THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN KENYA: A CASE OF THIKA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, 1945-2003

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for examination for the award of a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This Study is dedicated to all persons with visual impairments in Kenya.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

'A' LEVEL	Advanced Level of Schooling (at form five and six) in the former 7-4-2-3 system of education in Kenya
BOG	Board of Governors
CBM	Christoffel Blinden Mission
CPE	Certificate of Primary Education
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DC	District Commissioner
EACPE	East African Certificate of Primary Education
EFA	Education for All
FPE	Free Primary Education
GoK	Government of Kenya
KAPE	Kenya African Preliminary Examinations
KPE	Kenya Preliminary Examination
KCE	Kenya Certificate of Education (Offered at 'O' level)
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education; currently referred to as KICD
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KISE	Kenya Institute of Special Education
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KSB	Kenya Society for the Blind
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; currently referred to as MoE
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
'O LEVEL'	Ordinary Level of Schooling (at form four) in the 7.4.2.3 system of education
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RESB	Royal Empire Society for the Blind

SA	Salvation Army
SE	Special Education
SMC	School Management Committee
SNE	Special Needs Education
TSB	Thika School for the Blind
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
LWVI	Learners with Visual Impairments

ABSTRACT

This study set out to trace the historical development of education for Learners with Visual Impairments (LWVI) in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 using Thika School for the Blind (TSB) as a case. This was deemed an important problem worth studying by the researcher, given the fact that many aspects of special education have not received due attention in the country. Specifically, the study set out to document the historical account of the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya from 1945-2003 as well as to analyze the government's participation in the development of education for LWVI in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with reference to TSB. The study also examined the significance of TSB to persons with visual impairments and the society at large. The study was guided by the Social Development theory. Historical research design was employed in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Data was collected from the archives, from oral interviews and through research into secondary materials in libraries. Collected data was then evaluated through external and internal criticisms before being analyzed qualitatively through triangulation and deduction of themes. The research findings reveal the development of education for the LWVI at TSB as a pioneer school for the blind having started as an institute for the blind in 1946, changed into a primary school in 1954 and the establishment of a secondary school in 1967. From the institute at Thika, there arose other forms of education for LWVI such as vocational education from the time of the establishment, pre-primary school education from the year 1959 as well as the introduction of teacher training programs for teachers of LWVI. The study also established that the government has played a key role in educating the LWVI at TSB and other institutions for the LWVI. Contributions by the government include its support on raising the capital grant for the establishment of TSB in 1946 and subsequent provision of yearly grants for running of the institute. In addition, the government also formulated policies that governed provision of special education in general which affected the education for LWVI. Through its programs, TSB created capacity for the persons with visual impairments and the society through both education and employment. The study came to the conclusion that provision of education for LWVI in Kenya had changed from charity model in 1940s to a human right model by 2003.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This an introductory chapter that presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study and objectives of the study. The chapter further provides the research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study as well as the scope of the study. Operational definition of terms and a description of the organization of the study are also provided in this chapter.

1.2 Background to the Study

The provision of education for the Learners with Visual Impairments (LWVI), as part of the global commitments to quality Education for All (EFA) has gained reasonable development globally over the last couple of decades (Korir, 2015). However, such education is still faced with challenges relating to insufficient funding, lingering negative societal attitudes towards people with visual impairments, and inadequate policy as well as research attention (Oketch, 2009). In Kenya, while much has been achieved in the quest for EFA, particularly at the primary school level (Government of Kenya [GoK], 2015), the provision of education for LWVI has not received commensurate policy, fiscal, and research attention (Kiarie 2004).

Education for LWVI falls under the general category of Special Education (SE), which provides suitable adjustments in syllabi, methodology, educational materials, mode of communication and the learner's environment so as to meet the needs of learners with special needs (Gargiulo, 2003). Other categories of SE include education for the: hearing impaired, physically impaired, mentally handicapped, multi handicapped, gifted and talented and socially disadvantaged persons such as street children (Gargiulo, 2003).

Globally, there has been a considerable proportion of the population with visual impairments through history. By 2012 for instance, over 285 million people in the world had visual impairments with 39 million being totally blind and 246 million having moderate to severe visual impairments (WHO, 2012). The WHO (2012) report also shows that close to 90 percent of these people with visual impairments live in developing countries such as Kenya. In Kenya, the 2009 census report indicated that 1.3 million people had disabilities with 25 percent of

them having visual impairments (GoK, 2009). This group of the population needs to be given a chance to have access to education just like the other general population without disability. This is because, if not well educated and their special needs met, the group would be rendered dependent and thus affect the normal development of a nation (Mbugua & Okul, 2013).

There are numerous landmark conventions, proclamations, and legal instruments at international level that put emphasis on the importance of provision of Basic Education for All. These include among others, the 1948 United Nations (UN) Declaration on Human Rights, the 1954 Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the four United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Conferences held between 1960 and 1966. Others include the 1989 UN convention on the rights of the child, the 1990 World Declaration on EFA, the 2000 African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the 2000 Global Movement for Children. All these conventions present education as a fundamental tool for a country's development, with emphasis on access to quality education for every child regardless of gender, creed, race or any other perceived differences such as any form of physical or sensory disability. However, as various sources indicate, education for LWVI and other disabilities at large has not been adequately addressed (Kamere, 2004; Kiarie, 2004; Project IDEAL 2013). This argument is strengthened by the current state of affairs in which there are still large numbers of the disabled such as the blind that are still begging for monetary assistance on streets in most of the towns in Kenya.

Further, Kiarie (2004) notes that education for LWVI in Kenya is still faced with numerous challenges despite having expanded from its early beginnings. She cites lack of funds, lack of adequate number of trained personnel for students with visual impairments as well as lack of adaptations of materials for students with visual impairments as indicators of the bad state of education for LWVI in Kenya. In agreement with Kiarie (2004), Kamere (2004) notes with concern the slow development of special education in general citing that it was not until 1962 that Joytown Primary School was established as the first school for the physically handicapped in Kenya. These concerns necessitate the historical study on the development of education for the LWVI in order to illuminate on the actual developments that might have been realized during the period under this study.

The historical background of education for the LWVI can be traced back to the year 1784 in Paris, France. Valentin Haüy, the pioneer of this education came across blind persons making

their survival through entertaining others or begging on the streets of Paris. After seeing people who had great ability yet blind, Haüy resolved to teach them better ways of earning a living (Heward, 2003). He used raised print to teach them how to read and write among other skills. Haüy can therefore be considered as the one who started a pioneer school for children who were visually impaired.

The success of students from Haüy's school could have possibly led to the establishment of other residential schools in Europe and other parts of the world. Most of the students from Haüy's school attained improved status including being more independent in life as well as obtaining employment (Heward, 2003). After Haüy's success, many schools for the LWVI were founded. These included the establishment of schools for the blind in the United Kingdom in 1791, Germany in 1806, Sweden in 1809 and United States in 1828 (Moodley, 2002). Since the establishment of these schools, positive attitudes and services for students with visual impairments expanded throughout the world.

In Africa, education for the LWVI as special education was introduced through the Western education system by the Christian Missionaries. Prior to the introduction of Western education in Africa, members of the various communities were mostly prepared for later life through the informal education system, which was part of the African Indigenous Education (Scanlon, 1964). This system was characterized by a wide range of activities, all geared towards equipping the youth with those skills that would be relevant for participating in the day to day activities of societal character. In effect, adult life was approached with a reasonable degree of self-reliance as a result of the traditional education system. However, education for the disabled in this traditional system of education was unknown. Churches and voluntary organizations can therefore be cited as the pioneers of SE in Africa.

While Western education was introduced in Africa from the late 19th century to early 20th century, Kiarie (2004) notes that children of primary school going age with disabilities such as visual impairment were not adequately accommodated in the education system for an extensive period. This is attributed to lack of sufficient assistance from key stake holders such as the government of the time (Kiarie, 2004). The progress of education for LWVI in Africa thus remained slow over the decades of years that followed until late 20th century when significant progress became noticeable (Nasiforo, 2005).

Today, some countries in Africa have achieved much in provision of education for the LWVI in terms of legislation and policy aimed at improving access and quality. For instance, South Africa has promulgated various Acts and policies related to, and impacting on, SE that directly affect, education for the LWVI. These include the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy of 1997, the Consultative Paper No: 1 of 1999 and Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (Praveena, 2008). However, there are still significant setbacks in the provision of education for the LWVI in most African countries ranging from policy, access, resources and attitude related challenges (Nasiforo, 2005)

In Kenya, SE programs for the LWVI were established from mid 1940s by churches and voluntary organizations (Ndurumo, 1993). Education for the LWVI was formally started in 1946 when the first school for the blind was established by the Salvation Army (SA) Mission at Thika. The institution was started as a rehabilitation center that was intended to help veterans blinded during the Second World War but it was later turned into a school for the blind under the name Thika School for the Blind [TSB] (Cherono, 2003).

A few more schools for LWVI were founded in the years that followed by mission groups and the Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB). Since 1946, the number of special schools for the LWVI as well as special units for them have significantly increased but TSB has remained a premier institution of education for the LWVI in Kenya (Ministry of education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2016). Most LWVI learners now receive their education either in special schools, special units in mainstream schools, or together with sighted students in the same classrooms.

Soon after Kenya attained its independence from the colonial rule in 1963, there were several efforts by the new government to improve education for its citizens. Such efforts included the 1964 Report of the Committee for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled in Kenya as well as the Kenya Education Report of 1964. The Report of the Committee for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled in Kenya recommended the mingling of the handicapped with non-handicapped but as Kiarie (2004) notes, the implementation was poor due to lack of facilities and personnel to handle the disabled children. In 1968, the Kenya Education Report of 1964 formed the basis of Sessional Paper No. 5 which was used as a guiding principle in SE until 2003 (Kiarie, 2004).

In 2003, the GoK adopted the Persons with Disability Act which prohibited any manner of discrimination against persons with disabilities. The GoK also revived the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) as envisaged in the EFA goal. The objective of the FPE has been to ensure that all potential learners, including those with disabilities, access primary education. Following the implementation of FPE in 2003, the government directed all public schools not to deny admission to any child based on the account of his or her disability. The government further provided funds to all schools, some of which were earmarked to facilitate education of learners with disabilities. This development led to an increase in enrollment of learners with visual impairments to educational services (Korir, 2015). Currently, Kenya has five special secondary schools and six special primary schools serving most of the LWVI students in the country. Additionally, the country has nineteen units for students with visual impairments in regular education schools (MoEST, 2016).

Despite the discussed developments in SE for the LWVI, most of the aspects with regard to such education have not been adequately addressed (WHO, 2012). Considering their population, the number of institutions catering for persons with visual impairments is inadequate. For instance, six special primary schools, five special secondary schools and 19 special units for the LWVI learners in the country are inadequate to effectively cater for the entire population of LWVI that form about 0.8 percent of the total learners' population (GoK, 2010). The schools for the LWVI are few considering that learners have to travel over long distances in order to access them and this locks out most of the potential learners from accessing such education. In 2015 for example, only 21 percent of children with visual impairments were attending school (Nguyo, 2015). This implies that the majority, 79 percent, of children with visual impairments did not have access to education.

It is also to be noted that the state of enrolment of LWVI in school has been worse in the previous years as compared to more recent years. According to UNESCO (1994) for instance, ten percent of the total population in Kenya in the 1990s had disabilities. Around 25 percent of these persons with disabilities were school aged children. Out of around 750, 000 school aged children with disabilities, only 90,000 had been evaluated and recognized. However, only 14,614 recognized children were enrolled in special schools, while majority of these disabled children went to mainstream schools (UNESCO, 1994). This means that above 90 percent of school-going age children with disabilities such as visual impairments were either in

mainstream schools with little or no specialized assistance or they were not receiving any kind of education at all.

While some areas in SE such as provision of teaching personnel have drawn some attention and institutional setup, not much has been done in terms of funding, curriculum relevance, physical facilities, to mention only a few (Kiarie, 2004). For example in the Development Plan of 1979-83, out of the total education expenditure of Ksh.548, 938,000, SE received only Ksh.2,588,000; a big neglect in so far as funding is concerned representing only 2 percent of the educational budget. Ndurumo (1993) noted that out of about 1.8 million disabled people in Kenya by the year 1985, 456,500 of them were of school going age yet special programs hardly catered for 10 percent of that population. Presently the state of funding SE has not changed much. The report of Education for All National Review of 2015 indicates that while Ksh.17, 492,190,000 was used for development in the education sector from the financial years 2009 to 2011, no amount was used in developing SE. From the financial years 2011 to 2014, Ksh. 86,463,330,000 was again used for educational development out of which only Ksh.21, 400,000 representing 0.02 percent was used in SE (GoK, 2015).

It is in this regard that this study set out to examine various aspects of SE for the LWVI as they apply to the Kenyan situation in a historical perspective, with special reference to TSB as the pioneer institution for Special Education in Kenya. The first aspect to be examined was the establishment and development of education for the LWVI with analysis of motivation and energy that has been devoted towards the same since 1945 with TSB as a case. The second aspect was to examine the government's participation in establishing, funding, monitoring and formulation of policies to support SE in general and education for the LWVI in particular. The third aspect focused on the significance of TSB to the society through the analysis of how it has benefited persons with visual impairments and the society at large in Kenya as a representative of other institutions offering SE.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that special schools for the LWVI in Kenya were established immediately after the Second World War, the state of this education is still not sufficient enough to satisfy the educational needs of all LWVI. The pace of its development has been slow despite several steps that have been undertaken in promoting it. Little has been done to advance the quality

and quantity of education for the LWVI in Kenya and most LWVI still receive their education in regular schools that are not well equipped to meet their special needs. This makes it crucial to study education for the LWVI historically to establish why, despite Kenya's high achievement in education, SE for the LWVI has lagged behind. This is because history informs the present and the future. In addition, while there are several historical studies on various educational aspects and institutions, there does not seem to be a historical study that has been carried out on TSB. This is despite the fact that it was the first special school in Kenya and remains one of the premier institutions offering education for the LWVI. It is against this backdrop that this study set to analyze the history and development of Education for the LWVI in Kenya with special focus on TSB from 1945 to 2003.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyse the development of education for the learners with visual impairments in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with reference to TSB.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to highlight the historical developments of education for learners with visual impairments by using TSB as a case. Specifically, the study aimed to:

i. Document the historical account of the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with special reference to TSB

ii. Analyze the government’s participation in the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya between 1945 and 2003 with reference to TSB

iii. Examine the significance of TSB on persons with visual impairments and the Kenyan society at large.

1.6 Research Questions

The study set out to address the following questions:

i. What is the historical account of the development of education for LWVI in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 in reference to TSB?

ii. How has the government been involved towards developing education for the LWVI in Kenya and TSB between 1945 and 2003?

iii. What has been the significance of TSB persons on persons with visual impairment and the Kenyan society at large?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study sought to provide a historical documentation of the developments in SE of the LWVI using TSB. The choice of TSB as a case was guided by the nature of the school. It was the first school for the LWVI in Kenya and it caters for the education of LWVI not only from central region of Kenya but also from the rest of the country. Results of this study may therefore contribute towards provision of adequate knowledge on the establishment, developments realized and challenges encountered in education for the LWVI in Kenya.

In a more specific way, it is hoped that the findings, conclusions and recommendations on the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya will enlighten policy makers and curriculum planners in order for them to evaluate approaches used in provision of education for the LWVI with the aim of improving them. The findings of the study may also enable teachers to reflect on the methods of teaching they use in the education of the LWVI and evaluate their effectiveness as well as enable parents to reflect on the best practices for effective socialization of children with visual impairments.

The findings of the study will also contribute to the existing body of knowledge in history of education as well as SE. Such knowledge may help in improving SE through the identification of challenges and strategies raised in education of the disabled and as such, benefit interested future researchers on SE.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study relied mainly on documents, some of which were prepared many years ago. Due to varied reasons such as poor storage and unforeseen destructions, some of the documents were incomplete or missing. The researcher however interviewed people who witnessed some of the activities in the development of education for the LWVI in order to reduce the effects of these limitations by filling some of the identified gaps in the documents.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study sought to analyze the development of education for the visually impaired in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 taking TSB (Primary and secondary) as a case. The year 1945 marked the end of Second World War which led to international recognition to provision of education to all people including the disabled (Kamere, 2004). Even though TSB was officially started in 1946, its foundations for set up started in 1945 justifying the study's analysis from the year 1945.

On the other hand, the year 2003 is the year in which the government of Kenya revived provision of free primary education to all children. From this time, emphasis was laid on inclusive education which implies learners with disabilities could be enrolled in mainstream schools alongside non-disabled learners. The termination of the study in the year 2003 therefore enables the study to focus on the development of education for the LWVI during the time it was mainly offered in special schools. The duration of study therefore gave 58 years which is ample time for thorough analysis of developments realized in SE and the strides made towards achieving EFA in Kenya. It also enabled the study to touch on recent trends and make suggestions for further developments.

The scope of developments included changes in policies, structure and curricular. In addition, infrastructural changes that help facilitate smooth learning for the LWVI were also analyzed. Further, changes in external factors that affect the SE development such as donor funding and societal support were also analyzed.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

The following operational terms were used in the study:

Development: Changes that have taken place over time. With reference to education for the LWVI, this will include changes in number and nature of institutions providing education for the LWVI, changes in learner's population, and changes in access, curriculum, policies and other related changes with regard to education for the LWVI.

Education for LWVI: Education that has some modifications/adaptions in the methodology, nature of learning materials and/or the learning environment in order to effectively cater for the special needs of LWVI.

Handicap: Physical, sensory, mental or social disadvantage limiting individual fulfillment

Impairment: Lacking part or all of a part of the body, or having a defective part of the body, organ or mechanism of the body in a way that it hinders performance of the individual.

Learner: In this study, the term will refer to a person undertaking any of the forms of education that were provided in TSB including primary school education, secondary school education and tertiary education.

Mainstream Education: Education for the larger masses of learners without disabilities

Mainstream School: Regular/ordinary schools where children without disabilities receive their education.

Special Education: Education provided to learners with disabilities such as those with visual impairments, those with hearing impairments among others in which special methods and materials are used to aid such learners acquire and communicate knowledge and skills

Special School: A school designated to provide education to children with special needs according to their respective disabilities.

Special Unit/Special Class: A class set aside either in mainstream or in a special school to cater for specific needs of learners.

Learner with Visual Impairment: A learner who has a condition of being blind or with low vision to the extent that it interferes with his/her optimum learning and success, unless modifications are made in the methodology, the nature of learning materials and/or the learning environment.

1.11 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study by giving the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study as well as limitations and scope of the study. Operational definition of terms is also provided under chapter one. Chapter two deals with review of literature related to the study in general and the study objectives in particular. Conceptual and theoretical frameworks are also discussed under chapter two. Chapter three deals with the methodology used in the study with focus on the research design, sources of data, procedure for data collection, evaluation of data as well as data analysis and presentation. Ethical considerations are also explained under chapter three. Chapter four to seven present the results

of the findings and their subsequent analysis. Specifically, chapter four focuses on historical development of education for the LWVI in Kenya while chapter five presents the analysis of the government's participation in education for the LWVI. Chapter six of the study presents the significance of TSB to the society while chapter seven provides the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the research problem under investigation. It seeks to analyze documented work on the origin and the development of education for the LWVI globally and in Kenya. The themes of the review as guided by the objectives of this study include: Development of education for the LWVI; government's participation in provision of special education for the LWVI and TSB, its development and significance to the society. Conceptual and theoretical framework are also discussed under this chapter.

2.2 Development of Education for the Learners with Visual Impairments

This section reviews related literature that has addressed either directly or indirectly the origin and development of education for the LWVI through history from the ancient times to the present. The section is divided into two sub sections. The first section deals with development of education for the LWVI globally while the second section focuses on development of education for the LWVI in Kenya.

2.2.1 Development of Education for the LWVI globally

It is in record world over, that learners who required SE such as the visually impaired were treated as second class citizens for a long time (Cherono, 2003; Enerstvedt, 1996; Nordstrom 1986). For centuries, these individuals were marginalized and hidden away. Nordstrom (1986) states that: ''the disabled children were usually sacrificed for the welfare of the state in ancient times. They were left to die by exposing them to severe conditions or were killed outright.'' In close relation to Nordstrom, Enerstvedt (1996) while writing on education for the blind before 1900 states as follows:

> ''The great majority of blind people probably lived a very difficult life up to the last two centuries and still do in many countries of the world. In some countries, blindness is still regarded as a curse of the Almighty. The blind had and have no occupation, no source of income and were and are often rejected by family and society. Even for those blinded later in life, there would seem to be an almost universal reaction of fear, avoidance and rejection, an immediate emotional reaction that has taken a variety of forms in its expression. In some cultures, people who are blind have been merely shunned, while in others they have been actively persecuted'' (Enerstvedt, 1996).

This means that children with visual impairments together with other handicapped children were not only denied education, but they were denied basic rights and needs such as the right to live, the right to basic amenities in life and freedom of association. Despite this wide spread discrimination and elimination of the disabled children in ancient times however, Enerstvedt (1996) states that there were some isolated cases in which the blind together with other handicapped were provided with care, treatment and training in ancient Greece and Rome. The origin of education for the LWVI can therefore be traced back to ancient times. The varied treatment of the LWVI in the Ancient times presents a state of both despair on one hand as well as hope on the other hand based on different situations and place. With this evidence of varied treatment, it is paramount to study the history of education for the LWVI for each society separately in order to have a clear glimpse of the developments that might have been realized thereof.

Different studies have attributed the origin of education for the blind to different individuals. Nordstrom (1986) for instance, describes the development of education for the deaf and blind. In his description, he attributes the origin of education for the blind to a French philosopher Dennis Diderot who wrote one of the first discourses concerning education for the blind. Nordstrom notes that the essay proposed that the sense of touch could be perfected for reading for persons who were blind. This is seen as a precursor to the invention of the Braille writing system. Diderot is therefore recognized to have underscored the role of sensory experience in individuals, promoting the idea that the inability to see does not affect ability to understand or reason.

Smith (2004) attributes the origin of education for the blind to a French calligrapher professor Valentin Haüy who started the first school for the blind in Paris in 1784. According to Smith (2004), Haüy appreciated the fact that blind persons can learn by reading with their fingers, and this made him to develop an elevated Roman alphabet system to teach his students. Haüy's methods later became the model that was adopted by other educators of the blind for the next half century (Smith, 2004). Besides Haüy being recognized to have started the Braille system, he is also credited to have started the first school ever for the blind (Heward, 2003). While Diderot only wrote on tapping the sense of touch to educate the blind, Haüy seems to have gone ahead and put this in practice even though literature accessed did not indicate whether Haüy had read Diderot's essays or it was his own invention.

Regardless of whether the establishment of education for the LWVI is attributed to Diderot or Haüy, one common thing arises from their efforts. They both tapped the use of sense of touch to enable persons with visual impairments to be able to read and eventually write. The efforts of the two pioneers led to development of the Braille system which is still in use today. The establishment of Haüy's school in Paris in the year 1784 also led to establishment of other schools for the blind that emerged setting momentum for the development of education for the LWVI. These early schools emerged first in other parts of Europe as stated earlier followed by United States of America (USA).

In the USA, schools for the blind were established in the early 19th century following positive attitudes concerning blind persons as most of them were seen as talented individuals who could contribute positively to the society (Enerstvedt, 1996). These positive attitudes could only have arisen from seeing what the blind can do, and how the blind can be educated as was evident from Haüy's schools and other schools in Europe. The schools that were established in USA include the New England Asylum School (now called Perkins School for the Blind) in 1828, the New York Institution for the Blind in 1831 and Overbrook School for the Blind in 1832 (Alquraini, 2011). These schools led to great advances towards educating persons with visual impairments such as the establishment of the American Printing House for the Blind and the official printer of school books for blind students in America. Today, USA has one of the best developed systems of education for persons with disabilities such as the visually impaired (Alquraini, 2011). This indicates how history defines the present. USA started schools for the LWVI longtime ago and over time, these schools for the LWVI have developed creating one of the best systems around the world.

Afb (2012) posits that more organized systems of education for the blind around the world became profound after the First World War (1914-1918) when injured war veterans began pushing for services to prepare them to re-enter the military. This led to formulation of the Soldiers Rehabilitation Act in the U.S.A by the year 1918. This Act led to training and financial support to veterans with disabilities. The Act also formed the basis of other legislations that addressed broader needs of the disabled persons. The Act was amended in 1943 to broaden services to individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental illness (Afb, 2012). Many more countries are likely to have borrowed from this pioneer legislation

concerning persons with disabilities which has gone a long way in formulating policies concerning educating of the disabled such as the LWVI.

In Africa, persons with visual impairments were mostly excluded from the educational programs that existed at that time before the arrival of Western education (Marfo, 1986). Upon the introduction of Western education, the situation did not improve much. This is because Western education paid little attention towards persons with disabilities during the early years of colonization in Africa. Marfo (1986) notes that it was the influence of Christianity and missionaries that gradually gave way to the recognition of persons with visual impairments; thus, the beginning of SE for the persons with visual impairments in Africa is traced to the initiative of the missionaries. The education of LWVI in Ghana for instance started around 1936, through initiation of education for the blind by Reverend Haker who started with two pupils (Efua, 2014). It was after this initiative that the Presbyterian Church officially opened a school for the LWVI in 1946 at the Eastern Region of Ghana (Marfo, 1986). While the establishments of such a school in mid 1940s was a milestone in the development of education for the LWVI in Africa, the time of establishment displays how long the LWVI were discriminated from the Western education that had been introduced around 50 years before.

Kiarie (2004), while writing on trends and issues for students with visual impairments in Kenya observes that several milestones were made in the development of SE in Africa and even globally after World War II. She states that the period after World War II saw the creation of SE system, organized parallel to the ordinary system. This led to expansion and diversification of education to accommodate learners with disabilities such as the LWVI. Since World War II, educational services for persons with visual impairments have improved remarkably around Africa and even in the entire world. Nonetheless, the developments have been patchy across the nations (Lynch, 1994). This makes it crucial to study each nation as a case in order to have a clear view of the developments that might have been realized thereof.

In South Africa for Instance, Moodley (2002) notes that South Africa is one of the best developed countries in provision of library services for persons with visual impairments. The country has also promulgated various Acts and policies related to, and impacting on, SE that directly affect education for the LWVI. These include the *South African Schools Act 84 of*

1996, the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy of 1997, the Consultative Paper No: 1 of 1999 and Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (Praveena, 2008).

However, unlike in South Africa, Lynch (1994) while writing on special educational services in Asia noted that India has major challenges in provision of education for the LWVI. He observes that services for LWVI in India are meager with most of the special classrooms present only in urban areas despite the government's commitment through policies that enhance provision of special education. Lynch (1994) further notes that majority of children with visual impairments are out of school. This displays that the progress of education for the LWVI is not only determined by the time it was established but also the efforts that have been made by the society and different governments in developing it. This makes it crucial to study the developments of education for the LWVI and the related efforts in different countries in order to understand the state of the current progress, an objective that this study pursued.

These previously discussed studies indicate that the origin and development of SE in general and that of LWVI in particular is attributed to different individuals and reasons at different places and times. The studies show that the progress made in SE for the LWVI differs in different regions due to a variety of efforts. This suggests that in order to have a clear understanding on origin and development of SE for the LWVI, it is important that every region and institution be studied on its own. It is in this regard that this study sought to examine the origin and development of education for the LWVI in Kenya with reference to TSB, an area that seems to have not been studied before in order to provide more literature on development of SE in general and that of LWVI in particular.

2.2.2 Origin and Development of Education for the LWVI in Kenya

Education in Kenya and Africa in general has come a long way from the traditional informal education to the introduction of reading, writing and use of modern technology in the adjustment to the changes brought about by globalization (GoK, 2015; Scanlon, 1964). However, one area that is still lagging behind despite the rapid change in the world is special education, which includes education for the VI (Nguyo, 2015; Oketch, 2009). Education for the LWVI in Kenya, just like many other areas of special education is faced with challenges of low access, lack of enough resources and low performance in comparison to regular education (Nguyo, 2015) .

While there was good spread of Western education in Kenya from 1909 onwards, it was not until 1946 that the first special school for the blind, TSB was established (MoEST, 2003). The establishment of this school was an initiative of the SA church. The opening of the school led to establishment of other schools by the same SA church as well as by the Catholic Mission. Such schools include St. Lucy's School for the Blind which was established by the Catholic Mission in 1958, St. Oda School for the Blind which was established by the Kenya Society for the Blind in collaboration with the Catholic Mission in 1961 and Likoni School for the Blind which was established by the SA church in 1965 (Orinda, 2008). Other schools for the blind that have been established since then include Kibos School for the Blind in 1965 and St. Francis School Kapenguria for the Blind in 1979 (MoEST, 2016). Table 2.1 gives a summary of Special Schools for the Blind currently in Kenya.

Table 2.1

List of Special Schools for LWVI in Kenya

School	**County**	**Sections of School**	**Year Established**
Thika School for the Blind	Kiambu	Primary	1946
		National secondary	1967
St. Lucy's School for the Blind	Meru	Primary	1958
		National Secondary	2005
St. Oda School for the blind	Siaya	Primary	1961
		National Secondary (also known as Nico Hausa School)	2013
Likoni School for the Blind	Mombasa	Primary	1965
Kibos School for the Blind	Kisumu	Primary	1965
		National Secondary	2009
St. Francis School for the Blind	West Pokot	Primary	1979
		National Secondary	2007

Source. MoEST (2016)

Table 2.1 indicates that there are only eleven special schools for the LWVI with six special primary schools and five special secondary schools for the LWVI in the entire country. All the five secondary schools are categorized as national meaning that they admit students from all over the country. It is important to note from the table that it has taken a period of over 60 years to establish a total of eleven special schools for the LWVI since the establishment of the first special school for the blind. As at 2003, there was only one special secondary school for

the Blind in the whole republic, Thika High School for the Blind. This implies that before 2003 learners with visual impairments were attending mainstream secondary schools that lacked proper resources to cater for their disabilities.

It is also important to note that establishment of these schools for the LWVI was spearheaded by Christian missions and charitable organizations and not by the government of the time. This implies that aid towards the disabled was being undertaken through the Charity Model of Disability. This model stipulates that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are victims of circumstance who should be pitied. The model therefore advocates that PWDs should be helped through able well-wishers as a show of pity and concern (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). While (Orinda, 2008) points out that the schools for the LWVI were started by the Christian mission groups and not government it was the researcher's conviction that the government of the time might have been involved in one way or the other, an aspect that had not been shown. The study therefore in documenting the development of TSB, sought to identify the role that could have been played by the government of the time.

