2020; COVID-19 Surveillance Group 2020). The secondary impact may include decreased access to health care and essential supplies, increased deprivation due to disproportionate unemployment and inadequate social protection, increased stigma, discrimination, neglect, violence and abuse (Arielle 2020; Ekstrand 2020; Kukla 2020;

Ryan 2020). According to Meaney-Davis et al (2020), people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 not only because it can exacerbate underlying medical conditions, but because of attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers to their participation in and benefit from the pandemic response. The media as an information source institution should ensure that people with disabilities are included in all response communications and activities by delivering information in accessible formats to them (Meaney-Davis et al 2020).

#### **5.2.2.1.1.5 Untrue information**

Participants also complained about untrue information about them being carried by print media. A specific example was in relation to the copyright law bill involving the president and the Blind SA organisation in which the media implicated that people with visual impairments were not fighting for this law alone but being influenced by other forces. This to some participants undermined their capability as concerned citizens and implicated them as people who can easily be manipulated; something that is totally untrue and misleading.

Participant one:

*Sometimes information is blatantly untrue, like in an opinion piece where the opinionista suggested that blind persons are being used by those in favour of the Bill, as if we are easily manipulated and cannot make our own decisions.*

According to participant one, certain people think that people with disabilities can not air their own views on issues concerning them. This was seen when it was said that people with visual impairments were being used by those in favor of the copyright bill Bill when they spoke their views concerning the Bill. According to the article, the president refused to sign the copyright bill meant to assist people with visual impairments to translate materials to Braille format saying that bringing the bill into law could infringe on the rights of those who own intellectual property. This refusal led to people with visual impairments, in particular Blind SA – an organisation which is mostly concerned about the affairs of people with visual impairments – dragging the president to court. The organisation told the *Sunday Time's* reporter that the president's failure

to act timeously on the matter of the Copyright Law has disadvantaged millions of visually impaired South Africans. The organisation therefore asked the South African Supreme Court to compel the president to still sign the Copyright Amendment Bill. Hence to think that people with disabilities can not air their own views on issues concerning them is not true. Such untrue statements indicate that people with visual impairments can easily be manipulated or are unable to make their own decisions.

#### **5.2.2.1.1.6 Information Errors**

Sometimes stories about people with disabilities are reported with errors. This was also the case in the analysed stories. For example, in article by the Daily Dispatch 2017, the reporter said, “Perkins Braille is a sophisticated machine that can load Braille textbooks”. However, my findings from participants were that a “*Perkins Braille is a Braille typewriter, and that it doesn’t load textbooks*”. Hence this error shows that more than likely the article was written by a mainstream journalist who did not pass it by the SANCB representatives before publishing it.

The second error was spotted in an article by *The Star* newspaper (2018) which said, “About 60 people are estimated to be 75% visually blind”. The phrase “visually blind” does not exist. In which other way could the people be blind? In the same story the reporter wrote, “The City of Joburg had together with the Department of Social Development previously hosted a workshop on October 11 for blind and disabled people”. For “blind and disabled people” implies that being blind is not a disability.

#### **5.2.2.2 Participants’ suggestions on managing print media content**

In relation to actual content covering issues about people with visual impairments in mainstream print media, participants aired their suggestions.

##### **5.2.2.2.1 Covering disability issues**

All participants said print media needed to do more in terms of covering issues related to disabilities in their publications.

Participant three:

*Mainstream print media should be producing more information or news on disability matters. The reason for making this suggestion is that there is very limited information about disability in print media.*

There should be more information published in print media about disability issues. This suggestion was also made by participant four:

*Print media need to rework more on covering disability issues in terms of coverage. Mostly disability issues are not really covered.*

As argued by Sjøvaag, (2016), the general belief is that the media in a democratic society should reflect diverse interests, values and cultures and provide access to the widest possible range of voices. According to Doyle (2002), people who cannot see themselves appearing in the media, will not be able to see themselves as belonging to the community in which they live.

In analysing print media content although print media do not publish as many stories on disability issues, a few newspapers carried certain stories for which the public might have learnt a lot about people with visual impairments.

#### **5.2.2.2.1.1 Some stories concerning visual impairments from the analysed content**

Apart from the stories analysed in relation to specific issues as discussed above, there were also several stories I came across in print media concerning people with visual impairments. These were stories about their personal achievements, the challenges they face as people with visual impairments, their support systems and how some of them have managed to challenge their disability.

##### **5.2.2.2.1.1.1 Personal achievement stories**

Newspapers informed the public about a lady who had graduated with a Bachelor of Law degree and was aiming to do her Master of Law degree. Quoted by the news reporter of *Northern news* - Kraaifontein, Brackenfel, Kuils River of 11 April (2018) which published this story, she said:

*Since my diagnosis, I cannot put into words the support I received from my family; they were incredible and were there when I needed it. The university, through its office for students with special needs, assisted with study materials, a psychologist, a separate study and exam location.*

The lady was able to attain her law degree through the support she got from relatives and the university itself.

Having mainstream print media covering such stories means that many people who had doubts about lawyers who were blind were now in the know that such lawyers existed. This is the power of the media to inform and educate (McQuail 1992). Informing and educating the public about blind people who are lawyers via print media may be one way of ending the discrimination they face. As Ray (2007) and Cmiel (2004) argue, that the media by covering a story for information purposes may indirectly be promoting important things about that particular issue.

Through newspapers we were also informed about a matric student who was awarded for the outstanding achievement of gaining the second best results of learners with special educational needs in Gauteng in the National Senior Certificate examinations in 2019 (Pretoria News 2020). The Sowetan newspaper of the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 also wrote about another person with visual impairment who also conquered his teaching degree with multiple distinctions.

Ottowitz (2013) observes that teachers who are visually impaired have an extra responsibility of being role models to students who are with visual impairments as well as their families. Her observation was that the families and students get inspired and motivated by the positive images that the teachers with visual impairments portray because they look upon these teachers as examples of how people with visual impairments can live successfully. She added that students with visual impairments often base their abilities to perform tasks on how well their teachers with visual impairments can perform their tasks (Ottowitz, 2013). Apart from educational achievements, we were also informed about people with visual impairments who were book authors.

The *Maritzburg Sun* newspaper on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019 reported about 10 people who came together to write their book entitled *Ngamehlo Osiba* and already had it launched. The *Record East* newspaper of the 21st April 2019 published an article about another author of *Born to Die* which is about the obstacles a person living with blindness has to overcome. A book written by people with visual impairments themselves expressing their experiences would carry information that is credible, trustworthy and reliable. In essence, this means that the information is being obtained first-hand, directly from the source or origin (Mills 2017). We have many book authors with disabilities who through their works of fighting for the rights of people with disabilities have yielded positive results. Finkelstein (1981), Barnes (2001) and particularly Oliver (1990; 1996) were activists in the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and masterminds of the social model of disability. The model was given academic credibility and ended up being adopted by many countries including South Africa as a way of viewing disability. We were also informed about a visually impaired inspirational speaker and workshop facilitator who is also an author. The person was endowed with the uppermost accolade of Toastmasters International – the International Presidential Citation – according to an article published by the False Bay Echo on August 17 (2017). She was reported by the newspaper as saying:

*I was overwhelmed and honoured to have received this prestigious award. Volunteer organisations don't always receive the appropriate appreciation that they deserve. I never want to be treated differently and have found a platform in Toastmasters that allows me to be just me. If it wasn't for Toastmasters, I don't believe I would be doing any of the activities that I am currently involved in.*

According to the above paragraph the person having visual impairment does not want to be treated differently as if she is any different from others especially those without a visual impairment. She has just wanted to be herself despite having a disability and thanks to Toastmasters for providing her with such a platform.

A survey by Chapman University established that over a quarter of people are afraid of speaking to a group (Keller 2020). Being the centre of attention and knowing that all eyes are on you is a truly terrifying prospect for many people. Learning about such people with visual impairments who are also inspirational speakers through print

media, is one way in which the media is promoting the welfare of people with disabilities and should not be underestimated.

People with visual impairments have also been honoured with awards due to their artistic talents as published by newspapers. The *Roodepoort Northsider* newspaper on 13 May 2018 covered a story about someone with visual impairment who would go on to become one of the greatest and most successful artists of all time, winning 25 Grammy awards. Other newspapers which covered stories about musicians with visual impairment are the *Newcastle Advertise* newspaper (2018), the *Polokwane Observer* newspaper (2016), the *Sunday Times* (2017) and the *Mail & Guardian* (2017). The article in the *Newcastle Advertise* newspaper was about a musician who became blind at the age of two and was in the process of recording an album after producing and recording a single. He gained airplay on radio stations such as uKhozi FM, Newcastle Community Radio and Gagasi FM. In the *Polokwane Observer* the story was about a female musician who was born blind and who performed at the South African Championships of Performing Arts in Rustenburg and qualified to attend the international competition in Los Angeles in 2017. She also won two gold, two silver and one bronze medal in the opera, gospel, jazz and open categories of the 19 to 24 age group. The musician covered by the *Sunday Times* was waiting to perform on SA's Got Talent television show with the *Mail & Guardian* informing us about South Africa's first blind music rapper. Quoted by the newspaper some said:

*Everything runs off a computer, but I use the turntable to control music off the computer. It's all a digital set-up. I would like to show the world that anything is possible if you really want to be it. You got to work hard and face the odds, as long as you try your best and love what you do. I have always wanted to be a musician and deejay* (The Sunday Times 2017).

*If I can do it, you can do it too* (Mail & Guardian 2017).

The two paragraphs are emphasizing on hardwork as a key to achieving any dream be it with or without a disability.

According to research findings blind musicians' brains can be a lot more musically attuned than sighted musicians (Barnes 2015). A study by scientists at the University of Montreal revealed that blind people, especially those who were born blind or



became blind at a young age, are up to 10 times better at discriminating between pitches (Ho 2011). When a person loses their sight at an early age their brain undergoes radical changes in order to make better use of the sensory inputs they receive. They repurpose large portions of their visual cortex in order to respond better to auditory stimuli. The findings indicated a clear correlation between musical talent with age of blindness (Barnes 2015).

People with visual impairments in South Africa are not only excelling in music and art but also in drama. The *Northern news* - Kraaifontein, Brackenfel, Kuils River of the 19 September (2018) informed the public about an actor who was a blind young man performing the leading role in performing arts. The talented actor also won a prize of R72 000 through a competition run by his college. According to research findings by Ashfaq (2017) on the impact of the media on viewers with visual impairments in Pakistan, respondents (who were blind) complained about the performance of actors in blind roles in movies and dramas by sighted people. According to the findings, sighted actors are not capable of performing blind roles as perfectly as it is supposed to be; this is so because they have absolutely no idea how it feels to have a disability. As such, many respondents saw this practice as a mockery of their characters and suggested that production houses must hire actual blind people for blind characters. This suggestion is incredible and capable of yielding multiple benefits for both sides; producers will get original actors and viewers will experience natural acting (Ashfaq 2017). Stories about people with disabilities with actors like these may help place them in the position where they could be hired as actors. Sighted people performing as blind actors in roles supposed to be acted by blind people is probably due to the fact that they have no idea that the world has actors who are really blind.

#### **5.2.2.2.1.1.2 Challenges faced by people with visual impairments**

Although we know about certain people with visual impairments who are excelling in life, newspapers have also informed us about many societal challenges faced by the people with visual impairments.

## ➤ Educational challenges

Two schools, in particular, Rivoni Boarding School for the Blind and the University of Limpopo had newspapers report about their challenges.

*Look, is this what the department expects us to use for sleeping? We have no proper blankets and linens, just some rags with which we cover our bodies. This is truly demeaning; we sometimes do not feel like full humans – they are reducing us to pigs that stay and live in a pigsty. ... We are living in heart-breaking conditions. The taps are old and messed up, so we are always ready to mop the water off the floor. There's a shortage of Braille-writer machines, and the Braille-printing machines that were donated some years ago are always conked out and fixing them is costly. We have neither lockers nor wardrobes, so our clothes lay on our beds and down on the floor, and that alone makes us feel less than human (Limpopo Mirrors 2019).*

In the above paragraph pupils are complaining about the harsh conditions at their school. Leaking taps, shortage of Braille materials, lack of lockers and wardrobes for their food and clothes; conditions which make them feel treated like pigs.

*She told me this university is the best university in the country for people living with disability but I can't say this university is the best. If I'm struggling with my academics, how can I say this university is the best? The classes are not accessible, the resources are not even enough for us, so the university is not the best at all (Mail & Guardian 2017).*

The student was told that Limpopo university was the best to students with disabilities only to go there and find the situation different. Inaccessible classes and insufficient academic resources.

*Sometimes you are supposed to write a test at 1pm and you end up waiting until 3pm at the centre and no one comes with your question paper. And when you confront the lecturer, they will simply say: 'Ah, I forgot you are writing at the DSU [Disabled Students Unit]. I forgot to submit your question paper' (Mail & Guardian 2017). And when asked*

Another student at university of Limpopo lamented on how disorganised teachers could be when it comes to administering examinations at the school especially concerning people with visual impairments i. e. Forgetting to bring examination papers in time.

The DSU is a disability centre where students with disabilities write their tests and exams because it has all the necessary equipment, such as computers with speech synthesisers for blind students. According to the article, the situation at the university has at times even resulted in university students protesting to highlight their frustrations. One way in which people with disabilities look at ending their academic challenges is through government intervention. Normally such issues are addressed in the State of Nation Address (SONA). However, in the 2019 SONA for one reason or another people with disabilities were never included. This we learnt from Plainsman newspaper published on the 20th Feb 2019. The incident led to concerned people reporting their disappointment to the media.

*Mr President are you not aware that blind and partially-sighted pupils at the 22 special needs schools and those children attending mainstream school do not have CAPS textbooks, readers, prescribed books, and recreational books in an accessible format, especially Braille and large print, more specifically, none of this is available in our African languages?*

The above statement was addressed to the president by people with visual impairments. Questioning him about the condition of schools for people with visual impairments in South Africa. No necessary books in accessible formats for students with visual impairments.

Article 24 of the UNCRPD (2006) requires for States Parties to make sure “to enable children having disabilities equally access an inclusive, free and excellent primary as well as secondary compulsory education as anyone else from their residing communities; and anyone with a disability should not be excluded from the universal education”. The directives of this article are: providing education facilities that are accessible and ensuring that all education institutions are capable of supporting and reasonably accommodating learners with disability (UNCRPD 2015). Chapter 9 of the National Disability Policy (NDP) further explains about the education system playing a greater role in building an inclusive society, providing equal opportunities and helping all South Africans to realise their full potential, in particular, those previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies, namely black people, women and people with disabilities (NDP 2015). Education equips people with disabilities with the knowledge and talents they can apply or execute to exercise a variety of extra human rights,

including their right to participation in political and cultural life, work, living independently and raising a family as well as contributing to their communities (Integrated National Disability Strategy INDS 1997).

People with visual impairments are also faced with the challenges of having to translate published books into Braille format for their usage due to copyright laws. We are informed by newspapers *The Citizen* and the *Sunday Times* that both published on 7 June 2020 about the president refusing to sign the copyright law which was passed by parliament in March 2019 giving them the right to translate published materials to alternative formats.

### ➤ **Employment challenges**

Employment challenges are also what people with visual impairments are faced with. The two newspapers which covered issues in relation to employment challenges were the *Weekend Argus* of 19 August 2018 and the *Daily Dispatch* of 4 December 2017.

*It's hard for a blind woman to find employment. I tried telling people about my impairment and tried not telling people at times (Weekend Argus 2018).*

People with visual impairments find it so difficult to get employed such that sometimes some have felt like hiding their disability; to pretend not having any disability in order to be considered for employment.

*Very few people living with blindness were ever employed in senior managerial positions in government. If you look for a job they will be impressed with your CV but as soon as they see that you are blind, their whole attitude changes (Daily Dispatch 2017).*

The above statement implies that when considering managerial positions in government, people's disabilities matter more than their job qualifications or capabilities as stated on their CVs.

The decision to conceal one's disability while seeking employment confirms the findings of the survey carried out about the attitude of employers toward people with disability (Unger 2002). Unger (2002) conducted a survey involving eight different

disability categories which exposed that employers prefer to hire individuals with certain disabilities over others (Unger 2002). According to Unger (2002), employers were reluctant and more concerned about employing people with mental disabilities and blindness than other disabilities. The researcher further observed that this attitude may affect the eagerness of persons with these specific disabilities to disclose their disabilities or request for accommodations (Unger 2002). The WPRPD (2015) also confirms that females with disabilities are more marginalised in terms of employment compared to their male counterparts. Article 27 of the UNCRDP is the work and employment article on the right of people with disabilities to earn a living by working equally as others, which includes their right to being subjected to the same standards of employment processes as anyone else. For such equality to be achieved, specific measures such as the prohibition of discrimination against anyone that has a disability throughout the employment value chain must be followed.

➤ **Mobility challenges**

According to the article in the *Daily Dispatch* (2017) one main reason why people with visual impairments are shunned when it comes to employment is to do with their mobility. But the *Chicago Light House* (2020) states that being visually impaired do not mean you automatically lose the independence of getting to and from places whenever you please. When in familiar places, people with visual impairments generally know the layout and memorise where things are (Chicago Light House 2020). They use other senses like sound, touch and smell to orient themselves to their surroundings (Martinez 1998). Martinez (1998) further states that people with visual impairments can memorise important street names, locations, etc., and use mobility devices to travel independently and safely from point A to point B. To be able to acquaint themselves with mobility and orientation skills people with visual impairments need to be trained, however in South Africa there is a scarcity of such trainers which becomes yet another challenge faced by people with visual impairments in the country. This scarcity of mobility trainers in South Africa was revealed in an article by the *Daily Dispatch Weekend* of 24 May 2017. In the article we are told by the reporter that one person in East London who was then partially sighted had looked for mobility training but to no avail.

*I was becoming an embarrassment to myself and those with me because I would bump into people at the mall, so I thought I should get a white cane so people could immediately tell I am blind.*

It becomes embarrassing for a blind person to bump into people hence the need to use of a white cane to avoid such incidents.