Mutua and Dimitrov (2001) noted that even though education for the LWVI in Kenya was started in 1946, it is only in recent years that it received considerable support towards attaining the needs of the LWVI. This is indicated by the delay in policy formulation and the slow expansion of schools that cater for LWVI (Mutua & Dimitrov, 2001). For instance, educational programs for learners with low vision was absent for a long time after the establishment of education for the LWVI in Kenya. It was not until in the 1980s that these low vision programs were started in integrated schools with the assistance of the Ministry of Education and several Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) among them Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM) and Sight Savers International (SSI). It is inferred from Muchiri (1982) that the reason for this neglect could be attributed to the negative societal attitude that persons with impairments such as the LWVI were incapable of engaging in gainful employment.

In his study on the historical development of the primary teacher training program for teachers of the LWVI in Kenya, Ojwando (1990) noted that teacher education for the LWVI was fragmented prior to 1986 when the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) was opened. Ojwando further notes that for teachers of the LWVI, the training program at KISE stepped up the rate at which trained teachers for both special schools for LWVI and integrated units are

produced. However, he observed that the program still did not produce enough teachers for the visually impaired learners leading to insufficient manpower for training of LWVI. In agreement with Ojwando, Eduwen (1995) observed that the majority of teachers who were handling LWVI in integration programs at regular schools were not qualified or had limited knowledge in SE. In addition, these teachers handling the LWVI at regular schools were teaching and handling class sizes of up to 70 pupils. This compromises the quality of SE which should be designed to ensure adequate attention to those whose schooling is hindered by disabling conditions.

Orangah (2012) researched on factors enabling transition of students with blindness to university in Kenya. In her report, she observes that LWVI have the lowest participation in education in Kenya. She points out that enrolment, attendance and completion of formal education are among the indicators of their low participation. For instance, the results of the study estimated that only about 13 percent of students with visual impairments that sit for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination join university each year. This situation is further shown to be worse by Wawire (2009) who indicates that most of the students with visual impairments at the universities in Kenya usually get admitted as self-sponsored students. This low enrolment and progression of LWVI is attributed to several factors such as stigmatization, regressive cultural beliefs, negative attitudes towards the blind and lack of awareness on the possible potential of children with visual impairment by parents. Consequently, most parents do not enroll their children with visual impairment of school going age to school, thus barring their transition to higher education

The afore-mentioned studies show that there is some information on the development of SE for the LWVI in Kenya. Nevertheless, there is lack of systematic documentation on the development of LWVI education from the time it was instituted and the specific efforts involved through history since the information available is patchy. Furthermore, there seems to be lack of systematic documentation on historical development of any school for the LWVI. This study therefore aimed at filling this gap by providing further analysis of development of SE for the LWVI in Kenya and documenting the history of TSB, a premier institution in education of the learners with visual impairments.

2.3 Government's Participation in Provision of Special Education for the LWVI in Kenya

While educational services for LWVI in Kenya started in 1946, Mwangi (2013) notes that most of the developments realized in SE up to the 1970s were largely expedited by volunteers such as the missionaries and private organizations. The government's participation was thus minimal being limited to provision of the general curriculum and later training teachers for the deaf in the 1960s. Even though there is limited literature on the extent of governments involvement in education for the LWVI, Mwangi (2013) alludes to the fact that there was minimal involvement in funding and formulating policies for SE by the government during this period. From the 1960s however, the government started being involved through funding and taking over the management of most of the institutions that were offering SE such as TSB (MoEST, 2003).

In her study on development of education for the physically challenged learners in Kenya, Kamere, (2004) observes that the Government of Kenya has shown some commitments towards development of SE in terms of improving quality and access to education system to all Kenyans including those with special educational needs such as those with visual impairments. Kamere (2004) argues that these commitments are demonstrated by ratification and domestication of various global policy frameworks in education. These include among others the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the 1994 Salamanca Statement, the 1999 Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (SNE), and the 2000 Millennium Development Goals and EFA.

There have also been various education commissions and committees since Kenya's independence (1963) initiated by the government, whose policy recommendations have been used as a guide in proving education to the learners with special educational needs such as the LWVI. These include among others the Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled [Ngala Mwendwa Report] (1964), Kenya Education Commission [Ominde Report] (1964), National Education Commission on Education Objectives and Policies [Gachathi Report] (1976) and the Presidential Working Committee on Education and Training for the next Decade and Beyond [Kamunge Report] (1988). Others include the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya [Koech Report] (1999), The Children's Act (2001), The

Task Force on SNE [Kochung Report] (2003), The Persons with Disabilities Act [PDA] (2003) and the Gender Policy in Education (2007).

While the 2015 National Review of Education for All Report alludes to the fact that some recommendations of these commissions have been used in directing and guiding provision of education for learners with special needs and disabilities such as the LWVI (GoK, 2015), Adoyo and Adeny (2015) observe that most of these previous recommendations have not been legalized or harmonized for smooth provision of SNE. There however seems to be lack of a study that has analyzed in detail how the recommendations of these reports have affected education for the LWVI or that of special education in general. This study therefore strived to analyse how the recommendations from these reports have affected the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya.

The government's commitment to education for the LWVI and other forms of SE through history has also been demonstrated by the establishment of SNE section and the appointment of SNE Inspector in 1975 and 1978 respectively (GoK, 2015). This must have been driven by the desire of the government to monitor quality in provision of special educational services. The government further posted SNE specialist at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) in 1977 (GoK, 2015).

In his documentation on teacher training for LWVI education in Kenya, Ojwando (1990) notes that the government's involvement in supporting training of teachers for the LWVI education and other SNE programs was poor until 1986 when KISE was set up under the sponsorship of the Danish International Development Agency. The government's involvement in establishing KISE was motivated by the need to build the capacity of SNE service providers through teacher training, teacher in-servicing as well as research (Ojwando, 1990). KISE has over the time played an important role towards education for the LWVI because not only does it train teachers for the various categories of special needs but also serves as a specialized institution mandated to produce instructional materials for learners with visual impairment at a subsidized price together with The Kenya Institute for the Blind (Ojwando, 1990).

In terms of funding and improving access of special education for the LWVI, the government's involvement was slow and not adequate (Abilla, 1988; Daun, 2000). Daun, (2000) notes that even though the government of Kenya focused on the funding and expansion of primary and secondary education from the 1960s' through to the 1980s, there was little

focus in terms of funding and developing SE until after 1990. It is probably for this reason that many potential LWVI remained out of school in the past. For instance, in 2012 it was estimated that close to half of the total number of LWVI in Kenya were either out of school or in regular schools most of which lack specialized attention to learners with visual impairments. (GoK, 2012).

Abilla, (1988) also notes that despite tremendous growth of educational services by the government, educational prospects for learners with special needs and disabilities have lagged behind in the education sector. The majority of learners that require SNE in Kenya have had poor access to educational services. For example, in the year 1999, out of the estimated 55,000 children with special needs and disabilities within the school-going age bracket, only 22,000 learners were enrolled in special schools (primary and secondary), special units and integrated programs (GoK, 2010). This number of enrolled learners with special needs is further shown to be small when compared to a total of over 10 million learners that were enrolled in the primary and secondary schools (GoK, 2015). Even though the number of SNE learners rose to 26,885 in 2003 and 45,000 in 2008, it was still lower when compared to the overall population in education (GoK, 2015).

Literature reviewed under this section reveals that the government has been involved to some levels in provision of education for the LWVI as a subset of special education in Kenya. This includes provision of funds to support the program as well as policy formulation to guide the running of the program. Studies reviewed however only point to the government's involvement in special education after Kenya's independence in 1963 although special education had been introduced way back in 1946. This creates a gap that this study sought to fill by documenting on government involvement right from the time education for the LWVI was introduced in the country. The studies reviewed here also fail to provide a detailed analysis of how the level of government's funding and policy formulation have affected the development of education for the LWVI, a gap that this study sought to fill as well.

2.4 Thika School for the Blind: Development and Significance to the Society

Thika School for the Blind was the first kind of special school that was established in Kenya in the year 1946 (Orinda, 2008). The institution was started by the SA Church as a vocational

school, because the targeted learners were past school going age (Ministry of Education, 1976). Later, the vocational school grew and it became known as Thika School for the Blind.

There are some studies that have been conducted on TSB, some of which have indirectly touched on its historical development and its importance in the community. For instance, Wanjiku (2009) carried out a study on factors influencing Braille learning in Thika Primary School for the Blind. In her study she posits that Thika Primary School for the Blind was the first school for the blind to be established in Kenya in 1946. She further states that the school was started by the SA Church as a vocational school with the objective of rehabilitating wounded soldiers of the Second World War. By the early 1950s, the institution started admitting blind learners in order to give them formal education. The school was later named Thika Primary School for the Blind. Wanjiku (2009) further points out the significance of Thika School by stating that it admits LWVI from all over the country. In her conclusion, she states that Braille literacy among the blind learners in Thika Primary School for the Blind was wanting, citing low enthusiasm in learning Braille, minimal Braille drilling and practice and failure to complete Braille assignments. Many Braille writing mistakes were also observed.

Milimu (2008) studied factors hindering teaching of orientation and mobility to students who are visually impaired in Thika Primary School for the Visually Impaired. In her analysis, she observed that the school was initially started as "The Institute for the Visually Impaired" in Thika. She further observed that those who were admitted at this institute were mainly adults who had been blinded during the Second World War. Milimu (2008) posits that the institute did not last long for in 1952, there was a strike which made the administration to admit young children and thus changed the institute to a school with the name Thika School for the Blind. She however fails to give the details of the said strike and the reasons that led to this shift creating a gap that this study intended to fill among others. Her study therefore points to some of the milestones in the development of TSB through enlightening on important transition of the institution. The study by Milimu also pointed out some of the challenges and the failures experienced since she concludes by noting that despite the various efforts towards education for persons with visual impairment in this school, orientation and mobility was not given formal instruction.

Wanjiru (2014) agree with Milimu (2008) that the SA Church set up Thika School for Blind in 1946 as the first institution to assist blind Second World War veterans, but later turned it into

a school for children with visual impairments. However, Wanjiru (2014) goes further to point out that enrolment in the institution remained low since children with disabilities rarely got educated. Kiarie (2004) seems to give a reason for this poor enrolment by stating that these children were often neglected because their families provided little support to them, and the society even encouraged their murder. It can thus be deduced that blind children were considered not only as a burden to the family but were seen a source of shame thus necessitating infanticide. Over the period of time, this situation has changed and there has been increased demand for special education. However, TSB (Primary and Secondary) has remained popular with a higher number of learners with visual impairments in comparison to other schools for the LWVI (Kiarie, 2004).

In his study on the development of teacher education for the LWVI in Kenya, Ojwando (1990) stated that Thika primary school for the blind was the first institution in which training of teachers for LWVI was offered in form of on-the-job training in the mid-forties. He points out the importance of this institution in that teachers trained in this manner received certificates after the then European trainers were satisfied that the teachers were competent enough in Braille knowledge. After the establishment of the Teacher's Service Commission (TSC) in 1967, those who were responsible for the already mentioned in-service training programs recommended teachers who had successfully received the training for licenses to teach. These teachers remained in the teaching force as qualified enough to teach visually handicapped pupils (Ojwando, 1990).

The studies mentioned above indirectly address some of the factors related to origin and development of TSB as well as its significance to the society but they fail to systematically analyse the historical development of the school hence creating gaps in the documentation of its development. This study therefore aimed at systematically documenting the origin and development of TSB and analyzing its significance and influence to the community while using it as a case in the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya.

2.5 Summary of Reviewed Literature

Literature related to this study has been reviewed in this section under three main themes namely; development of education for the LWVI, government's involvement in education for the LWVI and development of TSB and its significance to the society. Concerning

development of education for the LWVI, it has emerged that there are various studies that attribute the development of education for the LWVI to different individuals and reasons at different places around the globe (Afb 2012; Enerstvedt, 1996; Marfo, 1986; Nordstrom, 1986; Smith 2004) This necessitates a study on the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya in order to add on the existing body of knowledge around the globe.

In Kenya, the review of literature has shown that there are some studies that have partly provided some information on the development of SE for the LWVI (Kiarie, 2004; Ojwando 1990; Orangah, 2012; Orinda, 2008). Though these studies provide insights on the development of education for the LWVI such as when the first school for the blind was established as well as on the establishment of more institutions for the LWVI, there is lack of a systematic documentation on the development of LWVI education in Kenya. The studies on the Kenyan case have also shown that even though provision of education for children with special educational needs has improved remarkably over the past few years, this kind of education is not sufficiently equipped to meet the educational needs of the intended recipients such as the LWVI (Kiarie 2004, Orangah 2012).

The review of literature has also shown some level of government's involvement on provision of education for the LWVI as a form of special education (Muuya, 2002; Mwangi, 2013). Government involvement is cited through policy formulation, curriculum development and funding of LWVI educational institutions. Nevertheless, there seems to be lack of a detailed study that has systematically documented the governments support and its effects on education for the LWVI in Kenya. For instance, even though Kamere (2003) and Kiarie (2004) have indicated that recommendations of various educational reports in Kenya have been used in directing and guiding provision of education for learners with special needs and disabilities, their studies fail to give the specific policies that have been adopted from these reports and how such policies have affected the said education. It is in this regard that this study sought to provide a systematic documentation of education for the LWVI in Kenya, addressing the efforts involved as well as the challenges encountered in order to inform on the present status of this education which may in turn help in projecting the future.

The review of literature has also indicated that there are some studies that have indirectly addressed the historical development of TSB as well as its significance to the society (Milimu, 2008; Wanjiku, 2009; Wanjiru, 2014). The studies have shown that TSB was started by the

Salvation Army Mission in the year 1946 and later led to establishment of a secondary school in 1967. The studies however fail to give details of how the school was established, what courses were offered, what transpired within the school as time went by among other details that may be historically relevant. These studies seem to provide patchy information on TSB and education for the LWVI because their main focus was not on historical development. Furthermore, there seems to be no study that has provided systematic documentation of the history of an institution offering education for the LWVI learners such as TSB. It is in this regard that this study used TSB in documenting the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya. In the process, the study documented the history of TSB and its benefits to the society through history.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Social Development Theory that was developed by Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory provides a comprehensive view towards various aspects such as child development, psychology and special education. Concerning SE, the theory asserts that in education, there are some learners who have peculiar factors which lead to the inability of the education system to accommodate them. These factors are their special needs that arise as a result of their sensory, physical or psychological dysfunction (Vygotsky, 1980). Vygotsky's theory therefore underscores the need for identification of children with special needs so that their individual needs can be catered for through the appropriate strategies which according to him, are social factors that will determine their development. The theory therefore focuses attention on factors in society that determines educational development in areas of SNE such as education for the LWVI (Crawford, 1996).

In this study, the Social Development Theory provided a guide towards analyzing various factors from the society that have affected development in provision of education for the LWVI. Since Vygotsky draws focus on the relations between people and the socio-cultural context in which they act and interact in common experiences (Crawford, 1996), the study was guided by the theory to identify the different experiences that have been provided by the society towards the LWVI in terms of supporting their education. It is important to note that the society, through different efforts and interventions provides a social environment that affects not only development of education for the LWVI, but society's development in general

as well. The social environment as created by the society therefore may include policies, infrastructure, resources and attitudes towards educating persons with visual impairments.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The study aimed at documenting the history of education for the LWVI in Kenya using Thika School for the Blind as a case. In achieving this, the study highlighted the factors behind the establishment of Thika School for the Blind in 1946. The study also traced the growth and development of Thika School for the Blind from 1946 to 2003 and sought to establish the contributions made by the school to the development of education for the LWVI as well as to the socio-economic welfare of LWVI and the society at large. The study showed that the establishment of Thika School for the Blind as well as its growth and development created opportunities for the persons with visual impairments and improved their livelihood. However, the establishment, growth and development of Thika School for the Blind depended on the then existing mission organization support, government support, community participation, local and political situation and the availability of teaching personnel. This relationship is represented diagrammatically in figure 2.1

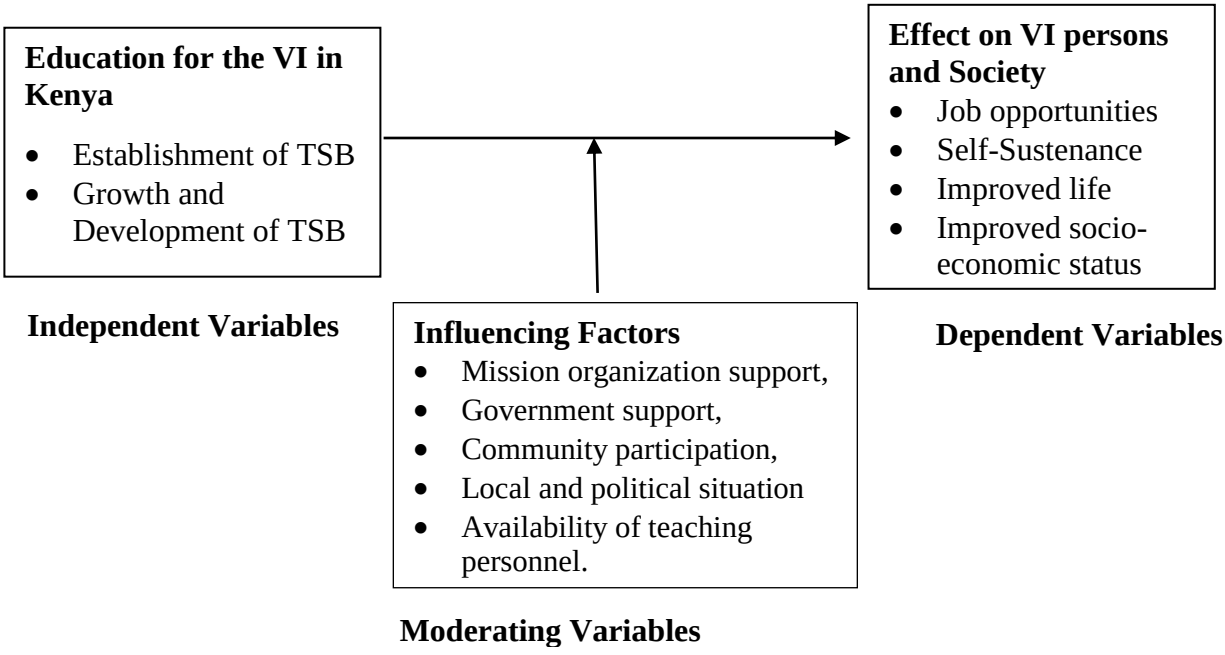

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework thus presents the relationship between the establishment, growth and development of TSB and socio-economic development to the persons with visual impairments and the society. As a result of the establishment and the growth of the TSB as a learning institution for LWVI (independent variables), there was improved socio-economic status to persons with visual impairments as well as to the society (dependent variables). This influence was however sometimes retracted or promoted by the moderating variables that include mission organization support, government support, community participation, local and political situation and the availability of teaching personnel. The mission support for instance was shown to have played a key role in the expansion of this education thus improving its access to more persons with visual impairments. The government support was also shown to have promoted the growth of this education but not to sufficient level to enrich all persons with visual impairments. Negative attitude towards educating persons with disabilities in the community together with lack of trained teachers to handle SNE derailed the results of improving the livelihoods of persons with visual impairments.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research process and methodology. The chapter contains the research design, sources of data, procedure for data collection as well as evaluation, analysis and presentation of data.

3.2 Research Design

The study is a qualitative research that employed the historical research design. This involved systematic location, collection, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning past events, which is the intent of a historical research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The study employed the historical research design since it sought to systematically search for facts relating to development of education for the LWVI in the past.

Since historical studies do not involve manipulation of variables as in the case of experimental research, this study focused on documenting the occurrences of the past developments made in provision of education for LWVI from 1945 to 2003. This was done through the systematic search of documents, relics and participants in the events of education for the LWVI for the duration under study. The study therefore strived to achieve one of the main purposes of a historical research in education by providing insights into the education for the LWVI in the past, which may not be accomplished by other means. The study also sought to provide an understanding of how the present system of education has developed with reference to education for the LWVI as offered by TSB and other institutions. Through this historical research, the researcher sought to achieve a better understanding of present institutions, practices and issues in education for the LWVI.

3.3 Sources of Data

This study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources included primary archival data and oral evidence from informants. Primary archival data search included analysis of reports as well as original documents such as educational reports and minutes of meetings, official school records, memos, newsletters and photographs that were

mainly obtained from the archives. These included the archives of TSB, archives of the SA Church that was involved in establishing several special schools including TSB, Kenya National Archives, MoEST archives and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) archives. A sample of documents that were accessed is provided in appendix H while the specific information that was sought from these archival sources is as indicated in appendix A.

Interviews were employed after the archival data search to obtain information deemed suitable to bridge gaps in archival material as suggested by Parkash (2007). There were categories of people who were interviewed in this regard. These included former and current church officials who were directly involved in the S.A. educational activities, former and current head teachers and teachers of TSB and former students of TSB as well as some significant leaders such as retired chiefs who witnessed some of the events taking place. Officials in the MoEST as well as those of the Kenya Society for the Blind were also interviewed. The information that was sought from these informants was guided by the interview guides as indicated in appendices B, C, D and E. The items in the appendices were however modified according to the knowledge of the informants engaged.

In identifying informants from the above categories, purposive sampling technique was used. This implies that the researcher consciously decided who to include in the sample based on who was deemed to have information being sought. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the informants that were interviewed:

Table 3.1

Groups of Informants

Informants Category	**Number interviewed**
Church leaders (former and current)	3
School officials (former and current)	3
Teachers of TSB (from1945 to 2003)	6
Former students of TSB (from 1945 to 2003)	3
Officials in the MoEST	2
Significant leaders	2
Officials of KSB	2
Total	**21**

The numbers indicated in each group were determined based on prior inquiry of availability of designated persons especially from the school and the actual availability during the data collection period. Considering that interviews were only used to bridge gaps from the main source of this historical research, the archival source, a small number of informants were involved as indicated in Table 3.1 as recommended in historical research (Parkash, 2007). Since these informants were to provide information that was to be used in documenting the past because of their presence during these past occurrences, they are not considered as a representative sample of an existing population.

The secondary sources for this study included published materials such as journals, textbooks as well as online materials from the internet. Since the secondary sources are those in which the person providing the information of a given event was not present when the event was taking place but has only received his/her information from another person who may not have necessarily observed the said event directly (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003), the secondary sources were only used as a way of bridging gaps in the various pieces of primary evidence.

3.4 Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection procedure started with archival data collection from the TSB, archives of the SA church, KNA, MoEST archives and the KICD archives. These provided useful data about the developments achieved as well as about the efforts made in developing SE for the LWVI in Kenya in the specified period as well as the general developments and changes in the education sector from the year 1945 to 2003. The researcher spent time in these archives reading through the relevant documents available, noting significant features, occurrences, decisions, challenges and other relevant aspects that impact on education for the LWVI. Some of the documents were photocopied on permission for further analysis and presentation in the final report.

The researcher then collected data through oral interviews of the SA Church leaders, teachers who served at TSB before 2003, former students of TSB before 2003, officials in the MoEST as well as officials of Kenya Society for the Blind. During the entire period of data collection, the researcher was also studying the secondary sources in libraries and from the internet in order to bridge gaps of data from primary sources.

3.5 Evaluation of Data

To ensure reliability of the data collected, the researcher carried out a dual process of establishing the authenticity (external criticism) of the sources and validity of their contents (internal criticism) as suggested by Parkash (2007). This was further enhanced by use of triangulation as suggested by Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2013). The following subsections give a brief detail of how each of the approaches above was used.

3.5.1 External Criticism

External criticism refers to the genuineness of all documents the researcher uses (Parkash, 2007). External criticism was applied through scrutinizing the characteristics of authors of the documents that were used as sources. The qualifications of the authors were also verified to establish their abilities, authenticity, expertise and authority as reporters of events under investigation. The conditions and factors which influenced the production of these documents and the type of materials used in their production like paper and ink were also considered.

In particular, the following questions were used as a guide in the endeavor to achieve external criticism: (a) Who wrote the document? (b) Was the author living at that time? (c) For what purpose was the document written? (d) For whom was it intended and why? (e) When and where was the document written? (f) Is the date on the document accurate and could the details described have actually happened during this time? (g) Under what circumstances was the document written? and (h) Is there any possibility that the writer of the document might have been coerced? (Oketch, 2009).

3.5.2 Internal Criticism

Internal criticism is the analysis of the truthfulness and accuracy of the contents of a document (Parkash, 2007). In this research, this involved analysis of the authors' reports, their acquaintances with the facts and whether their reports were in agreement with other available information on the same topic by different people who also witnessed these events (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The researcher considered the following questions among others: (a) Do the contents make sense? (b) Could the event described have occurred at that time? (c) Would people have behaved as described? (d) Does the language of the document

suggest a bias of any sort? (e) Do other versions of the event exist? and (f) if so, do they present a different description of what happened? (Oketch, 2009).

3.5.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is a method of cross-validating information through seeking regularities in the data by comparing different informants' comments, settings and methods so as to identify recurring results in order to establish the credibility of the study (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2013). Triangulation was achieved in this study through comparison and integration of data obtained from three sources that include secondary sources, archival sources and data obtained through oral interviews.

3.6 Data Analysis

After the collection of data, the data was verified and validated before being used as historical evidence for the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The evidence was then analyzed qualitatively through documentary analysis and triangulation. The documentary analysis was guided by a documentary analysis schedule as shown in appendix G. The analysis led to the deduction of themes in the developments of education for LWVI during the period 1945 to 2003 as acquired from documentary sources and oral interviews. Deduction of themes began by developing a coding system where certain themes captured by the evidence were identified. This was intended to sort out the evidence where materials addressing particular themes were separated and categorized under identified topics. The evidence was then interpreted in view of the objectives of the problem under investigation. From this process, historical facts were established and the emerging trends together with any generalizations suggested by the data determined (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The outcome of the analysis was then presented descriptively as research findings of the study as provided in chapter four, five and six.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are an integral part of a qualitative research. Mwinzi (2012) reiterates the significance of ethical considerations particularly in educational qualitative research by noting that since such studies involve learning from human behaviour as the primary element, the dignity of those human beings must be protected. He further points out that while conducting research, the researcher ought to be cautious so as to avoid embarrassment, perpetration of pain, or infliction of other disastrous effects on the sources of information in the study. To

ensure adherence to ethical issues in this study, the researcher considered four issues of concern. These included authorization for the research, informed consent of the informants, anonymity and confidentiality of the informants, and acknowledgement of the sources used in the study.

3.7.1 Research Authorization

Concerning research authorization, the researcher sought clearance from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation before commencing data collection. The permit granted is as shown in appendices I and J. Permission was further sought from the County Commissioner's office and Ministry of Education office of Kiambu County in the Central region of Kenya where TSB is located. From these offices, permission was granted to visit the two TSB schools. Upon visiting Thika Primary School for the Visually Impaired, the researcher sought permission from the head teacher to collect the necessary information from the school. Similarly, the researcher obtained permission from the Principal, Thika High School for the Blind before collecting information from the school. Permission was also sought from the leadership of the Kenya National Archives, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and the Salvation Army to access archival documents from the areas under their jurisdiction.

3.7.2 Informed Consent

The principle of informed consent requires the researcher to ensure that the informants or respondents are fully informed about the nature, procedures, and possible risks that are involved in a given research before they give their assent of participation. This is because informants are human persons and moral agents who cannot be reduced to be objects or simply be used as means to an end (Mwinzi, 2012). It is in this regard that the researcher treated the informants with respect considering them as neutral contributors towards understanding the development of education for the LWVI during the period under study.

Upon meeting with the informants, the researcher explained clearly the research purpose and obtained informed consent as guided by appendix F. The researcher also made it clear that any informant had the right to retreat from participating in the study. To ensure that the informants willfully gave information without coercion or interruption, the researcher conducted interviews according to the informant's convenience in terms of availability and comfort. The

researcher also ensured that the informants were not asked embarrassing or demeaning questions that could interfere with the informants' attitude towards the study.

3.7.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality of the Informants

The principal of anonymity requires that the informant's identity is protected so as not to harm the provider as in the case of a contemporary qualitative research (Mwinzi, 2012). This however being a historical qualitative research, in which validity is strengthened by providing the identity of the informants, permission was sought from the informants for their identity to be revealed as indicated in appendix F. This is because historical research focuses on past occurrences and therefore the information provided may not necessarily be considered as harmful to the informant if his or her identity is disclosed.

For those informants who wished to remain anonymous however, or in the case where the researcher deemed that the information given by the informant is sensitive, then pseudo names were used (Creswell, 2012). Out of the 21 informants interviewed, three wished to remain anonymous and therefore hypothetical names A, B and C were used when citing their information in the document to protect their identity. All the informants were assured that the information that was being sought was solely intended for academic research and not for any other purpose that could be a source of worry. This assurance enhanced honesty in answering questions thus strengthening the reliability of data.

3.7.4 Acknowledgement of the Sources

In an effort to avoid plagiarism and academic fraud, the researcher ensured that all scholarly work used in the study were properly cited and referenced. The cited work included both published and unpublished materials that was quoted or inferred to either directly or indirectly from both primary and secondary sources. The citation and referencing was done using the format of the sixth edition of the American Psychological Association manual.

CHAPTER FOUR
DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN KENYA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings to the first objective of this study which focused on documenting the historical account of the development of education for the Learners with Visual Impairments (LWVI) in Kenya from 1945-2003 with special reference to Thika School for the Blind (TSB). In pursuit of this, the researcher delved into documents at KNA, Ministry of education, TSB and the SA church. In addition, some informants were interviewed. The respondents were allowed to respond to the questions with as many details as possible. Moreover, frequent probing questions were used to enrich the answers.

The researcher deduced eleven themes under development of education for the LWVI in Kenya. These include: early educational activities for the LWVI in Kenya and the establishment of TSB, early developments at Thika Institute for the Blind 1946-1956 and from Institute of the Blind to Thika School for the Blind. Others were development of primary education 1956-2003, development of secondary education at TSB, development of vocational and technical education at TSB, development of pre-primary school education at TSB, development of teacher education for teachers of the LWVI at TSB, development of girls' education at TSB and development in educational assistive equipment for the LWVI at TSB. Challenges that have been experienced in education for the LWVI at TSB also form part of the eleven themes. For clarity, some of the themes above that form topics under this chapter have been further divided into various sub-topics.

4.1 Early Educational Activities for the LWVI in Kenya and Establishment of Thika Institute for the Blind

Even though the first institution in Kenya to offer education for the persons with visual impairments was established in 1946, there is evidence of some disintegrated efforts that were not only aimed at caring for the blind but also aimed to offer some form of training to them. The first form of these care and educational services can be traced to the Church Missionary Society missionaries Ludwig Krapf and Johann Rebmann who arrived in Kenya in 1844 and 1846 respectively. In their mission station which they had established at Rabai, Rebmann and

Krapf set up a school for rehabilitating former slave children, some of whom were blind (Khanani, 2015).

It was not until 1942 that slightly more organized and focused training for the LWVI was initiated on a voluntary basis by the Salvation Army mission in Nairobi (KNA, MOH/3/282). This was facilitated by Mrs. Colonel Barell, an experienced person in training of the blind who had worked with the blind for several years in Jamaica. She started by gathering a few blind persons into temporary quarters in Nairobi and began teaching them how to read by the Braille system (KNA, DC/TTA/3/15/1). Figure 4.1 shows teaching in progress at the Salvation Army mission, Nairobi.

Figure 4.1: Teaching of LWVI in progress at the SA mission, 1943

Source: KNA, MOH/3/282

In 1944, the government became interested in the experimental activities of training the blind by Mrs. Barrell and therefore gave a promise of financial assistance to the SA mission on condition that they would organize and maintain on a larger scale the welfare work for the blind which had already commenced. This position was then discussed by the SA leadership in the same year who agreed that training should be put on a sound basis with government support. Plans were therefore made to move the institute to Thika.

The premises on which the institute was to be established at Thika served as a rehabilitation center for soldiers who were either physically or psychologically disabled by the ravages of the Second World War (SA, 2017). A letter by the department of Lands Hon. Secretary dated November 7, 1927 indicates that the SA started religious and educational activities at Thika from early 1926. They leased two plots for 99 years at a fee of 72 East African shillings from

which they carried out these activities (KNA, LND 42/27/1). In 1945 a rehabilitation center for ex-servicemen of Second World War was established at the Thika mission.

Thika mission was the preferred location for relocation of the training center for the blind for several reasons. One of the reasons was its central location in Kenya with easy accessibility from various parts of the country. It was also considered suitable due to its proximity to Nairobi, the country's capital city. The SA mission at Thika was only 27 miles from Nairobi along the Nyeri-Nanyuki branch of the East African Railways

The Salvation Army Mission agreed with the government that the institution was to remain under the management of the SA mission on behalf of government with the government's education department providing supervisory role and generally safeguarding government interests. An advisory committee was appointed to manage and provide guidelines on expansion of the school. The committee was comprised of the director of education as the chairperson, the director of medical services, the labor commissioner and the territorial commander of the SA Mission. Others were the District Commissioner (DC) Thika and the School Superintendent (KNA, MOH/3/282).

Accordingly, the Institute for the Blind was opened at Thika in early 1946. The official opening of the institute was presided over by His Excellency, the acting Governor Mr. G.M. Rennie on January 30, 1946 (KNA, DC/KSM/1/29/32). Senior-Major Edward Osborne, who had studied various phases of work among the blind in England was appointed as the Superintendent of the institute (KNA, MOH/3/282).

This section has partially fulfilled the first objective of the study which focused on documenting the origin and development of education for the LWVI in Kenya. The section has provided information on the early activities that led to establishment of TSB. Having started as a training center for a few blind persons at the Nairobi's SA center, TSB was founded upon the transfer of the training programs to Thika Center of the SA following the expression of interest by the government of the time in the training activities for the blind by the SA.

4.2 Early Developments at Thika Institute for the Blind, 1946-1956

As earlier stated, records indicate that in 1946, the center that was serving as a rehabilitation center for ex-soldiers was converted into the initial form of TSB, Thika Institute for the Blind

(SA, 2017; KNA, MOH/3/282). This conversion was as a result of a joint agreement by the SA mission and the government of the time to commence educational activities for the blind. The institute was to cater for the training of blind Africans although the Salvation Army mission stated that it was ready to respond to any inquiries and offer possible guidance to other non-African blind people (KNA, MOH/3/282). The institute started with an accommodation capacity of twenty five students. Admission to the institute was intended for the blind persons from the following groups of people:

a. Ex-servicemen from East African Territory
b. Civilian male adults under 25 years of age and without dependents
c. Boys from eight years and above

At its establishment, the institute was meant for training of male persons of different ages. The institute did not cater for the training of female persons until the year 1954 (KNA, CA/3/49). The institute enrolled any blind student from the Kenyan Colony who showed interest of schooling. As the institute grew in terms of student capacity, it allocated specific number of slots for every district. The District Commissioner (DC) in charge of every district was to ensure that slots allocated to his/her district were filled.

The institute was thus communicating to the DCs requesting them to identify and forward a given number of blind learners to the institute. For instance, a letter by the institute to the DC, Kitui district located in the Eastern part of Kenya shows that the district had been allocated eight slots for six boys and two girls while the neighboring Machakos district had been allocated six slots for four boys and two girls for the year 1955 (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11). The DCs were to ensure the positions were filled. However, some DCs were slow or rather reluctant in identifying and directing blind persons to the school leading to low enrolment in comparison to the capacity of the institute. This is revealed by a case in Kitui district where the Provincial Commissioner (PC) intervened and gave an ultimatum to the DC to ensure that the slots were filled. (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11).

Apart from the DCs who were obliged to identify and forward the candidates to the institute, enrolled boys were also charged with the responsibility of identifying other blind boys from their localities. This was occasioned by the low student enrollment in the early years at the institute that was attributed to lack of information about the school by most of the blind persons and their parents as well as negative attitudes towards blind persons. Some of the

parents were also not willing to let their blind children stay away from them considering that the institute was purely boarding (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11).

The institute therefore experienced low numbers of students in its early years after establishment despite the fact that learners' training and upkeep at the institute was free of charge (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11). The cost of schooling and upkeep was catered for by the SA church through the institute. The initial cost of getting the candidate to the institute was to be catered for by the DC of the district from which the candidate hailed from while the subsequent travelling expenses to and from vacations was paid by the institute (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11).

At the establishment of Thika Institute for the Blind and a few years that followed, there were two main areas of training that were provided by the institute. The first form was academic based that focused on literacy, numerical competence skills and use of Braille. This type of training was usually referred to as 'academical training'. The second and main type of training was in trade training in which learners were offered skills in different trades such as carpentry, masonry and basket making among others (KNA, AB/14/34).

The type and duration of the training offered to an individual was determined by the authorities of the institute. This was based on the age, background and ability of the individual as assessed by the authorities of the institute (KNA, MOH/3/282). It was clearly stated that no course was to detain any student longer than it was necessary. In the cases of adults, no course could exceed three years and this normally included one or two trades, according to the abilities of the student. Where the adult student had had previous education, he was permitted to enter classes for the learning of Braille. In cases of adolescents, the students were encouraged to undertake academic training in addition to trade training. Their training was to last from four to five years. Children on the other hand were taken in for full academic training and were not allowed to undertake trade training until towards the end of their training. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the type of training at the institute in its early years.

Table 4.1

Type and Nature of training at Thika Institute for the Blind 1946-1956

Students Group	**Type of training**	**Duration**
Adults	1-2 Trades	3 years
Adolescents	Academic training and trade training	4-5 years
Children	Academic training and trade training towards the end	7 years

Source: Generated by researcher from KNA, MOH/3/282

Academic Training included reading, writing, arithmetic, English and Swahili grammar, geography, history, hygiene and handwork. Trade courses included basket making, carpentry, shoe repairing, rope making, net making, mat making, gardening and brick making. Figure 4.2 and 4.3 show learners engagement in trade training in the early years of Thika Institute for the Blind.

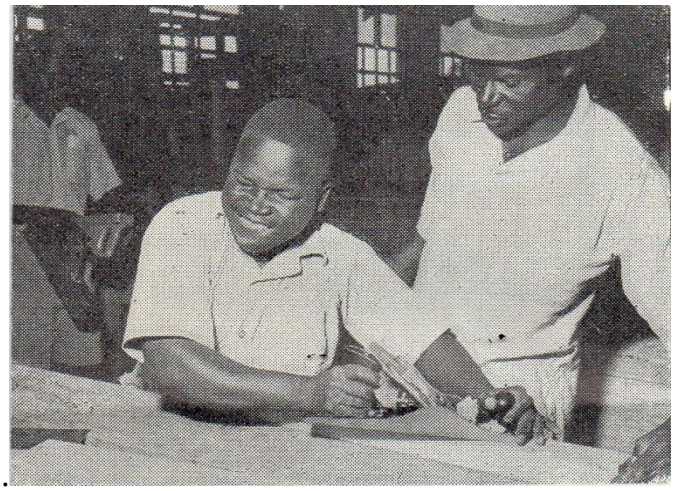

Figure 4.2: A student with visual impairment with his carpentry instructor at Thika Institute for the Blind, 1949 Source: KNA, MOH/3/282

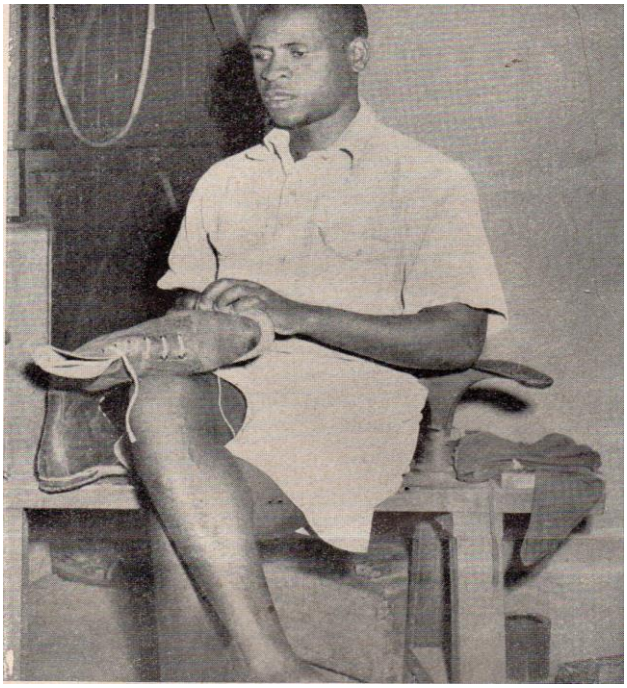

Figure 4.3: A student with blindness perfecting his shoe making skill at Thika Institute for the Blind, 1951

Source: KNA, MOH/3/282

In offering Academic and trade training at Thika Institute for the Blind, English was the preferred medium of teaching. In some instances however, classes were conducted in vernaculars such as Kikuyu, Kikamba, and Dholuo. This was done based on the presence of learners who were not very much conversant with either English or Swahili languages as well as availability of instructors who were conversant with the individual vernacular languages (KNA, MOH/3/282).

As a pioneer institution for the blind in the larger East African region, Thika Institute for the Blind admitted students from all the territories within the East African region. The institution thus catered for blind students from Tanganyika and Uganda besides those from Kenya. This was done on the basis of application by potential learners from the other territories and availability of admission slots at the institute. In 1952 for instance, the numbers were as shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Table of Student Enrolment at Institute for the Blind, Thika in 1952 by Territory

Territory	**Number of Students**
Uganda	3
Tanganyika	5
Kenya	48
Total	56

Source: KNA, MOH/3/282

Table 4.2 indicates the significance of the Institute upon its establishment not only to Kenya but to the surrounding countries as well by admitting blind persons from Uganda and Tanganyika in addition to those from Kenya. G. Milimu (Oral Interview, June 13, 2018) opines that it was the first institution purely for the blind in Africa. This is also confirmed by the proceedings of the 1961 inter-territorial conference on work for the blind held from 13th to 15th of February at Nairobi in which it is was observed that other regions in Africa had started integration programs for the blind but there wasn't an institution purely for the blind (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4). The total number of enrolled students at the school shown in the table 4.2 was however only male since the institute had not started admitting female students.

Discipline at the institute was highly valued and any learner who showed signs of indiscipline was expelled. This is indicated by several letters of expulsion that were seen by the researcher. For instance, the researcher came across a letter written by Thika Institute for the Blind dated July 27, 1948 that was addressed to the DC in charge of Kitui district in Eastern region of Kenya. The letter contained explanation concerning expulsion of a blind student from the school who was over age and yet reluctant to follow instructions (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11). The letter was addressed to the DC Kitui district because the disorderly student hailed from that district. This particular letter written by the School Superintendent, Major Edward C. Osborne showed that the school valued morality and indiscipline of any form was not tolerated at the school.

The institute's observance of high levels of discipline however faced resistance from majority of the learners some of whom were adults and even parents. In 1952 for instance, the learners boycotted classes and demonstrated on the mistreatment they were receiving in the name of enhancing discipline. The learners cited lack of free time and restricted movement and association within the institute. The learners fury was however quelled by the management of the institute through calming of the learners and promising to accommodate their views (KNA, BY/12/21). This incidence however served as an eye-opener to the management of the institute who observed that the institute needed to admit only children who can easily be managed and guided (KNA, BY/12/21). The 1952 students demonstrations which Milimu (2008) refers to as a strike could therefore be cited a precursor to the conversion of the institute to the primary school.

This section has provided some of the answers that were sought by the first objective of the study concerning the development of TSB. The section has shown that TSB started as an institute for the blind with provision of training to the male individuals only, an aspect that had not been shown by previous studies. The section has further shown the type and duration of training that was provided in the early years besides other enlightenments on the mode of enrolment and the values of the school.

4.3 From Institute for the Blind to Thika School for the Blind

In December 1953, the government formed an ad hoc committee for the blind that brought a major shift in the nature of education offered at TSB. The ad hoc committee was established

as an interim measure until such a time the proposed new foundation for the blind was established (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4). The committee resolved to change the Thika Institute for the Blind to a primary school and to therefore gradually phase out the non-primary school pupils from the year 1954. It was envisaged that the vocational and trade training programs were to complete the phasing out process by the year 1956. The ad hoc committee together with the school management further agreed that the primary school was to be mixed, with approximately one-third of the pupils being girls (KNA, DC/KJD/3/11/7). In 1954, Thika Institute for the Blind therefore changed its name to Thika School for the Blind.

The School Management Committee (SMC) further agreed that pupils to be enrolled were to be carefully selected with a view to a reasonable proportion of them being capable of proceeding for further studies. The SMC suggested that the District Education Officers could, with guidance, select a number of suitable candidates but the final selection was to be carried out by a staff member of Thika School for the Blind. The SMC further drew a three year plan in which the school was to have increased enrolment as well as introduction of teacher training programs. The program for the development of the school as an eight year primary school with accommodation for 100 pupils and an attached Teacher Training Center was thus envisaged as shown in figure 4.4.

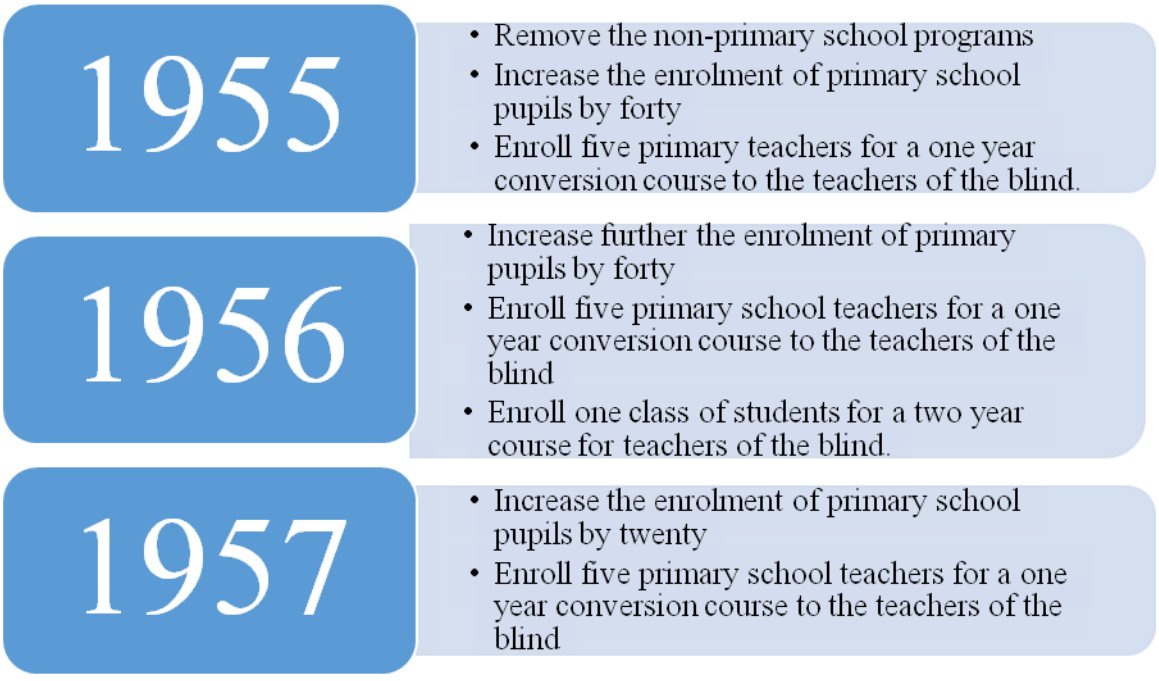

Figure 4.4: Thika Primary School for the Blind three year Development Plan, 1955-1957

Source: Generated by the researcher from KNA, BY/12/21

In 1956, the School Management Committee (SMC) held a series of meetings as a follow-up to the recommendations that had been adopted earlier on in the year 1954. Led by its Chairman, Mr. Wadley, the SMC noted progress realized in the eleven years of the school's existence. The committee noted that these eleven years of the school's existence were experimental since there had been no clear policy that guided the school's programs. The committee therefore concluded that there was need to formulate a definite policy. The SMC thus drew up the policy in August, 1956 (KNA, BY/12/21).

In the new policy, Thika School for the Blind was made to restructure its programs to be identical to the pattern of schools for the sighted in the colony. The school was therefore placed under a new committee, the Regional Education Board, as suggested by the education department (KNA, BY/12/21). The terms of service for the new committee were as set forth in education ordinance No. 58 of 1952 and government notice No. 724 of 1955 which dealt with school committees for aided schools. The policy required that the chairperson of the SMC was to be a non-government official and therefore Mr. Gee was appointed to take the position that had been held by Mr. Wadley, the director of education.

The school therefore adopted a policy of an eight-year academic program which approximated as much as possible to that carried out by the primary and intermediate schools for sighted children. Upon completion of the eight years of schooling, the blind learners were to undertake industrial and vocational training. In addition to the new formulated program of eight years of schooling, the school had eight teacher trainees by 1956. This program was to continue parallel to regular education and therefore a proposal to build a separate dormitory for teacher trainees was accepted in the SMC meeting held October 10, of 1956 (KNA, BY/12/21).

By 1956, TSB had therefore made significant strides from its establishment as an institute to a primary school for the blind with definite programs. This marked the beginning of formal primary school education for the LWVI alongside their sighted peers in regular schools. Figure 4.5 gives a summary of the early developments for Thika Institute for the Blind before and after its establishment up to 1956.

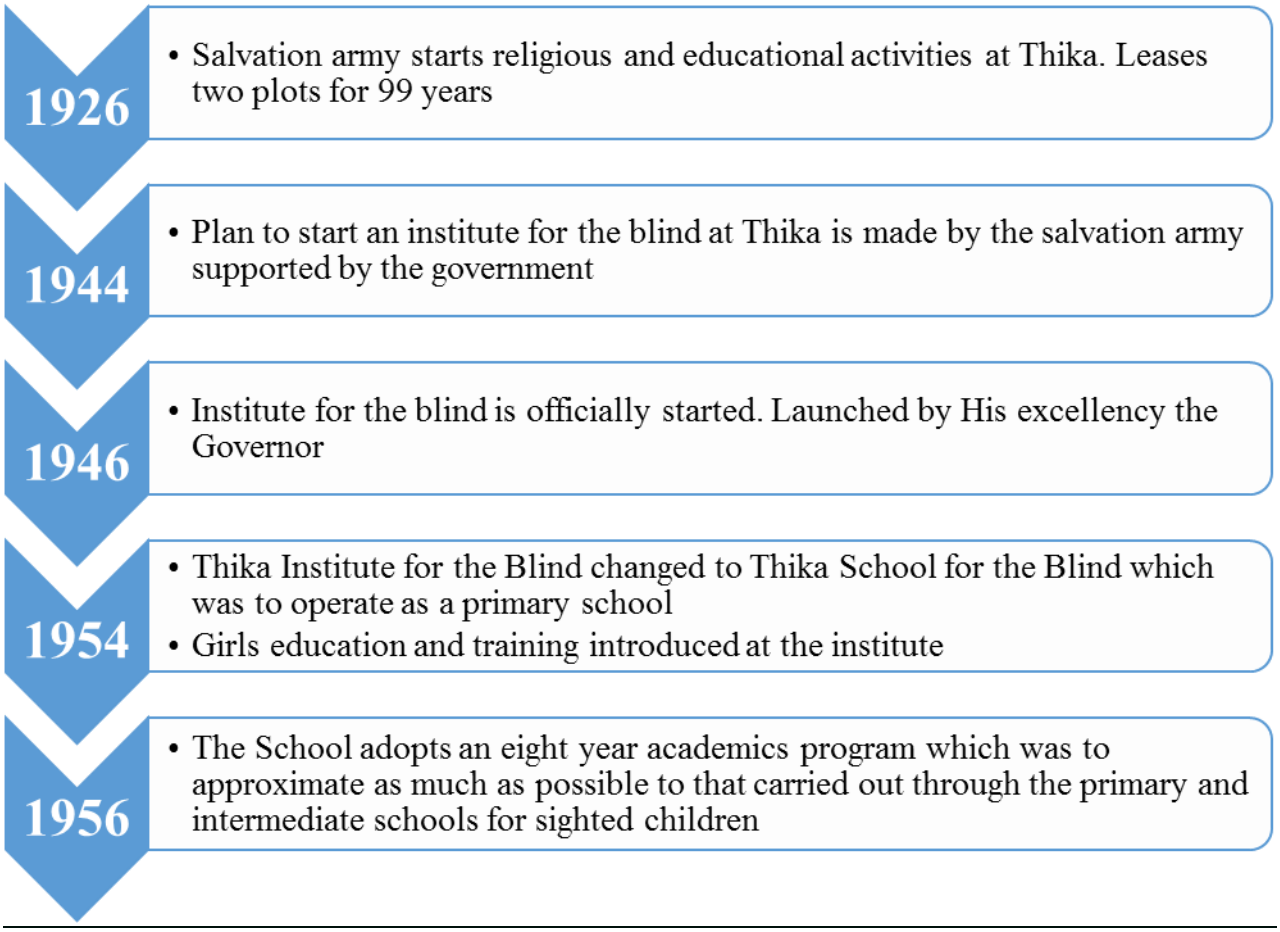

Figure 4.5: Key events in the early years of the establishment of Thika Institute for the Blind

Source: Developed by the researcher from KNA, DC/KSM/1/29/32; KNA, MOH/3/282; SA, 2017; KNA, BY/12/21.

This section has provided the strides made in the development of education for the LWVI at TSB showing the transformation from an institute for the blind to a primary school. The different forms of education that emerged at Thika School for the Blind namely academic education for primary school, vocational training in form of trade training, teacher education and girls' education as well as pre-primary school education center and secondary education that emerged later are discussed separately in this chapter.

4.4 Development of Primary Education in TSB, 1956-2003

As earlier indicated, TSB started as an institute for the blind that mainly targeted older children and adults to study various trades so as to enable them become independent in life.

Alongside this however, was an academic type of education that could be associated with primary schooling. This academic education led to the institute being officially changed in to a primary school in the year 1956. This section will attempt to document the journey of primary education at TSB. The section has been divided into three subsections namely general developments for the primary school, leadership at the primary school and academic developments and achievements at the primary school.

4.4.1 General Developments at Thika Primary School for the Blind

Primary education at TSB commenced at the start of the institute in form of what was called 'Academical education' as derived from the term academic education. In the mainstream education system in Kenya, the primary education level consisted of six years before 1950 since the education structure in place was 6-2-4 which denoted six years of primary schooling, two years of junior secondary schooling, and four years of high school (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014). Nevertheless, the academic education offered at TSB did not adhere to the six years since the education provided was not for examinations but was mainly offered as a starting point for learners before they could undertake trade courses. This applied to children and adolescents but the learners who were considered over age were not allowed to undertake academic education but started trade training directly (KNA, MOH/3/282).

The academic education at TSB comprised of some aspects that were related to what was being taught in the mainstream primary schools. Such aspects included reading, writing, arithmetic, English and Swahili grammar, geography and history. The depth of these subjects was however shallow with main focus on the basics. In addition to these subjects, there were other aspects in academic education such as hygiene and handwork that were aimed at enabling the blind learners to be as independent as possible. In offering these academic subjects at TSB, English was the preferred medium of instruction with the first lessons covering the alphabet written in Braille. The value of instruction in English was appreciated in that Braille literature in English language was plentiful and easily accessible at that moment, while there was no such literature in local languages (KNA, MOH/3/282).

The duration through which academic knowledge was offered alongside vocational training was considered as experimental period which went on for eleven years up to 1956. The development from the experimental years was facilitated by an ad hoc Committee for the Blind that was formed towards the end of 1953. In 1954, the ad hoc Committee for the Blind

agreed to change Thika Institute for the Blind to a primary school and to remove the non-primary pupils by the end of the same year. This implied that the school was to offer eight years of primary schooling as in the mainstream education since the system in place which had commenced in 1952 was 4-4-4 which denoted four years of primary schooling, four years of intermediate schooling, and four years of secondary school (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014).

By 1956, the primary school was on course. The school registered its first candidates for the Kenya African Preliminary Examination (KAPE). However, the non-primary education had not been scrapped off as earlier envisaged since the ad hoc committee had not made sufficient plans on how to terminate the non-academic programs including where they were to be moved. The SMC members however were of the opinion that there was need to formulate a definite policy of aligning the school structure to that of the sighted schools in the colony (KNA, BY/12/21) regardless of other non-academic programs that were being offered in the school. The School therefore adopted an eight year academic program which comprised of four years of primary schooling and four years of intermediate schooling after which industrial and vocational training could be commenced.

The learners' age for enrolment to the primary school was to be as far as possible, comparable with to that of sighted learners joining mainstream primary schools. The curriculum and the timetable also followed those adopted in regular primary schools but with certain revisions and adaptations as was necessary in the case of the children with visual impairments (KNA, BY/12/21). The emphasis of the curriculum was however directed towards technical training and the general scheme of work was designed towards that end. As several developments were being realized at TSB, discipline and high moral standards were still being observed through enforcement of various moral requirements. Some of the records accessed showed some female students being sent away from school due to early pregnancies, while some boys were also sent away because of engaging in sexual activities in school (KNA, BY/12/21).

In 1956, the SMC adopted a transition plan of implementing the eight years study program but with adaptations to cater for different levels of learners based on their ability (KNA, BY/12/21). In the plan, all pupils admitted to the primary school were to complete training up to standard six. The learners were however to be classified into three different grades during the fourth year of study at standard four. The first category was that of low grade pupils who were deemed as being unlikely to benefit by continuation. They were to have two year

ordinary handwork training and therefore complete their studies at standard six. The second category was that of medium grade pupils who were deemed as being likely to benefit from advanced technical training. These were placed on two to four year course and therefore finishing their studies between standard six and eight. The last category comprised of top grade pupils who were deemed as being likely to qualify in professional subjects. These were to take a special four year course in subjects they appeared most adaptable to, provided that there were definite prospects of placing them in positions for which they were trained (KNA, BY/12/21).

In 1959, there was another major shift in the structure of education for the blind at Thika School for the Blind. The SMC made a request to the department of education for permission to extend the schooling duration from eight to ten years. This was instigated by the SMC view that the blind needed more time for hand work (KNA, BY/12/21). The request for extension was also informed by a new development; the establishment of Machakos Institute for the Blind in 1958. Upon its establishment, the institute for the blind at Machakos had laid out plans to enroll learners from the age of seventeen years and above for vocational and technical training (KNA, BY/12/21). This entry age to Machakos Institute for the Blind was slightly above the usual age of learners leaving TSB that ranged between 13 to 16 years old. The learners from TSB were therefore to stay at home from one to three years before they became eligible to join Machakos Training Institute for the Blind.

The SMC therefore sought extension to provide for a larger scope in the curriculum for handwork and to cover the gap which existed from the time a pupil formerly completed eight years of schooling (13-16 years old) and the age at which he became eligible for admission to the Machakos Institute for the Blind (17 years old), or a suitable age at which to begin work outside the school (KNA, BY/12/21). The request was therefore made to the department of education in May 1959 through a representation of the TSB school management committee that visited the education department. Upon receipt and consideration of the request, the education department granted permission to TSB to extend the schooling period to ten years as requested. This paved the way for ten years of primary schooling.

By 1959, the school population had increased to 179 students as a result of increased number of classes due to the extension of schooling period as well as increased enrolment. The increased student population resulted to a strain on the facilities and resources that were

available. However, the school through the support of the SA made some infrastructural developments to ease the strain that was being experienced. These included upgrading the school sanitation system at a cost of £3,350, extension of teachers' houses at a cost of £300, construction of a sickbay and dispensary as well as installation of internal communication scheme to ease communication and speed up training of telephone operators (KNA-BY/12/21).

In 1960, the school had reached its saturation point in terms of student population with a population of 200 students, the maximum number that the school could accommodate (KNA, BY/12/21). It was therefore agreed by the SMC that the intake of new entrants be limited to 20 pupils every year. This created limitation in terms of access to education to very many children with visual impairments considering that this small number of twenty was to be distributed across the country. The researcher came across many letters of rejection for admission in the early 1960s to blind learners who had applied to be admitted to Thika Primary School for the Blind (KNA, DC/TTA/3/15/1; KNA, DC/KJD/3/11/7). Following this crisis, a letter was written by the SMC of Thika Primary School for the Blind to KSB requesting for necessary action to be taken towards expansion of education for the blind.

Earlier on in 1958, the KSB had worked with the Catholic mission to establish St. Lucy School for the blind in Meru but the number of the children with visual impairments who were to be enrolled in the then only two schools exceeded the schools' capacity. It was in this regard that KSB in joint efforts with the Catholic Mission established St. Oda School for the blind in 1961 in Nyanza region of Kenya. KSB also worked with the Salvation Army Mission to establish both Likoni School for the blind and Kibos School for the blind in 1965.

After Kenya's independence in 1963, TSB was removed from the control of the Salvation Army Church to become a public primary school for the visually impaired (TSB, P/1/2005). This implied that all the aspects of the school including management, enrolment and staffing were to be facilitated by the government. The Salvation Army Church however remained an active stakeholder of the school being the sponsor up-to-date. Apart from employing and paying the teaching staff through the Teachers Service Commission, the government also started paying the non-teaching staff through the school's Board of Governors (BOG).