One of the strategic pillars for realising the rights of people with disabilities as stated in the 2015 WPRPD is personal mobility supported by article 20. Personal mobility according to the article is an essential component of access and holds that there must be measures followed to make sure that anyone with a disability is able to access personal mobility with the utmost conceivable independence at any time as well as at a reasonable cost (WPRPD 2015). According to Okungu (2014), a person with visual impairment in a working environment may need accommodations such as assistive technology, one of which would be for mobility purposes. As part of their accommodation, people with visual impairments may need assistive technology services in acquiring and customising the devices to meet their individual needs, the maintenance, repair or replacement of the devices, and training on the use of the devices (Morais, Lorensen, Bell, Hill & Woods 1997). Apart from the lack of enough mobility trainers, mobility challenges are also faced by people with visual impairments in terms of using public transport. The *Dobsonville Urban News* on 10 June 2018 reported on how a person with visual impairment was ejected from a taxi by a driver who told him that he does not take people with disabilities in his taxi. Reporting to the *Dobsonville Urban News* the victim said:

*I couldn't believe that we are living in such an intolerant society until I experienced it first-hand. I boarded a taxi in the morning from home in Roodepoort to work in Dobsonville. I paid my fare like everyone else in the taxi. The driver told me that he doesn't pick up blind people in his taxi at which I asked for an explanation. He then handed back my R20 and told me to get off the taxi.*

In South Africa people with disabilities have the right to transportation enshrined in Article 9 of the Disability Rights Charter of South Africa and the UNCRPD (2015: xx) which states that “affordable and adequate transport shall be made available to disabled people”. Such treatment by taxi drivers might end up keeping people with disabilities at home consequently keeping them out of jobs, away from shopping, and

out of community life. This may prevent them from making valuable contributions to society as individuals, workers, consumers, and taxpayers (National Council on Disability 2005). Accessing premises with their guide dogs was also another challenge faced by people with visual impairments as reported by some newspapers. Issues in relation to this challenge were published in the *Witness* of 25 January 2017 when a visually impaired man was refused entry into the home affairs department due to his dog but eventually was allowed in, and in *The Mercury* newspaper of 18 June 2019 when a woman was refused entry into a restaurant. She told the news reporter:

*When we arrived at the restaurant, we were told that I couldn't enter with Eddie, my guide dog. I am visually impaired and Eddie is my eyes. Eddie has undergone extensive training as a guide dog. The restaurant was quite full and it was humiliating to be spoken to in that way (Mercury newspaper 2019).*

Guide dogs are trained to assist people visual impairments getting from point A to point B and they make mobility much faster and safer (South African Guide-dogs Association for the blind 2019). According to the South African Guide-dogs Association for the Blind (2019) owning a guide dog is a life-changing experience for someone with a visual impairment in an all-inclusive package of independence, mobility, companionship and dignity.

#### ➤ **Challenges faced when relying on others for help**

At times people with visual impairments may rely on other people who are fully sighted for help. This sometimes creates a challenge for them as it seems that they are not always rendered the help they were looking for. The *Weekend Witness* of 16 November 2019 reported on someone with a visual impairment who needed assistance with using an ATM from a person who ended up making an incorrect transaction involving a large sum of money. Currently, the banking sector is working on improving the self-service usage by ensuring that people with visual impairments are not excluded. This new development was written about in the *Herald* newspaper of 2 February 2020. In a research done by Fuglerud (2014) on the barriers to and benefits of ICT usage for people with visual impairments, participants expressed satisfaction using ATMs in Norway where a bank introduced a speech interface

through earphones. For the participants who had used this system they expressed excitement as they were able to simply use the ATM without previous training (Fuglerud 2014). We are also informed about a situation in the story written in the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper of 27 October 2017 when a student with visual impairment sought the help of her sighted friend to edit spelling on her assignment. However, the victim told the reporter that instead, her assistant deliberately ended up introducing errors into the assignment.

*In September, I wanted to submit my English assignment and, obviously, because I can't edit for myself, I asked one of my friends to edit for me. I thought she loved me and instead she introduced mistakes in my assignment. So it's painful; we have challenges even when doing our assignments. Since then I just write and sometimes I don't even get someone to edit for me. So obviously the lecturer, when marking, will see the spelling mistakes but there is nothing I can do.*

According to Lauenstein (2007), Argyropoulos and Martos (2006) and Clark and Stoner (2008), students with visual impairments may have more spelling difficulties than their sighted counterparts because they may have had less exposure to written words. However, students who are taught uncontracted Braille learn to read in much the same way as their sighted peers, because one Braille cell corresponds to each letter of the alphabet (Clark & Stoner 2008). In this way, students learn to sound words out and can work on spelling and decoding words alongside their sighted peers (Lauenstein 2007). In this case, if the student was acquainted or was able to use uncontracted Braille such problems could have been avoided.

#### ➤ **Failure to attain justice**

Failing to attain justice is also another challenge faced by people with visual impairments when they are victimised. This is due to them being unable to describe their victims to the people responsible for issuing justice. The *Cape Argus* newspaper of 7 September 2020 in their article, said that two women with visual impairments who were raped were sent back by police officials due to their failing to identify or describe their perpetrators. A cross-sectional study on sexual assaults in individuals with visual impairments of a Norwegian sample by Brunnes and Heir (2018) revealed a higher prevalence of sexual assaults among women with visual impairments than that of the



general population, with the largest difference among those aged 36-50 years. This story indicates the impossibilities that are there in South Africa for people with disabilities to attain justice once their rights are violated. It shows barriers hindering people with visual impairments from utilising the system of justice as victims. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the UNCRPD each specify that the right to equal recognition before the law is operative 'everywhere'. As long as people with disabilities are faced with barriers as part of the system of justice, they will not be able "to shoulder their complete accountabilities as community members or exercising their rights and appreciate identical opportunity to execute their obligations as eyewitnesses, jury members, attorneys, judiciaries, mediators, and other partakers in the justice administration" (WPRPD 2015:65).

➤ **Failure of being understood**

Another challenge faced by people with disabilities is that they are not listened to when they air their problems. In the *Citizen* newspaper of 19 April 2017, we are informed about people with visual impairments going on strike to voice their dissatisfaction. The move, according to the article, was due to the use of their work at the Rand Show as well as having their workshop where they manufacture their goods unlocked without involving them in the decision. The South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) secretary in Ward 21 told the reporter that the centre had been closed by the department of social development since January after the blind people complained of maladministration, mismanagement of funds and nepotism.

*They are unhappy because no attention has been given to their complaints for the past four months, but the department saw it fit to take their work to the Rand Show.*

Although people with visual impairments encounter so many challenges, they obtain support from their peers; which newspapers also covered.

### 5.2.2.2.1.1.3 Support systems

People with visual impairments like to assist each other and some on a personal basis. The newspapers which helped to inform us about this are the *African Post* of 17 March 2017, the *Rekord East* of 19 April 2019, the *Citizen* of 24 April 2019 and the *Daily Dispatch Weekend* of 24 May 2017.

*The lessons are for free and will help them to be able to interact with the outside world better when they can read, and walk using a white cane. Their disability should not stop them from being able to read – they cannot depend on others to interpret their confidential information because they cannot read (African Post 2017).*

In the *African Post* we have a Braille instructor wanting to assist fellow people with visual impairments in Braille and computer skills computer as well as in mobility skills using white canes and guide dogs. These lessons were being offered for free.

*I have always wanted to be a professional cricketer and seeing that blind people are limited in such sports, this motivated me to find resources to invent my own cricket for people living with blindness (Rekord East 2019).*

The *Rekord East* story was about someone wanting to teach others cricket in tertiary universities seeing that blind people are not acquainted to such sport.

*The aim is to assist the blind and partially sighted learners to access and enjoy quality and transformative education through assistive technology, improved and well-equipped libraries, and the improvement of physical infrastructure in public schools catering for blind learners (The Citizen 2019).*

The *Citizen* newspaper reported on a story about a government official also with visual impairment collaborating with the South African Council for the Blind to host an Invitation Golf Day and Gala Dinner with 22 special schools for the blind.

*At the moment there is no-one rendering that service here, even though there are about 16500 blind people in the Amathole district, so the need is huge. They will be able to teach blind people to be mobile and also to dress themselves, make coffee and shave (Daily Dispatch Weekend 2017).*

The *Daily Dispatch Weekend* informed us about a person with visual impairment in the Eastern Cape who decided to assist in the area of orientation and mobility; a service that was lacking in the area. He enrolled two of his workmates at a mobility training school to be trained and also to train others thereafter.

Orientation and mobility training (O & M) helps people with visual impairments to know where they are in space and where they want to go (orientation). It also helps them to be able to carry out a plan to get there (mobility). Hence orientation and mobility skills allow people with visual impairments to navigate their world efficiently, effectively, and safely (Martinez 1998).

People with visual impairments also get peer support through community-based organisations as reported by various newspapers. The *Citizen* newspaper of 18 October 2018 published an article about the computer centre in the Eastern Cape to ensure that learners with visual impairments are afforded equal learning opportunities through information and communication technology. Also, to assist in terms of ICT was the Cape Town Society for the Blind which launched an initiative to introduce a new computerised system specifically for the blind known as the JAWS (Job Access With Speech). This information was published in the *Cape Argus* newspaper of 14 June 2020.

*People living with disabilities are just as capable as most of us. JAWS creates a conscious, accessible working environment for people living with disabilities. It helps them to carry out whatever task they need to do, be it at home or in their work spaces or school environment (Cape Argus 2020).*

The *Kempton* newspaper of 14 April 2017 published an article about the Life After Blindness organisation with the aim of assisting community members of Tembisa.

*Our aim is to empower people who are visually impaired by offering skills development programmes. We will help be more independent and also offer moral support through peer counselling. Blind people should be able to do things by themselves and be independent (Kempton 2017).*

The *George Herald* newspaper of 13 April 2017 actually informed about one person who is a member of the Ilitha Centre for the Blind and how the organisation had assisted him.

*I found myself alone in a dark world, unable to do anything for myself. I am forever dependent on other people to help me move around. Killing myself is constantly on my mind. Accepting being blind has been every difficult; every morning I wake up hoping I will see gain. I have hope that all will be fine; I would like to learn to do a lot of things on my own and be able to work for myself again (George Herald 17).*

Also written in the *George Herald* of 22 November 2017 was an article about the George library (Thembaletu e centre) which had organised a meeting with members of the Ilitha Centre for the Blind. The purpose was to hold discussions with people with visual impairments to ensure that they have access to information and technology.

*When I arrived at the meeting just before 10:00, I met a young lady from Thembaletu who felt unhappy and depressed about her blindness. After the autobiographical stories we shared in small groups, the input from a few people, her first experience of Braille and the collaboration around a cup of tea and light refreshments, she blossomed and spoke with excitement about the future (George Herald 2017).*

The *Westlander* newspaper of 20 March 2019 published a story about The League of Friends of the Blind, a non-governmental organisation also assisting people with visual impairments.

*Children from birth to 13 years of age receive services which ensure optimal development, independent living, access to mainstream schooling and inclusion within their communities (Westlander 2019).*

There was also an article in the *Mid Coast South Mail* newspaper on 4 July 2017 about an organisation known as the ACTION for the Blind and Disabled aimed at training students with disabilities on basic computer literacy.

*Here at Action for the Blind, the blind have an opportunity to sit in front of the computer using speech software which enables them to do office work like any other sighted person. We can do anything that any sighted person does, if not better, we would not spend our time going to shops or seeing friends. What is there to see? There is a great need for awareness about blind people. We want people to know about us. A visit to see what we do, would make us happy (Mid Coast South Mail 2017).*

According to a report on a study conducted by CBR Education and Training for Empowerment (CREATE) (2015), Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a community-based strategy that aims at enhancing the lives of people with disabilities within their community. The idea behind CBS is the equalisation of opportunities and social inclusion of all adults and children with disabilities. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of people with disabilities themselves, their families and communities and the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services (ILO, UNESCO, WHO Joint Position Paper 2004). Fundraising activities are also a part of how people with visual impairments get assisted. Some print media took their responsibility to publish stories about people with visual impairments involved in fundraising events. The newspapers that published such articles were the *Table Talk* newspaper of 4 December 2019, about a concert hosted by Retina SA Cape Town to raise funds for awareness of retinal blindness as well as for research to find a cure for retinal blindness. Another fundraising event was an upcoming event known as the Dinner in the Dark organised by the KZN Blind and Deaf society to raise funds for the many projects administered and managed by the KZN Blind and Deaf Society. The *Highway Mail* of 26 August 2016 and *Southlands Sun* newspapers of 30 August 2016 were the newspapers that published about this event. A similar event was covered by *People's Post* on 11 April 2016 with the theme "Let the blind lead" when the Institute of the Blind celebrated its 135-year history. The greatest challenge faced by most people with disabilities as shown by various research is poverty (Disability Awareness in Action 1996; Census 2011). According to Disability Awareness in Action (1996) a person with disability having a job or an organisation with money are in far stronger positions. Organisations of people with disabilities require funds to run campaigns, support members and finance the group's activities. Many institutions give funds to organisations to help them run projects and activities (Disability Awareness in Action 1996).

People with visual impairments may at times need support medically in terms of going through surgery to have their eyes treated especially if they have cataracts. We are informed about them being rendered such assistance through newspapers such as the *Bloemfontein Courant* of 13 October 2013. The newspaper published information about the Department of Health in the Free State which hosted an annual sight

awareness campaign, during which two elderly people over the age of 90 were operated on. In another article by the *Sowetan* newspaper on 25 June 2019 about 67 people were operated on by three surgeons at Leratong Hospital in Krugersdorp, over a period of two days. Cataracts is a condition which results in the clouding of one or both eyes leading to visual impairment (Illinois Eye Center 2016).

Assistive device is also part of the supporting system for people with visual impairments. With so many assistive technologies supporting people with visual impairments, newspapers are not just sitting back but have given out information on these important devices. The *Saturday Star* of 20 April 2019 published an article in which a 24-year-old had developed an advanced walking stick called *Bulatsele* to help people with visual impairments with navigation.

*I was in the CBD a while back, sitting in a bus waiting for it to fill up, when I noticed an elderly blind woman waiting to cross the road at the robot. She had a guide dog with her. In the time I was waiting for my bus to leave, the robot had changed twice already and she still hadn't been able to cross the road, as she had no assistance. It was heartbreaking to see. It got me thinking about the millions of blind people that face battles every day, and I knew I had to do something. The idea was to develop a device that would help blind people navigate and guide them, using technology to detect objects, to use existing technology that we have to build something valuable for the blind community (Saturday Star 2019).*

The *Star* newspaper of 27 April 2020 published a story about another youth who developed a mobile app known as *Blind Pilot* also to improve the way blind people move around the city. Navigation assistive device is not the only one needed for the blind.

*The idea came after I witnessed a pedestrian looking down into her phone collide with a visually impaired person. I wanted to see if anybody thought of using a smartphone for blind navigation, but I could only find beacon/GPS-based apps, which don't detect obstacles (Star 2020)*

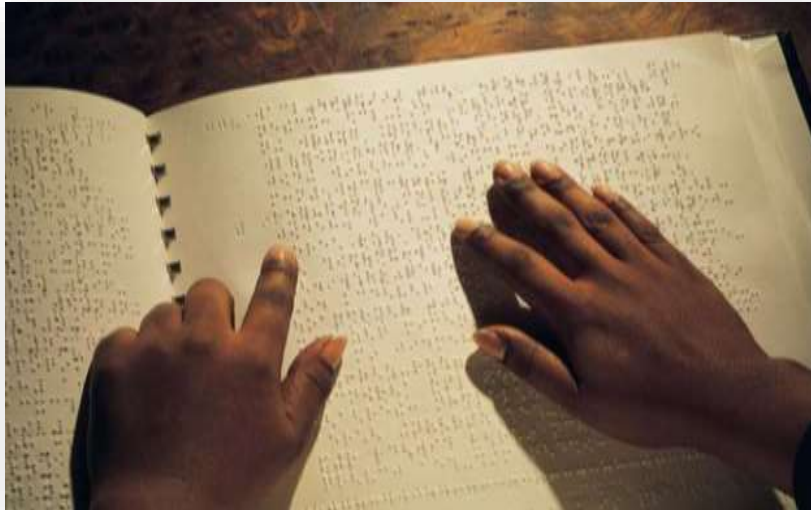
The *Middleburg Observer* on 12 October 2016 published an article about 'The Kiss' technology aimed at enabling people with visual impairments to read graphics by running their fingers over it.

*We want to open up a whole new chapter of making art available for the blind and visually impaired. Maybe in the future (they) will have a 3-D printer of their own at home and will be able to download 3-D files from museum homepages (Middleburg Observer 2016).*

Facebook has also introduced machine learning technology trained to recognise objects in pictures and then describe photos aloud. This information was also published by the *Middleburg Observer* on 15 April 2016.

*As Facebook becomes an increasingly visual experience, we hope our new automatic alternative text technology will help the blind community experience Facebook the same way others enjoy it. While this technology is still nascent, tapping its current capabilities to describe photos is a huge step toward providing our visually impaired community the same benefits and enjoyment that everyone else gets from photos (Middleburg 2016)*

Producing materials in Braille format is also one way of supporting people with visual impairments in terms of accessing information.



**Figure 5.1: Braille reading**

We are also informed about a magazine known as *Pick n Pay Fresh Living* through the *Weekend Post* of 22 June 2019. Braille materials remain the vital format for which people with visual impairments access printed documents (Swenson 1988:337). This is why materials in Braille format are also mostly used to produce study documents for educational purposes for people with visual impairments (ibid.). There was also an article published on 4 April 2019 in the *Daily Dispatch* about the court instructing the department of basic education to provide textbooks in Braille to every pupil who needs them. A Report to the Nation by the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute of March 26 (2009) emphasises the importance of Braille materials including study materials for academic purposes for people with visual impairments. A study was conducted looking at the vital role of Braille in establishing lifelong literacy across 45 cities, towns, and rural communities in 11 eastern and southern American states. In this study, 60 students took part of whom 45 were with visual impairments and 15 were fully sighted. The findings of the study were that literacy rates of blind high school students who began their Braille education at an early age were consistent with those of their sighted peers. The study also indicated that totally blind children who received infrequent or no Braille training, or who began their Braille education at later stages of life, exhibited noticeably lower literacy rates (Ryles 1999).



#### 5.2.2.2.1.1.4 Challenging the disability

We are also told by newspapers that accepting one's condition has also helped many people with visual impairments to adjust to their lives and focus on their abilities, consequently succeeding in their lives. Several people told newspaper reporters how they moved on despite being born or becoming blind later in life.

*I accepted my condition long ago, and that has made me able to make the best of life (City Press 2018).*

Accepting one's condition enables them to lead a happy life.

*The greatest disability is in our minds. Today I still train and do almost everything I used to do (Zululand Observer 2017).*

The greatest disability is in our mind than our physical bodies.

*Don't let anything be an obstacle to achieving your dreams. Fight for your success (District Advertiser 2018).*

Nothing should hinder anyone from achieving their goals be it a disability.

*Disability is not an inability to be able to function. With hard work and focus, you can achieve your dreams, anything is possible. Don't let anyone put you down. You have to fight to make your dreams come true (Roodepoort Record 2018).*

When one has a disability, it does not mean they are unable to be productive.

*Use your disability status to encourage and help others (Polokwane Observer 2016).*

Disability should be used to encourage others not to discourage.

All these words as said by these people are all aimed at inspiring others with a similar condition. Kaufman (2011) argues that inspiration propels a person from apathy to possibility and transforms the way we perceive our own capabilities. According to Thrash and Elliot's (1994) findings, inspired people are more open to new experiences and report more absorption in their tasks.

#### **5.2.2.2.2 Information verification before publication**

Apart from the suggestion on managing print media content by covering more disability issues, some participants cited the need for information verification before publication.

Participant four:

*Mainstream journalists need to be verifying some disability issues with the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) if they are not sure about its actuality.*

A study by Ryan and Owen (1977) on metropolitan newspaper coverage of social issues found that the coverage of social issues contained more errors than general coverage. The accuracy data showed that the most common errors were subjective – those in which the news source and the reporter may differ on how the information should have been treated (Ryan & Owen 1977). Heller's (1999) suggestion is that the media need to contact disability organisations or experts for information verification. This suggestion was also made by Barnes (1999:5) when he says “authors, scriptwriters, journalists, reporters and advertisers have a responsibility to check the accuracy of their work before it is made public. In order to avoid inaccuracies, they should seek advice from organisations controlled and run by people with disabilities”. Information about these organisations can be obtained from disability councils (Barnes 1999) which in South Africa is the SANCB as stated by participant four.

#### **5.2.2.2.3 Advocating for disability related issues**

Participants also suggested about the need for print media to focus more on issues of advocacy in order to bring some positive changes in the lives of people with visual impairments.

Participant eight:

*If print media and or all other media so to speak would be focusing on issues of advocacy I believe it can probably bring about some changes.*

The word advocacy has been defined in a number of terms by several organisations. Sharma (1997:2) defines advocacy as “an action directed at changing the policies, positions, and programs of any type of institution”. According to Inclusion Ghana (2014), advocacy will promote the social inclusion, equality and rights of people with disabilities.

#### **5.2.2.2.4 Creating awareness**

Several participants also suggested creating awareness as the need for print media to ensure inclusion.

Participant one:

*There should be more issues on the awareness about various disabilities, activities of persons with disabilities and organisations of disabled persons, assisting with advocacy related matters in respect of disability.*

More awareness issues about activities involving people with disabilities and their organisation. The media should also be assisting with issues of advocacy. Participant six concurred with one on issues of disability awareness.

Participant six:

*I enjoy all other stories of interesting news. But I see that the media should be publishing more awareness issues about disability.*

Also in agreement with issues of awareness was participant seven emphasising on human rights issues such as education and employment. This agreement of creating more awareness and on human rights issues was also made by participant four who also suggested an ending to using early disability school of thoughts emanating from the medical model of disability.

Participant seven:

*Human rights issues are of paramount importance. People must be aware of the rights of people with disability regarding education, employment and*

*everything. These must be published in ways that change can occur than just hearsay.*

Participant four:

*Most issues are reported using an early adaptation phase perspective of disability which places disability as a personal problem. We need more of human rights and awareness issues.*

Analysing print media content, I came across awareness creation stories. However as suggested by participants such stories were just few. There was a story covered by the *Star Argus* of 10 September 2019 the SA Guide Dog Association were intending to roll out an awareness campaign to educate people about guide dogs. This type of awareness was also published in the *Sunday Times* on 10 August 2018. *The Star* newspaper of 26 October 2018 published an article about Blind SA organising a meeting and inviting various taxi associations from all over Johannesburg. The idea was to teach the associations different ways of dealing with people with visual impairment who use public transport such as taxis.

*It's quite clear there is a lack of understanding and knowledge about what a working dog is and what their role is when accompanying someone with a disability. Many people think it's just a pet, that it's unhygienic or could bite you. This is definitely not the case when it comes to our dogs. They are highly trained and socialised so they can accompany their owner to any venue (Star Argus 2019).*

The reason for creating awareness about guide dogs as stated above is the lack of people's understanding on the importance of these dogs to people with visual impairments. Some people think that the guide dogs are just like any other dogs that can be termed, not knowing that these dogs are highly trained to serve people with visual impairments. Hence creating awareness is important for the general public to understand about these dogs and know how to handle them whenever in company of the person they are meant to serve.

*We need to educate our drivers because they are the ones who are on the streets and can identify who is visually impaired but as taxi owners we need to educate ourselves so we can give our drivers rules on how to take care of the elderly, the disabled and visually impaired people before we hire them (Star 2018).*

As people with visual impairments encounter so many challenges while using public transport, the above awareness was meant to make taxi drivers understand how to handle a person who is with visual impairment whenever they want to use their transport.

Recently, disability awareness has been given significance as it helps in decreasing society's stereotypical mind-set thereby creating a positive and inclusive society for all. Furthermore, disability awareness helps to bring about necessary policy changes with regards to people with disabilities (Lindsay & McPherson 2011). Research has established that disability awareness programmes at schools have resulted in children developing positive attitudes towards people with disabilities (Rillotta & Nettlebeck 2007).

According to Goethals et al (2016), when people with a disabilities are represented in the media, the messages lack the potential to play a role in facilitating social change and change public perceptions consistent with the framework of the UNCRPD. Creating awareness on disability is enshrined in the UNCRPD. It is relevant to the media in terms of raising awareness and the portrayal of people with disabilities (Ingrid 2016). Article 8 (1) of the CRPD states that; "State Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures:

- a) To raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of people with disabilities;
- b) To combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to people with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life
- c) To promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of people with disabilities" (UNCRPD 2015).

Once print media make efforts to rectify issues as expressed by participants in terms of providing content in accessible formats as well as promoting disability issues, it will then enable them to access their preferred information consequently gratifying their motifs. All participants therefore also indicated their content of interest in print media.

### 5.2.2.3 Print media content of interest

Participants also shared on the content of their interest and also made suggestions on how the media could be managing content focusing on their interests. An observation by Williamson et al (2000) is that while there is literature about the information needs of people with disabilities in specific settings, such as in universities, there seems to be very little known about information needs for everyday life or the sources of information most frequently used by people with visual impairments. For this study, participants shared their information preferences.

Participant one:

*I like breaking news, political news, sports, but I speak only for myself. Blind persons have a wide range of news tastes just like our sighted counterparts.*

Just like the fully sighted, blind people have a range of news and information preferences like breaking news, political, sports etc.

Participant five:

*Visually impaired readers are interested in the same news as readers who can see normally. We would like to read the latest news reports as well as magazine and newspaper articles regarding health, sports, opinion, world news, lifestyle and in our ladies' case, all articles regarding women's issues such as advice on clothing, children, cooking, make-up and decorating our homes. Visually impaired readers would like to get information about movies and our favorite soap operas and everyone who performs in them.*

Similar participant five indicates that people with visual impairments like same news as those with full sight. People with visual impairments prefer news and information from both newspapers and magazines such as information on health, sports, opinions, lifestyle etc.

Participant seven:

*I search for interesting stories that are informative I enjoy baking so I also search for information on baking instructions and new recipes.*

Baking information is also preferred by people with visual impairment as stated by participant seven.

Participant nine:

*I like to read about the politics of the day and some financial info. I'd say, my main interest is people. I enjoy articles on the success and failure of people. A day in the life of motivational people, inspirational people and the achievements of ordinary people.*

Others may prefer financial information, people's successes and failures and inspiration stories as said by participant nine.

Participant four:

*I search for news depending on my areas of interest, and, besides I like every day news articles, etc., from my perspective, things like technological evolution, technical articles, and articles relating to the release of new forms of technology rank the highest.*

There are also those who are interested in information on technologies as participant four.

In a study conducted by Moore (2000) on information seeking behaviours of people with visual impairments, the findings were that apart from the information needs that they share with everyone else, they require other types of information; information that relates to their position as people with disabilities such as about specific rights and entitlements open to people with disabilities, and information that would support their political consciousness as people with disability. As for those with visual impairments they look for information that specifically relates to their status of being visually impaired such as information about their condition including, the aids, equipment and services that are available, as well as self-help groups (Moore 2000). With some participants mentioning their interest in cooking and baking, normally one would assume that someone who cannot see might not be able to bake let alone be interested in information on how to cook; however, Pallet, a blind person who teaches blind people how to cook, clarifies the mechanisms used by blind people when

cooking. According to Pallet (2000), blind cooks use their sense of smell, taste, touch and even hearing to identify how ingredients feel at different stages of cooking (Pallet 2000). Pallet (2000) further says that if you have a refined sense of hearing, it is sometimes possible to tell that a sponge cake is done when it stops ticking or sizzling by using a timer. This also validates that people with visual impairment may indeed be interested in any news just as the fully sighted.

#### **5.2.2.4 Legislation**

The legislation about the rights of people with disabilities is an important aspect in understanding the issues involved (Ingrid 2016). People with visual impairments feel excluded even when there are policies which contain their rights as people with disabilities.

Participant eight:

*Disability rights are just on papers but rarely practical.*

There are so many written disability rights but remain just on paper; not followed by society. People with disabilities are entitled to employment opportunities but rarely do they get employed even by the government and nothing gets done by their situation.

Participant seven:

*There are white papers and legislation to enforce the inclusion of disabled people, but right from the top (at President's level) down to corporate companies and small businesses, disabled people are excluded.*

Despite having white papers and legislation people with disabilities are still being left out in so many things all over society levels.

The WPRPD was approved by the South African Cabinet in 2015. The WPRPD's intension was "to accelerate transformation and redress with regard to full inclusion, integration and equality for people with disabilities" (WPRPD 2015:3). The formation of the WPRPD was formed by social and political activists who also had disabilities themselves as stated in the WPRPD (2015:4). The WPRPD was established with the



vision to “create a society that is free, just and inclusive of every individual with disability having equal rights as citizens” (WPRPD 2015:42). It commits duty bearers to realising the rights of people with disabilities, including the right to communication in terms of languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, lip-speaking services, speech reading services, whisper interpretation, note-taking services and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology (ibid.).

Additionally, the UNCRPD is legislation which holds the rights of people with disabilities. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2010), the UNCRPD places emphasis on particular forms of human rights violations that people with disabilities experience. Countries that are party to the UNCRPD are committed “to the promotion and ensuring everyone with a disability enjoy their human rights as well as essential freedoms without being discriminated against in anyway” (UN 2006:5). The provisions of the UNCRPD place a commitment on governments to eradicate all the barriers to the realisation of the rights of adults and children with disabilities. However, despite such provisions people with visual impairments continue to experience exclusion as stated by participant seven.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND THE PROPOSED MODEL**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

After the findings of this research and the established gaps that were found in relation to print media information pertaining to people with visual impairments, the final objective was therefore to develop a framework to be followed by print media in order for them to start including people with visual impairments as their news and information audiences. But before presenting the framework, general findings of this research have been presented based on the objectives from which the developed framework was based. According to the research findings of this study, people with visual impairments feel that the media does not necessarily include them as part of their media audience. The findings are discussed based on the theoretical frameworks in which this research was grounded which are the UGT and the SRT theories. This study explored how print media news and information are accessible to people with visual impairments and examined print media content concerning issues around visual impairments. The findings of this study from both interviews and content analysis were that print media do not provide content in format accessible to people with visual impairments. Participants cited using electronic print media to cater for their information needs however some challenges were being encountered in accessing print media on online services. The problem cited was failure of the print media websites managers to follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Both findings from interviews and the analysed content was that there was also only a few information being written in print media about people with disabilities. As cited by participants print media especially newspapers used stereotyping way of describing people with disabilities and this was mainly seen in stories that spoke about achievements attained by people with visual impairments. Articles were being described focusing on someone's disability than their hardwork.

## **6.2. PRINT MEDIA FORMAT**

### **6.2.1 There is no known mainstream print media in Braille format**

According to literature and from what participants said, the Braille format is the only way that allows people with visual impairments full access to hardcopy print media (Foulke 1979). Various scholars have argued about the importance of Braille reading materials as the most efficient and effective reading medium for people with visual impairment (Foulke 1979; Schroeder 1996; Wormsley 1996; Danielsen 2006). Both the findings from interviews and analysing print media content established that there is no known mainstream print media in Braille format.

### **6.2.2 Electronic media is graphically inaccessible to people with visual impairments**

According to studies on access to web information by users with visual impairments, people with visual impairments may spend more time navigating around each web page, especially if the page contains graphics, a lot of information or has many links (Craven 2003). Participants cited that they face a lot of challenges when surfing the mainstream electronic print media due to the use of graphics and adverts. Their Assistive devices do not read such texts. This study was underpinned by two theoretical frameworks, the UGT and the SRT. The UGT is based on how consumers seek particular media over others; mostly preferring those which are able to satisfy their needs and motives (Stafford et al 2004). In this research, in the absence of physical Braille print media, most participants indicated preferring electronic print media versions as they are able to independently access it without asking for the help of family and/or friends. It was also cited by participants that the reason for opting for electronic mainstream print media is its capability of providing authentic information as opposed to other online news information sources. According to Windahl et al (2008), under the UGT the more people's needs are met the more satisfactory the particular media becomes. However, although the UGT is said to be one such theory to fulfil the needs and motives of audiences, with regards to people with visual impairments this seems not be completely the case. Audiences based on the UGT according to Stafford

et al (2004) get gratification from the media through the content itself; this is when the media provides content that align with the expectations of consumers.

Furthermore, despite the preference of electronic version print media, participants cited the challenges faced in the process of trying to access information on the print websites. People with visual impairments use screen readers which translate text into audio and according to participants; the process involved in sourcing print media information electronically using assistive devices is frenetic. Every time participants encounter graphics or adverts while reading electronic print media, they have to first stop the screen reader and surf passed the graphics to continue reading where there is only text. This is due to the incapability of screen readers to translate graphics into audio and when it is on the graphics according to participants the screen reader produces a noise indicating its failure to read the graphics; this becomes very distracting and interferes with their listening experience according to participants. Furthermore, according to Brown, Chen and Harper (2012), most of the screen readers are unable to efficiently notify users that new content has appeared on the website. This does not allow people with visual impairments to fully experience and benefit from dynamic websites (Brown et al 2012). These experiences according to participants, pose as a great challenge to them such that one participant stated that “*it is more of a battle to get to the news, than what it is a pleasure*”. With such feelings and experiences, it indicates that people with disabilities may not get the needed gratification from using electronic print media on an equal basis with others as expected. This confirms what Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985) argue about the power of the UGT – that if people select a certain media in the hope that it will be useful to them, there is also the possibility that they might still not use or like it for some reason.

## **6.3 PRINT MEDIA CONTENT COVERAGE OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

### **6.3.1 Lack of interest to cover issues about them**

Participants cited the lack of print media to cover issues related to them. This lack of interest of print media to cover important disability issues may be due to what McManus (1994:21), describes as ‘Market-driven journalism’; one that sees audience

as consumers and not citizens and where news becomes a commodity to suit the needs of the market as opposed to reflecting reality. Lack of interest to cover disability issues was also discovered when analysing print media content and this seem to be the cause of underrepresentation and absence of representation of people with visual impairments in the media; While analysing newspapers and magazines, the discovery was that there were just a few stories about people with visual impairments being covered per print media. In some print media, there was completely no representation of people with disabilities. These are print media which in one way or another should have been carrying information concerning people with disabilities. The lack of interest of print media to cover issues concerning people with visual impairments indicates its failure to incorporate the principles of the SRT. As stated earlier on, the SRT incorporates several principles to promote inclusion of the vulnerable and the voiceless of which people with disabilities are a part (Rowe & Frewer 2000). One of such principles is promoting public participation which is synonymous with democracy and involves engagement and involvement of people (Bryson & Carroll 2002). Not involving people with visual impairments as part of media consumers entails the media's failure to promote public participation as held by the SRT (Bozo & Hiemer 2016).

### **6.3.2 Print Media Presentation of Visual Impairment Information**

- Promotion of negative stereotypes
- Usage of degrading terminology
- Generalisation of disability
- Untrue information and information errors

#### **6.3.2.1 Promotion of negative stereotypes**

From the interviews data collection, some participants raised a concern about being represented as a super cripple in print media stories once they achieve anything. This was also confirmed when analysing print media content. Research findings on a case study conducted by Hertog and McLeod (1988) about media coverage of radical protests revealed that the media when covering news stories of achievements by people with disabilities do it from a pro-establishment bent and focus on their

disabilities rather than the achievement itself. Print media look to super cripples as sources and as subjects of stories because they fit with the infotainment format – with the intent of both informing and entertaining (Heller 1999). Apart from the stereotype of the super cripple the finding of this study found the presence of several stereotypical practices in representing people with visual impairments. In some stories, people were presented as burdens; as people who could not operate independently resulting in some of them not finding employment; some were represented as objects of violence – for example in a story featuring two women who were raped and who never managed to attain justice. Some were depicted as pitiable; narrating their stories about how difficult it is for them to be with a visual impairment; object of atmosphere or curio whereby some magazines used them to stress a point such as in the soccer Ladumma Magazine in which a reporter said, “even the blind can see that a particular team will win”.

### **6.3.2.2 Usage of degrading terminology**

Participants mentioned the use of degrading terminologies in describing people with disabilities in print media. However, the discovery of this research is that the use of degrading technologies is nearly coming to an end as many technologies of concern were not seen being used in the analysed content. However, some degrading terminologies like describing people by their disability before being classified as humans were seen i.e ‘blind musician’ ‘blind authors’, ‘sightless breadwinners’.

### **6.3.2.3 Generalisation of disability**

Generalisation of disability was mentioned by participants when they said that normally when print media are writing about people with disabilities, they put them all under one umbrella. Yet according to participants, disabilities differ as there are various kinds of disability. Not all people with disabilities are a burden some are independent and can do everything without needing any assistance. The consequences of generalisation because of a deep-seated Western cultural bias in favour of particularity, is that they have developed a bad reputation and therefore are criticised as stereotypes, or even worse, as profiling (Stein 2004).

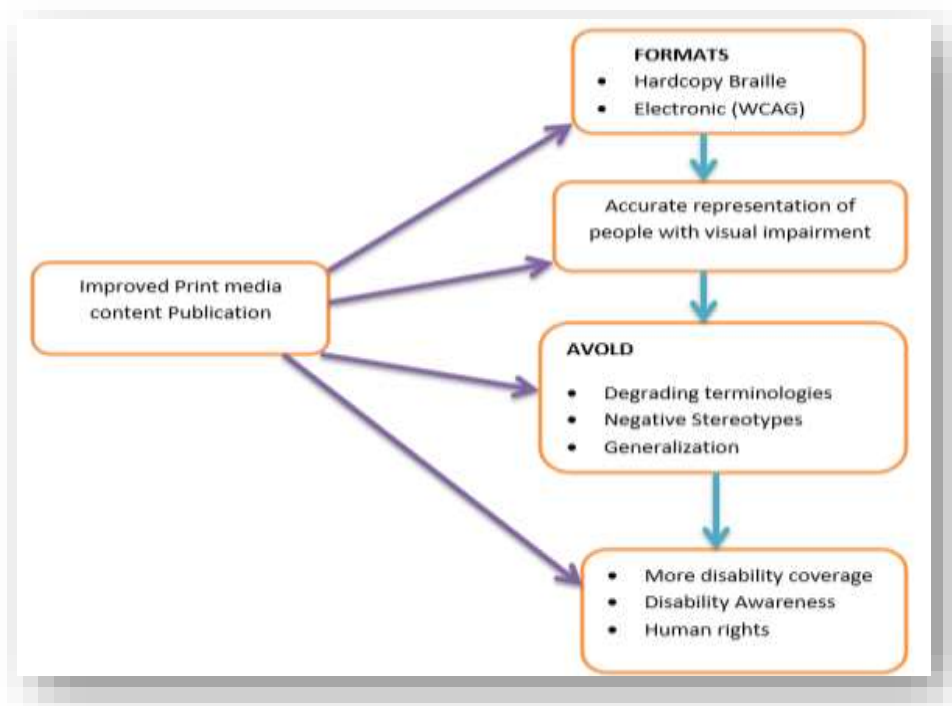
#### **6.3.2.4 Untrue information and information errors**

Participants also complained about untrue information about them being carried by print media. A specific example was in relation to the copyright law bill involving the president and the Blind SA organisation in which the media implicated that people with visual impairment were not fighting for this law alone but being influenced by other forces. This to some participants undermined their capability as concerned citizens and implicated them as people who can easily be manipulated; something that is totally untrue and misleading. The findings of the content analysis matched with what participants highlighted in terms of their representation in print media; there were exclusions and misrepresentations of people with visual impairments. From the analysed content, all analysed print media were published in standard print media format with no publications in Braille. The discovery of how print media represents people with visual impairments was that stereotypes were being used especially in newspapers headings. This is because newspapers story headings were based on a persuasive style, unknowingly applying degrading terminologies such as labelling people with their disability, rather than what the stories were actually about. In terms of the SRT the media indicated some failures to adhere to its principles. This ethical theory requires journalists to operate under their code of ethics (Moemeka 1991; Pachamama Alliance 2020). As required by the South African Press Council (2020) journalists when gathering and reporting of news, in terms of Chapter 1, section 1.2 of the press media code of ethics, should present news in context and in a balanced manner, without any intentional or negligent departure from the facts whether by distortion, exaggeration or misrepresentation. Section 5 of Chapter 1 prohibits journalists from using discrimination and hate speech and section 10.1 of Chapter 1 states that journalists should not use the headlines, captions, posters, pictures and video/audio content to mislead the public. The used pictures should reflect the content that is being reported (Press Council South Africa, 2020:14; 16; 37; 48).