As a special school that required more personnel to aid the learners with visual impairments in their daily routines, the number of government paid staff at Thika School for the Blind was

inadequate to meet the its demands. The Salvation Army therefore employed and paid more non-teaching staff personnel that worked alongside those employed by the government. These mission employees were paid from the donations and grants to the school that were channeled through the Salvation Army (TSB, P/3/1997). The school also underwent structural changes of shifting from the then 8-10 years of primary schooling to the 7 years of primary education. This was in conformity with the changes in other primary schools following the recommendations of the Kenya Education Commission report of 1964 that introduced the 7-4-2-3 system of education which denoted seven years of primary schooling, four years of secondary schooling, two years of high school and three years of university schooling.

In 1984, the school made infrastructural expansion by building a total of five new classrooms. This was done in preparation for the newly introduced 8-8-4 system of education which denotes eight years of primary schooling, four years of secondary schooling and four years of university schooling. (TSB, P/3/1997). As the school was preparing to transit to the new 8-4-4 system of education, the school celebrated its 45th anniversary in 1986 and later on, the 50th anniversary in 1991. In both the anniversaries, the school resolved to embark on modernization and expansion of the school structures some of which were too old. It is in this regard that a laundry room was constructed, a borehole constructed, ten teachers houses constructed among other developments that were completed by 1997 leading to uplifting the face of the school (TSB, P/3/1997). Figure 4.6 shows the TSB pupils celebrating the completion of the borehole project that solved water problems at the school. The borehole has since then served as the main source of water to the school up-to-date.

Figure 4.6: TSB learners at the newly constructed borehole, 1997
Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

The school has continued to expand in terms of student population as well as in terms of resources up to date. As at 2002, Thika primary school for the blind had a population of 190 students. This population was comprised of 108 boys and 82 girls. The strides made by TSB in terms of leadership and academic developments from 1946 to 2003 are discussed in later sections.

4.4.2 Leadership at the Thika Primary School for the Blind, 1945-2003

Since its establishment in 1946, TSB was led by the Salvation Army officers with the title of 'School Superintendent'. The first Superintendent at the school was Senior-Major Edward Osborne who had studied various phases of work among the blind in England (KNA, MOH/3/282). With his expertise, Osborne pioneered the educational activities for the blind at the time when there was no policy, trained teachers, resources or curriculum consideration for the LWVI. With the support of other stakeholders, he led the school in setting up programs of study and enrolling blind students at the time when schooling for the blind was unknown in Kenya.

In 1957 Major Osborne was transferred to South Africa for other duties and Major Gordon Swansubarry was appointed by the Salvation Army to take over from him in January 1958. Having similar experience in training of the blind, Major Swansubarry continued with the work of his predecessor in planning and implementing programs for the blind. He also continued with teacher training programs for teachers of the blind at TSB, a program that had been initiated by his predecessor (KNA, MOH/3/282).

After Kenya attained its independence in 1963, the school was taken over by the government but in close collaboration with the Salvation Army Church. The government therefore posted a headmaster alongside teachers not only to Thika primary school for the blind but to all other Salvation Army maintained schools from 1967. In most of the cases, the headmaster posted to TSB was usually a member of the Salvation Army. Despite this move, the Salvation Army still retained their School Superintendents to run their special schools, TSB included (TSB, P/2/1978). The first government posted headmaster at TSB was Mr. Titus Kioko. Table 4.3 provides the list of officers who have headed the school since its establishment while figure 4.7 is a photograph of one of the headmasters who served TSB satisfactorily despite being blind.

Table 4.3

List of Headmasters of Thika Primary School for the Blind 1945-2003

FROM	TO	NAME
January 1946	December 1957	Senior-Major Edward Osborne
January 1958	December 1968	Maj. Swansubarry
January 1969	December 1974	Titus Kioko
January 1972	December 1974	Captain Asiema
January 1975	December 1980	Mr. Luke Wambua
January 1981	December 1986	Mr. Joseph Charo
January 1987	December 1993	Mr. Anderson Kagema
January 1994	October 1995	Mr. Daniel K Munyao
January 1995	November 1997	Mr. Gedeon Mwango
November 1997	July 2006	Mr. Stephene Gitau

Source: Plaque of headmasters at Thika Primary school for the Blind

Figure 4.7: Mr. Mwango, head teacher, Thika Primary School for the Blind (1995-1997)

Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

The introduction of headmasters serving alongside the School Superintendents eventually led to management conflicts between the School Superintendent and the headmaster not only at

TSB but even in other Salvation Army maintained schools such as Joytown Primary School for the Crippled (now called Joytown Primary School for the Physically Challenged). These conflicts were instigated by supremacy contests as to who was more senior than the other. This culminated into wrangles on the roles that were to be performed by each, with both fighting for control of school funds. Interestingly, each of the leader believed that he/she was the one with the mandate to control the school's activities. The wrangles derailed progress and smooth running of the school's activities and this threatened the goodwill of donors.

Following these conflicts, a special meeting was convened by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education in the year 1972 to draw up proposals for the dual responsibilities of the superintendent and the headmaster. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Permanent Secretary, the Teachers Service Commission and the Salvation Army (TSB, P/2/1978). As a result of this meeting, a description of the respective responsibilities of each of the two officers was drawn up. An understanding was reached that both the superintendent and the headmaster were to work in complete accord in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill. The headmaster was charged with the responsibility of directing the operation of the academic program and the superintendent was to serve in a supervisory role and coordinate the keeping of school accounts which included the grants from the ministry and the Salvation Army funds (TSB, P/2/1978). This technically made the superintendent to be overall in charge of the school.

The management conflicts however continued with the headmasters in the SA maintained special schools demanding similar authority as their counterparts in other schools. At TSB the conflicts escalated in 1975 following the posting of a new headmaster, Mr. Wambua after the death of the previous headmaster. The headmaster wrote to the Ministry of Education seeking intervention on the responsibilities and authority over various issues in the school (TSB, P/2/1978). It was at this point that some of the responsibilities such as managing and keeping records of government funds was shifted from the superintendent to the headmaster.

In 1977, the Salvation Army Church took a decision that brought a shift in the leadership of the school by withdrawing the School Superintendent leaving the school to be led by the headmaster. The decision was effected from January 1978. The headmasters that were posted to the school by the government through TSC were previously working under the Superintendents (TSB, P/2/1978). This move to withdraw the superintendent was explained as

being aimed at unifying the school administration to that of other regular schools as well as to stabilize the schools' administration and improve moral standards in the school (TSB, P/2/1978). In replacement of the superintendent, the church gave a Salvation Army officer who was to serve as a teacher under the headmaster and serve as a school chaplain to help the headmaster in maintaining the high standard of morals established before (TSB, P/2/1978). The headmaster was therefore recognized as a substantive authority for the school representing both the Salvation Army Church and the Ministry of education.

The move to withdraw the SA school administrators from the schools however made the church and the schools by extension to lose most of the donors whose donations played a key role in operations and developments of the schools. This was because most donors wanted the control of their donations to be under trusted church leaders. This led to financial problems at TSB in the years that followed after the change. The withdrawal of some of the donors as well as financial challenges experienced by the church in supporting the school led to the Salvation Army reviewing their policies on management of their special schools.

In the 1980s, the Salvation Army resolved to reintroduce their own representatives as managers of their special schools under the title of 'School Administrator'. These officials were posted in each SA special school to work alongside the head teacher in order to take care of the interests of the church and that of donors (Informant A, Oral Interview, June 10, 2018). This move was explained as aiming at regaining the confidence of the donors.

However, after a short time, the administrators started experiencing conflicts with head teachers on management issues and the roles to be played by each one of them once again. These conflicts between the SA administrators and the head teachers continued through the years until 1998 when a meeting was convened by the SA Territorial Commander with an aim of ending the conflicts. The meeting was attended by the Ministry of education officials, headmasters and the SA school administrators. From the deliberations of the meeting, it was agreed that the Head teacher would be the overall in charge but he or she was to work closely with the SA administrator in the school. The conflicts however continued and this still made more donors that were supporting the school to pull out. For instance, the schools main donor, Christoffel Blinden Mission gave a notice of withdrawal of its funding as from the year 2001 (TSB, S/3/2003).

In 2001, the Salvation Army therefore made the decision to pull out their School Administrators that were in charge of each school performing management roles alongside the school head teachers. This left the chaplains as the only full time representatives of the church in the schools with their role being limited to spiritual guidance. The SA also closed its financial account through which donations to the school was channeled. These decisions were aimed at solving conflicts and to allow the schools to be managed from one central point, the headmaster's office.

The closing of the financial account however generated worry to the school management as evidenced in the minutes of several board meetings of 2001 (TSB, P/1/2005). The worry was mainly over the sponsorship and donations to the schools that were previously channeled through the church. The Salvation Army however explained the necessity of this move and made assurance to the school management that it will continue channeling funds to the school through the BOG account after closing the mission account that was managed by the withdrawn SA administrators (TSB, P/1/2005).

The change in administration of the Salvation Army special schools in 2001 did not only affect the SA administrators but affected all other school employees who were previously hired and were being paid by the Salvation Army. This led to all the twenty one workers in Thika primary School for the Blind being laid off as they were declared redundant. The situation created a critical shortage in the schools' workforce which affected the smooth running of the school. By 2003, the school was therefore struggling with meagre resources from the ministry to pay its staff since the school required more officers to help it's learners with visual impairments in leading a normal life.

The reduced number of staff created a challenge to the students since they lacked some of the basic services such as those provided by house mothers. These challenges associated with limited staff and constant conflicts in the management of the school can be interpreted as a negative social environments with respect to the Social Development Theory. In terms of this theory, more personnel to aid the LWVI is one of the social factors in society that determines educational development of the LWVI. Enough personnel ensures that learners' needs such as hygiene, easy access to basic facilities such as washrooms and dining room are met. This makes the learners to be more comfortable and hence more able to concentrate on their studies.

One of the former students at Thika primary school explained that the laying off of staff led them to lack house mothers who were like parents to them. She posits that: ‘‘we felt like we have been left on our own because the people who were caring for us and whom we were spending most of the time with outside class were gone. This increased the feeling of loneliness and definitely affected our concentration in class ’’ (J. Mungai, Oral Interview, June 13, 2018). The inadequate number of staff therefore served as a hindrance to the learners towards achieving their full potential.

Despite the negative challenges caused by the withdrawal of SA representatives in the management of schools, peace and stability was maintained at TSB. This was due to the school being led from a single central command of the headmaster. By 2003, the headmaster of the school was Mr. Stephen Gitau and the school has up to the present continued to be managed by the government’s posted headmasters through the TSC.

4.4.3 Academic Developments and Achievements at Thika Primary School for the Blind

As a pioneer school for the learners with visual impairments in Kenya, TSB experienced a number of challenges in its early years. These ranged from lack of adapting some features in the curriculum to suit the blind, lack of enough trained teaching and non-teaching staff as well as limited resources for effective teaching and learning (KNA, BY/12/21). These challenges therefore impacted negatively on optimum acquisition of education by the LWVI in the school. Prior to 1956, the attempts of enrolling the students for the national examinations were not very successful because the learners did not qualify or failed upon taking the examinations (KNA, BY/12/21). This was because most of the learners had not undergone through the eight years of primary education schooling but were in most cases enrolled for the examinations based on their age. Educational acquisition was therefore mainly measured through observation of learners’ competence in performing learned skills especially in the trade courses.

The school however made an educational milestone in 1956 after recording the first success in Kenya African Preliminary Examinations (KAPE). These examinations were usually done at the end of the eight years in the then 4-4-4 system of education (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014). In the KAPE results of 1956, eight out of ten candidates got a pass and were therefore awarded certificates (KNA, BY/12/21). In 1957 the number of successes dropped to six out of the

twelve students who sat for the KAPE examinations. This drop might have mirrored that of the other Africans in general because of the policy which required that only less than 5 percent of African children were to proceed to secondary school (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014) Table 4.4 provides a summary of the performance of TSB in KAPE results from the year 1956 to 1963.

Table 4.4

Performance of TSB Learners in KAPE Examinations, 1956-1963

Year	Total Number of candidates	Number of candidates who passed
1956	10	8
1957	12	6
1958	12	7
1959	14	7
1960	13	8
1961	14	7
1962	15	9
1963	16	8

Source: KNA, BY/12/21

The school also continued to produce skilled learners in different trades. The learners took different destinations based on the skills they had acquired. Some were sent for factory training and by 1956, they were reported to be doing well. Some other students were employed at East African Tobacco Company while others joined Post Office Training School at Lang'ata for training in telephony (KNA, BY/12/21).

After Kenya's independence in 1963, TSB adopted a new structure of education which had been recommended by the Kenya Education Commission of 1964. This comprised of seven years of primary schooling, four years of secondary schooling, two years of high school and three to five years of university education [7-4-2-3] (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014). In the new system, the students sat for the Kenya Preliminary Examination (KPE) at Grade seven up to 1967 when KPE was replaced with the East African Certificate of Primary Education (EACPE). The change in examination systems however did not affect the number of candidates from TSB who qualified to proceed to secondary school to a greater level.

Even though the number of students sitting for final national examinations at TSB increased as from 1964 due to removal of the Competitive Entrance Examinations that were done at Grade 4, the number of LWVI proceeding to secondary schools did not rise to commensurate this increase. Records accessed indicated that the number of LWVI from TSB who proceeded to secondary school were six in the year 1964, seven in 1965 and eight in 1966. (KNA, BY/12/21; TSB, P/2/1978). This could be attributed to lack of a special secondary school for the LWVI since the succeeding number rose to fifteen in 1967 upon the establishment of a secondary school at TSB.

From 1967 to 1977, the learners at TSB undertook EACPE examinations. During this period, the performance of learners however remained almost similar to that of the previous years. The reason could be because EACPE, the East African based examinations, assessed learners based on the same structure of education as the previous Kenya Preliminary Examinations that had been introduced after independence. Records accessed indicated that the number of students who proceeded to secondary school during this period ranged from eight to fifteen in every year (TSB, P/2/1978), a state that was not very different from the previous years. Upon the collapse of the East African Community in 1977, the EACPE examination was replaced with Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), the Kenyan based examinations at Grade seven but there was still no major impact on the performance of TSB learners in this final examinations (TSB, P/2/1978).

As a result of limitations associated with visual impairment and lack of enough resources, the school's achievements from independence to 1990s fluctuated from fair to good (Milimu, 2018). This state continued even after the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education which led to final examinations changing from CPE to Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). In 1995 for instance, only ten students out of the forty nine that sat for KCPE qualified for secondary school admission. The headmaster however helped three pupils to secure admission in regular schools while eleven joined various training workshops (TSB, P/3/1997). This poor performance might have influenced the teachers to assess the preparedness of 35 candidates that were to sit for the 1996 KCPE examinations. In the assessment, it was found that eleven candidates were not well prepared and therefore in consultation with their parents, they were advised to repeat standard seven with the hope that they would become more prepared in the forthcoming 1997 KCPE examinations (TSB, P/3/1997).

In 1997, the school registered 25 students for KCPE out of which 17 joined Thika High School for the Blind. (TSB, P/1/2005). Even though this was a slight improvement from the 1996 results, the strategy of making students repeat at class seven was unsustainable and only showed how the school was struggling with improving the academic performance. From 1999 to 2003, the performance of Thika Primary School for the Blind was fair with the mark ranging from slightly below to slightly above average. Table 4.5 provides a summary of KCPE performance for the five years preceding 2003.

Table 4.5

KCPE Performance at Thika Primary School for the Blind 1999-2004

YEAR	AVERAGE MARK
1999	348.9/700
2000	358.92/700
2001	236.1/500
2002	275.2/500
2003	242.71/500

Source: TSB, P/1/2005

In terms of student population sitting for the final examinations, records indicate that the numbers continuously grew with time through the years (TSB, P/3/1997; TSB, P/1/2005). This could be associated with the general growth of the school population, improved resources and increased awareness of education for the LWVI in the society. Starting with 10 students in 1956, the numbers grew and by 1998, the school registered 45 candidates for KCPE, the highest number achieved since its establishment.

In terms of talent nurturing and development, the school has been involved in co-curricular activities such as sports, music and drama over the years with outstanding performances. When asked on the achievements of Thika Primary School for the Blind, one of the informants, a former student and the current music trainer and teacher at the school stated as follows:

> ‘‘Music, yes music is the best achievement we ever made in my life as a student at Thika School for the Blind. We used to perform up to national level and even though we could not see our audience, we knew they were enjoying it from the applause we were receiving. Music brought joy to our lives and made us to travel to various parts of the country meeting different

dignitaries. It raised our self-esteem and made us believe that we are able....'' (P. G. Maina, Oral Interview, July 13, 2018)

This shows how students at TSB loved and put their efforts in music. The sentiments of Mr. Maina are confirmed by various minutes of meetings of the SMC in which it was widely noted on how the school was performing well in music and other co-curricular activities (KNA, BY/12/21; TSB, P/3/1997). Figures 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 are photographs of learners engaging in co-curricular activities.

Figure 4.8: A learner with visual impairment playing a musical instrument in 1979
Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

Figure 4.9: LWVI at TSB engaging in high jump 1992

Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

Figure 4.10: LWVI at TSB playing football
Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

The school continued to perform well in both academics and co-curricular activities up to the year 2003. In the year 2001, the school was awarded trophies and certificates during Thika Municipality prize giving day for three years steady improvement in KCPE performance, best overall in music and best managed school. All these awards were based on evaluation of the year 2000 (TSB, P/1/2005). The school was also awarded for participating in music and other co-curricular activities up to national level.

This section covered the developments that were realized at TSB in terms of primary school education. The section has therefore contributed to the realization of the first objective of the study which focused on documenting the developments made at TSB. Initially, primary school education at TSB started only as preliminary knowledge before one could commence vocational training. As time went by however, primary school education at TSB developed to the level of undertaking national and regional examinations. There were successes in these examinations and some students managed to proceed to secondary school education. The section has also shown developments in leadership at the school as well as the school's involvement in various activities. The section has therefore contributed to the existing literature in history of education in Kenya as well as to the area of special education.

4.5 Development of Secondary Education at TSB

At its establishment in 1946, Thika Institute for the Blind did not have the provision of training learners up to secondary school level. The education provided was more of elementary in nature with main focus on equipping learners with simple vocational skills that

would enable them to be more independent in life. As time went by however, there was eminent need for provision of secondary school education especially after the institute was transformed into a primary school. Learners from the primary school required to proceed with secondary education necessitating the arrangements for secondary schooling for the blind learners. This section traces the development of secondary school education for the blind as initiated by TSB.

4.5.1 Early Efforts in Providing Secondary Education for the Blind in Kenya

Prior to the establishment of secondary school section at TSB in 1967, most blind learners from TSB primary and other special schools for the blind went into tertiary institutions to pursue vocational and industrial training. These institutions included the vocational center at TSB, Machakos Training Institute for the Blind and Kolanya Institute for the Blind in Busia among others. A few other students however joined mainstream secondary schools where they learned alongside learners without visual impairments. As one of the informants explained, the experience for these learners was challenging because they were to work extra hard in order to catch up with sighted learners by use of their Braille machines for writing (Milimu, 2018).

Concerted efforts to establish access to secondary education for learners from TSB primary started in early 1959 when the SMC of Thika Primary school for the Blind resolved to establish a secondary stream at the school (KNA, BY/12/21). This resolution was however not implemented due to financial constrains at the school as well as intricate logistical challenges. A section of the minutes of SMC meeting of February 4, 1960 states as follows:

> ‘‘Whereas this committee agreed to establish a secondary school stream by the beginning of the year, it is clear that this plan requires more time to be successfully implemented. This is because the stream requires finances and adequate planning before implementation. While the members note with concern the serious need to have a secondary school for the blind, the implementation of the plan is shelved to allow for mobilization of funds from the sponsor. The management will however seek admission for our students at Thika High School and other secondary schools as an interim measure before a secondary stream is established.’’ (KNA, BY/12/21).

In 1960, the Provincial Education Officer of Central Province and the head teacher of Thika High School Mr. G. Wright met to discuss the possibility of Thika High School admitting LWVI from Thika Primary School for the Blind (KNA, BY/12/21). The two officials agreed

to enroll the students with visual impairments joining secondary school to Thika High School as from 1961 (KNA, BY/12/21). This agreement was made on condition that the students passed KAPE just like their sighted peers. In the year 1961, six blind students from Thika Primary School for the Blind were enrolled at the school (TSB, P/4/1970).

Admitting blind students at Thika High School did not however bear much success since it was a mainstream school admitting students without visual impairments and therefore only a few blind students could qualify for admission since there was no affirmative action for the blind. Furthermore, the school had no teachers that were trained to handle LWVI. The need for TSB to have a secondary school was therefore becoming even more urgent.

Efforts of establishing a secondary school at TSB were therefore revived in 1965 following the SMC meeting of September 9, 1965 in which a plan was laid to establish a secondary school by 1967. This followed the expression of willingness by the Salvation Army to finance the establishment of the school (KNA, BY/12/21). This plan led to the establishment of Thika Secondary School for the Blind in 1967 (Informant B, Oral Interview, April 4, 2018). Admission of blind students at Thika High School was therefore halted in 1967 when Thika Secondary School for the Blind was established (KNA, BY/12/21).

4.5.1 General Developments at Thika Secondary School for the Blind

Thika Secondary School for the Blind was officially opened on January 6, 1967. The opening ceremony was presided over by the territorial commander of the East Africa territory of the Salvation Army Church. In the opening ceremony, it was noted that the school was going to serve as a milestone towards educating the blind in Kenya as the school was the first one of its kind in the country (TSB, P/4/1970). Captain Olive Bottle who had experience in working with the blind was appointed as the leader of the school with the tittle of the School Superintendent.

Upon its establishment, Thika Secondary School for the Blind remained under the care of the Salvation Army Church until the year 1971 when the school was taken over by the Kenyan government to become a public national mixed boarding secondary school for the blind (TSB, S/3/2003). The school started by offering a four year academic type of education from Form one up to Form four (TSB, S/1/2000) to learners with visual impairments (both totally and partially blind). This is despite the fact that the education system of the time (7-4-2-3) had two years of high school education after Form four.

It was not until the year 1978 that the ministry of education realized that it was not giving blind school leavers at Form four level a fair chance of schooling. This recognition came from a series of complaints from the learners to the school management committee concerning the absence of Advanced Level ('A' level) education in the school which restricted them to Ordinary Level ('O' level) education. The school management committee subsequently made a request to the Ministry of Education to introduce Form five and six at the school. The Ministry of Education therefore provided a capital grant and maintenance grant to the school to establish Forms five and six for the two years of 'A' level training prior to university training (TSB, S/2/1994). The school therefore became Thika High school for the Blind.

The enrolment at the lower level of Thika High School for the blind remained to be for the students with visual impairments from Form one to Form four. At Form five and six however, the school integrated the blind students with a few non blind students. Learners joining Form one were usually selected from the special primary schools for the blind across the country as well as from some schools with units for the blind. As a result of the large number of students with visual impairments who wished to join Thika High School for the Blind, the school only selected the best performers at KCPE level (TSB, S/1/2000).

Learners joining the school at Form five level were selected from the school and other non-special schools after successful performance in Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE) examinations at the end of Form four. Those selected from other schools were required to have chosen the school as their first choice and were required to have scored division one of less than 20 points in KCE examinations. The learners were also required to show interest and appreciation for the blind (TSB, S/2/1994). Form five and six were however gradually phased out after introduction of a new system of education in the country which comprised of eight years of primary schooling, four years of secondary schooling and four years of university education (8-4-4) in 1985. The last form six class at the school was in the year 1990.

The curriculum offered at the school in its early years comprised of twelve subjects which were examinable at both 'O' and 'A' levels. These included English, Kiswahili, French, Mathematics, Biology, Home Science, Commerce, History and government, Geography, Music, CRE and Culture and Social Ethics. The school also offered other subjects that were considered as necessary for the LWVI but they were not examined. These included Typing, Mobility and Orientation, Braille, Athletics, Drama and Swimming (TSB, S/1/2000). These

non-examinable subjects were to help the students with visual impairments to learn better and be more self-reliant in most of the aspects in life.

As a result of being the only special secondary school in the country alongside many several special primary schools, Thika High school for the Blind was placed under the management of the primary section by the then Ministry of Education. This was because the primary section in the Ministry of Education was the one that was charged with the responsibility of managing all the special schools in the country (Informant B, 2018). This worked well for the school in terms of finances but it however hampered all other matters pertaining to the school such as curriculum, inspection and staffing. The school faced delays in reference to these matters due to the back and forth referrals between primary and secondary sections in the Ministry of Education (TSB, S/2/1994).

It is in this regard of placement in the primary section that Thika High School for the Blind faced curricular related challenges during the first few years after introduction of the 8-4-4 system. As a pioneer school in providing secondary school education for the LWVI, the school encountered challenges of adapting the syllabus to suit the LWVI. The school was faced with the problem of finding the ten required subjects as a minimum entry for the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). This was because among the compulsory subjects, the school could not offer Mathematics, Geography, Biological Sciences and Physical Sciences. Among the options, the school still could not offer Home Science and Agriculture (TSB, S/1/2000). This was because, the content of these subjects most of which comprised of practical areas required some modification and adaptation for those who were visually handicapped which had not been done.

From 1985 to 1988, the school worked with the Ministry of Education through the Kenya Institute of Education and the Inspectorate and managed to adapt the syllabus to one which could suit the blind in Mathematics, Geography, Biological Sciences and Home Science. The ministry however encountered challenges in adapting most of the content in Physical Sciences and Agriculture. The reason was that the subjects comprised of complex physical activities that the blind could not easily perform (Informant C, Oral Interview, June 13, 2018). As a result, the blind were therefore allowed to undertake eight subjects in their final KNEC examinations including the four subjects that had been adapted in the year 1989. The learners at TSB were exempted from Physical Sciences and Agriculture.

From 1990 onwards however, the school was instructed by KNEC to register a minimum of 10 subjects for every candidate. This directive by the KNEC was made to all schools in the country with the intention of attaining uniformity in the number of subjects examined (TSB, S/1/2000). This affected many blind students who had dropped agriculture but were now required to do it in the final examinations. The school therefore started teaching Physical Sciences and Agriculture with the first batch of students taking their examinations in 1994. The performance in these two subjects was however poor as compared to the performance in other subjects. In the 1994 results for instance, out of 49 candidates that sat for agriculture examination, 39 scored less than five points out of the possible 12 points (TSB, S/1/2000). As years went by however, the performance in these two subjects improved.

Regarding available resources, the school had reached its full capacity by 1987. This was because the school was the only high school for the blind not only in Kenya but in Africa at large (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4). Most of the other countries in Africa preferred integration at secondary school level and hence they had no special secondary schools for the blind (TSB, S/1/2000). For this reason, the school was usually under pressure to admit students from countries like Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia and Rwanda but due to lack of resources and facilities, the school was unable to consider such requests since it was already overwhelmed by the Kenyan population.

As a result of the school being unable to enroll all the Kenyan blind students, some blind students were being integrated at Kitui High school, St. Mary's Girls high school and Chogoria Girls high school all in the Eastern province of Kenya (TSB, S/1/2000). Despite these integration programs in the three schools, the student population who qualified and wished to join Thika High School for the Blind was still enormous. The School, through its BOG therefore requested the government for allocation of more land for the expansion of the school as well as permission and support to open a third stream in the school. The school therefore opened a third stream in the year 1988 increasing the number of students admitted yearly to the school by thirty (TSB, S/1/2000)

From the 1980s, the school started admitting a few fully sighted students alongside the LWVI with the intention of reducing the negative attitudes towards the blind (TSB, S/1/2000). This integration was however stopped in 1998 due to limited capacity of the school in relation to the number of LWVI who intended to join the school. The school again therefore started

admitting learners with visual impairments only (TSB, S/1/2000). After 2003 however, the integration program was reintroduced after the country adopted the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) which encouraged integration and inclusion. Presently the school admits LWVI as well as a few fully sighted learners.

While the LWVI admitted at the school have always included those with low vision, it was not until 2018 that the school started providing low vision resources such as large print (Muigai, 2018). Prior to introduction of low vision services, students admitted to Thika High School for the Blind were undertaking their studies through Braille while those with substantial ability to read were taught on how to read the normal size print. This was intended to enable the learners to be able to adapt as much as possible to the ordinary life (Muigai, 2018). By the year 2003, Thika High School for the Blind had a population of 200 students comprising of 116 boys and 84 girls. Of this population, 81 students were totally blind while 119 had low vision (TSB, S/3/2003).

4.5.2 Leadership at Thika High School for the Blind

At its establishment, Thika High School for the Blind was made to operate independently from Thika Primary School even though it was established within the same premises of the primary school and they were to share most of the facilities. The independent operation made the Salvation Army to appoint Captain Olive Bottle as the first Principal of the School. The school continued to be led by the SA appointed principals up to the year 1982 when a government posted principal through the Teacher's Service Commission took over. As the pioneer leader of the first secondary school for the LWVI in Kenya, Captain Bottle utilized his expertise to acquire the necessary resources as well as to guide the staff of the school effectively.

At the establishment of the school, Kenya had no teachers who were trained to handle LWVI at secondary school level (TSB, S/2/1994). Captain Bottle therefore provided basic guidance to the first batch of teachers on the modifications they required to undertake while teaching the LWVI. The tenure of Captain Bottle was however short-lived since he was replaced in September of the same year by Captain Mike Rich due to health reasons. Captain Bottle therefore only led the school for eight months but his mark as the pioneer head of the school remained in the history of the school.

Captain Mike Rich led the School from September 1967 taking over from his predecessor's footsteps in establishing policy, providing training to teachers and pioneering curriculum modifications for the blind at the secondary school level in Kenya (TSB, S/2/1994). In 1978 for instance, Captain Rich managed to convince the Ministry of Education to establish Form five and six at the school therefore transforming the school from a secondary school to a high school. He also introduced the first form of integration at Form five and six in which learners without visual impairments were enrolled alongside those with visual impairments. He led the school up to July 1982 when the TSC posted a principal to the school. The Salvation Army Church however created a position for its representative in the leadership of the school under the title of School Superintendent as it did in all its special schools such as Thika Primary School for the Blind.

During their tenure of office, both Captains Bottle and Rich were allowed to handle the ministry's grants in aid as well as the donations money most of which was channeled through the church. In 1982 however, the new Principal under the TSC, Mr. Kariuki took over and the two funds were split, with the donations fund being left under a Salvation Army official and the Ministry of Education fund under the Principal (TSB, S/2/1994). Mr. Kariuki headed the school up to 1985 after which he was replaced by Mr. Ben Lusiji. Mr. Lusiji is remembered to have pushed for curriculum modification and adaptation for the LWVI after the implementation of 8-4-4 system of education. Together with the school management, Mr. Lusiji pushed the Ministry of Education to adapt the curriculum in biological sciences, home science, geography as well as mathematics (TSB, S/2/1994).

From 1982 up to the present, the school has continued with government posted principals but the Salvation Army has continued to play an active role in the management of the school. This includes sourcing funds from donors and well-wishers as well as playing a key role in the running of the school. Table 4.6 provides the list of the school heads that have served at Thika High School for the Blind since its establishment.