#### **6.4 MEASURES OF PROMOTING INCLUSION THROUGH THE VIPRIMA MODEL**

Examining the ways in which required information is accessed by people with visual impairments may assist information providers to understand whether the existing

information provision mechanisms are effectively meeting their information needs or not. This in return will enable them to make reasonable adjustments for such people (Houtenville & Boege 2019). Following the findings of this research, print media need to improve in terms of providing information in accessible formats for people with visual impairments both in their printed and electronic versions. Print media also need to improve in their coverage of people with visual impairments, by covering more issues concerning people with visual impairments and also improve their representation in the media. Putting together all the findings I developed a model for the needed inclusion of people with visual impairments in print media.



**Figure 6.1: Visual Impairment Print Media Accessibility model: VIPRIMA**

The VIPRIMA model has been established to guide print media to be producing information to be accessible to people with visual impairments.



## **1. FORMATS**

Print media companies should ensure that their publication content is in formats accessible to people with visual impairment;

- in hardcopy Braille as well as
- in electronic format

Print media managers should make sure that their print media websites follow or adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. These guidelines enable screen readers to interpret texts to people with visual impairments as required.

## **2. REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE MEDIA**

Print media should ensure to accurately represent people with visual impairments in their publications.

- Avoiding using degrading terminologies in their publication.
- Avoid using negative stereotypes in their publications.
- Avoid generalising disabilities.

## **3. PRINT MEDIA INFORMATION COVERAGE**

Print media should improve on their coverage of news and information concerning people with visual impairments. There is need to cover more important issues on visual impairment.

- Issues of awareness
- Issues of human rights

### **6.4.1 Provision of Information in Accessible Formats**

Print media has a duty and responsibility to provide information in accessible formats to people with visual impairments. One of the theories underpinning this study is the UGT which is an audience-centred approach to understanding mass communication

(Severin & Tankard 1997). The significant role played by the media according to the UGT is to meet the needs and motivations of its audience and that the more such needs are met, the more satisfaction is generated (Windahl et al 2008). According to Amiri et al (2012), the focus of the UGT is basically on how audiences seek media and to what extent they are satisfied with its type, content, and method of use (Amiri et al 2012). Through the UGT, researchers have uncovered several motivations people often have for consuming media (Vinney 2019).

In this study participants stated seeking information in mainstream print media due to their trust that the media carries trustworthy information. It was also stated by all participants that they have various information needs they seek from print media ranging from politics, finances, technology, and others. Participants further cited being unable to source mainstream hardcopy print media; this was due to unavailability of the news media in Braille format. Edwards and Lewis (1998:302) assert that “access to the printed word has long been recognised as a significant barrier to the integration of people with visual impairments in society”. According to Luxton (1990:524) standard print slows people with visual impairments down and often makes them dependent on other people. Not providing information in Braille format means such people become unable to read information on hardcopy print media. If information is inaccessible or the method of accessing content is cumbersome, information seekers will find it hard to get the satisfaction they seek in searching for information. The exclusion also means depriving them of their feeling of independence and equality as stated by Schroeder (1998).

People with visual impairments need information to support them in their roles they play in society firstly as citizens and secondly as consumers (Moore 2000). By excluding them in terms of format and content indicates failure of the print media as stated within the norms of the UGT where people may seek information to fulfil their needs. Lack of access to information according to Moore (2000) contributes directly to social exclusion. Without adequate access to information, people with visual impairments cannot make informed choices as consumers and are not able to benefit fully from all that society has to offer. Access to information can greatly assist people with visual impairments to build up an understanding of the world they live in and be

able to get answers to specific questions that bother them and simply to function as social beings (Williams et al 2000).

#### **6.4.2 Legislation**

Providing information in alternative formats for the accessibility of people with visual impairments is clearly enshrined in the Disability Rights Charter of South Africa. Article 14 under communication states that people with disabilities have the right to communicate freely and there should be placed measures to ensure that they fully enjoy their right to communication. For those with visual impairments such measures are the provisions of information in both Braille and/or in audio recorded materials (Disability Rights Charter of South Africa 2006). Furthermore, such rights are also enshrined in the *White Paper for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. One of the strategic pillars is for all media platforms to ensure equal access to information and communication platforms through incorporating universal design principles.

Most participants cited web accessibility problems in using print media websites. Web accessibility deals with people being able to get and use web content; it implies that people with disabilities can understand, surf, and interact with the web as well as contribute to it (Hong, Katerattanaku, Choi, Kang & Cho 2007). Web accessibility comprises all disabling factors to accessing the web to people with disabilities. Participants' suggestions were for web designers to follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). These are universal design principles that were developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) under the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) to ensure compatibility with AT products. According to the World Wide Web Consortium (2002), compliance with the guidelines occurs through a series of web developments.

Apart from the universal design principles, the WPRPD (2015: 56) states that information providers must ensure that all the needed steps have been taken to have their printed information accessible to people with disabilities (WPRPD 2015:56). In this case, print media must ensure that their printed information is also accessible to people with visual impairment; that is, producing newspapers in Braille format.

#### **6.4.3 Print media Coverage of Issues Concerning People with Visual Impairments**

The media entails acknowledgement of how complex and heterogeneous society is and its competing interests, by meeting information needs for every social group and member of society (Raeijmaekers & Maesele 2015). However, there is need for more issues, such as those that aim at promoting the rights of people with disabilities empowering them and promoting equality, that need to be covered. Social Responsibility Theory regards the media as being for the people and society – it dwells on the responsibility the media has on helping eradicate social problems. In this regard, the media must speak against and educate people about social problems for the betterment of society (Dominick 2005). In this regard, media need to dwell more on publishing awareness and human rights' issues concerning people with visual impairments. Lack of awareness on people with disabilities is one of the social barriers which result in their non-acceptance within communities; destructive attitudes resulting from ignorance, misunderstandings and prejudices which refrain society from appreciating and experiencing the full potential people with disabilities can achieve (SAHRC 2017). By advocating for issues intended to promote the affairs of individuals with disabilities the media can produce tremendous results, especially as the media is a powerful tool for setting public agendas (Lippmann 1922:9-16; McCombs & Shaw 1972). The media audiences tend to form their own focus or opinion on those issues that are considered by the media as worthy of attachment on their mental/psychological agendas (McCombs & Shaw 1972; Littlejohn & Foss 2009). Not only do media audiences obtain accurate information from the media about public matters, they similarly become knowledgeable of the extent of significance they can ascribe to a subject as per the emphasis on it in the media (Cohen 1963; Littlejohn & Foss 2009). The media have therefore the special ability to contribute or influence audience's perceptions, focus, values and priorities, henceforth, they are considered responsible in influencing and shaping the public opinion and agenda (Lyengar & Kinder 1987).

Mobility issues such as using public transport as well as their guide dogs have been some of the concerning matters that need serious attention by the media. Apart from that, there are issues of employment where government as well as other employers

still consider employing people with visual impairments a problem; and in terms of education, students with visual impairments still face many educational challenges in institutions meant for their condition. The media must also be pluralistic (including ideas and people from different groups) and must never be biased; it must represent the views of different groups of people and not only those of a single group (Estlund 2002; Held 2006). Under the SRT the media must also yield social benefits in that they must work for the society and only do things that are beneficial to that society. The strengths of the SRT are the pluralism and diversification aspects of it in terms of news coverage and the people involved where the voiceless and marginalised people are able to raise their voice (Randall 2003). Randall (2003:3) argues that media reporters have the responsibility to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, providing a voice for those who cannot normally be heard in public”. According to Bolin (2006), the media have a democratic mission which is primarily given to them by the public. The inclusion of minority groups like those with visual impairments in terms of media participation, reflect the fulfilment of the media’s role ensuring media promotion of democracy and public participation (Wirth 1945; Doyle 2002).

#### **6.4.4 Accurate Representation of People with Visual Impairments by Print Media**

The media can perform a significant role in presenting disability issues in a manner that could oust negative stereotypes and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities (Ingrid 2016). Some of the major features of the SRT are self-regulation in media; in this regard, the media must have some boundaries within itself to be ethical. These regulations should be followed by all media professionals involved in a particular institution. The second major feature is the code of ethics which stipulate that media institutions must have a written or unwritten code of ethics which should be the standard followed by all. And thirdly, the professional standards feature in which the quality of the publishing should be maintained and that false interpretation of any information should be avoided (Bajracharya 2018). The South Africa Press Code (2010) has put in place what the press needs to do in terms of gathering and reporting of news, discrimination and hate speech as well as the usage of headlines, captions, posters, pictures and video/audio content. Based on what participants said on the failure of print media to accurately represent people with disabilities, in terms of

portraying them using degrading technologies, negative stereotypes and generalisation, the media need to change their approach to embrace a more positive approach to representing people with disabilities.

The findings of this study were that print media when writing articles about people with visual impairments refer to peoples' disabilities, especially in their headings, as opposed to referring to them as individuals first. Hence, the media should learn to refer to a person's disability only when necessary and appropriate and refer to the individual first, then to their disability (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disability 2020). There were also articles implying that people with disabilities are overly courageous, brave or special, referring to people with disabilities as being "inspirational". Such representations must be avoided. First and foremost, people with disabilities must be viewed as human beings, and their personality should not be encompassed by the disabilities they have (Ingrid 2016). Apart from being guided by their press code of ethics, one way to avoid this is to shift their view of disability from the medical model to the social model. This will help the media refrain from viewing people with disabilities as sick people who need medical attention (Oliver 1990). Living with disability means being confronted with environmental and social barriers daily; hence, the media's portrayal of people with disabilities should always reflect this as a major cause of their continued existence (Barnes 1992). According to Barnes (1992) the media should avoid representing people with disabilities as receivers of charity, rather showing them interacting with both disabled and non-disabled people as equals and giving as well as receiving. The media should also refrain from generalising people with disabilities and their variations should be accurately reflected in the media.

People with disabilities have individual and complex personalities with a full range of emotions and activities, hence, just as all human beings they experience a variety of emotions such as anger, depression, happiness, etc., as well as performing all sorts of roles including lover, parent, provider and others (Barnes 1992). The media should refrain from representing people with visual impairments as objects of curiosity but as members of an average population or a cast of characters. People with visual impairments and other disabilities are normally able to participate in all aspects of community life, and it is the responsibility of the media to portray them as being

involved in a wide variety of roles and situations (Ingrid 2016). When covering issues of sexual assault, the media should avoid portraying people with visual impairments as sexually abnormal and rather as people with dignity and capable of being in loving relationships expressing the same sexual needs and desires as non-disabled people (Barnes 1992).

When covering stories about achievements involving people with visual impairments the media should resist presenting them as having characters with extraordinary abilities or attributes. They also need to avoid portraying them as people who only need to have the 'will' and the 'right attitude' in order to succeed (Barnes 1992; Ingrid 2016). Participants strongly recommended that the media should be consulting with the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) before publishing any information concerning people with visual impairments to check for any incorrect elements. This may also help resolve issues of misrepresentation of people with visual impairments and the use of degrading terminologies.

#### **6.4.5 Self-Representation: - 'Nothing about us without us'**

Apart from representation in terms of covering issues concerning people with disabilities, representation should also be adhered to in terms of employing people with disabilities in the media (Barnes 1992). The South African Human Rights Commission acknowledges that people with disabilities can contribute significantly to South Africa's productive workforce if barriers preventing them from actively participating in employment are identified and removed (Malatji 2017).

#### **6.5 Quality Assurance (QA) of the VIPRIMA**

Based on the VIPRIMA model, what needs to be done is for print media in South Africa to try and test the model by producing both their print products in Braille and fixing their electronic versions. This is to ensure that the model meets the ongoing needs of people with visual impairments. The VIPRIMA model should be implemented in such a way that fulfils the purpose it is intended for; to benefit people with visual impairments. People with visual impairments should not encounter problems when accessing print media information meant for them under the VIPRIMA model; this is

the basis of QA. Quality assurance is described by Christian, Markus, Carsten & Wolfgang (2016) as a way of inhibiting mistakes and flaws in manufactured products and the prevention of complications when distributing products or rendering services to customers. By the virtue of the VIPRIMA model to follow the WCAG the model is already ensuring quality assurance; that is providing confidence that quality requirements of providing information for people with visual impairments using the VIPRIMA model would be fulfilled. The provision of print media information to people with visual impairments under the VIPRIMA model is to provide such information in accessible formats to them. The WCAG entails constructing websites in such a way that the screen readers used by people with visual impairments should be able to interpret all texts on the websites without problems. Hence adhering to the WCAG is already ensuring conformance of the VIPRIMA. Conformance is how well a product or service meets a specified standard (Christian et al 2016). An additional way to ensure QA of the VIPRIMA model is by using consultants or contractors, these should be people with visual impairments themselves to test the VIPRIMA model by making them access information on the websites and providing feedback to the print media web designers. These contractors who are people with visual impairments will also ensure that there are checks and balances on the information being published by the media concerning them. This is particularly bearing in mind the many information errors as stated by participants and as discovered through the analysis of the print media content. Through such testing the media could then see how to improve the initial VIPRIMA model where necessary to one which they might find more suitable for people with visual impairments. The model should also be able to benefit print media financially since print media are media companies which cannot operate without making profits. Nevertheless, news companies' first priority is to inform the public, rather than make money (Berger 2007), and the media should use the model to create a balance where both consumers and the media could meet for their mutual benefit.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Based on the findings of this study in relation to the literature review, this chapter discusses recommendations made as well as the need for future research. The significance and limitations of this study are also explained in this chapter.

### **7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

I would like to recommend all print media publishers especially those that focus on both hardcopy and electronic publication versions to make use of the VIPRIMA model. The VIPRIMA model has been recommended as it encompasses the necessary steps print media should follow to ensure accessibility of information to people with visual impairments; both on their online and harcopy publications and also interms of format and published content. In this research all participants cited the need for print media to be producing their publications in Braille formats and adherence to WCAG in order to make their electronic print versions accessible to people with visual impairments. The implication here is that South African electronic print media websites do not adhere to the WCAG, hence their being inaccessible to people with visual impairments. The VIPRIMA also encompasses that need of adherence to the WCAG.

### **7.3 FUTURE RESEARCH**

As stated by Mustafa and Al-Zoua'bi (2008) that there is a lack of research on the accessibility or usability of news websites, I recommend that a research should be carried out to evaluate the accessibility of South African print media websites to people with visual impairments. This will further enable print media to come up with the right solutions to fix their websites so that they are more accessible to those with visual impairments.

This research only focused on members of the blind mailing list. A different research focusing on people with visual impairments in general could produce different findings for an alternative way forward for print media to help people with visual impairments better access print media information.

## **7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

The limitation of this study was that firstly, it only focused on print media published in English. Although this was the case there were some publications which published the same publications in both English and other languages, hence I can say that to a very large extent the research managed to indirectly capture stories both in English and other languages. However, those publications purely in other languages were not considered as those were the languages the researcher was not well acquainted with. Secondly, the research only focused on people with visual impairments on the blind mailing list, hence, these findings cannot be generalised to the entire community of people with visual impairments in terms of their accessibility to print media information.

## **7.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research is very significant in that it is one research which has tackled an area that is not usually touched by researchers who research people with disabilities. This research has tapped into the world of people with visual impairments in terms of their accessing print media information both in newspapers as well as magazines. The research has further searched for the experiences of people with visual impairments in using electronic print media websites with profound findings. This research has revealed that while accessing information might be taken for granted by most people, for people with visual impairments this takes place with considerable struggle. For people with visual impairments, this research will provide the needed emancipation for them to be on par in accessing print media like anybody else. These findings will therefore assist print media owners to improve their information dissemination strategies so that they are done in such a way to accommodate those with visual impairments. Furthermore, as stated by Barnes (2001:13-14) every research produces data; it is obvious that such data generates knowledge and such knowledge is empowerment on its own. Hence this research has produced outcomes that will benefit people with disabilities firstly by empowering them with knowledge in relation to how print media disseminates information concerning them and secondly, the empowerment may come about based on the developed framework in this study to have print media adjust its dissemination of information in order to accommodate people with visual impairments. Print media through this research can also gain

knowledge through this research of how their operations towards people with disabilities are perceived by the people themselves. This might even stimulate them further to change their attitudes towards their story publications and representations of people with disabilities.

## **7.6 CONCLUSION**

This research was designed to assess the accessibility of print media to people with visual impairments. The outcomes of this research are that print media is not only accessible to people with visual impairments in terms of format, in both hardcopy and electronic media versions, but also through content. There is underrepresentation of people with disabilities in terms of content and in some cases, a total lack of representation. Additionally, print media uses stereotypical approaches and degrading terminologies when covering issues about people with visual impairments especially in newspapers. Following these findings, guidelines have been formulated to be followed by print media for the inclusion of people with disabilities. The media, by adhering to their code of ethics and legislation concerning people with disabilities, the theories of media used in this research, and the framework formulated, should be able to combat the discrimination against people with visual impairments by promoting their inclusion and empowering them.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Sample magazines

#	ARTICLE TITLE	AUTHOR/ REPORTER	NAME OF MAGAZINE	TYPE OF MAGAZINE	CATEGORY	PUBLICATION DATE
1	Valcare #StoriesofHope.	Nadia Krige	Val de vie	Arts, Culture and Heritage	Consumer	9th September 2019
2	The disabled – the South African conundrum?	Dr Ivor Blumenthal	Business Brief	Business and News	Consumer	30th Sep 2019
3	Bryan Manning: My Blindness Inspired My Company	Staff Reporter	Forbes Africa	Business and News	Consumer	February 10, 2020
4	He's blind – and lord of the lanes!	Staff Reporter	TV Plus English	Entertainment	Consumer	13 Jul 2020
5	Deaf and blind graduate proves doubters wrong	Emma Crichton	TV Plus English	Entertainment	Consumer	7 Jul 2020.
6	I am blind. But I still fight	Staff Reporter	Drum	Family Interest	Consumer	28 Jul 2020
7	Woman doesn't allow her blindness to stand in her way.	Shanaaz Prince	YOU	Family Interest	Consumer	23 Oct 2017.
8	New accessibility feature in @ChromeDevTools: simulate vision deficiencies, including blurred vision & various types of color blindness.	Kyro Mitchell	Popular Mechanics	Male	Consumer	12 March 2020
9	Ford's smart window displays views for visually impaired	Staff Reporter	Mech Chem Africa	Engineering – Other	B2B	14 January 2020

10	New partnership to benefit NGOs.	Staff Reporter	PositionIT	Engineering – Other	B2B	May 4th, 2017
11	Promising technologies help the blind to see	Staff Reporter	Lightning and Design	Industry	B2B	Non specified
12	South Africa extends help to disabled abuse victims	Staff Reporter	South African Business	Industry	B2B	09 Dec 2016.
13	We're all behind our Blind Cricket South Africa team, off to T20 World Cup	Melissa Javan	South African Business	Industry	B2B	27 Jan 2017
14	Pick n Pay's Fresh Living magazine now available in Braille	Kieno Kammies	Fresh Living	Home	Custom	25 June 2019
15	How cataract surgery can change someone's life	Staff Reporter	Medi Clinic Family	Medical and Allied Health	Custom	8 December 2017

## Appendix 2: Samples of newspapers

### DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Daily Sun	The Star	Sowetan	The Citizen	Cape Times	Cape Argus
Daily News	Business Day	The Herald	Daily	Dispatch	Pretoria News
The Witness					

### WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Soccer Laduma	The Post	Mail & Guardian	The Voice	Sunday World
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### WEEKEND NEWSPAPERS

Sunday Times	Sunday Tribune	Southern Cross	Pretoria News Saturday	Weekend Argus
City Press	Star Argus	The Saturday Star	Independent on Saturday	The citizen
Weekend Post	Daily Dispatch	Weekend Witness		

### LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Mpumalanga News	Worcester Standard	Gemsbok	District Mail
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Mosselbay Advertiser	Capricorn Voice	Brits Pos	Die Noordwester
Newcastle and District Advertiser	Hermanus Times	Stellalander	Potchefstroom herald
Estcourt and Midlands News	Amajuba Eyethu	Streeknuus	Vryheid Herald
Middelburg Observer, Tuesday	Limpopo mirrors	Eikestadnuus	Representative
Northern Natal Courier	Southern Mail	Tembisan	Knysna Plett Herald
South Coast Herald	Vaalweekblad	African Reporter	Graaff Reinet Advertiser
Zululand Observer Monday	Ladysmith Gazette	The Weslander	Carletonville herald
Northern Review Weekend	Mid-South Coast Mail	The courier	Oudtshoorn Courant
Rustenburg Herald	George Herald	Southern Mail	Middleburg observer
South Cape Forum	Bosvelder Review	Die Daller	

### FREE NEWSPAPERS

PE Express	Phoenix Sun - inc. Cornubia, Tongaat & Verulam	The rising sun	Tabletalk	Upper Highway Mail
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Sedibeng Ster	Tame Times – Weekly	Randburg Sun	Vukani	Randfontein / Westonaria Herald
Ethekwini Times	Chatsworth Rising Sun	Maritzburg Echo	Noordkaap	Southern Suburbs Tatler
People's Post	City Vision (Khayalitsha)	Phoenix Tabloid	Eikestadnuus.	The Springfield Weekly Gazette
South Coast Sun	North Eastern Tribune	Athlone News	Plainsman	Bedfordview & Edenvale News.
Rekord East	North Western Bonus	Kempton Express	Boemuus	Tygerburger Milnerton
Berea Mail	People's Post Retreat	Kathorus Mail	Express	Tygerburger De Grendel
Mthatha Express	Merebank Rising Sun	Highway Mail	Lentswe	Rekord Central/Sentraal
Southern Mail	Issue, Eastern Free state	Kalahari Bulletin	Tribune	Johannesburg Eastern Express
Xpress Times	NewsHorn Mpumalanga	Boksburg Advertiser	Steelburger	Overport Rising Sun
Umlazi Times	People's Post Grassy Park	Sandton chronicle	CXpress	Easterncape Rising Sun
Isolomzi Express	People's post Landsdowne	Comaro Chronicle	Idinga	Tygerburger Tyger Valley
Kouga Express	Tygerburger Durbanville	Chatsworth Tabloid	Kroonnuus	Chiawelo urban news
Hillcrest Fever	Rekord West News/Wes Nuus	Roodepoort Record	Vista	North Coast Courier
Alex News	Mid-South Coast Rising Sun	Tygerburger Bellville	Tygerburger	Northern News, Kraaifontein,
Brakpan Herald	Midkaroo Express	Tygerburger Kuilsrivier	Elsiesrivier	brackenfel, kuils river
Midweek Rekord	City Vision (Lwandle / Nomzamo)	Tygerburger Brackenfell	Bolander	South Coast Herald Bonus
Southlands Sun	People's Post Claremont/Rondebosch	Vereeniging Ster	Rekord North	People's Post Woodstock

Bonus Review	Northern News Goodwood /Parow	The Highvelder	Go & Express	People's Post City Edition
Midweek Herald	Northern News Bellville/Durbanville	Queenstown Express	Laudium Sun	Highlands Panorama News
Southern Courier	Mossel bay Home Ads News	Bloemfontein Courant	Alberton Record	The Weekly Free State
Cape Towner	Die ghaap - Kimberly Gazette	Tygerburger Parow	The Village News	Cosmo City Chronicle
Maluti News	Tygerburger Ravensmead/Belhar	Tygerburger Goodwood	Northern Eyethu	Tongaat & Verulam Tabloid
Maritzburg Fever	Inner City Gazette	Queensburgh News	Full Sus	Benoni City Times
Msunduzi Eyethu	Zola Urban News	Vrystaat nuus/News	Ridge Times	South Coast Fever
Hazyview Herald	Eyethu Bay Watch	Constantiaberg Bulletin	Weskus Nuus	East Griqualand Fever
Free State Sun	Dolphin Coast Mail	SA Jewish Report	Rekord Moot	The Ewaterkloof Gazette
Atlantic sun	Intshonalanga Eyethu	Fourways Review	Midvaal Ster	Northern Business Review
Sasolburg Ster	Standerton Advertiser.	White River Post	Ster, North	Rising Sun Lenasia
Corridor Gazette	Tongaat & Verulam Sun	Tygerburger Table View	Village Talk	Dobsonville Urban News
Parys Gazette	Roodepoort Northsider	False Bay Echo	Nelspruit Post	Diepkloof Urban News
Sentinel News	Meadowlands Urban News	Helderberg Gazette	City Buzz	Northcliff & Melville Times
Issue Mangaung	Jabavu Urban News.	Polokwane Observer	UD Express	People's Post Athlone
Maritzburg Sun	Awsum Newspaper	Midrand Reporter	Umlazi Eyethu	Germiston City News
Rekord Mamelodi	Vanderbijlpark Ster	Springs Advertiser	Soweto Express	Eldorado Urban News

Coastal Weekly	Tygerburger Kraaifontein	Greytown Gazette	Rekord Noweto	Orlando Urban News
Amajuba Eyethu	Amanzimtoti Fever	Krugersdorp News	Stanger Weekly	Rosebank Killarney Gazette
Northglen News	Protea Urban News	Pimville Urban News		



### Appendix 3: Newspaper articles

#	ARTICLE	NEWSPAPER	REPORTER	PUBLICATION DATE
1.	Sexually assaulted blind women being turned away by cops	Cape Argus	Shakirah Thebus	September 7 2020
2.	Mageza" throws out blind Senzo, Blind Senzo left stranded	The Dobsonville Urban News	Staff Reporter	10 June 2018
3.	Guide dogs 'a blind person's eyes'	The Witness	Kailene Pillay	25 January 2017
4.	Woman tells of being refused entry due to her guide dog	The Mercury	Se-Anne Rall	18 June 2019
5.	Life is hard when you're visually impaired and have to use public transport	The Star	Zintle Magengenene	26 October 2018
6.	SA Guide Dog Association to roll out awareness campaign	The Star Argus	Kevin Ritchie	10 September 2019
7.	Guide dogs honoured for transforming the lives of disabled	Sunday Times	Suthentira Govender	10 August 2018
8.	A Blind man is asking the Pietermaritzburg high court to order Dundee-based investment	The Weekend Witness	Sharika Regchand	16 November 2019
9.	Guide dogs to transform how visually impaired customers use ATMs.	The Herald	Staff Reporter	2 February 2020
10.	Students say 'disability-friendly'varsity is anything but Bongekile Macupe	Mail & Guardian	Staff Reporter	27 October 2017
11.	Blind SA takes Ramaphosa to court over Copyright Amendment Bill	The Citizen	Kaunda Selisho	7 June 2020
12.	Lim Hawks visit school of blind for their 67 minutes	Capricorn Voice	Riana Joubert	20 July 2016
13.	A place to call home for blind man	Capricorn Voice	Orlando Chauke	28 July 2016.
14.	Blind woman creates own opportunity	Weekend Argus	Tanya Petersen	19 August 2018

15.	EC blind appeal to premier for practitioners and resources	Daily Dispatch	Sikho Ntshobane	4 December 2017
16.	Helping the blind like he once was	Daily Dispatch Weekend	Barbara Hollands	24 May 2017
17.	Justice Minister Masutha to host Golf Day for 22 special schools for the blind.	The Citizen	Staff Reporter	24 April 2019.
18.	Computer centre for the visually impaired comes to PE	The Citizen	Staff Reporter	18 October 2018
19.	New system gives blind people in Cape Town a boost	Cape Argus	Nomalanga Tshuma	14 June 2020.
20.	Now there is Life After Blindness	Kempton Express	Staff Reporter	14 April 2017
21.	The daily struggle of being blind	George Herald	Staff Reporter	13 April 2017
22.	Blind woman creates own opportunity	Weekend Argus	Tanya Petersen	18 August 2018
23.	Mum refuses to let blindness hold her back	Carletonville Herald	Staff Reporter	25 May 2017
24.	George Library meet with the blind	George Herald	Staff Reporter	22 November 2017
25.	Helping the visually Impaired and the blind	Westlander	Staff Reporter	20 March 2019
26.	New chapter awaits the League of Friends of the Blind	Southern Mail	Lillian Amos	28 February 2018
27.	How about taking a drive to Action for the Blind	Mid-South Coast Mail	Staff Reporter	4 July 2017
28.	Breaking barriers for the blind	City Press	Gwendie	13 March 2018
29.	Ronald's blindness doesn't hold him back	Zululand Observer Monday	Staff Reporter	4 July 2017
30.	Blind musician's promising career from small-town to radio.	Newcastle and District Advertiser	Tersi Gopi	4 December 2018
31.	Disability is not an inability' Steven Pienaar said a few words of encouragement to the learners	Roodepoort Record	Lungi Ndimande	16 October 2018

32.	Rosina Machete overcomes challenges of blindness	Polokwane Observer	Barry Viljoen	25 August 2016
33.	Blind Tuks student earns law degree	Pretoria News	Rudzani Matshili	13 September 2019
34.	Chante's dream becomes a reality	Northern news - Kraaifontein, Brackenfel, Kuils River	Staff Reporter	11 April 2018
35.	Visually impaired matriculant from Prinshof School gets top marks	Pretoria News	Chelsea Ntuli	27 January 2020
36.	Blind authors launch book.	Maritzburg Sun	Staff Reporter	18 October 2019.
37.	Visually impaired speaker awarded	False Bay Echo	Staff Reporter	17 August 2017
38.	Today in History: Stevie Wonder was born	The Roodepoort Northsider	Blake Linder	13 May 2018
39.	Blindness no deterrent for SA's Got Talent DJ hopeful	Sunday Times	Taschica Pillay	17 September 2017
40.	Mr Tap's vision to inspire others	Mail & Guardian	Staff Reporter	18 August 2017
41.	Tomely lands a lead role.	The Northern news - Kraaifontein, Brackenfel, Kuils River	Staff Reporter	19 September 2018
42.	Without freedom to touch, blind migrants disoriented in virus-hit South Africa	Sedibeng Ster	Sofia Christensen	26 June 2020.
43.	Major Covid-19 challenges for the blind, visually impaired	Cape Times	Lisa Isaacs	11 June 2020.
44.	Fund-raiser for retinal blindness awareness	Table Talk	Staff Reporter	4 December 2019
45.	Dinner in the dark, a grand night to remember	Highway Mail	Khethukuthula Lembethe-Xulu	26 August 2016
46.	Blind people capable of taking leading role	People's Post	Desirée Rorke	11 April 2016

47.	Lions treat blind bowlers to annual tourney	South Coast Herald	Madeleine Gouws	10 September 2016
48.	Visually impaired cricketers inspire Res Hills youth	Overport Rising Sun	Zola Phoswa	21 March 2017
49.	Blind cricketers to take on Northdene Prep's 1st team.	Queensburgh News	Evelyn Morris	19 March 2019
50.	True grit	Bolander	Carolyn Frost	16 March 2019
51.	Tech geek helps the blind	The Saturday Star	Sameer Naik	30 April 2019
52.	High school student develops navigation app for visually impaired	The Star	Gilbert Ngabo	27 April 2020
53.	Klimt's 'Kiss', made with 3D printer, to touch and feel	Middleburg Observer	Staff Reporter	12 October 2016
54.	Facebook tests tech to help blind people enjoy photos	Middleburg Observer	Staff Reporter	15 April 2016
55.	Department of Health pays attention to the visually impaired	Bloemfontein Courant	Courant News	13 October 2013
56.	Caring doctors reverse blindness By	The Sowetan	Zoe Mahopo	25 of June 2019
57.	Justice Minister Masutha to host Golf Day for 22 special schools for the blind	The Citizen	Staff Report	19 April 2017
58.	Chain launches food magazine in Braille	Weekend Post	Staff Reporter	22 June 2019.
59.	Court orders department to provide Braille textbooks for all pupils in need	Daily Dispatch	Ernest Mabuza	4 April 2019
60.	Blind teacher graduates with multiple distinctions	The Sowetan	Mandla Khoza	8 January 2019
61.	Support the blind at 'Dinner in the Dark'	Southlands Sun	Staff Reporter	30 August 2016
62.	Golfers take to Glendower for blind open	Bedfordview & Edenvale News	Stephan Lehman	12 October 2019

63.	Blind TUT student to educate people on blindness	Rekord East/Oos	Dineo Gcaza	21 April 2019
64.	SONA omits disabled	Plainsman	Letter to the editor	20 Feb 2019
65.	Now there is Life After Blindness	Tembisani	Staff Reporter	14 April 2017
66.	Rivoni pupils close up R578 in demand for a school	Limpopo Mirrors	Staff Reporter	11 April 2019
67.	International Deaf Blind Awareness Week	Mpumalanga News	Staff Reporter	28 June 2016
68.	There is light at the end of the tunnel for visually-impaired children.	South Coast Herald	Staff Reporter	25 April 2017
69.	Free Braille Lessons	African Reporter	Staff Reporter	16 March 2017
70.	'Even A Blind Person Can See That Chiefs Have No Chance Of Winning This League'	Soccer Laduma	Beaver Nazo	19 April 2017
71.	Even A Blind Person Can See That Jali Has A Position At Naturena'	Soccer Laduma	Lerato Mkhondo	02 May 2018

## Appendix 4: Formation of preliminary codes

PARTICIPANT ONE DATA ITEM		
RAW DATA	DATA EXTRACTS	INITIAL CODES
<p>I almost never read paper media, but very regularly read electronic media like with the News24 and EWN apps or the Daily Maverick website and the like. None of the mainstream newspapers are available in Braille. A blind person, Albert Peters, many years ago transcribed some Sunday Times articles into Braille and distributed them to other blind persons who wished to receive it, but he couldn't maintain this for long. Some magazines are read and recorded in audio and distributed to subscribers, but this may also become non-sustainable. One of these is Die Huisgenoot, but I believe the audio version is coming to an end. Blind SA's Braille Services publishes our own magazines in Braille, for example, Braillorama, a monthly magazine which contains articles lifted from mainstream newspapers or magazines and The Braille Trumpet which is a similar monthly magazine but with a distinct African flavour. The SA Library for the Blind in Makhanda distributes some Braille magazines that they get from the US and some other countries.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I almost never read paper media, but very regularly read electronic media like with the News24 and EWN apps or the Daily Maverick website and the like. None of the mainstream newspapers are available in Braille.</li> <li>2. A blind person, Albert Peters, many years ago transcribed some Sunday Times articles into Braille and distributed them to other blind persons who wished to receive it, but he couldn't maintain this for long.</li> <li>3. Some magazines are read and recorded in audio and distributed to subscribers, but this may also become non-sustainable. One of these is Die Huisgenoot, but I believe the audio version is coming to an end.</li> <li>4. Blind SA's Braille Services publishes our own magazines in Braille, for example, Braillorama, a monthly magazine which contains articles lifted from mainstream newspapers or magazines and The Braille Trumpet which is a similar monthly magazine but with a distinct African flavour. The SA Library for the Blind in Makhanda distributes some Braille magazines that they get from the US and some other countries.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I almost never read paper media,</li> <li>2. but very regularly read electronic media like with the News24 and EWN apps or the Daily Maverick website</li> <li>3. None of the mainstream newspapers are available in Braille.</li> <li>4. A blind person, Albert Peters, many years ago transcribed some Sunday Times articles into Braille and distributed them to other blind persons who wished to receive it, but he couldn't maintain this for long.</li> <li>5. Some magazines are read and recorded in audio</li> <li>6. and distributed to subscribers,</li> <li>7. but this may also become non-sustainable.</li> <li>8. One of these is Die Huisgenoot,</li> <li>9. but I believe the audio version is coming to an end.</li> <li>10. Blind SA's Braille Services publishes our own magazines in Braille,</li> <li>11. for example, Braillorama, a monthly magazine</li> <li>12. which contains articles lifted from mainstream newspapers</li> <li>13. or magazines</li> <li>14. and The Braille Trumpet which is a similar monthly magazine but with a distinct African flavour.</li> <li>15. The SA Library for the Blind in Makhanda distributes some Braille magazines</li> <li>16. that they get from the US and</li> <li>17. some other countries.</li> </ol>
<p>I like breaking news, political news, sports, but I speak only for myself. Blind persons have a wide range of news tastes just like our sighted counterparts</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. I like breaking news, political news, sports, but I speak only for myself. Blind persons have a wide range of news tastes just like our sighted counterparts</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20. I like Breaking news</li> <li>21. Political news</li> <li>22. Sports news</li> <li>23. Blind persons with news tastes as sighted counterparts</li> </ol>