Table 4.6

List of School Heads at Thika High school for the Blind Since its Establishment

From	To	Name
January 1967	September 1967	Captain Olive Bottle
September 1967	July 1982	Captain Mike Rich
July 1982	May 1985	Mr. Peter Njoroge Kariuki
May 1985	January 1997	Mr. Ben Lusiji
January 1997	May 1997	Mr. Macbeth Joseph Kithuku
May 1997	September 1997	Mr. B.N. Kinuthia (Ag)
September 1997	May 2000	Mrs. Margret Githang'a
May 2000	July 2000	Mr. Reuben Mwanzi (Ag)
July 2000	2019	Mr. Kamau A. Muigai

Source: Plaque of Principals of Thika High School for the Blind

Mr. Kamau Muigai led the school from the year 2000 to 2019. He oversaw the school go through multiple developments. These include infrastructural developments in which the school developed modern classrooms, laboratories and dormitories (M. Kamau, Oral Interview, April 3, 2018). This has in turn increased the learner population to about eight hundred.

4.5.3 Academic Development and Achievements at the Secondary School

Since its establishment in 1967, Thika High School for the Blind has played a cardinal role in academic development of learners with visual impairments. The school served as the only special secondary school in the country and beyond that was providing special education for the LWVI for more than thirty five years before a few other special schools for the blind were established after 2005 as shown in table 2.1. Despite the various challenges that were encountered by the school as the pioneer institution for educating the LWVI, the school has performed tremendously well in national examinations through the years. This is clearly shown by its comparable performance against non-special schools.

In the 1970s for instance, the school featured prominently among the top ten schools in Kenya at 'O' and 'A' levels. In the 1987 results for example, 18 out of 36 candidates who sat for 'O' level examinations qualified to proceed to form five. At 'A' level, 14 out of 28 candidates secured admission to the public universities. In the 1988 results, 17 out of 25 candidates who sat for 'A' level examinations were admitted to the four public universities that were present at the time. The results were so good that the school was ranked position 19 nationally in the year 1988 (TSB, S/1/2000).

However, after the introduction of 8-4-4 system of education, the school experienced some challenges in terms of subjects required for KCSE examinations by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) leading to a drop in performance in the national examinations. The school however picked up with time and the successes in performance increased gradually. In 1997 for instance, only one student qualified for university admission but this improved in 1998, in which out of 66 students the school registered for KCSE, 15 of them qualified for university admission by scoring grade C plus and above. The school scored a mean standard score of 4.27 out of the 12 points possible (TSB, S/1/2000). In 1999, thirteen students from Thika High School for the Blind joined university, two joined Kagumo Teachers College and several others joined tertiary institutions (TSB, S/1/2000). Sending 13 students to university was a high achievement for the school since there were many regular schools that could not manage to send a single student to the university. Table 4.7 provides a summary of university intake from the school between 1996 and 1999.

Table 4.7

Summary of University Intake from Thika High School for the Blind, 1996-1999

Year	**Number of students who qualified for university**
1996	1
1997	15
1998	15
1999	13

Source: TSB, S/1/2000

The school has also been faring well in terms of mean standard score in comparison with other mainstream schools. In 1997 for instance, the school got a mean standard score of 5.1 out of the 12 maximum score. This score dropped to 4.9 in both 1998 and 1999. Table 4.8 provides a summary of the mean standard score of Thika High School for the Blind at KCSE from 1997 to 2003.

Table 4.8

Thika High School for the Blind KCSE Mean Score 1997-2003

YEAR	MEAN GRADE (OUT OF 12)
1997	5.111 C-
1998	4.9205 C-
1999	4.9426 C-
2000	5.3699 C-
2001	4.7917 C-
2002	4.9334 C-
2003	5.1235 C-

Source: TSB, S/1/2000

Besides the academics, the school continuously participated and excelled in co-curricular activities such as in games, sports, music and drama. In 1986 for instance, the school participated in the Music Festival for schools of the LWVI and won first overall position up to the national level. In 1996, the school participated in national annual games for the LWVI and emerged best overall having won the trophies in volleyball, netball and football. Figure 4.11 shows blind students from Thika High School for the Blind, performing during drama competitions while figure 4.12 is a photograph of students and teachers displaying the various trophies they had won in various competitions.

Figure 4.11: LWVI of Thika High School for the Blind performing in drama competition

Source: School Album for Thika High School for the Blind

Figure 4.12: Students and teachers of Thika High School for the Blind displaying trophies

Source: School Album for Thika High School for the Blind

The school was also among the few schools that had their own organized annual cultural festivals. These festivals were useful to the holistic development of the learners in that through their involvement, they were able to develop self-confidence, and were given a chance to be self-creative besides being able to appreciate competition. Learners were also able to develop in skills such as public speaking, poetry and choir as well as in playing of musical instruments such as piano, organ, guitar, trumpets among others (TSB, S/1/2000). Figures 4.13 and 4.14 below show students performing a song/dance and a student playing piano respectively during one of the annual festivals.

Figure 4.13: LWVI performing during annual cultural festival, 1987
Source: School Album for Thika High School for the Blind

Figure 4.14: LWVI playing piano during annual cultural festival, 1987
Source: School Album for Thika High School for the Blind

This section has documented the developments realized in provision of secondary school education for LWVI in Kenya as pioneered by TSB. In providing an answer to the first research question as derived from the first objective, the section has shown that from the time education for the LWVI was established in Kenya in the year 1946, the LWVI persons waited for a long time before a secondary school that catered for their educational needs was founded in 1967. The section has also highlighted on the curricular related progress and challenges that the LWVI learners faced in the quest to acquire secondary school education. The section has therefore enriched the existing literature in history of education as well as in the area of special education which forms part of the first objective of the study.

4.6 Development of Vocational and Technical Education at TSB

As earlier stated, when Thika Institute for the Blind was established in 1946, the course to be pursued by every learner was determined by the institute based on the learner's age as well as intelligence level. One of the main areas of placement for the boys admitted was in vocational and technical training. In the early years of the institute, this vocational and technical education involved training in some trades such as basket making, carpentry, shoe repairing, rope making, net making, mat making, gardening, pottery and brick making. Adult students were taking a three year vocational training that normally included one or two trades, according to their abilities. Adolescents on the other hand undertook trade training after two to three years of academic training while children undertook trade training towards the end of their education at the institute after undertaking a full academic course. Figures 4.15, 4.16 and

4.17 below are photographs that were taken during trade training practical sessions in the early years of Thika Institute for the Blind.

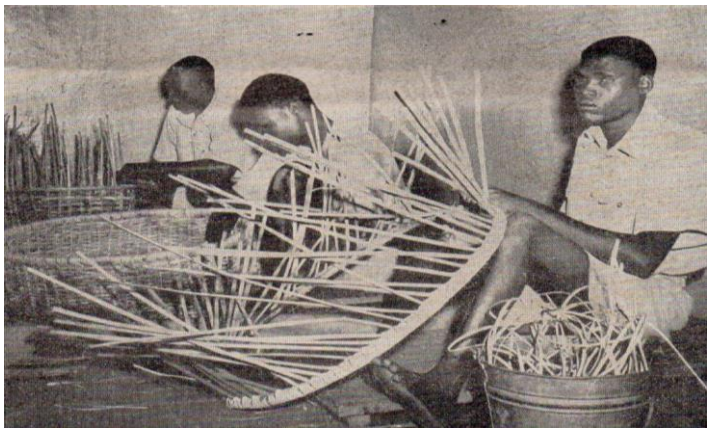

Figure 4.15: LWVI undertaking basket making trade at Thika Institute for the Blind, 1949
Source: KNA, MOH/3/282

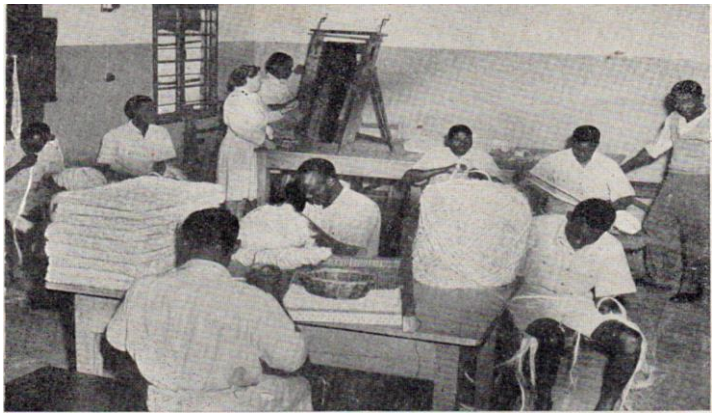

Figure 4.16: LWVI at Thika Institute for the Blind in a mat making class, 1950
Source: KNA, MOH/3/282

Figure 4.17: A trainee with visual impairment setting up a frame to make sisal mats

Source: KNA, MOH/3/282

The training in these trades was also provided to a few former students who were allowed to return to the school for a refresher course. The refresher course was aimed at perfecting the skills of the ex-trainees especially in cases where one had established such a trade business in the village. In 1952, there were 8 former boys on refresher courses in different trades (KNA, BY/27/4).

Gardening trade offered at Thika Institute for the Blind was equivalent to what was being offered in other institutes for the blind that were called 'Shamba' training centers which literally means farm training center. Their establishment was based on the rural background of over 90 percent of blind persons in Kenya (KNA, BY/27/4). The centers were therefore meant to train blind persons to acquire farming skills so that they could be independent by making a living from their farms. Such centers had been established at Kolanya in the Western part of Kenya in the year 1956 as well as at Chuka in the Eastern part of Kenya in the year 1958. The Gardening trade at Thika Institute for the Blind was therefore a Shamba training wing at the institute. The trainees at Shamba training centers who had to be blind peasants were taught to do the normal agricultural tasks connected with a family Shamba (KNA, BY/27/4). Figure 4.18 is a photograph of blind trainees assessing the quality of maize cobs by touch at the Shamba training wing.

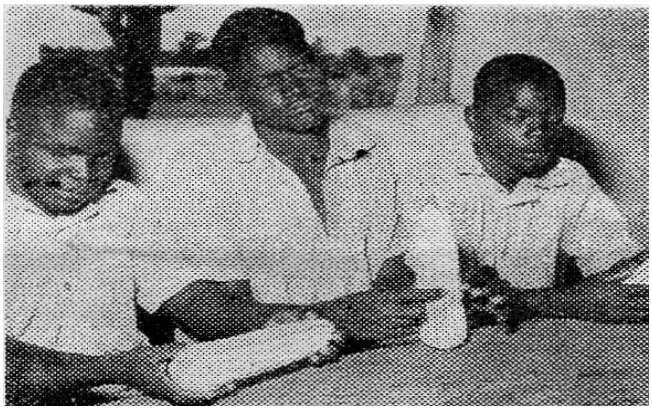

Figure 4.18: LWVI learning how to assess the quality of maize cobs by touch, 1951

Source: KNA, BY/12/21

In 1956, a suggestion to start a technical school for post-intermediate pupils and rehabilitation work was accepted by the School Management Committee (KNA, BY/12/21). This was a training that was designed for former pupils of the academic school and those who had the misfortune to lose sight during adulthood. There was a consensus among the members of the

School Management Committee that there was a growing need to prepare the blind for factory work and as telephone operators among other vocations as well as to help those who became blind later in life.

A classroom was therefore set aside for this kind of training which targeted LWVI persons that were slightly older than the usual age bracket of learners in the academic program. A few learners were enrolled to the program with a large percentage being that of former learners of the academic program. The school utilized the staff of the academic school. This program however was halted after a short period of its existence in early 1957 (KNA, BY/12/21). This was as a result of plans that were underway to establish Machakos Institute for the Blind which was to cater for the group for which the program was initially intended.

Until 1958, the Salvation Army School for the Blind at Thika was one of the only two institutions that were providing educational and vocational training for the blind. The other institution was a Shamba training center at Kolanya in Western part of Kenya which had only operated for two years. In the same year 1958, two more institutions for the blind came up. These included establishment of another Shamba training center at Chuka in Eastern part of Kenya as well as the establishment of Machakos Institute for the Blind. Machakos Institute for the Blind was established by the Kenya Society for the Blind while the Shamba training center at Chuka was established through the joint efforts of KSB and the Salvation Army.

The institute at Machakos was started as a rehabilitation center but was later converted into an institute for the blind to provide vocational training to blind youths of over 17 years of age. The vocational training comprised of crafts and light industries courses. Training in crafts lasted for one year and it included rural training, simple carpentry, mat-making and basketry while training in light industries lasted for six month. The training at Machakos was to enable blind persons establish themselves as local craftsmen or be absorbed into local light industry (KNA, DC/KTI/3/3/11). A vocational center for the blind similar to the one at Machakos was later opened by the Catholic Church at Sikri in Nyanza region of Kenya in 1970 (Ojwando, 1990).

As a result of this establishment of a vocational center at Machakos which was to offer almost similar training that TSB was offering in trade training, TSB chose to concentrate on provision of academic education from the year 1957. These comprised of nursery education, primary education and additional further training (KNA, DC/TTA/3/15/1). The subsidiary course for

boys in their early teens (adolescents) was therefore also discontinued because the KSB training center at Machakos was becoming operational (KNA, BY/12/21). Pottery training was however incorporated in the academic training not as a vocational training but as a form of handwork to be included in the time table of the regular classes.

Vocational training at TSB however found its way back in 1959 when a subsidiary crafts course for boys was re-introduced (KNA, BY/12/21). The course was reintroduced for boy school-leavers for whom no work could be found as well as for those learners who had surpassed the maximum age of admission to TSB but had not attained the age of obtaining admission to the Training center at Machakos. This was because there was a gap between the maximum age for admission to TSB (10 years) and the minimum age of admission to Machakos Institute for the Blind (17 years).

The decision to reintroduce this subsidiary crafts course was also informed by multiple concerns from employers of the blind trainees. The employers had raised efficiency related issues over the blind persons in employment with complaints that most of them were too slow and required too much attention. These concerns were discussed in the School Management Committee meeting of May 16, 1958 (KNA, BY/12/2). In the deliberations of the meeting, there was a view that blind people required extended time of schooling in comparison to their sighted peers because they did not mature emotionally and socially as quickly as sighted young people. While this view by the SMC seemed to harbor negative attitudes towards the blind, supportive evidence of extended schooling from other parts of the world was given.

The belief that the blind did not mature emotionally and socially as quickly as other sighted persons was quoted as a reason that informed the extended training program undertaken by the blind in the United Kingdom; so that in England, a blind person did not finish his training until he or she was 21 years old while in Scotland it was not until one was 18 years of age (KNA, BY/12/21). A decision was thus reached to borrow the United Kingdom practice by extending the training of the blind at TSB through additional subsidiary crafts training.

By 1960, the subsidiary course was doing so well that the SMC thought of expanding some of the training programs that were in place. In one of the SMC meetings held on August 22, 1960, samples of rubber shoes made through rubber sandal making training were presented. The sandals had been made by the boys for their own use through the sandal making training sessions. The SMC therefore proposed a plan for large scale production of the rubber sandals

(KNA, BY/12/21). As a mechanism of enhancing the vocational training at the school, follow-up on employment of the blind at East African Tobacco Company in Nairobi was made. Some trainees were also taken for Post office training at Lang'ata Institute in Nairobi to be trained in telephony. The school also installed internal communication scheme to speed up training of telephone operators as well as to introduce learners to practical training in telephony besides easing communication in the school (KNA, BY/12/21).

Since training in vocations was aimed at enabling blind learners to be independent either by securing employment or by being involved in self-employment, TSB through its SMC undertook some efforts in the 1960s which were aimed at marketing the blind trainees for employment (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11). Such efforts included printing an advertisement in the press, publishing of articles that described the work of blind telephonists in the press and having a stand at the Royal Show in Nairobi to offer display and demonstration of telephony by blind operators as well as writing an informative letter to the Rotary club.

Vocational training at TSB continued up to the late 1960s when it was phased out leaving the school to operate purely as a primary school. This followed the decision by the Salvation Army to establish an independent vocational training center adjacent to TSB to cater for all categories of people including those with and without special needs. This center was established in the year 1965. Currently, the Variety Village Training Center at Thika offers residential practical skills training for young men and women from 15 to 25 years of age. Besides persons with visual impairments, the center offers training to persons with other forms of disabilities such as the physically challenged, and those with hearing impairments. Majority of the learners at the school are however those without any form of disability.

This section has contributed to the systematic documentation of education for the LWVI which was an endeavor of the first objective of this study. The section has provided documentation on the development of vocational training to the blind as established at TSB and the various transformations it underwent. Vocational training at TSB probably led to establishment of other vocational training centers for the blind in various parts of the country. Such centers included Kolanya Shamba Training Center for the Blind, Chuka Shamba Training Center for the Blind, Machakos Training Institute for the Blind and Sikri Institute for the Blind.

4.7 Development of Pre-primary School Education at TSB

At its establishment in 1946, Thika Institute for the Blind was enrolling students eight years and above in terms of age. This was because the institute was interested in training people who were considered as being old enough to master various trades in order to be independent and productive in life. In later years, the minimum age was reduced to seven years due to the high number of interested blind learners who were below eight years of age. Despite this reduction of minimum age, the institute still experienced large numbers of underage learners some of whom, could not be turned away due to their desperate state that called for help (KNA, BY/12/21). These states included malnourishment, physical malfunctions, emotional disturbance as well as a clear outlook of neglect from the caregivers.

In 1959 for instance, the institute received eighty new blind children between six to eight years Most of the said children showed evidence of neglect in various forms, revealing that there had been lack of adequate care in their homes. Malnutrition or unattended physical mal-conditions were common. Most of the other children had been regretfully denied admission on account of being too young for school life. This situation made the school management to lay a plan of establishing a center for young children that would cater for both their development and education. In a 1959 note written by the School Superintendent , one of the statements reads: ‘‘This experience portrays a need for a center which is comparable in function to the Sunshine Homes in the United Kingdom under the administration of the Royal National Institute for the Blind’’ (KNA, BY/12/21).

Following such considerations, a nursery classroom was thus built at Thika School for the Blind from 1959 at a cost of £1,200 of which £1,000 was raised by the school through the Salvation Army. The rest of the money was given by a local donor who wished to remain anonymous. By 1960 the nursery classroom was complete and was in use with 17 blind children in residence thus forming the first form of pre-primary school education and training at TSB. The nursery school was made to operate as a separate unit from the primary school. This was however not possible since the pre-primary school had to share most of the facilities with the primary school. The center was commonly referred to as ‘The Sunshine Home’ as borrowed from similar schools for blind children in the UK (KNA, BY/12/21).

Since the poor conditions of the children was associated to ignorance and poverty, the nursery school section was made to be free of charge with free provision of clothing, feeding and other personal effects to the learners. The school calendar of the learners was designed in a way that allowed periodic holidays for the learners to return home to have a change of environment. In every year learners were released from the school thrice in the months of April, August and November to December. Learners who had no caregivers at home were however allowed to stay in school throughout the year.

In the year 1964, the Sunshine Home was expanded through creation of two classes that catered for different age groups of children. The first class catered for children that were below four years of age and therefore it provided more of the care services than education. The second class comprised of children of five years or above depending on the age of enrolment at the school. The first class was commonly referred to as Kindergarten while the second class was commonly referred to as the Nursery class (KNA, BY/12/21). The pre-primary school section was thus divided into two sections, the kindergarten for under-school age children and the nursery school for slightly older children. Each of the classes was handled by one housemother.

As a result of this expansion, there was increased capacity for enrollment of more children. The school management committee therefore adopted a plan to market the Sunshine Home to parents who might not have had any information regarding the school as well as to inform the community of the benefits of the pre-primary school program. This was to ensure that the school was of benefit to as many children as possible (KNA, BY/12/21). Informative programs such as distribution of newsletters concerning the Sunshine Home as well as holding of public events to promote it were thus carried out. This made the nursery school to expand by opening doors for more children with the number of enrolled children rising from 17 in the year 1960 to 34 by the year 1966 (KNA, BY/12/21). The number of children admitted to the Sunshine Home continued to increase and by the year 1987, TSB had over 40 children in this pre-primary school education program. Figure 4.19 below is a photograph of some of the children of the nursery class of 1987 (TSB, P/3/1997).

Figure 4.19: LWVI of the nursery class at TSB, 1987

Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

The curriculum at the Nursery School included music, games, stories and social training among others. The content of the curriculum was aimed at enabling learners to develop physically as well as socially in line with early childhood development. The center has thus continued to function as a nursery school for blind children to provide good nurture, medical attention, sound feeding, hygienic conditions, social training and happy companionship in play so as to start primary school physically and socially fit. Figure 4.20 below shows the nursery school class at TSB displaying their play skills during a school function in 1991.

Figure 4.20: Nursery class at TSB displaying their play skills, 1991

Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

With reference to teachers for the nursery school class, TSB initially relied on the services of housemothers to care and teach the infants in the Sunshine home. In the year 1978, Christoffel Blinden Mission, a Germany based organization sponsored two housemothers at TSB for

training at Montessori College in Nairobi at a cost of KSh. 35,000 (TSB, P/2/1978). The two sponsored housemothers undertook a one year course for nursery/kindergarten teaching and upon finishing, they offered their skills at the nursery school of TSB. These two were therefore the first qualified teachers to handle blind learners in the Sunshine Home.

Some efforts to have the pre-primary school teachers employed by the government was made in 1982 when the school, through the head teacher, wrote to the Ministry of Education requesting for employment of the two teachers as support staff since the government was not employing nursery school teachers by then. The Ministry of Education however remained non-committal on the issue without giving any response to the request that had been made. The nursery school teachers therefore continued to be paid from donations that were channeled through the SA church (TSB, P/2/1978).

In 2001, the pre-primary school education at TSB faced a blow after its only two teachers that had been hired and were being paid by the SA mission were laid off. This was as a result of the wide scheme in which the Salvation Army withdrew all its employees in its sponsored special schools with exception of chaplains (TSB, P/1/2005). This forced the School management to redeploy one of the primary school teachers to the nursery school. The withdrawal of the teachers by the Salvation Army Church also made the school to introduce a levy for every learner in the Sunshine Home in order to pay the teachers. By 2003, the school had hired two teachers to cater for the two classes in the Sunshine Home. Presently the school has a pre-primary school education center of three streams with about sixty blind children who are fulltime boarders.

This section has provided more enlightenment in the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya, an effort that the first objective of the study sought to achieve. The section has shown that while education for the blind that was introduced in Kenya by 1946 targeted blind children and adults, the targeted persons were to be old enough for primary education schooling. This left out young children who required pre-primary school education. The section has shown that efforts were however made leading to the establishment of a pre-primary school education at TSB to cater for young children. This was a significant development in education for the LWVI.

4.8 Development of Teacher Education for Teachers of the LWVI at TSB

While efforts were made in establishing schools for the LWVI in Kenya and Africa at large from the 1940s, there were no schools to train teachers who could handle the LWVI some of whom were totally blind. At the establishment of Thika Institute for the Blind in 1946, there were neither trained teachers to handle the LWVI nor any formally established institution for training of teachers for the blind in Kenya. The only trained person at the institute was therefore the superintendent, Senior-Major Edward Osborne, who had studied various phases of work among the blind in England (KNA, AB/14/34). The teachers and trade instructors at the institute thus started receiving on-the-job training from Major Osborne on how to teach the blind.

The training work of Major Osborne received a boost in 1950 when the Institute received more European workers, some of whom had some knowledge in training of the blind (KNA, AB/14/34). Together with the trained European workers and local teachers who had already been trained, Major Osborne extended the teacher training program at TSB to other persons who were not serving teachers at the Thika Institute for the Blind. This extension commenced in 1954 when the Provincial Commissioner (PC) of Nyanza sent some of the community development assistants to learn about training of the blind at Thika Institute for the Blind. This decision influenced all other PCs who also sent community development assistants for the training (KNA, DC/KTI/3/3/11). This was necessitated by large numbers of blind people in the colony all of whom could not be enrolled at the Thika institute. On return to their regions, these community development assistants were expected to offer training to the blind persons in useful occupations (KNA, DC/KTI/3/3/11).

Thika Institute for the Blind can therefore be cited as being among the first institutions in Africa to offer teacher training programs for teachers of LWVI because by 1954, there was no other teacher training college for the LWVI in Kenya and even in the entire Africa. It was not until 1956 that the first teacher training facility for the LWVI in Africa, Montfort College, was established in Malawi (Ojwando, 1990). The college started serving other African countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe besides Malawi.

In 1956, there was discontent among the teachers of the LWVI at Thika School for the Blind (TSB) owing to the difference in pay that they were receiving in comparison to teachers in other non-special schools. In an effort to counteract this discontentment, the School

Management Committee (SMC) made a recommendation to the government to train more teachers who could teach the LWVI. The government adopted this recommendation and this led to establishment of a program at TSB that aimed at offering SNE skills to teachers who had already been trained in regular education (KNA, BY/12/21). The SNE skills training comprised of training in use of Braille and mobility guidance, aspects that are pertinent to teaching of the LWVI. A one year conversion course for qualified teachers of ordinary schools was therefore introduced at TSB with the intention of meeting the future needs of the institute for capable teachers. The non-special school teachers were to obtain a certificate that showed their qualification to handle the LWVI as an additional training before they could be allowed to teach. The certificate was referred to as the Blind Certificate.

By October 1956, there were eight teacher trainees at TSB for the conversion course. The school therefore adopted a proposal to build a dormitory for them (KNA-BY/12/21). TSB thereby formally established a teacher training center in the school with two categories of trainees: Those trained from teacher training colleges for ordinary schools and those who had not received any kind of teacher training but were teaching at TSB. Qualified teachers who obtained a Blind Certificate after conversion course were therefore to work alongside teachers who had only received blind school training from the TSB. A proposal was however put forth in the SMC meeting of October 10, 1956 for the education department to recognize teachers who had only trained to handle the LWVI as qualified for employment. The representatives of the education department in the SMC meeting accepted the proposal (KNA-BY/12/21). Teachers trained only at TSB were therefore recognized by the education department as teachers of the blind and were to receive a salary comparable to one that was paid to teachers from training colleges that were also teaching the LWVI. However the certificates were to be in no way interchangeable and those holding only Teacher of the Blind Certificates could not be employed in non-blind schools.

The school also collaborated with the neighboring Kilimambogo Teacher Training College in Thika by sending the teacher-trainees who had not received any training before to the college to attend certain general lectures each week in order to improve their competency (KNA, BY/12/21). Kilimambogo Teacher Training College was for training teachers for ordinary schools. The two categories of teachers from TSB went a long way in providing the required manpower not only to TSB but to other schools for the LWVI that emerged later on from the

late 1950s to 1960s such as St. Lucy school for the Blind, St. Oda School for the Blind, Likoni School for the Blind, Kibos School for the Blind and Thika High School for the Blind.

The teachers who obtained the on-job-training at the school were awarded with certificates by the Salvation Army after a considerable time of training and serving. This was determined by the European trainers, who had to be convinced by the teacher's competence in Braille knowledge before such certification could be awarded. Such teachers were recognized and employed under the Ministry of Education from 1956. Upon the establishment of the TSC in the year 1967 such teachers were recommended by their European trainers for registration and subsequent employment by the commission (KNA, BY/12/21). These teachers remained in the teaching force as qualified teachers for the LWVI.

When Major Osborne was transferred from the institute in 1957, his position was taken over by Colonel Swansubarry from England. Along with him, the institute also received a few other Europeans who had some knowledge in training of the LWVI. With his background in educating the LWVI, Colonel Swansubarry followed suit of his predecessor by serving as the superintendent as well as a trainer of those teachers who were serving in the school particularly in the area of Braille knowledge (Ojwando, 1990). Together with other Europeans in the institute who had Braille knowledge, Colonel Swansubarry continued with the teacher training program at TSB with emphasis in the area of communication and writing for the LWVI.

After Kenya's independence in 1963, there were disintegrated efforts towards training of teachers besides the training that was being offered at TSB. These included bringing of experts in education for the LWVI to Kenya by the Royal Commonwealth society for the Blind. The experts provided teachers of the LWVI with rigorous short-term in-service courses. These were one month courses, spread over a period of six months. However, as one of the former teachers who wished to remain anonymous indicates, the program was very rudimentary and left little impact on the teachers that attended them, apart from the award of certificates of attendance

The other effort was that initiated by the Christoffel Blinden Mission of Germany which in 1978, raised concerns regarding the promotion of teachers of the LWVI in the country. This came as a result of teachers for the blind learners remaining in the same salary scale for a long period while their counterparts in regular schools received promotions and salary increments

(TSB, P/2/1978). The reason for this discrimination was the view that the teachers of the LWVI were not as qualified as those in regular schools since most of them had received their training while in service. Consequently, a teacher training program for teachers of the visually handicapped was introduced at Highridge Teachers' College in 1980 under the financial auspices of the CBM. It should be noted that Highridge Teachers' College was already existing as a college for ordinary teacher training. The special training course for teachers of the visually handicapped therefore went side by side with the already existing ordinary training. By 1986, the program had led to the award of 51 certificates (TSB, P/3/1997).

In 1980, a meeting of special education officials was convened by the head of special education at the ministry of education headquarters for the purpose of formulating a policy guideline that would in future determine the direction of special education in the country. This meeting recommended that an institute be established to train teachers for different disability groups in Kenya. Six years later, this recommendation was adopted resulting into the establishment of Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) in 1986. The institute was established through the sponsorship of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

Since its establishment, KISE has played a significant role in building the capacity of teachers of the LWVI besides other categories of special needs education. This has been achieved through teacher training, teacher in-servicing and research. A survey conducted by the KISE in 1989 revealed that up to 50% of teachers working with students with disabilities were untrained in the field (KISE/1). The institute therefore strived to fill this gap by providing training of teachers in four categories of special education which are hearing, visual, physical and intellectual impairment.

The training at KISE offers diploma qualifications, certificates and distance-learning courses in Special Needs Education. The Diploma course runs for two years on a full-time residential basis and three years through distance learning. The certificate course runs as a three month residential in-service course and one year for distance learning (KISE/2). Besides KISE, Degree and Postgraduate courses in Special Education are offered at Kenyatta, Moi, Maseno and Methodist universities. A Diploma course in Audiology is offered at the University of Nairobi.

Upon the establishment of KISE all the teacher training programs at TSB and Highridge Teachers' College were terminated and moved to the institution. Since then, new teachers posted to TSB and other schools for the LWVI are those who have received additional training to handle the LWVI from KISE besides their ordinary teacher training. At the secondary school level, TSB receives teachers with degrees and diplomas in Special Education from universities that have established departments of special needs education such as Kenyatta, Moi, Maseno and Methodist Universities. TSB has however remained an important institution with regard to training of teachers for the LWVI. The school provides teacher trainees with practical exposure to learners with visual impairment through education visits, field attachment and teaching practice (TSB 2/2000).