<p>Although there are some apps with which a blind person could scan and OCR paper media and attempts have been made in the past to convert parts of newspapers into Braille, I believe that hardly any blind persons read paper media. Many of us read electronic newspapers. There is very seldom anything about disability in newspapers and when there is, the information often contains degrading terminology, like "wheelchair bound", "living with albinism". Sometimes information is blatantly untrue, like in an opinion piece in the Daily Maverick today about Blind SA's litigation against the President to compel him to sign the Copyright Amendment Bill into law, where the opinionista suggested that blind persons are being used by those in favour of the Bill, as if we are easily manipulated and cannot make our own decisions.</p>	<p>6. Although an attempt was once made to convert parts of newspaper to Braille I believe that hardly any blind person read paper media. Many of us read electronic newspapers</p> <p>7. There is very seldom anything about disability in newspapers. When there is information it often contains degrading terminology.</p> <p>8. Sometimes information is blatantly untrue, like in an opinion piece where the opinionista suggested that blind persons are being used by those in favour of the Bill, as if we are easily manipulated and cannot make our own decisions</p>	<p>24. Hardly any blind person read paper media</p> <p>25. Many read electronic media</p> <p>26. Seldom disability information in newspapers</p> <p>27. Information contains degrading terminology,</p> <p>28. Information blatantly untrue</p> <p>29. As if we are easily manipulated</p> <p>30. And cannot make our own decisions</p>
<p>Although I am passionate about Braille and a strong proponent, I just don't think it is even remotely feasible to have a regular newspaper also coming out in Braille. People tend to hugely underestimate the complexity of the process, skills and equipment required, the time needed to do the conversion and the cost involved. SA's Braille services which has been producing Braille since 1953 and is the largest Braille producer in Africa and the only one capable of producing Braille in all official languages, would not even dream of undertaking anything the task of producing newspapers in Braille. It would take too long and costly too much to convert paper media into Braille. Electronic text would by far be the most convenient</p>	<p>9. Although I am passionate about Braille and a strong proponent, I just don't think it is even remotely feasible to have a regular newspaper also coming out in Braille.</p> <p>10. People tend to hugely underestimate the complexity of the process, skills and equipment required, the time needed to do the conversion and the cost involved. Blind SA would not even dream of producing Braille newspapers</p> <p>11. Electronic text would by far be the most convenient format.. Text like in an email body or MS Word document would work well. PDF format is a big no-no.</p>	<p>31. I am passionate about Braille and a strong proponent</p> <p>32. Regular Braille newspapers not feasible</p> <p>33. Printed Braille newspapers production has the complexity of the process, skills and equipment , time and cost</p> <p>34. Electronic by far most convenient</p> <p>35. Text like in an email body or MS Word document would work well.</p> <p>36. PDF format is a big no-no.</p>

format.. Text like in an email body or MS Word document would work well. PDF format is a big no-no.		
There should be more issues on the awareness about various disabilities, activities of persons with disabilities and organisations of disabled persons, assisting with advocacy related matters in respect of disability. For example, we have tried to get media exposure for serious and even dangerous situations at two schools for the blind, but the media simply did not show any interest.	<p>12. There should be more issues on the awareness about various disabilities, activities of persons with disabilities and organisations of disabled persons, assisting with advocacy related matters in respect of disability</p> <p>13. We have tried to get media exposure for serious and even dangerous situations at two schools for the blind, but the media simply did not show any interest.</p>	<p>37. There should be more awareness about various disability issues</p> <p>38. activities of persons with disabilities</p> <p>39. organisations of disabled persons,</p> <p>40. assisting with advocacy related matters in respect of disability</p> <p>41. Media showing no interest to cover serious and dangerous disability issues</p>
<b>PARTICIPANT TWO DATA ITEM</b>		
<b>RAW DATA</b>	<b>DATA EXTRACTS</b>	<b>INITIAL CODES</b>
As far as I am aware, there are no mainstream newspapers and magazines available in Braille. Braille Services of Blind SA produces various our monthly and bimonthly magazines comprising articles from various media and I access these through hardcopy Braille display and refreshable Braille. I read mainstream print media electronically I use computer with synthesized speech and smartphone with speech to read mainstream paper media online	<p>14. As far as I am aware, there are no mainstream newspapers and magazines available in Braille. Braille Services of Blind SA produces various monthly and bimonthly magazines comprising articles from various media.I access these through hardcopy Braille display and refreshable Braille.</p> <p>15. I read mainstream print media electronically. I use computer with synthesized speech and smartphone with speech to read mainstream paper media online</p>	<p>42. There are no mainstream Braille newspapers and magazines</p> <p>43. Blind SA Services produces print media for the visually impaired produced</p> <p>44. Accessed in hardcopy and refreshable Braille</p> <p>45. I read mainstream print media electronically</p> <p>46. I use computer with synthesized speech and</p> <p>47. smartphone with speech to read mainstream paper media online</p>
I normally use electronic print media to read local (provincial), national and international news on politics, sports and entertainment	16. I normally use electronic print media to read local (provincial), national and international news on politics, sports and entertainment	<p>48. I normally use electronic print media to read</p> <p>49. local (provincial),</p> <p>50. National News</p> <p>51. International news</p> <p>52. Politics</p> <p>53. Sports</p> <p>54. Entertainment</p>



Usually we are excluded in mainstream print media. I feel that people have their own perception about us. Many people do not still understand what disability is	17. Usually we are excluded in mainstream print media. I feel that people have their own perception about us. Many people do not still understand what disability is	55. Usually we are excluded in mainstream print media. 56. I feel people have their own perception about disability 57. Many people do not still understand what disability is
Main stream print media should also be producing information in Hard-copy Braille, electronic text via e-mail or download link, MP3 audio just as it is done by the SA Blind services	18. Main stream print media should also be producing information in Hard-copy Braille, electronic text via e-mail or download link, MP3 audio just as it is done by the SA Blind services	58. Mainstream print media should also be in hardcopy and electronic Braille 59. Main print media should be produced in electronic text via email 60. Downloaded links 61. MP3 audios
My suggestion is that print media should ensure that any and all information in mainstream print that is available to the general public must be equally accessible to, and by, persons with visual disabilities. This is by also providing all information in format we can also read	19. My suggestion is that print media should ensure that any and all information in mainstream print that is available to the general public must be equally accessible to, and by, persons with visual disabilities. 20. by also providing all information in format we can also read	62. Mainstream print media to ensure accessibility of all information to the visually impaired just as it does to the sighted ones 63. By providing all information readable by the visually impaired
<b>PARTICIPANT THREE DATA ITEM</b>		
<b>RAW DATA</b>	<b>DATA EXTRACTS</b>	<b>INITIAL CODES</b>
I access mainstream print media in electronic format. For other print media such as the Blind SA I access in Braille format as well as Audios	21. I access mainstream print media in electronic format. For other print media such as the Blind SA I access in Braille format as well as Audios	64. I access mainstream print media in electronic format. 65. For other print media such as the Blind SA I access in Braille format as well as Audios
In print media I search for general News of the day, Political News and other interesting stories	22. In print media I search for general News of the day, Political News and other interesting stories	66. I search for general news 67. Political News 68. Interesting News
Honestly I do not want to sound judgmental but personally I do feel that news about disability is always stunted	23. Personally I do feel that news about disability always stunted	69. I do feel that news about disability is always stunted

<p>We have no known newspapers or magazines in Braille. Most of our print media news we get by electronic ways. Print news should be produced in Braille or in Daisy. Blind S.A. does that kind of production although to produce news in Braille takes longer that doing it in others formats. But print media can improve my readability Via the following methods: Either by additionally providing news in audio and Braille electronic reading</p>	<p>24. We have no known newspapers or magazines in Braille. Most of our print media news we get by electronic ways  25. Print news should be produced in Braille or in Daisy. Blind S.A. does that kind of production although to produce news in Braille takes longer that doing it in others formats  26. But print media can improve my readability Via the following methods: Either by providing it in word format for electronic reading in audio and Braille.</p>	<p>70. We have no known newspapers or magazines in Braille.  71. Most of our print media news we get by electronic ways  72. Print media should be produced in Braille or daisy as Blind SA  73. Braille news production takes long than other formats  74. Electronic Print media can improve by additionally providing news in word format</p>
<p>Mainstream print media should be producing more information or news about disability and in audio and digital as well as hardcopy Braille. The reason for making this suggestion is that there is very limited information about disability in print media and that none of the print media news is provided in audio and in both hardcopy and digital Braille.</p>	<p>27. Mainstream print media should be producing more information or news on disability matters  28. The reason for making this suggestion is that there is very limited information about disability in print media and that none of the print media news is provided in audio and in both hardcopy and digital Braille.</p>	<p>75. There should be more disability information in mainstream print media  76. there is very limited information about disability in print media  77. None of the print media news is provided in audio and in both hardcopy and digital Braille.</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPANT FOUR DATA ITEM</b></p>		
<p><b>RAW DATA</b></p>	<p><b>DATA EXTRACTS</b></p>	<p><b>INITIAL CODES</b></p>
<p>I generally read print media via electronic channels - online services like their websites using various forms of speech software like screen readers that make reviewing content the most efficient.</p>	<p>29. I generally read print media via electronic channels - online services like their websites using various forms of speech software that make reviewing content the most efficient.</p>	<p>78. I generally read print media electronically  79. Using various forms of speech software  80. Like screen readers that make reviewing content the most efficient.</p>
<p>I search for news depending on my areas of interest, and, besides I like every day news articles, etc., from my perspective, things like technological evolution, technical articles, and, articles relating to the release of new</p>	<p>30. I search for news depending on my areas of interest, and, besides I like every day news articles, etc.,  31. From my perspective, things like technological evolution, technical articles, and, articles relating to the release of new forms of technology rank the highest.</p>	<p>81. I search for news depending on my areas of interest  82. I like everyday news articles especially articles on technological evolution</p>

<p>forms of technology rank the highest.</p>		
<p>(might sound opinionated) Print media generally rely on generalised conceptualisation/interpretation, and, don't necessarily deliver an interpretation from the perspective of a blind/VI/differently-enabled individual.</p>	<p>32. Print media generally rely on generalized conceptualization/interpretation and don't deliver an interpretation from the perspective of a blind</p>	<p>83. Print media relying on generalized conceptualization/interpretation 84. Don't deliver an interpretation from the perspective of a blind</p>
<p>Am going to sound odd, but, right at the moment, hard-copy/print is not that relevant, what with covid-19, etc.? ;)But, on that note, while experimenting with OCR scanning software/technology, the biggest issue with print media is layout of things like newspapers, etc., and, while I think the library for the blind may offer some Braille renditions of media, I honestly don't think that would be too feasible, or necessarily valuable in the long run - I myself know basic Braille, but, honestly, don't use it too often, and, am not all that comfortable with it - can write it faster than I can read it, and, primarily since the whole world has gone electronic, including/especially the youth of today, I will stick to saying that electronic formats are the way to go. On that note, there are some publications that offer professionally, or volunteer read offerings, or at least audio renditions of media - that part could also be automated using technology, and, for example, on at least an android handset, I can ask google assistant to "read out" a news article to me, so, I would stick to saying that publications should make sure their electronic offerings, and, the access channels should stick to/maintain accessibility standards. Another possibility</p>	<p>33. Am going to sound odd, but, right at the moment, hard-copy/print is not that relevant, what with covid-19, etc.? ;) 34. But, on that note, while experimenting with OCR scanning software/technology, the biggest issue with print media is layout of things like newspapers 35. while I think the library for the blind may offer some Braille renditions of media, I honestly don't think that would be too feasible, or necessarily valuable in the long run - I myself know basic Braille, but, honestly, don't use it too often, and, am not all that comfortable with it - can write it faster than I can read it, and, primarily since the whole world has gone electronic, including/especially the youth of today, I will stick to saying that electronic formats are the way to go. 36. I can ask google assistant to "read out" a news article to me, so, I would stick to saying that publications should make sure their electronic offerings, and, the access channels should stick to/maintain accessibility standards. 37. Another possibility that might work at times would be to include something like QR codes printed alongside normal content, since those offer methods to embed at the least,</p>	<p>85. Right at the moment hardcopy print media is not relevant what with Covid- 19 pandemic? 86. Content layout as the biggest problem with electronic print media 87. Although Braille SA produces some print Braille materials media I honestly don't think that not it would be feasible 88. Or necessarily valuable in the long run 89. I myself know basic Braille, but, honestly, don't use it too often 90. I can write it faster than I can read it, and 91. I am not comfortable using Braille 92. Primarily since the whole world has gone electronic I will stick to saying electronic format is the way to go 93. Electronic print media publications to stick to accessibility standards 94. Include QR codes alongside print media content 95. Physical print media irrelevant nowadays 96. There were some issues of even starting to produce physical Braille study material electronically 97. Print media should also be published in RSS, twitter versions 98. Electronic print media to ensure their standard matches Web Content Accessibility Guideline Standards( WCAG)</p>

<p>that might work at times would be to include something like QR codes printed alongside normal content, since those offer methods to embed at the least, summarised versions of content, but, there, the issue would be finding a code to then scan it using an electronic device to access the content? but, honestly don't think physical paper is too important nowadays. For example, I know that, even here in South Africa, and, before the covid-19 issue arose, they were trying to find ways to switch over even student physical Braille study material to primarily electronic media. But all in all my number one recommendation would be print media publication via RSS feeds, twitter, and, primarily, ensuring that their online content matches the WCAG (web-content-accessibility-guidelines) standards My number one recommendation would be primarily, ensuring that their online content matches the WCAG (web-content-accessibility-guidelines) standards. WCAG standards/specifications matching - the origin of the WCAG is the W3c themselves, and, this relates to what almost all forms of assistive technology rely on when they then interpret content, and, in line with this, ARIA (Accessible-Rich-Internet-Applications) also relates - that relates to designating certain areas of something like a webpage with a specific role in terms of interaction, rendering content, etc. Another possibility that might work at times would be to include something like QR codes printed alongside normal content, since those offer methods to embed at the least, summarized versions of content.</p>	<p>summarised versions of content</p> <p>38. but, honestly don't think physical paper is too important nowadays. For example, I know that, even here in South Africa, and, before the covid-19 issue arose, they were trying to find ways to switch over even student study material to primarily electronic media.</p> <p>39. But all in all my number one recommendation would be print media publication via RSS feeds, twitter, and, primarily, ensuring that their online content matches the WCAG (web-content-accessibility-guidelines) standards</p> <p>40. My number one recommendation would be primarily, ensuring that their online content matches the WCAG (web-content-accessibility-guidelines) standards. WCAG standards/specifications matching - the origin of the WCAG is the W3c themselves, and, this relates to what almost all forms of assistive technology rely on when they then interpret content, and,</p> <p>41. in line with this, ARIA (Accessible-Rich-Internet-Applications) also relates - that relates to designating certain areas of something like a webpage with a specific role in terms of interaction, rendering content, etc.</p> <p>42. Another possibility that might work at times would be to include something like QR codes printed alongside normal content, since those offer methods to embed at the least, summarized versions of content.</p>	
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<p>Print media need to rework more on covering disability issues in terms of coverage. Mostly disability issues are not really covered. And few that I have come across always have a problem of generalization and some untrue information about disability. Mainstream journalists need to be verifying some disability issues with the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) if they are not sure about its actuality. Most issues are reported using an early adaptation phase perspective of disability which places disability as a personal problem. We need more of human rights and awareness issues</p>	<p>43. Print media need to rework more on covering disability issues in terms of coverage. Mostly disability issues are not really covered. And few that I have come across have always have a problems of generalization 44. and some untrue information about disability. Mainstream journalists need to be verifying some disability issues with the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) if they are not sure about its actuality. 45. Most issues are reported using an early adaptation phase perspective of disability which places disability as a personal problem. We need more of human rights and awareness issues</p>	<p>99. Print media need to rework more on covering disability issues in terms of coverage. 100. Mostly disability issues are not really covered. 101. And few that I have come across have always have problems of generalization 102. and some untrue information about disability. 103. Mainstream journalists need to be verifying some disability issues with the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) if they are not sure about its actuality. 104. Most issues are reported using an early adaptation phase perspective of disability which places disability as a personal problem. 105. We need more of human rights and awareness issues</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPANT FIVE DATA ITEM</b></p>		
<p><b>RAW DATA</b></p>	<p><b>DATA EXTRACTS</b></p>	<p><b>INITIAL CODES</b></p>
<p>As a totally blind person I use electronic gadgets to source print news. I depend heavily on my iPhone 8+ running IOS 13.5.1. I downloaded 3 newspaper apps, EWN, Google News and IOL and both are fully accessible with the built in screen reader VoiceOver.</p>	<p>46. As a totally blind person I use electronic gadgets to source news on my iPhone. I downloaded newspaper apps EWN, Google News and IOL and both are accessible with screen reader VoiceOver</p>	<p>106. I use electronic gadgets to source print news 107. I downloaded newspaper apps on my iPhone 108. EWN, Google News and IOL and both are accessible with screen reader VoiceOver</p>
<p>Visually impaired readers are interested in the same news as readers who can see normally. I like to read the latest news reports as well as magazine and newspaper articles regarding health, sports, opinion stories, world news, lifestyle and in our ladies' case: All articles regarding women's issues such as advice on clothing, children, cooking, make-up and decorating our homes. I also like to get information about movies</p>	<p>47. Visually impaired readers are interested in the same news as readers who can see normally. I like to read the latest news reports as well as magazine and newspaper articles regarding health, sports, opinion stories, world news, 48. lifestyle and in our ladies' case: All articles regarding women's issues such as advice on clothing, children, cooking, make-up and decorating our homes. I also like to get</p>	<p>109. Visually impaired readers are interested in the same news as readers who can see normally. 110. I like to read latest news on 111. healthy 112. Sports 113. Opinion stories 114. World news 115. Life style articles about women like advice on clothing, children, cooking, make-up, home decorations 116. Information about movies and 117. Our favorite Soap Operas and their performers</p>

<p>and our favourite soap operas and everyone who performs in them.</p>	<p>information about movies and our favourite soap operas and everyone who performs in them.</p>	
<p>No Braille or large print copies of newspapers and magazines exist in Supermarkets and newspaper stands to purchase. If a partially sighted person has enough sight left to read small print letters with ease then this person has no accessibility issues. The problem starts when a totally blind person or someone with very bad sight wants to buy a newspaper or magazine. In accessibility of print media to the visually impaired is the reason why visually impaired people these days prefer electronic methods like apps on smart phones, tablets, laptops and PC's. You will get sometimes that a partially sighted person buys a newspaper at his nearest supermarket and then uses a magnifier to read.</p>	<p>49. No Braille or large print copies of newspapers and magazines exist in Supermarkets and newspaper stands to purchase. If a partially sighted person has enough sight left to read small print letters with ease then this person has no accessibility issues.</p> <p>50. The problem starts when a totally blind person or someone with very bad sight wants to buy a newspaper or magazine. In accessibility of print media to the visually impaired is the reason why visually impaired people these days prefer electronic methods like apps on smart phones, tablets, laptops and PC's.</p> <p>51. You will get sometimes that a partially sighted person buys a newspaper at his nearest supermarket and then uses a magnifier to read.</p>	<p>105.No Braille or large print copies of newspapers and magazines exist in Supermarkets and newspaper stands to purchase</p> <p>106.Visual impaired people prefer electronic methods</p> <p>107.Partially sighted uses magnifier to read hardcopy printed news</p> <p>108.In accessibility of print media to the visually impaired</p> <p>109.is the reason why visually impaired people these days prefer electronic methods</p> <p>110.like apps on smart phones, tablets, laptops and PC's.</p> <p>111.a partially sighted person buys a newspaper at his nearest supermarket and then uses a magnifier to read.</p>
<p>Visually impaired readers find all the many ads between articles annoying. Ads that appear in articles complicate the listening experience. When we hear there is an ad or more than one, we must first stop the screen readers on our smartphones and computers and swipe past them to continue reading. I should have suggested that print media should be producing newspapers in Braille format but unlike magazines Braille newspapers will never work. First of all: It will be a very large book and a newspaper in Braille can even contain 2 or 3 volumes if you want to insert all articles plus Sport, Weather, Science, health opinion etc. Furthermore you will not be able to get breaking news as it happen on time. An electronic format is the</p>	<p>52. Visually impaired readers find all the many ads between articles annoying. Ads that appear in articles complicate the listening experience. When we hear there is an ad or more than one, we must first stop the screen readers on our smartphones and computers and swipe past them to continue reading.</p> <p>53. I should have suggested that print media should be producing newspapers in Braille format but unlike magazines Braille newspapers will never work. First of all: It will be a very large book and a newspaper in Braille can even contain 2 or 3 volumes if you want to insert all articles plus Sport, Weather, Science, health opinion etc.</p>	<p>112.Visually impaired readers find all the many Ads between articles annoying</p> <p>113. Ads that appear in articles complicate the listening experience.</p> <p>114. When we hear there is an ad or more than one, we must first stop the screen readers and swipe past them to continue reading.</p> <p>115.unlike magazines Braille newspapers will never work.</p> <p>116.First of all: It will be a very large book</p> <p>117.and a newspaper in Braille can even contain 2 or 3 volumes if you want to insert all articles plus Sport, Weather, Science, health opinion etc.</p> <p>118.Furthermore you will not be able to get breaking news as it happen on time.</p> <p>119.An electronic format is the answer to the best access of print media information by the visually impaired</p>