In an attempt to provide answers to the first objective of this study, this section has attempted to document the historical development of teacher training programs for the LWVI in Kenya. The section points out to the significance of TSB in the training of teachers for the LWVI not only in Kenya but also in Africa at large. Having started as a pioneer institute of teacher training programs for teachers of the LWVI, TSB remains an important institution as far as teacher training programs for teachers of the LWVI is concerned.

4.9 Development of Girls' Education at TSB

At the establishment of Thika Institute for the Blind in 1946, admission was limited to blind boys only. This is revealed by a letter dated July 27, 1946 in which a girl seeking admission to the school through the DC was rejected with the reason that the school was not admitting girls by then (KNA, DC/KTI/3/7/11). As the first educational institution for the LWVI in the country, absence of girls' education meant that blind girls lacked access to special education that catered for their needs. In the year 1947, there were requests from four DCs seeking for admission of blind girls from their respective districts to the institute (KNA, CA/3/49). As a result of several inquiries and requests that the institute was receiving concerning admission of blind girls, the School Superintendent Major Osborne raised the issue in the meeting of the advisory committee of the institute on March 5, 1948 (KNA, CA/3/49). In the deliberations of the meeting, Major Osborne made the following statement:

> ''We will be failing in our duty if in the process of training the blind, we leave out girls. In England, the residential schools for the blind admit both boys and girls and there is no reason why we should not do the same here.

> We have been receiving several inquiries on whether the institute enrolls blind girls and it is in my view that we need to immediately create space for blind girls.'' (KNA, CA/3/49).

In spite of this good will, blind girls however had to wait for longer before they were admitted to the institute because the deliberations of the meeting were inconclusive. The membership of the advisory committee meeting seemed to agree with the superintendent on enrolling of blind girls in future but no plans were laid out as to when and how the girls were to be catered for. There was also an expression that the institute was still in the experimental period and therefore girls should only be brought on board after evaluation of the success of the training programs that were in place (KNA, CA/3/49).

It was not until 1953 that a clear plan to enroll the girls to Thika Institute for the Blind was established. This followed the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee for the Blind that resolved to change the Thika Institute for the Blind to a mixed primary school with the rule that approximately one-third of the pupils were to be girls (KNA, DC/KJD/3/11/7). It was after this that plans were laid out to admit blind girls between the ages of six to fifteen years. The requirements for admission were however stringent in the researcher's view because girls to be admitted were to be of sound health with no long standing illness (KNA, DC/KSM/1/29/32).

Another condition was that only those girls deemed trainable were to be admitted but it was not clear on how one was to be determined as trainable or not. The researcher did not however come across similar conditions in the requirements in admission of boys. In an effort to find an answer to this, the researcher established that the school had created capacity for only a few girls and therefore the stringent measures were used as means of elimination for the large population of blind girls who would have wanted to be admitted.

In 1954, the plan of the ad hoc Committee for the Blind was implemented leading to enrolment of the first eight girls to the newly renamed Thika School for the Blind. The girls were admitted for free schooling and the school provided uniform for them at no cost (KNA, DC/KSM/1/29/32). The school built a new dormitory for girls through the funding of an anonymous donor in 1954. Four years later, an extra building was constructed in order to increase the capacity for girls training from thirty to sixty due to the many applications from blind girls that the school was receiving.

The girls were to learn together with boys if they were taking the same course or were at the same level of study for academic training. If a girl was six years old on admission, she received approximately eight years of primary education, domestic training, shamba (farm) training and handwork. The period however varied according to the age of the girl on admission. Girls judged to be too old to undertake the normal eight years of schooling would undertake the domestic science course. However, there was no guideline on the length of the course or a clear comprehension of their prospects after the course. A guideline was therefore brought up in the SMC meeting of January 3, 1959, in which it was agreed that the domestic science course was to take four years at the end of which a girl, provided she had reached the age of 18 years would leave school (KNA, BY/12/21). This form of training helped girls to be independent by enabling them to carry out most of the domestic chores on their own. Figure 4.21 shows blind girls at TSB ironing their clothes.

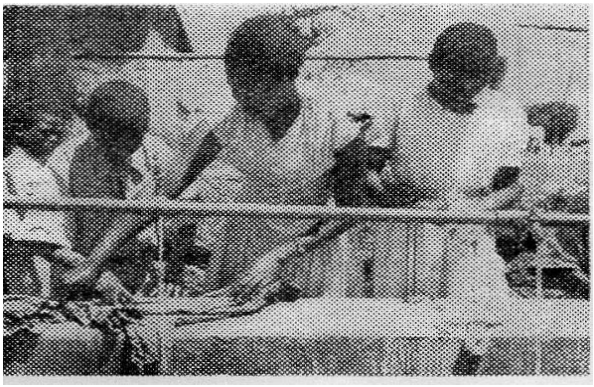

Figure 4.21: Girls with visual impairments ironing their clothes, 1958

Source: KNA, BY/12/21

With regard to trainees' prospects, an effort was made by the school and the community leaders in linking the school leaving girls to the activities of the 'Maendeleo' Clubs (Development Clubs) in their own villages where their skills could be demonstrated and taught to others (KNA, BY/12/21). Following the establishment of the nursery school in TSB, domestic science training was made to include care for the infants in the Sunshine Home section of the school. The program was however not very successful at the beginning because the girls expressed reluctance in providing care for the infants and some of them even opted to drop out of the school (KNA, BY/12/21). This was because both pupils and their parents had expected that paid employment would be found for the girls after their training, whereas the school's objective had been to train the girls for ordinary domestic life with their families. The

scope of the course was therefore explained to all the new intake of trainees in order to have a clear view of the course (KNA, BY/12/21).

By 1960, the school had a large number of girls studying together with the boys in the primary section as well as several others in the domestic science unit. This was a great achievement towards empowering girls with visual impairments not only in Kenya but East African region at large since by 1961 some countries such as Uganda and Tanganyika had not started their own training for blind girls (KNA, BY/27/4). The school has continued to admit both boys and girls in almost equal proportions from then up to the present. As at 2002 for instance, Thika Primary School for the Blind had a population of 190 students comprising of 108 boys and 82 girls. Upon the establishment of the secondary school at TSB in 1967, the secondary school also started admitting both boys and girls in almost equal proportions. By 2003 for instance, there were 84 girls at Thika High School for the Blind out of the total population of 200 students (TSB, S/3/2003). Figure 4.22 below shows TSB primary girls rehearsing for a dance competition in 1992.

Figure 4.22: Girls of TSB primary rehearsing for a dance competition
Source: School Album for Thika Primary School for the Blind

This section has positively contributed to the achievement of the first objective of the study which focused on documenting the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya. The section has illuminated on the delays that were experienced in providing girls education in comparison to that of boys which was introduced at the establishment of the Thika Institute for the Blind in 1946. The section has demonstrated that despite the delays, education for blind girls has undergone such commendable strides that by the year 2003, TSB schools were admitting both boys and girls in almost equal proportions.

4.10 Development in Educational Assistive Equipment for the LWVI at TSB

This section attempts to provide the historical development of access to key equipment and resources that are required by the LWVI. Most of these equipment and resources are related to Braille as a means of reading and writing. The Braille equipment and materials include Braille machines, Braille and braillon paper, Braille kits, thermoform, Braille watches and Braille embosser machine (P. Mutuku, Oral Interview, June 13, 2018). Other resources in provision of education for the LWVI include low vision equipment and materials, clinical and functional vision assessment tools and white canes (TSB, S/1/2000).

Since its establishment, TSB learners and teachers have continuously relied on Braille for reading and writing for the case of students who are totally blind (Mutuku, 2018). Low vision equipment and materials such as large print have however been unavailable since TSB has mainly concentrated on training learners to use Braille on normal print. Learners with visual impairments who have either total or almost total blindness are trained in using Braille while those with some level of vision are taught on using normal print. There has been some integration of sighted learners at the secondary section in the recent past who learn alongside the partially sighted learners using normal print (TSB, S/1/2000).

The specialized mode of teaching the LWVI at TSB has therefore been use of Braille as a form of reading and writing. Braille was invented in the year 1829 by Louis Braille, a Frenchman who was blind. It is a method of reading and writing that relies on using a tactile code that replaces printed characters with simplified patterns of raised dots adapted to the tactile sensitivity of the fingertip (Munyi, 2017). Each Braille cell is formed of a 2 by 3 matrix of dots that encodes a character or group of characters. Figure 4.23 below shows part of the Braille Alphabet while figure 4.24 shows reading of Braille using fingers.

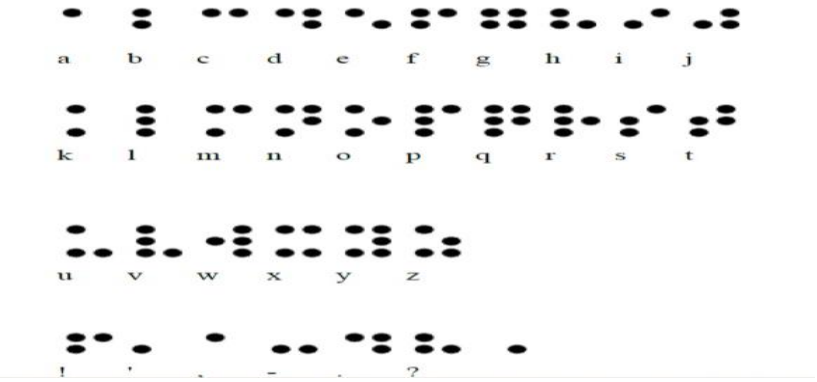

Figure 4.23: Braille alphabet and punctuation Source: Munyi (2017)

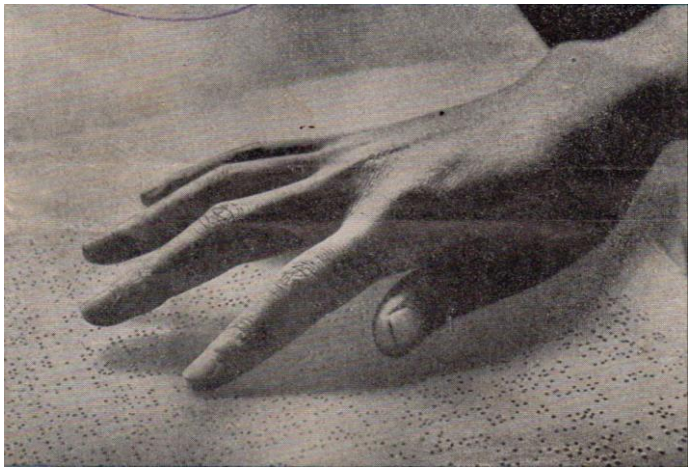

Figure 4.24: Reading by Braille

Source: KNA, BY/12/21

Use of Braille at TSB has followed the practice all over the world in which blind persons have used Braille as a method of communication in various aspects of life for almost two centuries (Munyi, 2017). Most of the former students of TSB with visual impairment that were interviewed acknowledged unequivocally the impact that Braille literacy has had on their academic, social and economic life (F. Kasina, Oral Interview, June 13, 2018; Milimu, 2018; B. Njoroge, Oral Interview, June 13, 2018). When asked on the significance of Braille knowledge on his life, one of the informants responded as follows:

> ‘‘As I said at the beginning of our session, I lost my sight when I was sixteen years old. This was the hardest thing to cope with especially having been able to read and write normally. I lost hope of education because I knew I would never be able to read or write without sight. All this changed when I learned Braille and slowly knew that I could be able to communicate effectively through Braille besides speaking. I’m now a teacher, I read Braille, write my notes, schemes and records through Braille ’’ (Milimu, 2018).

This among other responses indicates the value and effectiveness of learning using Braille especially for learners who are totally blind. The learners have been able to learn effectively and even acquire employment through the knowledge of Braille. As Munyi (2017) affirms, Braille proficiency has notably been associated with higher employment rates and educational levels, self-sufficiency, independence, self-esteem and feelings of competence of the blind.

At its establishment, TSB obtained its Braille materials from abroad since there was no local production of Braille materials in Kenya (KNA, AB/14/34). The Braille materials and other learning equipment were acquired in form of donations from well-wishers through the

Salvation Army Mission and the Royal Empire Society for the Blind. In Kenya, the first Braille materials were produced by the Sikri Vocational Training Center for the Blind that was situated in Nyanza region of Kenya (Ojwando, 1990). The center was mainly for training blind people in agricultural skills but went a step further and became a center for the production of Braille materials by the launching of a Braille press in 1973. However, this project was abandoned four years after inauguration in 1977 due to financial constraints.

This left TSB to continue relying on importation and donations from outside the country which made it expensive to acquire these learning materials. For this reason, Thika Primary School for the Blind resorted to using Braille kits instead of Braille machines which are more expensive. The use of Braille kits did not solve the problem of learning materials as the school continued to experience shortage of Braille related materials. A section of the minutes of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meeting of Thika High School for the Blind held on August 3, 1998 states as follows:

> ‘‘There is a serious problem of braillon in the school. The shortage has been attributed to computer technology. The Kenya Society for the Blind has given some Brailler spare parts but the school does not have enough Braillers. The primary school has however come to our aid by giving out slates and stylus. The transcription of books is also a problem we are facing as a school.’’ (TSB, S/4/1999).

The school therefore mainly relied on donations of some of these equipment and materials from well-wishers such as the CBM. Figure 4.25 is a photograph of one of the fifty Mathematical Kits donated to learners of Thika Primary School for the Blind by CBM in 1978. Each kit was made of a small wooden briefcase and it comprised of a big writing frame, a small hand frame, an abacus, four rulers, two measuring tapes, four rubber mats, four spur wheels and two stencils (TSB, S/2/1994). The kits were donated by CBM with the aim of enabling learners to participate more actively in school activities.

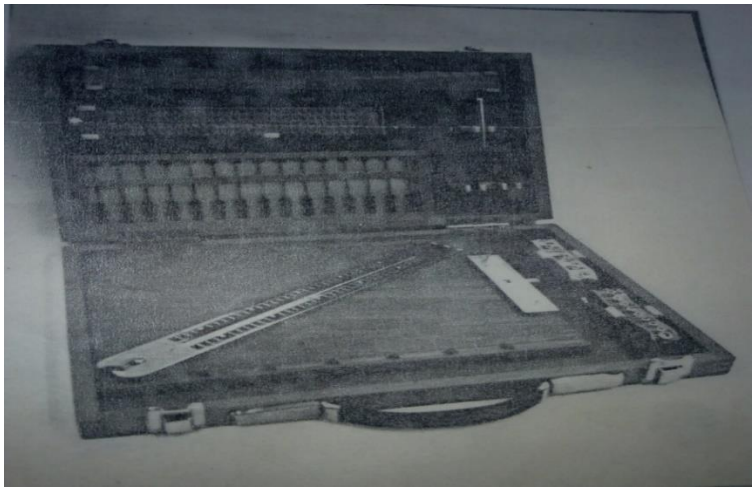

Figure 4.25: A mathematical kit donated to learners by CBM in 1978

Source: TSB, S/2/1994

Thika Primary School for the Blind has continued to use the Braille kits up to the present time since there are only a few Braille machines in the school (Mutuku, 2018). The situation is however different at Thika High School for the Blind where the school has strived to provide Braille machines to every blind student. The school has also employed a Braille technician to repair the Braille machines in case of breakdown (Kamau, 2018). Figure 4.26 shows learners using Braille machines at Thika High School for the Blind.

Figure 4.26: LWVI at Thika High School for the Blind writing by use of Braille machines

Source: School Album for Thika High School for the Blind

In reproducing Braille copies for students during examinations, TSB has undergone some development from use of thermoform machines to aqusition of a modern Braille embosser machine in the year 2009 whose cost is over KSh. 10 million. Thermoform machines, also called thermoforms rely on use of heat to form Braille characters and are therefore slow and

tiresome. The Braille embosser machine is a modern equipment that works as an impact printer to form Braille characters. It is therefore very fast and more efficient. The Primary section still uses thermoforms and occasionally engages the services of the Braille embosser machine at the high school (Mutuku, 2018). Figure 4.27 shows a thermoform machine while figure 4.28 shows a modern Braille embosser machine.

Figure 4.27: A thermoform machine at TSB

Figure 4.28: A Braille embosser machine at Thika High School for the Blind

Besides the use of Braille for learning, informants drawn from former students and teachers alluded to the viability of other options of reading that could be effective if utilized. These include audio taping of lessons, peer tutoring and group discussions. Audio taping was said to be effective in theoretical subjects like history and religion where learners could listen to the

audio several times to enhance learning and understanding. This method is however limited in areas that require learners practical engagement such as Mathematics and Sciences (Milimu, 2018).

This section has contributed in meeting the intention of the first objective of the study which focused on documenting the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya. Educational development for the LWVI cannot be realized without provision of the necessary equipment and learning resources such as the Braille related materials. The section has shown that despite the challenges of acquiring Braille related equipment and materials that TSB schools experienced, the schools have continuously relied on the use of Braille for reading and writing in the case of LWVI who cannot read normal print.

4.11 Challenges Experienced in Education for the LWV at TSB

In seeking to document the challenges encountered in the provision of education for the LWVI at TSB, the researcher deduced two broad forms of challenges. The first form involves challenges that are experienced by learners while the second form includes challenges that are experienced by the school, which by extension, affects the learners. These challenges are discussed respectively in the following subsections.

4.11.1 Challenges Experienced by Learners

Upon analysis of information collected from oral interviews of former students of TSB, the researcher deduced three types of challenges that LWVI experience in the course of their study. These were educational challenges, social challenges and psychological challenges. Some of these challenges emanate from the school while others emanate from the society.

Educational challenges are difficulties encountered during the educational acquisition process mainly in school. Visual impairment is in itself a limitation in the endeavor to acquire education. This is because the LWVI have to use other means of reading such as Braille which is a slow and tiring process especially where large volumes of reading materials are to be covered. When asked of the challenges encountered while at TSB, one of the informants stated as follows:

> ‘‘Reading by use of fingers is not as easy as reading by use of eyes. Before I lost my sight, I could read a sentence within a few seconds but when I changed to Braille, it could take me over a minute to read a sentence. Where

> a lot of work has to be studied, a lot of time is used and the process gets tiring'' (Kasina, 2018).

Learners with visual impairments therefore use more time than their sighted peers in studies. They are therefore supposed to work harder than their sighted peers in covering equal amounts of work. In 1999, the difficulties that come with use of Braille formed part of the reasons that some of the students of Thika High School for the Blind wrote to the editor of Kenya Times newspaper complaining about their challenges at the school. Part of the article which appeared in the Kenya Times issue of July 7, 1999 states as follows:

> ''The administrators are barring us from possessing radios which we use to record the notes after classes since we're unable to cope with dictation speed the teachers use. The radio cassettes help us during revision as we cannot go into Braille notes which are tiresome. We listen to the cassettes'' (TSB, S/1/2000).

Social challenges involve hardships encountered by the persons with visual impairments in society. Some of these societal challenges have a direct influence while others have indirect influence on the educational process of the LWVI. These include challenges related to lack of or limited employment by persons with visual impairments especially those that are totally blind, negative societal attitude towards the persons with visual impairments and lack of friendly infrastructure in most of the institutions that the persons with visual impairments encounter.

In terms of employability of learners from TSB, there were problems recorded in the early years of the institute. Most learners were hoping to acquire employment after their training but only a few were lucky to be employed. By 1953 for instance it was reported to SMC of Thika Institute for the Blind that most ex-students were giving up due to unemployment, as most employers did not believe that the blind could work effectively (KNA, AB/14/34). This trickled down to learners who were still training as it made some of them lose hope of a bright future and in turn, some of them dropped out (KNA, CA/3/49). The reluctance of employers in considering the persons with visual impairments could be associated to negative attitudes and stigma towards the blind. In an effort to address this discouraging factor, the institute worked to promote entrepreneurship skills to learners by teaching them how to use the different trades they had trained in to earn a living besides being employed (KNA, AB/14/34). The institute also implemented follow-up programs to ex-students with provision of aid and guidance (KNA, CA/3/49).

Learners with visual impairments also encounter social challenges in terms of unfriendly physical facilities. These include infrastructures that ease mobility such as pavements, staircase and motor vehicles. Others are basic infrastructures such as friendly washrooms and dormitories. Most of the former students that were interviewed attested to having had difficulties in the process of travelling to and from school, visiting other schools and while in society in general.

Psychological challenges that the researcher came across involved emotional stress that the LWVI experience as a result of having the impairment. The other psychological challenge is trauma that results from alienation from the rest of the family at an early age since TSB is a boarding school right from the nursery school. When asked of the challenges encountered in the course of study, one of the informants responded as follows:

> ‘‘Leaving my family at the age of five years to reside in a boarding school and yet blind was the hardest thing I ever encountered in my life of schooling. I used to cry most of the time demanding that I go back home. When it was time to resume school after holidays, I could cry and plead with my mother not to let me go back to boarding. My mother could also cry but she still encouraged me to go to school’’ (Njoroge, 2018).

The other psychological challenge could be associated to exploitation of the children with visual impairments by the sponsors or guardian, and problems related to broken families. The negative attitudes towards the blind that have prevailed also form part of the societal as well as psychological challenges. These negative attitudes impact negatively on the self-esteem of the learners leading to lack of full realization of their potential.

4.11.2 Challenges Experienced by the School

The school through its history has faced various challenges that include lack of ability and sometimes unwillingness by learners’ parents to pay school fee as well as inadequate funding. The school has also through the years faced leadership wrangles between the Salvation Army representatives and the government’s head teachers in the school. This challenge has been discussed in subsections 4.4.2 and 4.5.2 of this chapter.

In terms of school fees payment, evidence showed that most of the LWVI at the school came from poor backgrounds and therefore most of their parents were not able to pay school fees. Mutuku (2018) explained that for many years, the school’s administration had difficulties in compelling the parents to pay fees because most of them were very poor. ‘‘In most of the

occasions, we have sympathized with the learners leaving them to complete schooling sometimes without paying a single cent'' (Mutuku, 2018). The same sentiments were reiterated by Kamau (2018) who stated that they could not send students from poor backgrounds home for school fees.

The other challenge associated with payment of school fees is that most parents have a notion that the school is well funded by multiple sponsors hence they ought not to pay school fees. A section of the minutes of PTA meeting of Thika High School for the Blind held on August 3, 1998 states as follows:

> ''Parents of the handicapped expect the school to make payments for them. This is because they believe the donor and the sponsors bring a lot of money to the school which is not the case. This has resulted in some Form one students coming for admission empty handed'' (TSB, S/4/1999).

This reluctance or complete non-payment of the school fees hampers most of the school's operations and thus hindering its progress. The section of the minutes quoted above continues to state as follows: ''Non-payment of school fees in good time has led to the boarding department experiencing problems. Suppliers are not ready to give goods on credit all the time. The school can also not afford special diet'' (TSB, S/4/1999). This demonstrates part of the problems that arose at TSB as a result of non-payment of fees.

TSB has also experienced the challenges of inadequate funding considering that educating the learners with visual impairments requires special materials some of which are very expensive such as Braille paper, Braille books and writing equipment (TSB, S/3/2003). In 1976 for instance, the head teacher shared with the BOGs the difficulties he was facing in running the school due to limited and sometimes lack of finances (TSB, P/2/1978). The head teacher, reported that the Ministry of Education was not sending enough grants to the school and more so, it was not sending it on time. He gave an example of the first quarter of the year 1977 where a sum of Kshs. 43, 750 was received from the ministry. This sum of money was to cater for workers' salaries that was amounting to KShs. 36, 000 therefore leaving only a small amount to run all other school activities (TSB, P/2/1978). The school therefore had to cut and limit on essential services and resources such as books, student meals and learning activities outside the school. Insufficient funding therefore greatly affected the school's mandate of educating the LWVI effectively.

As a result of limited funding, the school has not always been able to acquire special materials that are required in educating the blind. This was demonstrated by a section of the minutes of PTA meeting of Thika High School for the Blind held on August 3, 1998 that states as follows:

> ‘‘Braillon has been difficult to get leading to continuous assessment tests not being administered and this is unfair to the students. A ream of braillon costs Kshs. 2,500 and the school requires 150 reams. Sight Savers and Low Vision projects at Kikuyu Hospital have been approached for assistance. Braille papers has not been very hard to get but the problem is money. A ream which contains 250 sheets costs Kshs. 225 and the school requires 1000 sheets a day’’ (TSB, S/4/1999).

These material acquisition problems interfere with the quality of teaching which in turn affects the level of performance of the learners. The effects stretch to future prospects of the LWVI that go through the school. The school has also faced challenges of getting sponsors to meet the educational needs for those children who are from poor backgrounds (TSB, S/3/2003).

The section has contributed positively to the intention of the first objective of the study. By showing the challenges that learners and TSB as a school have experienced over time, the section has displayed the struggles made in the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya. The section has displayed the efforts that were put up in different circumstances to overcome those challenges.

4.12 Conclusion

Thika School for the Blind has undergone multiple developments. Established as the Institute for the Blind in 1946 by the Salvation Army, it later developed into Thika Primary School in 1956 and Thika Secondary School for the Blind in 1967. In its development, TSB opened its doors to girls in 1954 and later to young children by establishing a pre-primary school education center in 1959. Through history, TSB has offered various educational and training programs to persons with visual impairments such as vocational and technical training in form of trade courses, academic training in primary and secondary sections, teacher training as well as pre-primary school education programs. Despite various challenges that TSB has experienced over time, the institution has grown in its capacity to offer education for the LWVI with evident development in infrastructure, supportive equipment and number of students as well as personnel to handle the LWVI.

CHAPTER FIVE
GOVERNMENT'S PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION FOR THE LWVI IN KENYA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings to the second objective of the study that focused on analyzing government's participation in the development of Education for the LWVI in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with reference to Thika School for the Blind (TSB). In pursuit of this, the researcher delved into documents at the Kenya National Archives (KNA), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), TSB and the Salvation Army (SA) Church. In addition, some informants were interviewed to enrich and fill the gaps in the information from archival data.

The researcher established that besides the government, Thika School for the Blind has developed through the contributions of many other stakeholders who have played a critical role from the time of its establishment through the years. These are multiple organizations and individuals who have supported the school through donations and financial support. They include the Salvation Army Mission, Kenya Society for the Blind, the CBM, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), African Braille Centre and Sight Savers International.

Despite the involvement of various parties as indicated, it was the researcher's conviction that the government and the Salvation Army remain the key contributors towards the development of TSB. The researcher considered that the contributions of the Salvation Army to the growth of TSB is so significant that it deserves mentioning in this documentation. This section therefore presents some of the contributions of the Salvation Army besides those of the government. The researcher deduced four themes under government's participation in education for the LWVI in Kenya. These include early government involvement and formation of the Royal Society for the Blind 1944-1950; government involvement from 1950 to 1963 and formation of the Kenya Society for the Blind; government's involvement in post-colonial period 1963-2003 and role of the Salvation Army.

5.2 Early Government Involvement and Formation of the Royal Society for the Blind 1944-1950

Kenya was a colony of Britain and therefore before independence, the British Colonial government was in charge of education through the education department that was set up in 1911 (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014). While the colonial government was engaged in educational activities from 1912 through establishing of schools, providing grants-in-aid to missionary schools and policy formulation through various education commissions and ordinances, there was little effort and engagement in provision of education for disabled persons such as the LWVI up to mid-1940s.

It was not until 1944 that the government got interested in the experimental activities of training the blind by the Salvation Army in Nairobi that had been started in 1942 by Mrs. Barrell. The government gave a promise of financial assistance to the SA mission on condition that they would organize and maintain on a larger scale the welfare work for the blind which had already commenced (KNA, DC/TTA/3/15/1). The training for the blind at Nairobi was thus transferred to Thika town in the then Central Province of Kenya leading to formation of Thika Institute for the Blind in 1946.

At Thika Institute for the Blind, the government gave an undertaking to provide £1,000 per annum for payment of staff. In addition, the government committed itself to provide Shs.25/- (in East African currency) to the institute on monthly basis for each blind African Kenyan accommodated at the institute to meet the recurrent charges (KNA, MOH/3/282). In the case of non-Kenyan blind students from other East African Territories admitted to the institute, a fee of £50 per head was to be paid to Kenya Revenue Department on a yearly basis. The fees was to be paid by the respective governments of the country from which the blind student hailed from (KNA, MOH/3/282).

In 1946, payment of £2,000 was made to Thika Institute for the Blind by the Kenyan government in accordance to this undertaking. This sum included a small additional amount for contingencies. The financial support provided by the government was however insufficient to cater for the many needs that the institute had, considering that it was in its early years of establishment (KNA, MOH/3/282). It therefore became apparent to the government that a grant on the basis of enrolment was insufficient in meeting the recurrent costs of the institute.

In the 1947 budget estimates, a grant of £3,225 was therefore allocated to the institute to meet the full deficit in the estimates approved by the advisory committee of the institute.

From 1947 onwards, a budget grant was regularly made in accordance with the recommendations of the advisory committee and subject to approval of the honorable Secretary of Finance (KNA, MOH/3/282). The establishment and early growth of Thika Institute for the Blind therefore had government involvement through provision of funds. One of the informants however, opined that the assistance was minimal since much of the costs of the establishment was met by the Salvation Army (Informant B, 2018).

The involvement of the government in development of education for the blind was further boosted by the events in Britain. The welfare and training of the blind in Britain was under a government body called National Institute for the Blind (KNA, MOH/3/282). In 1945 the British Colonial office together with the National Institute for the Blind, focused attention on the problems of blindness in its colonial empire. Within Britain, work among the blind had reached a leading position of competence and scope, but in the young, partly undeveloped lands in the colonial empire such as Kenya, it was quite apparent that a major and a national problem existed. A committee was therefore set up jointly by the Colonial Office and the National Institute for the Blind to study the documentary and other evidence available on the state of the welfare of the blind in all the British colonies.

The committee soon found itself confronted with an immense field in Africa and the Middle East where blindness was indeed being combated, but on a scale that was clearly inadequate in the face of such wide spread problems. Delegations of the joint committee visiting the African colony, the Middle East and elsewhere took surveys of the situations as they were in these regions. In Kenya, the committee visited and stayed at the Thika Institute for the Blind just a few months after it had been established in the year 1946. The information gathered there undoubtedly influenced the establishment of the British Empire Society for the Blind (KNA, MOH/3/282).

The subsequent report of the committee which was published in a White Paper in March, 1948 depicted a somber and significant picture of human suffering and social loss (KNA, AB/14/34). It not only showed how little was being done but also how all the necessary skills and money to deal adequately with the situation, simply could not be availed by the Colonies themselves. It was apparent that alone and separately, the colonies were in no position to

initiate, much less to sustain, campaigns of the magnitude required, if they were to cope adequately with the needs of the blind (KNA, MOH/3/282).