<p>answer to the best access of print information by the visually impaired. . There are plenty newspapers and news agencies that is perfectly accessible with iPhones and Android devices. As you know those phones of us fits in the palm of 1 hand. After opening such newspaper apps you can choose the topics of interest to you. The following newspaper apps are popular among blind and low vision users:</p> <p>News24, IOL, Eye Witness News (EWN). The following news agencies I love:</p> <p>Google News, ENCA (Electronic News Channel for Africa)</p>	<p>54. Furthermore you will not be able to get breaking news as breaking news as it happen on time. An electronic format is the answer to the best access of print information by the visually impaired. .</p> <p>55. The following newspaper apps are popular among blind and low vision users: News24, IOL, Eye Witness News (EWN). The following news agencies I love: Google News, ENCA (Electronic News Channel for Africa)</p>	<p>120.The following newspaper apps are popular among blind and low vision users: News24, IOL, Eye Witness News (EWN).</p> <p>121.The following news agencies I love:, Google News ENCA (Electronic News Channel for Africa)</p>
<p>I am going to answer this question focusing on the current Covid-19 pandemic. Blind people in South Africa are greatly neglected. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. So many companies and private individuals manufacture masks and sanitizers and distribute them to the public for free. My question is: Why did homeless and even working blind people not receive masks and sanitizers. Scandalous actions. The most heart breaking thing is where are media people to talk on our behalf? Do we have a say as blind people? As it seems no. For sighted learners, school subjects were made available online, but the Department of Education did almost nothing to help visually impaired children. No accessible devices. So many blind people are trapped in small rooms with no hope of getting a job. The government and private sector these days do nothing to empower blind people. No funds for training are</p>	<p>56. I am going to answer this question focusing on the current Covid-19 pandemic. Blind people in South Africa are greatly neglected. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>57. So many companies and private individuals manufacture masks and sanitizers and distribute them to the public for free. My question is: Why did homeless and even working blind people not receive masks and sanitizers. Scandalous actions.</p> <p>58. The most heart breaking thing is where are media people to talk on our behalf? Do we have a say as blind people? As it seems no.</p> <p>59. For sighted learners, school subjects were made available online, but the Department of Education did almost nothing to help visually impaired children. No accessible devices. So many blind people are trapped in small rooms with no hope of getting a job.</p>	<p>122.I am going to answer this question focusing on the current Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>123.Blind people in South Africa are greatly neglected.</p> <p>124. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>125.So many companies and private individuals manufacture masks and sanitizers</p> <p>126. and distribute them to the public for free.</p> <p>127.My question is: Why did homeless and even working blind people not receive masks and sanitizers.</p> <p>128. Scandalous actions.</p> <p>129. The most heart breaking thing is where are media people to talk on our behalf?</p> <p>130.Do we have a say as blind people? As it seems no.</p> <p>131.For sighted learners, school subjects were made available online,</p> <p>132.but the Department of Education did almost nothing to help visually impaired children.</p> <p>133. No accessible devices.</p>

<p>made available and visually impaired people are left to their own devices. Covid-19 causes visually impaired people to be at greater risk than sighted people. We must, through our hands and fingers, explore our surroundings. We often deal with stair railings and door knobs. That is why it is so essential that sanitizers and masks be made available to all visually impaired people. Visually impaired people should be able to obtain these items freely at their nearest Spaza shop or grocery store. All these issues are very vital issues that the media should have been perpetually talking about when it comes to disability issues but is that the case? No. My own opinion is therefore that the media is doing very little to cover issues about disability especially during this time when visually impaired people seem to be the most vulnerable to the virus. I believe that at a time like these when we are the most vulnerable people the media should be publishing more and more information on how we can be kept safe. There is need for change of attitude towards people with disability in the media</p>	<p>60. The government and private sector these days do nothing to empower blind people. No funds for training are made available and visually impaired people are left to their own devices.</p> <p>61. Covid-19 causes visually impaired people to be at greater risk than sighted people. We must, through our hands and fingers, explore our surroundings. We often deal with stair railings and door knobs. That is why it is so essential that sanitizers and masks be made available to all visually impaired people.</p> <p>62. Visually impaired people should be able to obtain these items freely at their nearest Spaza shop or grocery store. All these issues are very vital issues that the media should have been perpetually talking about when it comes to disability issues but is that the case? No.</p> <p>63. My own opinion is therefore that the media is doing very little to cover issues about disability especially during this time when visually impaired people seem to be the most vulnerable to the virus.</p> <p>64. I believe that at a time like these when we are the most vulnerable people the media should be publishing more and more information on how we can be kept safe. There is need for change of attitude towards people with disability in the media</p>	<p>134. So many blind people are trapped in small rooms with no hope of getting a job.</p> <p>135.The government and private sector these days do nothing to empower blind people.</p> <p>136.No funds for training are made available and</p> <p>137.visually impaired people are left to their own devices.</p> <p>138.Covid-19 causes visually impaired people to be at greater risk than sighted people.</p> <p>139. We must, through our hands and fingers, explore our surroundings.</p> <p>140.We often deal with stair railings and door knobs. That is why</p> <p>141. it is so essential that sanitizers and masks be made available to all visually impaired people.</p> <p>142.Visually impaired people should be able to obtain these items freely at their nearest Spaza shop or grocery store.</p> <p>143.All these issues are very vital issues</p> <p>144.that the media should have been perpetually talking about when it comes to disability issues but</p> <p>145.is that the case? No.</p> <p>146.My own opinion is therefore that the media is doing very little to cover issues about disability</p> <p>147.especially during this time when visually impaired people seem to be the most vulnerable to the virus.</p> <p>148. I believe that at a time like these when we are the most vulnerable people</p> <p>149.the media should be publishing more and more information on how we can be kept safe. There is need for change of attitude towards people with disability in the media</p>
<b>PARTICIPANT SIX DATA ITEM</b>		
<b>RAW DATA</b>	<b>DATA EXTRACTS</b>	<b>INITIAL CODES</b>
<p>We have Blind SA which provides us with print Information which is accessed</p>	<p>65. We have Blind SA which provides us with print Information which is accessed</p>	<p>150.We have Blind SA which provides us with print Information</p>



<p>through hardcopy Braille and electronic Braille and audio formats through assistive devices. I have never read hardcopy print media. I do not know of any print newspaper or magazine published in Braille. I only access online distributed print media through assistive devices like screen-reading software</p>	<p>through hardcopy Braille and electronic Braille and audio formats through assistive devices. I have never read hardcopy print media. I do not know of any print newspaper or magazine published in Braille. I only access online distributed print media through assistive devices like screen-reading software</p>	<p>151.which is accessed through Braille and audio magazines, and 152.screen-reading software which I also use to access print media information on websites</p>
<p>In print media i like searching for articles that are trustworthy and have interesting content</p>	<p>66. In print media like searching for articles that are trustworthy and have interesting content</p>	<p>153.I like searching for articles that are trustworthy 154.Interesting</p>
<p>The mainstream print media is, as far as I know, not directly involved in the production of Braille and audio material for the exclusive use by the visually impaired or other disabled persons. However, the visually impaired (VI) make use of Braille magazines produced by certain organisations to access info in the print media, e.g. Nuwe Pioneer by Pioneer Printers), a number of imported Braille magazines distributed by the SA Library for the Blind in Grahamstown and 4 monthly magazines from Blind SA, as well as the bi-weekly edition of Vuk'uzenzele, produced under tender by Blind SA for GCIS (Government Communications &amp; Information System). A number of publications are also produced in MP3 and Daisy format (human narration and TTS text-to-speech computer-generated speech) by Pioneer Printers, Library for the Blind, Tape Aids for the Blind and Blind SA.</p>	<p>67. The mainstream print media is, as far as I know, not directly involved in the production of Braille and audio material for the exclusive use by the visually impaired or other disabled persons 68. visually impaired (VI) make use of Braille magazines produced by certain organisations to access info in the print media, e.g. 69. Nuwe Pioneer by Pioneer Printers), a number of imported Braille magazines distributed by the SA Library for the Blind in Grahamstown and 4 monthly magazines from Blind SA, as well as the bi-weekly edition of Vuk'uzenzele, produced under tender by Blind SA for GCIS (Government Communications &amp; Information System) 70. A number of publications are also produced in MP3 and Daisy format (human narration and TTS text-to-speech computer-generated speech) by Pioneer Printers, Library for the Blind, Tape Aids for the Blind and Blind SA.</p>	<p>155.Mainstream print media not involved in Braille and audio material for the visually impaired 156.Visually impaired use Braille magazines produced by certain organisations 157.Nuwe Pioneer by Pioneer Printers), 158. a number of imported Braille magazines distributed by the SA Library for the Blind in Grahamstown 159.and 4 monthly magazines from Blind SA, as well as the 160.bi-weekly edition of Vuk'uzenzele, produced under tender by Blind SA for GCIS (Government Communications &amp; Information System</p>

<p>Print media particularly mainstream magazines should also be published in hardcopy and refreshed Braille. Most articles are accessible on-line through speech on computers, laptops and cell phones. VI population in S.A. has very few people with access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial constraints. Subscribing is sometimes expensive, as a vast number of VI does not have well-paid employment, or do not have access to assistive devices.</p>	<p>71. Print media particularly mainstream magazines should also be published in hardcopy Braille and refreshed Braille</p> <p>72. Most articles are accessible on-line through speech on computers, laptops and cell phones. VI population in S.A. has very few people with access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial constraints. Subscribing is sometimes expensive, as a vast number of VI do not have well-paid employment, or do not have access to assistive devices.</p>	<p>161. Mainstream print magazine should be published in hardcopy ad refreshed Braille</p> <p>162. Most articles are accessible on-line through speech on computers, laptops and cell phones.</p> <p>163. VI population in S.A. has very few people with access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial constraints</p> <p>164. Subscribing is sometimes expensive,</p> <p>165. a vast number of VI does not have well-paid employment, or</p> <p>166. do not have access to assistive devices</p>
<p>I enjoy all other stories of interesting news. But I see that the media should be publishing more awareness issues about disability</p>	<p>73. I enjoy all other stories of interesting news But I see that the media should be publishing more awareness issues about disability</p>	<p>167. I enjoy all other stories of interesting news</p> <p>168. But I see that the media should be publishing more awareness issues about disability</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPANT SEVEN DATA ITEM</b></p>		
<p><b>RAW DATA</b></p>	<p><b>DATA EXTRACTS</b></p>	<p><b>INITIAL CODES</b></p>
<p>I do not use media such as newspapers and magazines that is printed. I cannot read print media as I cannot see the letters. I use electronic media. Print media excludes brail. You might find that people with no option have their family/friends read them print media – take example of your survey your questionnaire is send out in electronic format, which in itself assumes that being visually impaired I am able to use electronic forms of communication. And yes, I do source info electronically</p>	<p>74. I do not use media such as newspapers and magazines that is printed. I cannot read print media as I cannot see the letters. I use electronic media. Print media excludes brail.</p> <p>75. You might find that people with no option have their family/friends read them print media – take example of your survey your questionnaire is send out in electronic format, which in itself assumes that being visually impaired I am able to use electronic forms of communication. And yes, I do source info electronically</p>	<p>169. I do not use media such as newspapers and magazines that is printed.</p> <p>170. I cannot read print media as I cannot see the letters.</p> <p>171. I use electronic media.</p> <p>172. Print media excludes brail.</p> <p>173. people with no option have their family/friends read them print media</p> <p>174. Your survey your questionnaire is send out in electronic format, which in itself assumes that</p> <p>175. being visually impaired I am able to use electronic forms of communication</p> <p>176. And yes, I do source info electronically</p>
<p>I search for any stories that are interesting especially those that are informative. I enjoy baking so I also normally search</p>	<p>76. I search for interesting stories that are informative I enjoy baking so I also search for</p>	<p>177. I search for interesting stories that are informative</p>

<p>information on baking instructions and new recipes.</p>	<p>information on baking instructions and new recipes</p>	<p>178. I enjoy baking so I also search for information on baking instructions and new recipes</p>
<p>There are white papers and legislation to enforce the inclusion of disabled people, but right from the top (at President's level) down to corporate companies and small businesses, disabled people are excluded. I was often involved in arguments with top management about this issue. Quarterly there were general meetings to report on the BEE progress, but there was never anything reported on the progress of employing disabled people.</p>	<p>77. There are white papers and legislation to enforce the inclusion of disabled people, but right from the top (at President's level) down to corporate companies and small businesses, disabled people are excluded. 78. Quarterly there were general meetings to report on the BEE progress, but there was never anything reported on the progress of employing disabled people.</p>	<p>179. There are white papers and legislation to enforce the inclusion of disabled people, 180. right from the top (at President's level) down to corporate companies and small businesses, disabled people are excluded. 181. I was often involved in arguments with top management about this issue. 182. Quarterly there were general meetings to report on the BEE progress, 183. but there was never anything reported on the progress of employing disabled people.</p>
<p>I regularly access electronic media and there are so many challenges faced when surfing the internet/content on websites. If all media houses could follow the normal rules for accessibility standards (which is available for all platforms), like using headings, naming columns, naming buttons etc. all electronic media, news and articles will be accessible. This is however a constant fight/problem. Once again however, I do not think I will be speaking on behalf of the whole VI population in S.A. as very very few people have access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial and social constraints. For these I believe Braille print can be of a great help.</p>	<p>79. I regularly access electronic media and there are so many challenges faced when surfing the internet/content on websites. If all media houses could follow the normal rules for accessibility standards (which is available for all platforms), like using headings, naming columns, naming buttons etc. all electronic media, news and articles will be accessible 80. Very few people have access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial and social constraints. For these I believe Braille print can be of a great help.</p>	<p>184. I regularly access electronic media and there are so many challenges faced when surfing the internet/content on websites. 185. If all media houses could follow the normal rules for accessibility standards like using headings, naming columns, naming buttons etc. all electronic media, news and articles will be accessible. This is however a constant fight/problem. 186. very few people have access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial and social constraints. 187. For these I believe Braille print can be of a great help.</p>
<p>Human rights issues are of paramount importance. People must be aware of the rights of people with disability regarding education, employment and everything. These must be</p>	<p>81. Human rights issues are of paramount importance. People must be aware of the rights of people with disability regarding education, employment and everything. These must be published in</p>	<p>188. Human rights issues are of paramount importance. 189. People must be aware of the rights of people with disability regarding education, employment and everything. 190. In ways that change can occur than just hearsays.</p>

published in ways that change can occur than just hearsays.	ways that change can occur than just hearsays.	
<b>PARTICIPANT EIGHT DATA ITEM</b>		
<b>RAW DATA</b>	<b>DATA EXTRACTS</b>	<b>INITIAL CODES</b>
I use mainstream print publications available on internet. I do not know of any print media particularly from mainstream media publishing in Braille. Apart from the Blind SA publications	82. I use mainstream print publications available on internet. I do not know of any print media particularly from mainstream media publishing in Braille. Apart from the Blind SA publications	191.I use mainstream print publications available on internet websites. 192. I do not know of any print media particularly from mainstream media publishing in Braille. 193. Apart from the Blind SA publications
I mainly search for current affairs.	83. I mainly search for current affairs.	194.I mainly search for current affairs
Generally speaking, there is a tendency to stereotype people with disabilities, portraying them as above-average achievers or persons who are always dependent on others.	84. Generally speaking, there is a tendency to stereotype people with disabilities, portraying them as above-average achievers or persons who are always dependent on others.	195.Generally speaking, there is a tendency to stereotype people with disabilities 196., portraying them as above-average achievers or 197.Persons who are always dependent on others.
I prefer Email rather than websites. My reason for not using websites unless there is no other way is quite simply because I am not the most proficient person in surfing the internet. Being self-taught means that I have missed a trick or two along the way. I often find PDF publications inaccessible, but converting to Notepad often provides a good solution but from fellow blind persons I understand that they encounter difficulties in surfing websites. I feel that the best way for publishers is to provide a user-friendly website is to ensure that they follow the international standards for web accessibility for visually impaired readers.	85. I prefer Email rather than websites. My reason for not using websites unless there is no other way is quite simply because I am not the most proficient person in surfing the internet. Being self-taught means that I have missed a trick or two along the way. 86. I often find PDF publications inaccessible, but converting to Notepad often provides a good solution but from fellow blind persons I understand that they encounter difficulties in surfing websites. 87. I feel that the best way for publishers is to provide a user-friendly website is to ensure that they follow the international standards for web accessibility for visually impaired readers.	198.I prefer Email rather than websites. 199.I am not the most proficient person in surfing the internet. 200.I often find PDF publications inaccessible, 201.but converting to Notepad often provides a good solution 202.fellow blind persons encounter difficulties in surfing websites. 203. I feel that the best way for publishers is to provide a user-friendly website is to ensure that they follow the international standards for web accessibility for visually impaired readers.