In spite of the documentation efforts displayed by the committee in its colonies, the committee seemed to have had a view that it was only the Britons that could solve the problem. This is revealed by the committee's position that the challenge was not only to the British and its colonial governments, but also, to the goodwill humanity and social conscious of British men and women everywhere, not least in the colonies themselves (KNA, MOH/3/282). This view negated the role that could be played by Africans themselves in solving the problem that befell them. Nevertheless, the joint committee's report led to realization of the need to establish a central body to organize and facilitate all the activities that were to cater for the welfare of the blind not only in Britain but in all its colonies as well.

The committee reiterated that the new body to be established was to provide positive leadership, to stimulate and coordinate action by both governments and specialized societies and not least to give the campaign that could befit the status and force of a great empire movement. Through the efforts of the committee, the Colonial Office and the National Institute for the Blind both recognized the difficulties which could hamper a purely official departmental approach. They were unanimous that work among the blind in the colonies, Kenya included, required not only the sympathy and support of governments but even more the energy and initiative of the public. This called for a special body, able to command the pooled resources and collaboration required.

In January 1950, the Royal Empire Society for the Blind (RESB) was established as the proposed central body. RESB which was also commonly referred to as British Empire Society for the Blind therefore came into being, sponsored jointly by the Colonial Office and the National Institute for the Blind. The society was constituted as an independent limited company under the direction of an executive council with seven founder members. The sponsors appointed the first seven members of the new Society's Executive Council, but the number was subsequently enlarged to include members with financial experience and those with intimate knowledge of large-scale voluntary organization and colonial administration (KNA, MOH/3/282). As an independent company, RESB was empowered to take action in every territory of the British Colonial Empire to prevent blindness and to provide for the education, training, welfare and employment of blind people.

It was at this point that regional branches of RESB were formed in each of the British Colonial territories. This led to formation of the Kenya Branch of the British Royal Society for the Blind. Its first task was to evolve a basic plan of action, and to create the organization required to carry the plan into effect. The plan required surveys of the blindness problem, adequate publicity, grants to establish or improve research, the establishing and assisting of eye hospitals and training centers and the provision of Braille presses. The Kenya Branch however prioritized two objectives namely: a) to conduct a survey of eye diseases in the colony which was linked to the provision of mobile clinic for treatment of eye diseases and b) to extend the work of the Thika Institute of the Blind. The committee published appeals for the funds from the Kenyan public in order to raise funds to support among others, education for the blind which had started at Thika Institute.

The Kenya Branch of the British Royal Society for the Blind also sent people into Kenyan rural areas to identify and recommend blind persons for training as well as for treatment (KNA, CA/3/49). This identification process was usually based on medical principles. In an endeavor to promote training for persons with visual impairments, the Kenyan Branch engaged the activities of social welfare workers from the government to single out blind children from among various communities and recommend their placement at Thika Institute for the Blind and other institutions for the blind that emerged later such as the Shamba training centers. Similar efforts were made by the DCs on the request of the Thika Institute for the Blind.

This section has dealt with early government's involvement in education for the LWVI in Kenya hence contributing positively towards meeting the second objective of the study. The section has shown the government's financial support to TSB in its early years. It has also illuminated the government's initiative of creating a body that could run the activities of the blind such as education.

5.3 Government Involvement from 1950 to 1963 and Formation of the Kenya Society for the Blind

The period after 1950 was characterized by increased government involvement in the education and training of the blind besides other welfare issues as a result of then newly formed Kenyan Branch of the British Royal Society for the Blind. Apart from simply

identifying children with visual impairments, the government officers through the Kenyan Branch went a long way in trying to change the traditional societal attitudes which tended to view any disabled persons as valueless elements of society (Ojwando, 1990). This led to gradual increase of the number of students enrolled at Thika Institute for the Blind since many parents were now responding positively by allowing their children with visual impairments to be taken to school without resentment. In 1950 for instance, there were 46 learners enrolled at the institute but the population slightly increased to 51 in 1951 and to 56 by 1952 (KNA, MOH/3/282).

The Kenyan Branch continued with more efforts in an attempt to improve the welfare and education of the blind. In August 1953 for instance, there was a discussion between representatives of the Kenyan Government and the Kenya Branch of the British Royal Society for the Blind on possible government share in services to the blind (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4). These services included among others education, care and treatment as well as preventive measures on blindness. From the meeting, it was agreed as follows:

1. That an autonomous body be established in Kenya to carry out services on behalf of the government and philanthropic public.
2. That more primary schools for the blind such as the one that was at Thika be established elsewhere to increase access.
3. That Shamba training centers be set up as an intermediate sound and economical method of rehabilitating many blind men and women.
4. That permanent workshops, possibly near Nairobi and Mombasa, for such as brush ware, coir fiber goods and the whole basket ware trade to be established.
5. That secondary schools for the blind be established in conjunction with training for the higher vocations
6. That resettlement and after care department for the blind be established.

These recommendations undoubtedly formed part of the blueprint for the developments in education for the LWVI that were realized gradually from the time they were made. Acting on the first recommendation that an autonomous body be established in Kenya to carry out services on behalf of the government and the philanthropic public, the Kenyan government formed an ad hoc Committee for the Blind in December, 1953. The recommendation was based on the need by the local blind people to have an internal autonomous body that could manage the activities of the blind rather that the then Kenyan Branch of the British Empire

Society for the Blind that relied on the Society's decisions in Britain. This move could also have been necessitated by the political agitation of the local Kenyans towards attaining self-governance.

The ad hoc Committee for the Blind was therefore established as an interim measure until such a time that the proposed new Foundation for the Blind would be established. The committee was charged with the responsibility of considering and making recommendations on all aspects of welfare for the blind in Kenya including education. The ad hoc committee was under the chairmanship of the director of medical services with four officials and five non official members nominated by the Kenya Branch of the British Empire Society for the Blind (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4).

Among its first tasks, the committee came up with further recommendations on the role of the government. The committee agreed that the government should do the following: a) Establish Kenya Foundation for the Blind to replace the then Thika Advisory Committee, and continue with education aid to Thika, b) Provide aid to other primary schools in the same measure as to mission schools, c) provide similar measures of aid to blind men and women in the Shamba training centers from Technical Training Department Funds and d) contribute 50 percent of capital expenditure for capital developments (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4).

The ad hoc committee further led the efforts of establishing a foundation for the blind through its engagement in drafting a bill that was aimed at establishing the said foundation. Upon consideration and approval by the Kenyan parliament in 1956, Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB) was established through an Act of Parliament CAP 251 of 1956. The opening statement of the Act states as follows: ''An Act of Parliament to establish a society to promote the welfare, education, training and employment of the blind and to assist in the prevention and alleviation of blindness; and for other purposes recorded therewith'' (KSB Act, 1956).

Through the Act, the government delegated its responsibility of coordinating education for the blind to KSB. The society was charged with exclusive responsibility of promoting education for the blind and soliciting funds through philanthropic donations and gifts from well-wishers. No other person or party including the schools for the blind could solicit funds for the blind without permission from KSB. Even though the Act was reviewed in 1984 and in 1988, KSB has remained an active agent in development of education for the LWVI since its

establishment. In partnership with different missions, KSB took an active role in opening Shamba training centers for the blind, primary schools for the blind as well as technical institutes for the blind such as Machakos Institute for the Blind. Figure 5.1 below shows blind trainees at Machakos Institute for the Blind with attires written KSB indicating the active role that KSB was engaged in at the institute.

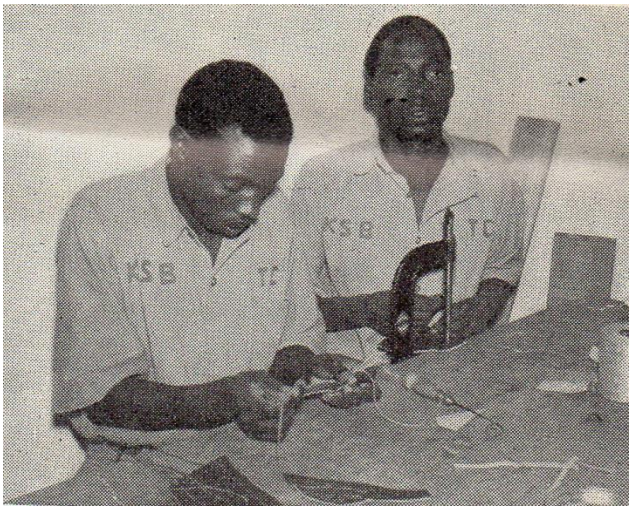

Figure 5.1: LWVI at Machakos Institute supported by KSB

Source: KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4

By the time of establishment of KSB, there were only a few educational institutions for the blind in the East African region. These institutions were not sufficient to meet the demand of the huge population of people who had visual impairments. In Kenya for instance, there was only Thika Institute for the Blind. In Uganda, there was a craft training school near Kampala and a Shamba Training Primary School at Teso aided by the Uganda Foundation for the Blind (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4). In Nyasaland (Malawi) the situation was slightly better because there were two mission schools for the blind children supported by Nyasaland Society for the Blind. There was however a negative tendency in Nyasaland where the two mission schools were becoming colonies for the blind persons by keeping the learners in the mission throughout without allowing them to return home for holidays (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4). The other territories including Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) had not commenced provision of organized educational activities for the LWVI (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4).

It was in this regard of the poor state of education for the blind in the entire East African region that the Kenya Society of the Blind in collaboration with blind welfare bodies of other

East African countries organized for an inter-territorial conference on work for the blind. The conference was held in February 13th to 15th in 1961 in Nairobi, Kenya. In attendance were stakeholders from countries in East Africa including Tanganyika, Uganda, Zanzibar and Kenya. There was also representation from Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland. The conference acted as a springboard in the development of education for the LWVI since it illuminated the poor state of this education and showed the need to act swiftly towards improving it (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4).

In the conference, it was noted that out of about three million blind persons in the commonwealth, about seven hundred thousand lived in Africa. Kenya for instance was noted to have had three times as many blind persons as Canada. Despite the high levels of blindness in the in the region, East Africa had only 300 children in school and 150 blind adults in training out of about 150,000 blind persons in the region.

The conference brought to light the fact that despite the region having been the first in starting a Shamba training scheme, the number of the persons with visual impairments in employment was so small due to lack of adequate training of these individuals. The poor state of unemployment was contrasted to the state in the United Kingdom where one third of the blind were employed, mostly in open industry. The conference therefore emphasized that the techniques that were being used in the United Kingdom should be applied on a wider scale in the Royal Commonwealth region.

These findings in the conference did not only depict a serious neglect towards educating the blind but also showed the dire need for government's involvement towards educating the blind with regard to that large proportion of the blind that were not receiving any form of training. While tribal customs in East Africa had in the past assured blind persons of food and shelter, this was at a great economic cost to the family and the country, and these traditions were therefore losing their force in modern times creating a need for empowerment of the blind through education and training. It was therefore recognized that there was need to have a modern system of education and training for the LWVI so that the individuals could lead an ordinary life and make a place for themselves in the community. The participants were therefore urged to talk of practical beginnings and sound plans.

The 1961 conference played a key role in the development of education for the LWVI since it brought to the forefront the need to create more educational institutions for the LWVI. This

was through the realization that the few schools for the LWVI in the territory provided much less capacity compared to the statistical figures of the blind in the region. For instance the incidence of blindness in Kenya was estimated to be 12 per every 1000 people, about 600 people in the whole of Zanzibar, 550 per 100,000 people in Uganda while there were no records for estimates in Tanganyika (KNA, DO/ER/2/6/4). It was after this conference that a few more institutions for the blind were created in Kenya leading to a more improved access to education by the persons with visual impairments. These institutions include St. Oda School for the Blind established in 1961, Likoni School for the Blind established in 1965 and Kibos School for the Blind established in 1965. The training at the already established Machakos Institute for the Blind and at the two Shamba training centers at Kolanya and Chuka was also enhanced with introduction of more vocational courses (KNA, BY/12/21).

This section has strived to provide additional answers on the second research question of the study that is concerned with the government's involvement in the provision of education for the LWVI in Kenya. The section has not only illuminated the state of blindness in Kenya in the 1950s but it has also depicted a state that showed the need for more efforts in providing education for the LWVI. The section has also described the activities that led to formation of KSB, an important body that runs the affairs of the persons with visual impairments in Kenya up to the present.

5.4 Governments Involvement in Post-Colonial Period 1963-2003

This section attempts to analyse government's involvement in educational development for the LWVI as provided at TSB and beyond from the time Kenya attained independence in 1963 to the year 2003. The section provides an analysis of the government's involvement in the development of education for the LWVI through funding, policy and other ways of promoting education for the LWVI. Following Kenya's independence in 1963 the Kenyan government took a more active role in promoting education for the handicapped including the LWVI. TSB for instance has remained a fully government owned school after independence in that the Ministry of Education through the Teachers Service Commission employs all the teachers for the school. TSB also receives grants from the government for boarding and tuition expenses.

In 1964, the first post-independence educational commission, the Kenya Education Commission chaired by S.H. Ominde released its report. The Ominde committee however

only dealt with special education concisely recommending that children with mild handicaps be integrated to learn in regular schools (GoK, 1964). This led to enrolment of LWVI with low vision in mainstream schools even though there was no special consideration in learning for this group in such schools.

In the same year, 1964, the government formed the first taskforce that was directly charged with assessing and recommending persons that required special needs education such as the LWVI. The taskforce that was referred to as the Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled was chaired by Ngala Mwendwa (GoK, 1964). The committee made 28 recommendations concerning the handicapped but these recommendations were not implemented until the early 1980s when the government started to pay increased attention to the special education field. The work of the commission however led to the formulation of Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1968 titled Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled which provided a framework for the development of special education.

This Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1968 formed a key milestone in as far as special education policies were concerned. This is because prior to its establishment, education for the handicapped referred to as special education was not defined in either the constitution or the Education Act of 1968. It was this particular sessional paper that not only made clear what special education entailed but also laid down the specific course of action that was to be taken by the Ministry of Education in liaison with other agencies to provide education to the LWVI in the country.

The paper had several objectives that aimed at providing a framework for the development of the welfare of the disabled such as the LWVI. Among these objective were the following: 1) to make an assessment of the numbers and types of disabilities in Kenya, 2) to investigate existing facilities for the education, training, settlement/employment of persons with disabilities, 3) to formulate a broad program of training and placement of the disabled involving community care designed to assist the economic independence of as many disabled persons as possible and 4) to examine and make a report on the existing machinery for the co-ordination of services to disabled persons.

As a follow-up of recommendations from the report of the Committee of the Care and the rehabilitation of the Disabled, the sessional paper recommended that all chiefs and sub chiefs were to make a count of all persons with disability throughout their districts. This therefore

created the first formal statistics on the state of disability in the country which could guide planning and expansion of related services such as education. In relation to educational services for the disabled, the paper recommended that efforts be made to integrate LWVI in regular schools. The paper also recommended that transportation be provided to learners with physical disabilities, so that they could attend school. The transportation was however to be provided by voluntary persons and agencies in conjunction with local authorities and not by the government.

The Sessional Paper No. 5 laid a plan for the establishment of special units in some regular schools especially in urban areas for learners with disabilities such as the LWVI. The paper also reiterated that all schools that could provide educational services for learners with all forms of disabilities were to be treated as special schools and receive funding accordingly. This sessional paper further influenced the establishment of the Department of Special Education under the Ministry of Home Affairs (Ojwando, 1990).

Even though this step of a special department was significant in the development of special education, it was the researcher's opinion that the department should have been under the Ministry of Education rather than that of Home Affairs. This is because the Ministry of Home Affairs main role was to provide rehabilitation and correctional services to convicts through the prison services. This is in agreement with Informant C (2018) who points out that the Ministry of Home Affairs was only engaged in soliciting and registering external support for special education services from voluntary organizations with little educational support. An attempt to involve the Ministry of Co-operatives side by side with the education ministry to take care of the education aspect of the handicapped in Kenya was unsuccessful making the progress of special education sluggish (Ojwando, 1990).

The department was later transferred to the Ministry of Education to serve as an inspectorate and administrative unit for the purpose of effective management and supervision of special education programs such as the one offered at TSB. The government's establishment of a fully-fledged Department of Special Education in the Ministry of Education led to positive developments to the programs that TSB as an institution offering SE education was engaged in (TSB, S/21994). This included the department's intervention in ensuring smooth clearance of learning materials and equipment for TSB at the customs office which had previously been a challenge.

Since most of the equipment's required for LWVI education came from abroad in terms of donations and as imports, the school was facing challenges of clearing these materials at the customs office since they would incur costs and it would take long for the materials to be cleared. In 1986, the school made a request to the government through the ministry's special education department to waive the customs costs and facilitate easier clearance of such materials (TSB, S/1/1994). The government stepped in to facilitate smooth clearance of such equipment without imposing duty.

In addition to the facilitation of acquisition of materials and equipment, the government continued to support TSB through the special education department by continuing to send grants to the school. However, in most occasions, the funds were delayed and were insufficient to meet all the needs of the school. In 1976 for instance, the Head teacher of Thika Primary School for the Blind shared with the school's Board of Governors on the difficulties he was facing in running the school due to limited and sometimes lack of finances (TSB, P/2/1978). The head teacher, reported that the ministry of education was not sending enough grants to the school and more so, it was not sending it on time. He gave an example of the first quarter of the year 1977 where a sum of Kshs. 43, 750 was received from the ministry. This sum of money was to cater for workers' salaries that was amounting to KShs. 36, 000 thereby leaving only a small amount to run all other school activities (TSB, P/2/1978).

Another example of the government's involvement in education of the LWVI as special education was illustrated in the report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies referred to as the Gachathi Report of 1976 (GoK, 1976). Even though the committee was not concerned directly with special education, it made several recommendations some of which concerned the area of special education. These included coordination of early intervention and assessment of children with special needs, creation of public awareness on causes of disabilities to promote prevention, research to determine the nature and extent of handicaps for provision of SE, establishment of pre-primary school education programs as part of special schools and development of policy for integrating learners with special needs. At TSB, these recommendations strengthened the programs of the Sunshine Home in the school which was officially recognized and supported by the government as a pre-primary school education center of the school (TSB, P/2/1978).

The government's efforts towards education for the LWVI were further boosted in 1980, when the leadership of the time, by the then President, His Excellency Daniel Moi, engaged in raising of funds for the handicapped. This was however done through mobilizing for donations by individuals rather than enhancing the budgetary allocation for the same. The government leadership organized a massive Harambee (Fundraising drive) in which twenty five million Kenyan shillings was collected to help the handicapped such as those with visual impairment (TSB, S/2/1994). The Harambee therefore generated the Disabled Fund from which TSB and other special schools received their shares.

In 1986, the government once again formed another commission, the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (GoK, 1988). The report of the commission which is commonly referred to as the Kamunge Report was released in 1988. With reference to SE, the Kamunge Report made several detailed observations and recommendations for different categories of SNE including the LWVI. Concerning education for the LWVI, the Kamunge report made the following eight recommendations:

i. That the young children with visual impairment of pre-primary school age be integrated in regular pre-primary schools;
ii. That the partially sighted be integrated in regular primary and secondary schools and be provided with necessary facilities and equipment including low vision aids to enable them learn effectively;
iii. That the learning and examination needs of the students with visual impairments in sciences and applied subjects be catered for in the various curricula and examinations;
iv. That the Kenya National Examination Council should make adequate provision for qualified transcribers and examiners, to cater for the special needs of the candidates with visual impairments;
v. That Sikri Vocational School be assisted to revive the operation of its braille press;
vi. That there be increased government participation and co-ordination in the production and distribution of Braille materials;
vii. That education and training institutions be encouraged to appropriate library services to their students with visual impairments.

The Kamunge report is therefore one of the reports that gave detailed recommendations for the LWVI. These recommendations positively affected the development of education for the LWVI in that it influenced the adaptation of the curriculum in science and applied subjects such as biology and agriculture, an aspect that had not been done before (TSB, S/1/2000). The recommendations also led to more considerations by the Kenya National Examinations Council towards the candidates with visual impairments such as the addition of 30 minutes for every examination paper administered to the LWVI (TSB, S/1/2000).

Besides these recommendations that were specific to LWVI, the Kamunge report also made recommendations that led to deployment of SE inspectors at the District level. The inspectors were to play a critical role of maintaining necessary contact with schools, teachers and the community and they were to involve all stakeholders at different levels in areas of SE such as that offered at TSB. The committee also recommended cost sharing in education, a suggestion that was implemented almost immediately after the publication of the report. In effect, the government reduced its funding to all public schools including TSB. The action shifted more burden of financing the school to parents of the LWVI at TSB and this led to financial constrains in the school since most parents were unable to bear the burden (TSB, S/4/1999).

In 1999 the Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training Taskforce was appointed. The taskforce's report commonly referred to as the Koech Report recommended the establishment of a national special education advisory board. It also noted that there was no comprehensive SE policy or legal framework on SE despite existence of various policy guidelines (GoK, 1999). The recommendations of the report were however not implemented with budgetary constraints allegedly being stated as a basis for not implementing the recommendations. Amutabi (2003) has however criticized the lack of implementation of recommendations of the Koech report noting that the failure was linked to the politics of the time rather than the budgetary constraints as claimed. Nevertheless, some recommendations were later accepted which led to the setting up of the Kochung Taskforce (2003).

In 2003, the government formed the second taskforce since independence that was primarily charged with addressing the needs of handicapped persons. The report of the taskforce, Kochung Report (2003) gave rise to the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) which was brought into force in June 2004. Prior to the enactment of this Act, the objectives of SE in Kenya were contained in the Ministry of Education's Draft Policy for Special Education of

1981 and the Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the next Decade and Beyond (Ojwando, 1990).

The Kochung taskforce was set to examine the challenges that individuals with special educational needs such as the LWVI face. Besides identifying those challenges, the report while borrowing from the Koech Report of 1999 however went further to providing a comprehensive legal framework which outlawed all forms of discriminative treatment of persons with special needs and disabilities. The report recommended that all persons with special needs should have access to education and training. It further reiterated that there should be adaptation of infrastructural, socio-economic and environmental facilities to ensure a conducive environment for persons with special needs and disabilities. The taskforce also led to the establishment of a National Council for Persons with Disability whose mandate was to implement the rest of the Act on the rights, privileges and protection of persons with disabilities such as inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and training programs.

In 2003, the government introduced free primary education. The money given by the government was used as subsidy of the fees that was paid for every student thus reducing the fees charged to the students. This brought much relief to parents of TSB most of whom were struggling to raise fees for their children with visual impairments since they were only levied the deficit of what the government funds could cater for as a supplement to government's contribution (TSB, P/1/2005). The government therefore enhanced its financial assistance to TSB and other special schools following the declaration of FPE. Table 5.1 shows the government's financial support to Thika Primary School for the Blind in 2003.

Table 5.1

Government's Grant to Thika Primary School for the Blind, 2003

Grant	**Amount in Kenya Shillings**
Initial Grant	28,871
1st Grant A/C 1	82,168
1st Grant A/C 2	21, 130
2nd Grant A/C 1	64,260
Special Grant	404,000
Municipal Grant (Thika)	35,000
Total	**635, 429**

Source: TSB, P/1/2005

Since 2003, the government has continued its engagement in education for the LWVI and other sectors of special education through both financial aid as well as policy formulation. In 2005 for instance, the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 was formulated. The paper states in part the overall government policy direction on learners with special needs and disabilities. It sets out clear policy guidelines for all education sub-sectors, including SNE and further underscores the government's commitment to ensuring that learners with special needs and disabilities have equal access to quality and relevant education. It provides the overall policy framework for the education sector and references the necessary legal context within which education and training, including SNE, shall be designed, developed and implemented in Kenya.

This section has positively contributed on the second objective of the study that focused on establishing the government's involvement in the development of education for the LWVI. While some of the government's efforts were not directly addressing education for LWVI but SE as a whole, such efforts still promoted the development of education for LWVI since it is part and parcel of the special education. The section has therefore illuminated the various government's efforts towards LWVI as part of the special education programs.

5.6 Role of the Salvation Army Church

Even though the Thika Primary School for the Blind and Thika High School for the Blind are fully maintained government schools, they still bear the name Salvation Army (SA). The primary school is referred to as the Salvation Army Primary School for the Visually Impaired while the secondary school is referred to as the Salvation Army High School for the Blind. These names point to the significance of the Salvation Army in the existence of the two schools for the LWVI. The names were adopted by the board of governors to honor the SA church as the founders of the schools and education for the blind in Kenya (TSB, S/1/2000). The retaining of SA in the names of the two schools is also due the fact that the SA church has remained an active partner in supporting of the schools.

The SA is an important stakeholder in general development of education in Kenya because it has also played a role in development of education for the physically handicapped as well as the general mainstream education besides the education for the blind (TSB, S/1/2000). Besides securing land for the establishment of TSB, the SA church constructed the necessary

infrastructure and hired staff for the establishment. Most of the facilities in TSB such as teachers' houses, school vehicles, classrooms and dormitories were catered for by the SA church. In 2001 for instance, the school vehicle which was owned by the SA church was officially given to the school and ownership transferred to the school (TSB, P/1/2005). To date, staff houses are owned by the Salvation Army Church and rent is paid directly to the Salvation Army Church.

Upon the establishment of the school, the SA continued to run TSB through grants to subsidize the many aspects of the school which the government could not be able to finance. Such aspects included medical expenses, food, water and electricity. Through the Salvation Army, the school also received grants from CBM, a Germany based organization to finance teaching aids such as musical instruments, typewriters, Braillers, thermoform machines, home science equipment, thermoform papers, Braille kits, Braille watches and white canes. CBM also gave funds for vehicles, buildings and personnel (TSB, S/2/1994).

Even though the SA mission pioneered search for donations and sponsorship for TSB, its policy seemed not to solicit or accept donations from other missions or churches. This is evidenced by the BOGs meeting of May 18, 1999 in which the SA army representative explained to the members that a donation that had been given by the Catholic Church Bishop could not be accepted. The donation from the Bishop was to aid in construction of the classroom (TSB, P/1/2005). On inquiry about the reasons for this stand, the researcher established that this was instigated by the spirit of competition and doctrinal differences among the different churches in the country and therefore the SA did not want to be seen as if it was in collaboration with other churches (Informant A, 2018).

The other significance of the SA to TSB is in its contribution to providence of the necessary labor force to the school. Since the establishment of TSB in 1946, the SA continued to hire and pay several workers for the school. This continued even after some of the workers such as the teaching staff were posted to the school by the government through the TSC and other non-teaching staff paid by government through the school's BOG. The SA therefore provided additional labor force after the government took over the role of paying for the school workforce. This was because being a special school, TSB required more staff to aid the blind learners throughout their stay in school as compared to other non-special schools. The SA supported workforce included the School Superintendents who were later called school

administrators, school chaplain and other non-teaching staff most of whom were house mothers. In 1996 for instance, Thika Primary School for the Blind had 40 non-teaching staff, 27 of whom were under BOG while 13 were under the SA mission payroll (TSB, P/3/1997).

Hiring and paying of staff by the SA at TSB was however halted in 2001 following leadership wrangles that were being faced at the schools between the SA administrators and the head teachers. The church however in giving the reason for withdrawal of these workers cited financial constraints. The withdrawal of the SA paid staff led to an acute shortage of the working force in the school leading to a crisis in some critical areas such as housekeeping. The school management committees made a request to the government to hire some staff to alleviate the workforce shortage that was experienced thereafter so that new workers would be paid by the government through the BOG. The decision also affected the daily running of the school since the SA mission also withdrew the regular financial budget it was offering to the schools (TSB, P/1/2005).

The withdrawal of the SA from providing skilled labor to TSB schools in 2001 was followed by another blow from CBM, the main donor from Germany who halted their financial support to the TSB schools in 2004 citing financial constraints (TSB, P/1/2005). As a result, a lot of the burden of running the school was left to the BOG whose source of funds was government allocations as well as money collected through school fees. The SA Mission has however continued to support these schools from then through its Territorial Headquarters on the basis of finances availability.

5.7 Conclusion

The government has played a key role in fostering education for the LWVI at TSB and Kenya in general through its various departments that include the MoEST, TSC, KNEC and KICD formerly KIE (TSB, S/3/2003). In the establishment of TSB the government contributed part of the capital cost and has continued to support the school through annual grants from MoEST, provision of teachers through TSC as well as adaptation of the curriculum and examinations for the LWVI through KICD and KNEC respectively. The government has also supported education for the LWVI through policy programs such as commissions and conferences. These include among others the Inter-territorial Conference on Work for the Blind of 1961, the Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled of 1964, Sessional

Paper No. 5 of 1968 and the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2000. The government has been involved in establishment of bodies to run the affairs of the LWVI such as RESB in 1950, Kenya Committee for the Blind in 1953 and KSB in 1956 which is still in place to present.

Based on the increased involvement of the government in provision of education for the LWVI, the researcher deduced that the provision of education for the LWVI and PWDs in general has moved from Charity Model of Disability that existed at the of the establishment of the first special education institution in 1946 to a Human Right Model by the year 2003. This is because the government's involvement changed from simply aiding the charity organizations that were involved in provision of this education to fully owning provision of education for the LWVI through running of the related institutions and formulation of policy guidelines. The Human Right Model of Disability views PWDs as victims of their impairment. The model therefore advocates that able bodied people have a responsibility to assist PWDs in whatever way possible as a means of fulfilling the right of these PWDs (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). This includes provision of the necessary institutions and services in which the government has to play a central role.

Besides the government, there are several other stakeholders that have been involved in the development of education and the general welfare of the learners with visual impairments. Among these stakeholders are churches which include the Salvation Army Church that established Thika School for the Blind, Likoni School for the Blind Thika School for the Blind and Kibos School for the Blind. The Roman Catholic Church also followed suit and established St. Lucy's School for the Blind, St. Oda School for the blind and St. Francis School for the Blind. Other stakeholders involved in the development of education for the blind in Kenya are NGOs such as the Kenya Society for the Blind, the CBM, DANIDA, African Braille Centre and Sight Savers International. Of great significance to TSB, is the Salvation Army Church who secured the land on which TSB is established, established TSB, employed staff and continued to support the school and learners financially throughout history.

CHAPTER SIX
SIGNIFICANCE OF THIKA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings to the third objective of this study which focused on examining the significance of TSB to persons with visual impairments and the Kenyan society at large. In pursuit of this objective, the researcher delved into documents at TSB and interviewed some people who went through TSB. The researcher deduced the following themes under significance of Thika School for the Blind: Thika School for the Blind and educational development of the LWVI, Thika School for the Blind and socio-economic life of the community and significant former students of TSB in the Kenyan Society.