<p>Although the print media tries to publish disability issues I think in my own opinion, issues that are focused on sometimes are those that have little impact to the disability community. If print media and or all other media so to speak would be focusing on issues of advocacy I believe it can probably bring about some changes. Other than that yes awareness issues.</p>	<p>88. Although the print media tries to publish disability issues I think in my own opinion, issues that are focused on sometimes are those that have little impact to the disability community. If print media and or all other media so to speak would be focusing on issues of advocacy I believe it can probably bring about some changes. Other than that yes awareness issues.</p>	<p>204. Print media tries to publish disability issues  205. Issues that are focused on sometimes are those that have little impact to the disability community.  206. If print media and or all other media so to speak would be focusing on issues of advocacy I believe it can probably bring about some changes.  207. Other than that yes awareness issues.</p>
<b>PARTICIPANT NINE DATA ITEM</b>		
<b>RAW DATA</b>	<b>DATA EXTRACTS</b>	<b>INITIAL CODES</b>
<p>Fortunately my wife is a sighted person. She is always willing to read out to me any article that may interest me. She has her own interests and I sometimes may have to wait a while before I get to hear the article. Again, I surf the 'net, where I'm able to read headlines and summaries</p>	<p>89. Fortunately my wife is a sighted person. She is always willing to read out to me any article that may interest me. She has her own interests and I sometimes may have to wait a while before I get to hear the article. Again, I surf the 'net, where I'm able to read headlines and summaries</p>	<p>208. Fortunately my wife is a sighted person. She is always willing to read out to me any article that may interest me.  209. She has her own interests  210. and I sometimes may have to wait a while before I get to hear the article.  211. Again, I surf the 'net, where I'm able to read headlines and summaries</p>
<p>I like to read about the politics of the day and some financial info. I'd say, my main interest is people. I enjoy articles on the success and failure of people. 'A day in the life of motivational people, inspirational people and the achievements of ordinary people.</p>	<p>90. I like to read about the politics of the day and some financial info. I'd say, my main interest is people. I enjoy articles on the success and failure of people. 'A day in the life of motivational people, inspirational people and the achievements of ordinary people.</p>	<p>212. I like to read about the politics of the day  213. and some financial info. I'd say,  214. my main interest is people. I enjoy articles on the success and failure of people. 'A day in the life of motivational people, inspirational people and the achievements of ordinary people.</p>
<p>To the best of my knowledge the day to day print media does not do a heck of a lot to relay info to and about the disabled community. Info gets printed in newspapers and magazines. Once it appeared in print, it becomes the onus of the relevant institutions, organisations, associations,</p>	<p>91. To the best of my knowledge the day to day print media does not do a heck of a lot to relay info to and about the disabled community. Info gets printed in newspapers and magazines. Once it appeared in print, it becomes the onus of the relevant institutions, organisations, associations,</p>	<p>215. To the best of my knowledge the day to day print media does not do a heck of a lot to relay info to and about the disabled community.  216. Info gets printed in newspapers and magazines. Once it appeared in print, it becomes the onus of the relevant institutions, organisations, associations, societies.</p>

<p>societies, etc. to relay the message to their members. There are however some web pages where one is able to read headlines and news summary. This is a schlep, because the web pages are so cluttered with advertisements and junk, that it is more of a battle to get to the news, than what it is a pleasure. Always bear in mind the fact that screen reader software, in most cases, cannot read graphics. It seems like most sighted people still cannot get a grip on the fact that a screen reader can only read text. The mere fact that one can see the text in a file, is no guarantee that a screen reader can read it, if the file is an image file</p>	<p>societies, etc. to relay the message to their members.</p> <p>92. There are however some web pages where one is able to read headlines and news summary. This is a schlep, because the web pages are so cluttered with advertisements and junk, that it is more of a battle to get to the news, than what it is a pleasure.</p> <p>93. Always bear in mind the fact that screen reader software, in most cases, cannot read graphics. It seems like most sighted people still cannot get a grip on the fact that a screen reader can only read text. The mere fact that one can see the text in a file, is no guarantee that a screen reader can read it, if the file is an image file</p>	<p>217. There are however some web pages where one is able to read headlines and news summary.</p> <p>218. This is a schlep, because the web pages are so cluttered with advertisements and junk,</p> <p>219. It is more of a battle to get to the news, than what it is a pleasure.</p> <p>220. Always bear in mind the fact that screen reader software, in most cases, cannot read graphics.</p> <p>221. It seems like most sighted people still cannot get a grip on the fact that a screen reader can only read text.</p> <p>222. The mere fact that one can see the text in a file, is no guarantee that a screen reader can read it, if the file is an image file</p>
<p>For me it would be much more of a pleasure to be able to read an article on my laptop or phone, without any interference or interruption from advertisements and other junk. Accessing info should be a much less cumbersome process than having to soldier and fight through pages of non-related links, just to get to a paragraph that may interest the reader.</p> <p>If it is text, it must be available as a text file, e.g. .docx. It must be understood that, for example a .jpeg file, containing text may seem like a text file to the normal eye, while in fact it is an inaccessible graphics file. If it is a picture, thus graphics, at this stage, it would help if the file is accompanied by a detailed description of the picture in text format. It is also possible to link a sound file, with a complete description of the picture, to the file. Sighted persons do not have to click on the descriptive file. I'm only able to answer questions from my personal perspective and personal circumstances.</p>	<p>94. For me it would be much more of a pleasure to be able to read an article on my laptop or phone, without any interference or interruption from advertisements and other junk.</p> <p>95. Accessing info should be a much less cumbersome process than having to soldier and fight through pages of non-related links. If it is text, it must be available as a text file, e.g. .docx .jpeg file, containing text may seem like a text file to the normal eye, while in fact it is an inaccessible graphics file</p> <p>96. If it is a picture, thus graphics, at this stage, it would help if the file is accompanied by a detailed description of the picture in text format. It is also possible to link a sound file, with a complete description of the picture, to the file. I'm only able to answer the questions from my personal perspective and personal circumstances.</p> <p>97. There could be some blind people who may prefer Braille print mainstream media like magazines. But for me bear in mind that I became blind later in my life and that I do not read</p>	<p>223. For me it would be much more of a pleasure to be able to read an article on my laptop or phone, without any interference or interruption from advertisements and other junk.</p> <p>224. Accessing info should be a much less cumbersome process than having to soldier and fight through pages of non-related links, just to get to a paragraph that may interest the reader.</p> <p>225. If it is text, it must be available as a text file, e.g. .docx.</p> <p>226. It must be understood that, for example a .jpeg file, containing text may seem like a text file to the normal eye, while in fact it is an inaccessible graphics file.</p> <p>227. If it is a picture, thus graphics, at this stage, it would help if the file is accompanied by a detailed description of the picture in text format.</p> <p>228. It is also possible to link a sound file, with a complete description of the picture, to the file.</p> <p>229. There could be some blind people who may prefer Braille print mainstream media like magazines.</p> <p>230. But for me bear in mind that I became blind later in my life and that I do not read Braille.</p>

<p>There could be some blind people who may prefer Braille print mainstream media like magazines. But for me bear in mind that I became blind later in my life and that I do not read Braille. This is why I am responding on my own behalf as someone who prefers electronic print media to Braille. The responses from a Braille-user, will probably be the complete opposite to my responses. With the introduction of electronic aids, I believe Braille is slowly but surely starting to die. It is a clumsy, cumbersome way of writing. Consider the space and time taken to produce and store Braille material. A staunch Braille user will differ vastly from this point of view.</p>	<p>Braille. I became blind later in my life and that I do not read Braille. With the introduction of electronic aids, 98. I believe Braille is slowly but surely starting to die. It is a clumsy, cumbersome way of writing. Consider the space and time taken to produce and store Braille material. A staunch Braille user will differ vastly from this point of view.</p>	<p>231. I am responding on my own behalf as someone who prefers electronic print media to Braille. 232. The responses from a Braille-user, will probably be the complete opposite to my responses. 233. With the introduction of electronic aids, I believe Braille is slowly but surely starting to die. 234. It is a clumsy, cumbersome way of writing. 235. Consider the space and time taken to produce and store Braille material. 236. A staunch Braille user will differ vastly from this point of view.</p>
<p>As a blind person I prefer all news information like those that have full vision but my concern is the way disability issues are published in print media. They mostly use degrading terminologies from the old disability schools of thoughts. My opinion is that media must be providing information about disability that is helpful to the disability community. Disability rights are just on papers but rarely practical.</p>	<p>99. As a blind person I prefer all news information like those that have full vision my concern is the way disability issues are published in print media. They mostly use degrading terminologies from the old disability schools of thoughts 100. My opinion is that media must be providing information about disability that is helpful to the disability community. Disability rights are just on papers but rarely practical.</p>	<p>237. As a blind person I prefer all news information like those that have full vision 238. but my concern is the way disability issues are published in print media. 239. They mostly use degrading terminologies from the old disability schools of thoughts. 240. My opinion is that media must be providing information about disability that is helpful to the disability community. 241. Disability rights are just on papers but rarely practical.</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPANT TEN DATA ITEM</b></p>		
<p><b>RAW DATA</b></p>	<p><b>DATA EXTRACTS</b></p>	<p><b>INITIAL CODES</b></p>
<p>I access print media through electronic means using screen reading software</p>	<p>101. I access print media through electronic means using screen reading software</p>	<p>242. I access print media through electronic means using screen reading software</p>
<p>I normally look for human interest news stories, I like</p>	<p>102. I normally look for human interest news stories, I like</p>	<p>243. I normally look for human interest news stories, 244. I like politics, 245. health,</p>

<p>politics, health, finance and technology news stories.</p>	<p>politics, health, finance and technology news stories.</p>	<p>246.finance and 247. Technology news stories.</p>
<p>I have a problem of stereotyping news concerning people with disability. I must make the point that being blind does not make you an angel. There are some unpleasant blind persons, some bad ones, even some evil ones. Blind people are in all respects normal, except that they (we) have visual problems. Just like there are sighted persons in jail, there are also blind persons in jail. Some blind people can be rude and offensive when you try to help them. Some have an attitude</p>	<p>103.I have a problem of stereotyping news concerning people with disability. I must make the point that being blind does not make you an angel. There are some unpleasant blind persons, some bad ones, even some evil ones. Blind people are in all respects normal, except that they (we) have visual problems. Just like there are sighted persons in jail, there are also blind persons in jail. Some blind people can be rude and offensive when you try to help them. Some have an attitude</p>	<p>248.I have a problem of stereotyping news concerning people with disability. 249.I must make the point that being blind does not make you an angel. 250.There are some unpleasant blind persons, 251. some bad ones, 252. even some evil ones. 253.Blind people are in all respects normal, except that they (we) have visual problems. 254. Just like there are sighted persons in jail, there are also blind persons in jail. 255. Some blind people can be rude and offensive when you try to help them. 256.Some have an attitude</p>
<p>At least if they can avoid stereotyping /generalising news about disability. When we achieve something it does not make us special just because we are blind but because we are hard workers just as anyone else capable of achieving goals.</p>	<p>104.At least if they can avoid stereotyping /generalising news about disability. When we achieve something it does not make us special just because we are blind but because we are hard workers just as anyone else capable of achieving goals.</p>	<p>257.At least if they can avoid stereotyping /generalising news about disability. 258. When we achieve something it does not make us special just because we are blind but because we are hard workers just as anyone else capable of achieving goals.</p>



## Appendix 5: Themes identified

THEME: VI excluded from hardcopy print media	THEME: Provision of print media by Blind organisations	THEME: Common print media apps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no known mainstream print media published in accessible formats for the visually impaired</li> <li>• Visually impaired people use electronic means to read mainstream print media</li> <li>• They use assistive technology devices to read online information</li> <li>• people with no option have their family/friends read them print media</li> <li>• Partially sighted uses magnifier to read hardcopy printed news</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magazines, Newsletters, compilation of mainstream print media general articles, bi-weekly edition of Vuk'uzenzele</li> <li>• In formats accessible to the visually impaired such as hardcopy and electronic Braille, daisy and MP3 audio</li> <li>• None of the mainstream print media news is provided in audio and in both hardcopy and digital Braille.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They download newspaper apps on their smartphones, personal computers, laptops, tablets</li> <li>• News24, IOL, Eye Witness News (EWN). Google News ENCA (Electronic News Channel for Africa)</li> </ul>
THEME: News and information of interest	THEME: Disability issues in print media.	THEME: Web accessibility issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaking news; Local and International news</li> <li>• Hard news i.e. political stories, finance stories, new technology stories, health stories</li> <li>• Soft news i.e. Feature stories, Lifestyle and entertainment news, Sports stories, Editorial opinion news</li> <li>• Visually impaired people are interested in the same news as readers who can see normally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not much news about disability being published</li> <li>• News is mostly stereotyped</li> <li>• Generalized information</li> <li>• Information contains degrading terminologies from the old disability schools of thoughts</li> <li>• Information blatantly untrue</li> <li>• Disability rights are just on papers but rarely practical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content layout as the biggest problem with electronic print media</li> <li>• jpeg file, containing text may seem like a text file to the normal eye, while in fact it is an inaccessible graphics file</li> <li>• web pages are so cluttered with advertisements and junk</li> <li>• screen reader software, in most cases, cannot read graphics</li> <li>• When we hear there is an ad or more than one, we must first stop the screen readers and</li> </ul>

		swipe past them to continue reading.
<b>THEME: Accessibility tools</b>	<b>THEME: Hardcopy Braille print media not feasible</b>	<b>THEME: Access to digital devices</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would help if text files are accompanied by a detailed description of the picture in text format.</li> <li>• link a sound file, with a complete description of the picture, to the file.</li> <li>• Absence of any interference or interruption from advertisements and other junk.</li> <li>• the best way for publishers is to provide a user-friendly website is to ensure that they follow the international standards for web accessibility for visually impaired readers.</li> <li>• the normal rules for accessibility standards like using headings, naming columns, naming buttons etc. all electronic media, news and articles will be accessible.</li> <li>• Print media should also be published in RSS, twitter versions</li> <li>• Include QR codes alongside print media content</li> <li>• Text like in an email body or MS Word document would work well</li> <li>• PDF format is a big no-no</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although Braille SA produces some print Braille materials media I honestly don't think that it would be feasible</li> <li>• Regular Braille newspapers not feasible.</li> <li>• Furthermore you will not be able to get breaking news as it happen on time</li> <li>• I became blind later in my life and that I do not read Braille</li> <li>• Physical print media irrelevant nowadays</li> <li>• Printed Braille newspapers production has the complexity of the process, skills and equipment , time and cost</li> <li>• I myself know basic Braille, but, honestly, don't use it too often.</li> <li>• I am not comfortable using Braille. I can write it faster than I can read it</li> <li>• Primarily since the whole world has gone electronic I will stick to saying electronic format is the way to go</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very few people have access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial and social constraints.</li> <li>• Subscribing is sometimes expensive as a vast number of VI does not have well-paid employment</li> <li>• Some of the VI do not have access to assistive devices</li> </ul>
<b>THEME: Alternative formats</b>	<b>THEME: Blind people greatly neglected during the Covid-19 pandemic.</b>	<b>THEME: Promoting Inclusion</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream print media should also be in hardcopy and electronic Braille</li> <li>• very few people have access to electronic equipment and internet due to financial and social constraints. For these I believe Braille print can be of a great help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did homeless and even working blind people not receive free masks and sanitizers manufactured and distributed freely by companies? Scandalous actions.</li> <li>• For sighted learners, school subjects were made available online, but the Department of Education did almost nothing to help visually impaired children. No accessible devices.</li> <li>• Covid-19 causes visually impaired people to be at greater risk than sighted people.</li> <li>• We must, through our hands and fingers, explore our surroundings.</li> <li>• We often deal with stair railings and door knobs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print media need to rework more on covering disability issues.</li> <li>• There should be more disability information in mainstream print media</li> <li>• We need more of human rights and awareness issues</li> <li>• assisting with advocacy related matters in respect of disability</li> <li>• activities of persons with disabilities</li> <li>• organisations of disabled persons,</li> <li>• Mainstream print media journalist should verify disability issue with SANCB if not sure</li> </ul>
<p><b>THEME: Advocating for disability related issues</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most heart breaking thing is where are media people to talk on our behalf?</li> <li>• Do we have a say as blind people? As it seems no</li> <li>• it is so essential that sanitizers and masks be made available to all visually impaired people.</li> <li>• Visually impaired people should be able to obtain these items freely at their nearest Spaza shop or grocery store.</li> <li>• So many blind people are trapped in small rooms with no hope of getting a job</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government and private sector these days do nothing to empower blind people.</li> <li>• media must be providing information about disability that is helpful to the disability community</li> <li>• If print media and or all other media would be focusing on issues of advocacy I believe it can probably bring about a some positive changes.</li> <li>• Human rights issues are of paramount importance.</li> <li>• People must be aware of the rights of people with disability regarding education, employment and everything.</li> <li>• In ways that change can occur than just hearsay about some changes.</li> </ul>		
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## **Appendix 6: RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Being a person with visual impairment how do you access information in print media like newspapers or magazine?
2. What kind of information do you basically look for in either print media?
3. How does print media relay information concerning visual impairment or about any other disability?
4. Is there any way you could suggest for print media to relay information for you to comfortably access it?
5. What information would specifically be of interest for the media to rework on for comfortable accessibility to people with visual impairments?

## **Appendix 7: COVER LETTER TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS FOR THIS STUDY**

Dear Prospective participant,

You are invited to participate in an online interview conducted by **Sally Kumwenda** under the supervision of **Professor Makoe Mpine** in the Department of **communication sciences** towards a **Doctor of Philosophy** at the University of South Africa. This is going to be one-on-one online interviews conducted using emails. I am humbly requesting those who are willing to participate in the interviews to please sign this consent form so that I may go ahead sending you the research questions through your private emails.

This research has been designed to find out if people with visual impairment have access to print media particularly English newspapers and magazines in terms of being able to read information written in these media based on format. That is the reason you have been selected to participate in this study. Your selection has also been based on you being someone who is able to read as well as with some experience and interest in sourcing information in print media previously, currently or always. Be reminded that you are participating in the study voluntarily and that any time you might think or feel the necessity of withdrawing you will be permitted to do so without having to explain yourself. Know that there will be no penalty or loss of benefit for not participating in the study.

Note that it is not a must to reveal your identity or particulars as participants for this study. The information collected from you will only be used for the purpose of this study and will not without your consent be given to anyone else except the university under which the researcher is researching. I shall undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

This research was reviewed and approved by the University Of South Africa Department Of Communication Sciences Ethics Review Committee you may contact the course coordinator at [vgassma@unisa.ac.za](mailto:vgassma@unisa.ac.za) during office hours. The study leader, who is my supervisor Professor Makoe Mpine, can also be contacted at [Qakisme@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Qakisme@unisa.ac.za) during office hours. Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93. The records of this study will be kept by the university for five years for audit purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed as per the university's policy.

If you choose to participate in this study it will take up to but no more than **an hour of your time**. You will not personally benefit from participating in this study however; the findings of this study may be helpful to enlighten the public how print media personnel relate to people with visual impairment as media consumers. As you are aware most calls for policy changes are as a result of outcomes from studies like these. Also be aware that there is no foreseen harm that you will experience for participating in this study.

By participating in this study, you agree that the information you provide may be used for other research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings. If you are interested in the outcomes of this study or anything else feel free to contact me. My contact details are as follows: Sally Kumwenda contact number 0796736147 /0715643247 email address [sallykumwenda@gmail.com](mailto:sallykumwenda@gmail.com)

## Appendix: 8: Letter for ethical approval



### UNISA COMMUNICATION SCIENCE ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date 04 June 2020

Dear Ms Sally Kumwenda

NHREC Registration #: Rec-240816-052  
ERC Reference #: 2020-COMMSCIENCE-CHS-61310859  
Name: S Kumwenda  
Student/Staff #: 61310859

**Decision:**  
**Ethics Approval from 04 June 2020 to 05 June 2025**

**Researcher(s):** Ms Sally Kumwenda

**Supervisor (s):** Prof Mpine Makoe

IODL

University of South Africa

[gakisme@unisa.ac.za](mailto:gakisme@unisa.ac.za)

082 957 4858

**Working title of research:**

**AN EVALUATION OF PRINT MEDIA INFORMATION AND ITS ACCESSIBILITY TO PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

**Qualification:** PhD in Communication

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by Department of Communication Science Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for five years.

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the Departmental Ethics Review Committee on **25 May 2020** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was tabled at the Committee meeting on **04 June 2020** for approval.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



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PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
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1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the **Communication Science Ethics Review Committee**.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**05 June 2025**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*Note:*

*The reference number **2020-COMMSCIENCE-CHS-61310859** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :

**SM MFUPHI**

Mr Siyabonga M Mfuphi

Ethics Chair :

Communication Science Ethics Review Committee

**E-mail:** [mfuphsm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mfuphsm@unisa.ac.za)

**Tel:** (012) 429-6661

Signature :

**EEN DUBE**

Dr Elijah EN Dube

Ethics Chair : CREC

**E-mail :** [Dubeeen@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Dubeeen@unisa.ac.za)

**Tel:** (012) 429 3892