6.2 Thika School for the Blind and Educational Development of the LWVI

Thika School for the Blind came into existence at a time when there were many cases of families hiding their blind children indoors and subjecting them to neglect and suffering (TSB, S/2/1994). The school therefore created a new chapter for the suffering persons with visual impairments since it was the first institution in Kenya and its surroundings to cater for their educational and training needs with an aim of liberating them from total dependency. The Establishment of TSB by the Salvation Army as the first school for the blind in 1946 also served as great impetus to the establishment of other institutions for the blind. The Catholic Church for instance might have borrowed a leaf from the Salvation Army and established schools for the blind in Meru in 1958 and in Nyanza in 1958.

Even though TSB was established in 1946, most of the persons with visual impairments did not access education and training in the 1940s and 1950s partly because of the limited capacity of TSB and other educational institutions for the LWVI that were established later. The other reason for less educational enrolment was however due to the negative attitudes towards the LWVI and ignorance on the part of parents on education and training of the LWVI. In 1953 for instance, a report by the Kenya branch of British Empire Society for the Blind on mobile units covering Kitui district revealed that most blind children were living in their own locations and carrying on with their ordinary house or Shamba duties. It further showed that a number of parents were afraid to let their children go far away even for a short time (KNA-BY/12/21).

On realization of the negative attitudes towards the blind, TSB used various efforts to change this attitude through educating the public on the abilities of the blind (TSB, S/2/1994). One of the programs involved visiting different areas in the country for identification of persons who were visually impaired and were in the age bracket of those who could receive education. This was done jointly by school officials, Social workers, officers from the government, DCs and students in some occasions (DC/KTI/3/7/11).

The school was also involved in other rigorous school programs such as holding of public days, sending of students on Christian outreach programs and community enlightenment programs that involved sending staff and students to chiefs' 'barazas' and market centers to demonstrate how blind children learn at school. From these demonstrations, parents and other members of the community were able to see for themselves the abilities of blind children apart from also learning to identify on whether the child had some form of visual impairment. Through these efforts, the negative attitudes towards the blind changed gradually and this led to positive development in numbers of enrolled students since most parents began to allow their blind children go to school. (TSB, S/2/1994).

Through engaging the services of blind persons most of whom had passed through the school, TSB has demonstrated educational success for blind persons which has undoubtedly led to more persons with visual impairments yearning to get education. TSB has therefore served as a mind shift towards the blind by having a sizable number of both teaching and non-teaching staff being blind. In 1986 for instance, Thika Primary School for the Blind had a total of nuber31 teachers of whom 9 were blind while by 1987, Thika High School for the Blind had six blind teachers who were performing their roles very well just like their sighted peers. One of the six blind teachers was even reported to have played a key role in writing of the syllabus, curriculum and textbooks in music (TSB, S/1/2000). Figure 6.1 below shows a blind teacher receiving an award for excellent performance of her duties at TSB.

Figure 6.1: A teacher with visual impairment receiving an award at TSB

Source: School Album for Thika High School for the Blind

When a secondary section was established at TSB in 1967 which later became a high school operating independently, Thika High school for the Blind served as the only educational institution for the blind in Kenya for almost thirty years. This indicates that majority of the blind persons who accessed secondary school education during that time passed through TSB since the integration programs only catered for a very smaller number of the population with visual impairments (Bukhala, Oral Interview, June 12, 2018). As the years went by, Thika high school for the blind introduced integration programs where a few sighted students were admitted besides the LWVI (TSB, S/2/1994). This integration program played a cardinal role towards changing of the society's attitudes towards the blind. By integrating the LWVI with sighted learners, the school gave an opportunity to the sighted and the blind to live together, appreciate and understand one another (TSB, S/2/1994).

As earlier stated, both Thika Primary and High School for the Blind have been excelling over time in academics. In the 1970s for instance, Thika High School for the Blind featured prominently among the top ten schools in Kenya at both 'O' and 'A' levels (TSB, S/1/2000). TSB has therefore demonstrated that that given the opportunity, the visually impaired can compete favorably with their non-handicapped peers. Through this excellent performance in national examinations, the school has been able to produce blind people who have trained and specialized in various fields such as law, education, social work and most of them have been reported to do well in their various fields (TSB, S/1/2000).

By 2003 for instance, over 2000 learners had completed their studies at Thika Primary School for the Blind out of which about 600 had proceeded to secondary school (TSB, P/1/2005). At Thika High School for the Blind, more than 1,200 learners had completed their secondary school education including the 'A Level' education by the year 2003. Out of this number, about 300 had proceeded to university to pursue different courses. Many others had joined other tertiary institutions (TSB, S/5/2005).

TSB has also played a key role in educational development for the LWVI not only as the pioneer institution in this area but as a resource and benchmarking center in the field of education for the blind. Since the introduction of integration particularly at the high school where the learners with no visual problems are admitted alongside the blind, the school has been serving as a resource center for integrated programs for the visually handicapped (TSB, S/1/2000). This makes the school a valuable institution considering that the trend in the world today is towards integration and inclusive education. This is aimed at educating learners with visual impairments in a less restricted environment.

In terms of teacher training for the LWVI, TSB was the first institution not only to train teachers for the LWVI but also to employ teachers trained in the area of LWVI. TSB has also been of great resource value to local teacher training colleges and universities offering special education such as KISE, Maseno University and Kenyatta University. Special Education students from these colleges and universities have been using the school for practical exposure to learners with visual impairment through education visits, field attachment and teaching practice since the early 1990s (TSB 2/2000). TSB also occasionally runs a rehabilitation program for those who become blind while in college, university or employment so that after three to six months, they are able to continue with their careers (TSB, S/1/2000).

6.3 Thika School for the Blind and Socio-Economic Life of the Community

Prior to the establishment of TSB in 1946, engagement of the blind in socio-economic development was minimal or unknown in most of the areas not only in Kenya but also in Africa at large (KNA, BY/27/4). This is because the blind were not only considered as useless but they were also not empowered to be independent and carry out some of the daily chores. The establishment of TSB therefore brought a paradigm shift which saw the blind engage in productive activities such as industry production that boosts socio-economic development.

At its establishment, TSB started offering vocational training in trades such as basket making, carpentry, shoe repairing, rope making, net making, mat making, gardening and brick making. The training in these trades was meant to assist learners obtain employment in local industries related to each trade after training. Employment for the blind was considered a relief for many as it enabled the blind to earn as well as care for themselves, their families and even other relatives hence improving the social standards of living. In the event a trainee was not able to secure employment, it was expected that the trainee would engage in self-employment by setting up his own business to produce various products according to the trade training obtained.

Some of the trainees in trade training were fortunate to secure employment in factories and telephone operation at the end of their training. There were however delays in placing the blind to factory employment in the early years as some of the employers doubted the ability of the blind to work efficiently as compared to the sighted. This negative attitude towards the blind therefore made employment for the educated blind to be a challenge. Even though the blind trainees were usually referred to their local DCs for employment consideration, correspondence letters from KNA accessed by the researcher revealed that they were mostly rejected as their skills such as mat making were not considered of value to the public service (KNA, DC/KTI/3/3/11).

The situation of unwillingness to employ the educated blind in the public service was further aggravated by the meeting of the PCs in 1950, from which it was resolved that before blind Africans are sent to Thika Institute for the Blind, the authorities were to satisfy themselves that there will be employment for them on their return to their homes. It was opined that the sorry state of the blind was likely to be aggravated if they went for training and remain unemployed and yet they might have been happier in their original unsophisticated states (KNA, CA/3/49). This position impacted negatively not only on the employability of the blind trainees but also on the enrolment and completion rate of the learners at Thika Institute for the Blind.

By 1953, it was reported to SMC of Thika institute that most ex-students were giving up due to unemployment, lack of follow-up on their training and lack of guidance. A proposal was therefore drawn to train one person from each district to help in follow-up activities of the ex-trainees (KNA, CA/3/49). This follow-up activities included providing financial as well as

logistical aid to ex-students for them to carry out their trades. For instance, in 1954, one of the ex-student who had trained in carpentry was given a full carpentry kit by the KSB in order to start off his carpentry business (KNA, DC/TTA/3/15/1).

In 1957, a resolve was made in the SMC meeting of TSB held on January 30, 1957 to have partnership with specific factories in the country in order to provide employment for the trainees. The factories were to provide employment opportunities to the blind after their trade training (KNA, BY/12/21). Upon consultations and mutual understanding, three factories whose productions were related to the different trade trainings at TSB were identified. These included the East African Sisal Estate, Ruiru; the East African Tobacco Factory at Nakuru and the Metal Box Factory at Thika. These factories were to partner with TSB to encourage blind training and employment and these efforts bore fruits since towards the end of 1957 for instance, ten ex-students of Thika Institute for the Blind were working well side by side with other sighted workers at the Metal Box Company of East Africa (KNA, BY/12/21).

In the SMC meeting of Thika Institute for the Blind held on march 9, 1959, there was a report that blind ex-students were not getting employment and for those employed, employers were raising concerns that they required too much attention (KNA, BY/12/21). As a result of this, concerns were raised over employment prospects since most employers considered employing blind persons as taking risks. There was thus a resolve to secure employment for ex-students of the craft of basketry at the tea and coffee factories. There was also suggestion of seeking employment in court interpretation services (KNA, BY/12/21).

Apart from employment obtained as a result of trade training, some LWVI who have passed through TSB have been able to excel academically and acquire higher training that leads to formal employment. Through history, there has been success stories of ex-students from TSB who have joined higher learning institutions or gotten employment opportunities in various fields. In 1978 for instance, one female ex-student named Mercy Wawire from Thika High School for the Blind was enrolled for physiotherapy training in the United Kingdom, two male ex-students secured employment in Kenya industries, and one male ex-student named Eli was sent to Canada for Piano Tuning course (TSB, S/2/1994).

Thika High School for the Blind has also produced prominent individuals in different professions (TSB, S/1/2000). Such former students include Honorable Isaac Mwaura, a nominated senator in the 11th parliament of Kenya and Mary Atieno, a famous gospel

musician in Kenya. Others are Dr. Nzoka and Dr. Mazrui, lecturers at Kenyatta University; Martha Mwaura, a lecturer at KISE; Dr. Samuel Kirorei, a commissioner at Kenya Land commission as well as Reuben Kigame, a renowned Kenyan gospel musician besides many other individuals in various fields such as education (M. Kimeu, Oral Interview, March 8, 2019). The Success of these individuals does not only promote their socio-economic wellbeing but that of their dependents and the society in general.

All these forms of engagement of the blind trainees whether through formal or self-employment play a role in social and economic life of an individual and the community at large. The employees are able to provide for themselves relieving those who were providing and caring for them. The training is also not useless for those learners who could not engage in any income generating activity since the benefits of training and education can not only be measured in terms of employment. Through training at TSB, persons with visual impairments acquire basic life skills such as mobility, hygiene, socialization and communication. These skills enables them to live more comfortably and happily in society than before they acquired them.

6.4 Significant former students of TSB in Kenyan Society

As previously indicated, TSB has played an important role in the lives of persons with visual impairments through awakening the potential in them to achieve success in life. The training and education that is offered to persons with visual impairments at TSB has produced great personalities who play a key role in society. This section presents some of the selected former students of TSB who have significant roles in the Kenyan society. This is aimed at displaying the significance of the education and training offered at TSB not only to the persons with visual impairments but also to the Kenyan society at large.

6.4.1 Dr. Nzoka Stephen Musila

Dr. Nzoka is a lecturer in the Department of Special Needs Education, School of Education at Kenyatta University, Kenya. Born totally blind in a humble background, Dr. Nzoka stayed at home for 15 years without access to education because of what he terms as lack of awareness by his parents concerning education for the blind (S. Nzoka, Oral Interview, February 18, 2019). He joined Thika Primary School for the Blind in the year 1965 where hopes of a bright future were promising. As a result of his high level of intelligence, Dr. Nzoka was made to

skip several classes such that he sat for his CPE examinations in the year 1969 at Class Seven only five years after he joined the school.

He later joined Thika Secondary School for the Blind in 1970 where he schooled up to Form Six level. He later undertook a Bachelor of Education Degree in Special Education at the University of Nairobi from 1976 but they were later transferred to Kenyatta University College in 1978 before he graduated in the year 1979 (Nzoka, 2019). He later pursued a Masters and a Doctorate degree at the same university. Dr. Nzoka plays a key role in society through his representation in different welfare bodies of the disabled. He is a member of the Kenya Union for the Blind, BOM member of Thika Primary School for the Blind and Chairperson of Ngongoni Persons with disabilities. He has published several articles relating to special education, attended and made presentations in workshops and conferences besides his teaching career in Kenyan universities (Nzoka, 2019).

6.4.2 Honorable Isaac Mwaura

Born with Albinism in the year 1982, Mr. Mwaura not only faced the challenges associated with albinism but also faced the problem of having low vision. He joined Thika Primary School for the Blind in 1989 where his potential in academics and leadership were unlocked. Mwaura performed well through his education and served as a prefect in various positions at the School. Upon completion of primary schooling in 1996, Mr. Mwaura joined Thika High School for the Blind in 1997 where he hatched his interest in politics (Mwaura, 2014).

Mr. Mwaura later Joined Kenyatta University where he pursued a Bachelor of Education Degree in special education and French. At Kenyatta University, Mr. Mwaura showed his advocacy for the rights of the disabled by organizing for a demonstration against an NGO that was exploiting blind students at the university. Due to his advocacy for the rights of the disabled, he was elected to the Kenyatta University Students Union as a representative of students with special needs (Mwaura, 2014).

Currently, Isaac Mwaura is a Kenyan politician who is serving as a nominated senator representing the interests of persons with disabilities. He has previously served as a nominated member of parliament from the year 2013 to 2018 representing special interest groups. He also served as a senior adviser on public policy relating to special interest groups such as the disabled to the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya from the year 2010 to 2012. Besides his contribution of advocating the rights of the disabled and representing their

interests in parliament, Mr. Mwaura is a source of motivation for many young persons, more so the disabled, through his excellent acquisition of education. He has continued to pursue higher education with a two post-graduate degrees from University of Leeds and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Mwaura, 2014).

6.4.3 Mary Atieno Ominde

Mary Atieno has been a renowned gospel musician in Kenya and a high school teacher for many years. Born totally blind, Ms. Atieno grew up at the time when schooling for girls was not taken seriously by the society. She was however fortunate to get admission at Asumbi Mission School, a Catholic Mission school before moving to St. Oda School for the Blind. Upon completion of primary school education, she joined Thika High School for the Blind where she undertook her 'O Level' and 'A Level' education from 1977 to 1984 (Mbilu, 2014).

At Thika High School for the Blind, Ms. Atieno led the starlight choir that outshone in major events within and outside the school. One such event is when they were invited by the then President Daniel Moi to perform at state house. Led by Ms. Atieno, the school quire sang their own composed patriotic songs which became instant hits on local radio and television stations (Mbilu, 2014).

Upon completion of Form Six, Ms. Atieno Joined Kenyatta University where she pursued Bachelor of Education Degree from the year 1985 to1988. Upon graduation, Ms. Atieno was employed by the Teachers Service Commission as an English and Literature teacher at Buruburu Girls High School in Nairobi where she has taught for over 26 years. In her teaching career, Ms. Atieno experienced challenges in teaching English which required someone to read the Novels to her in order for her to interpret the same to the learners. Due to this challenge, she later changed her teaching subjects from English and Literature to Christian Religious Education in which she has recorded high mean scores through the years (Mbilu, 2014).

Besides her teaching career, Ms. Atieno carried own her talent in music by delving into gospel music. She has released several songs that have topped the list of gospel songs in Kenya. Such songs produced mostly in Swahili language include: 'Adamu na Eva', 'Sodoma na Gomora', 'Hakuna Mungu Mwingine' and 'Njooni Tumsifu' (Mbilu, 2014). As a gospel artist, Ms. Atieno has played a key role of promoting morality and Christianity in the Kenyan society. She remains a source of inspiration to many persons with visual impairments and other

handicapped persons through displaying that one can rise to greater heights despite physical or sensory conditions.

6.4.4 Mr. Frederick Haga

Mr. Frederick Haga works at Kenya's Ministry of Education as the Deputy Director of Special Needs Education. He was born with full vision but while in in high school, he developed complications and lost his sight. This made him to drop and stay out of school for seven years before he was enrolled at Thika High School for the Blind. After completion of his studies at TSB, Mr. Haga joined Kenyatta University where he obtained a Bachelor of Education Degree. He then proceeded for postgraduate studies in Australia where he obtained a Master of Education degree in Inclusive and Special Education at Monash University (Haga, 2019).

Mr. Haga served as a secondary school teacher in various schools before moving to KICD as a curriculum developer. In 2012, he moved to the Ministry of Education where he served as the Head of Special Needs Education (SNE) Section. When the SNE Section was upgraded to a directorate in January 2017, Mr. Haga was appointed as the assistant director. He has cumulatively served in the public education sector in several capacities for a period of 22 years (Haga, 2019).

Mr. Haga has been championing the rights of the disabled persons through different movements at both national and international levels. In Kenya for instance, he has served as one of the leaders of the Kenya Union of the Blind and the United Disabled Persons of Kenya for a combined period of about ten years. More recently, he chaired the Board of Trustees of the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities, which is domiciled at the National Council for Persons with Disabilities. In 2015, he was a member of the delegation of the Government of Kenya during the consideration of Kenya's first report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Geneva, Switzerland, in which he was representing the Ministry of Education (Haga, 2019).

At International level, Mr. Haga has been an executive committee member for the World Blind Union for a period of four years. He has also been a member and executive director of the African Union of the Blind for eight years. The contributions of Mr. Haga are therefore

instrumental with regard to the welfare and education of not only the persons with visual impairments but also that of all PWDs at large.

6.4.5 Reuben Kigame

Mr. Reuben Kigame is a renowned gospel musician, mentor, journalist and businessman in Kenya. Born with sight in 1966, Mr. Kigame would later lose his sight in 1969 at the age of three years. As a result of the sudden visual impairment, he joined Kibos School for the Blind in Kisumu in the year 1973. He passed his Certificate of Primary Education examination well in 1980, and obtained admission at Thika High School for the Blind where he schooled from1981 to 1986. He later joined Kenyatta University where he schooled from 1987 to 1990 and graduated with a Bachelor of Education with a major in History, Philosophy and Religious Studies (Lungai, 2014).

Mr. Kigame served as a secondary school teacher from 1991 before he resigned in 1994 and started undertaking Christian outreach programs. He first worked with Kenya Youth for Christ and then he established Word of Truth Ministries; an organization that engages in friendly dialogue with critics and opponents of Christianity. In music industry he has recorded several albums from 1987 such as *What a Mighty God We Have* and *Raw Emotions* (Lungai, 2014).

Mr. Kigame has also worked as a journalist. He briefly worked with Radio Citizen in 2001 and wrote several jingles for them before joining Family Media as a presenter of a daily show. Mr. Kigame has also worked as a presenter at Bibilia Husema Radio Station, Kameme FM Radio Station and Hope FM Radio Station. He finally established his own radio station in Kenya known as Fish FM. In the year 2010, Mr. Kigame was awarded a Head of State award, the Order of the Grand Warrior (OGW) by the then President Mwai Kibaki in recognition of his contribution to Kenya's media and music (Lungai, 2014).

6.5 Conclusion

As a pioneer special school in Kenya and its surroundings, TSB which was initially called Thika Institute for the Blind was an impetus towards development of education not only for the LWVI but also to other areas of special education. Education and training for the blind as started at TSB transformed the lives of those who were formerly condemned to a mental and social segregation which charity could have palliated but not dissipated. The deep well of sympathy which the blind evoked, in every civilized country throughout the world, served to

inspire the thought and experiment of leaders, among both the sighted and sightless that brought about the changes of both out-look and practical possibilities in the lives of the blind from day to day. Specialized systems not only of the Braille system, but also of the useful occupations, reintegrated people into the normal workaday life of the world about them, so that they were able to have ordinary and self- supporting positions and contribute fully to the progress of the society. Despite the challenges faced in offering education to the LWVI, Thika School for the Blind (primary and secondary) has continued to produce school leavers who take up their positions in nation building after training in the local universities and colleges.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary

The study traced the development of Thika School for the Blind from the time of its establishment to 2003, the time Kenya reaffirmed free primary education and turned its attention to integration of the handicapped learners with those who are not handicapped. The study established that TSB was not only the first school for the LWVI but the first special school in Kenya which opened the avenues for educating the handicapped persons in general, and the LWVI in particular. The origin of TSB is attributed to the Salvation Army Mission whose initial aim was to establish a rehabilitation center for soldiers who had been blinded during the Second World War.

The school started as an institute for the blind in 1946 with a capacity of 25 male students. This number grew with time and in 1954, the institute opened its doors to girls who have continued to study besides the boys up to date. Over time, the institute grew and from it, emanated a vocational training center (from the time of its establishment), a nursery school in 1959, a formal primary school from 1956, a teacher training class and a secondary school from 1967.

An important observation from the findings of the study is that TSB was a pioneer institution for the blind in all these areas of study mentioned. By 2003 for instance, Thika High School for the Blind was the only special high school for the blind in Kenya. Out of these areas, the nursery, primary and secondary sections of the school exist up to the present having grown in capacity as national boarding schools for the LWVI. Vocational training was however halted following the establishment of Machakos Institute for the Blind in 1958 while the teacher training class was closed following establishment of KISE in 1986. The nursery school is managed together with the primary school while the secondary school is managed separately but lies adjacent to the primary school.

The school is run on the principles of the entire education system of the country meaning that learners admitted to TSB schools are subjected to the same curriculum, syllabi, subjects and examinations as prescribed by the Ministry of Education. There is however adjustment in methodology to enable learners read and write using Braille. The school throughout its history

has faced various challenges that include lack of ability by learners' parents to pay school fees, inadequate funding considering that educating the LWVI requires special materials some of which are very expensive as well as inadequate learning materials such as Braille paper, Braille books and writing equipment among others (TSB, S/3/2003).

The government has played a key role in educating the LWVI at TSB and other institutions for the LWVI. Contributions by the government include its support on raising the capital grant for the establishment of TSB in 1946 and subsequent provision of yearly grants for running of the institute. The government also hired and paid teaching and non-teaching staff with teachers under TSC and non-teaching staff under BOG. In addition, the government also formulated policies that governed provision of special education in general which affected the education for the LWVI.

Such policies were developed through committees and taskforces such as the Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled of 1964, Sessional paper No. 5 of 1968, the National Education Commission of 1976, the Presidential Working Committee on Education and Training for this Decade and beyond of 1988. More recent committees include the Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training Taskforce of 1999, the Kochung Report of 2003 and the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003.

With the aid of several other stakeholders besides the government, TSB has pioneered the development of education for the LWVI having serve as the first vocational training center for the blind, the first primary school for the blind, the first nursery school for the blind, the first and only secondary school for the blind for over 30 years as well as the first training center for teachers of the LWVI. Through its programs, TSB created capacity for the blind through both education and employment. Some of the trainees from TSB were able to secure employment in various industries, others proceeded with higher education and secured white collar jobs from 1950s to 2003.

7.2 Conclusions

The study focused on the development of education for the LWVI in Kenya. In pursuing this development, the study sought to establish the achievements and challenges experienced in the development of this education as well as the role played by government and other stakeholders in these efforts. The study used TSB as a case and therefore also sought to

establish the significance of TSB to the Kenyan Society. From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were derived:

i. Development of education for the LWVI in Kenya has been a slow but promising journey towards educating the blind. Established in 1946, TSB pioneered this development by establishing the various forms of training for the blind such as vocational training and academic training from nursery to secondary school levels. These forms of training as offered at TSB led to establishment of other institutions for the LWVI in Kenya such as Shamba training centers, vocational training centers and several other primary schools by 2003. Special secondary school education for the LWVI was however only offered at TSB by 2003.

ii. The slow development of education for the blind is attributed to several factors such as negative attitudes towards the blind in the early years, lack of information on educational ability of the blind, lack of identification procedures of the LWVI in society and lack of enough involvement of stakeholders such as the government in developing education for the LWVI. Besides making the development of education for the LWVI slow, the combination of these factors also made it difficult to ascertain the proportion of the Kenyan population that had visual impairments. By the 1960s for instance, there were no specialists instituted to identify visually handicapped children so as to make educational programs for them.

iii. The government has played a key role in fostering education for the blind through its various departments that include the MoEST, TSC, KNEC, and KICD formerly KIE (TSB, S/3/2003). However, besides the government, several other stakeholders have been involved in the development of education and the general welfare of the LWVI. Among these stakeholders are churches which include the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic Church. Others are NGOs such as the Kenya Society for the Blind, the Christoffel Blinden Mission, DANIDA, African Braille Centre and Sight Savers International.

iv. In an effort to adapt the curriculum to suit the limitations of the LWVI, some subjects' syllabi particularly at secondary schools level have been modified for the LWVI. This has been done by replacing complex psychomotor activities with more manageable ones. These subjects include biological sciences, home science, geography, and

mathematics. Major parts of the syllabi used in general education classes however do not have accommodation in terms of adapted activities for students with visual impairments. This makes it extremely hard for students with visual impairments to access the general education curriculum.

v. Despite the various challenges experienced by TSB which mirror experiences in other institutions for LWVI, TSB has emancipated the LWVI from a state of hopelessness to self-reliance and socio-economic wellness. This has been achieved through enabling learners to be independent through mobility training, to effectively communicate just like their sighted peers and through training in skills that generate income either through external or self-employment. Presently, some of the persons with visual impairment who passed through TSB and other institutions for the LWVI hold key positions in society hence playing a role in socio-economic development of the society.

7.3 Recommendations

7.3.1 Recommendations to the government

Based on the finding that there has been low access to education by the persons with visual impairments through history to the present, the government should improve the ability of persons with visual impairments to access education. This could be done by creating more special schools for the LWVI since they provide a more conducive and adapted environment for the LWVI (Mutuku, 2018). The government can also create capacity to more mainstream schools to be able to integrate the blind by proving the necessary materials and trained personnel such as teachers and technicians to handle the LWVI. Some informants indicated that some of the integrated schools do not have capacity to handle the blind and they should therefore be facilitated to be able to provide education for the LWVI effectively.

The government should also promote education for the blind by mobilizing educational resources and raising public awareness of the issues relevant to LWVI. Accordingly, the strengths and potentials of blind people and the challenges they face should be brought into the public eye. Furthermore, the government needs to support the VI and other disabled persons through full implementation and enforcement of Persons with Disability Act as its

enforcement would ensure that all learning environments are disability sensitive. The informants reported that integrated environments were not disability sensitive.

Based on the findings of the study that education for the LWVI requires more resources to enable LWVI to acquire education optimally, the government should consider allocating more funds to special schools for the LWVI such as TSB. In its budgetary allocation, the government should take into account the acquisition and maintenance of extra equipment required by the LWVI such as Braille machines used by the LWVI some of which are very expensive.

In terms of curricular, the government through the MoEST should take a leading role in ensuring that the curriculum is favorable to the blind and it is adapted appropriately. The KICD, which steers curriculum development needs to examine the content of what is taught to learners with LWVI, select entry points to the curriculum and determine appropriate accommodations and modifications for instruction and assessment. Even though some modifications have already been done, there needs to be continuous improvement to create a more conducive environment for the LWVI with time. For instance the KNEC usually allocates 30 more minutes during assessment of learners with blindness to enable them compete fairly with their sighted colleagues as Braille reading takes longer than reading print. However, three informants indicated that the 30 minutes usually allowed are still not enough.

This study established that acquisition of learning resources for the LWVI has been a challenge since most of the materials are expensive. It is in this regard that this study recommends that the government, through the Ministry of Education should provide affordable Braille textbooks and translate supplementary books into Braille. The MoEST should also program early learning of Braille since most of the informants opined that Braille learning should begin at lower primary level to enable faster Braille reading speed. The government through the MoEST should also provide learners with blindness with assistive technology like the purchase and use of talking calculators and computers with jaws. According to most of the informants some of who are teachers, the use of talking calculators would help level the playground between learners with blindness and their sighted colleagues and greatly improve their performance in mathematics.

7.3.2 Recommendations to Teachers

Based on the researcher's observation, teachers play a great role in boosting the self-esteem for the LWVI learners which has a direct impact on their education. Teachers should therefore continue fostering learners' self-esteem by building high expectations amongst students with visual impairments and play a role in eliminating negative perceptions that interferes with their educational aspirations. Teachers should also encourage students with visual impairments to utilize all kinds of alternatives at their disposal like audio taping lessons and taking notes (dictated notes) in Braille as according to the informants, these may enhance learning and understanding. Teachers should encourage mixed group discussions in integrated settings as blind students obviously benefit a lot from peer tutoring and group discussions as reported by the informants. Orientation of the physical environment and of other structures in the environment should also be taken seriously by teachers and administrators of academic institutions as the findings revealed that good orientation helped learners with blindness adapt to the physical structural environments easily.

7.3.3 Recommendations to Parents

Parents play a critical role in the educational life of persons with visual impairments. Starting at home, parents should create strong sibling and peer support towards children with visual impairments and ensure they are grounded in the family. This may increase their confidence and result in high aspirations in education. There is also need for parents to guide and counsel the learners and sensitize them on issues of sexuality as some of the records accessed showed that some female students were sent away from school due to early pregnancies while some boys were also sent away based on engaging in sexual activities in school. Continuous guidance and counselling by parents besides other stakeholders may make the learners to focus and concentrate on academic work.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has documented the development of education for the LWVI using TSB as a case. Despite being the first special school in Kenya the history of TSB had not been documented. It is therefore important to document the history of other educational institutions that arose later at different levels of learning such as primary, secondary, tertiary and university level.

Apart from education for the LWVI, the educational journey of other areas of special education such as the deaf, the physically challenged, the mentally challenged and the multi-handicapped have equally not received enough research attention. This study therefore recommends for further research and systematic documentation on the development of others areas of special education as well as documenting the history of institutions that offer such education in order to inform on the attention that has been given to the disabled in the society.

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Appendix A: Archival and Secondary Records Search Guide

From the TSB

1. What were the factors behind the establishment of the school?
2. What were the early experiences of the school in terms of population, staffing, funding among other factors?
3. What are some of the milestones that the school has made since its establishment to 2003?
4. What challenges has the school faced through history and how have they been addressed?
5. How has the school been performing in academics and other areas such as co-curricular activities in comparison to other schools?
6. Which activities did the school engage in that benefited the society

From the SA Church

1. What led to establishment of TSB
2. In what ways has the church been supporting and contributing to the development of the school

From Ministry of Education

1. What are the policies in special education that have been formulated since 1945?
2. What are the developments in learners with visual impairments access, No. of schools, progression and completion rate as well as dropout rates since 1945?

From Teachers Service Commission

1. What are the changes and developments in teacher qualification for special education teachers since 1945?
2. What are the developments in teacher-student ratio for special schools in general, and schools for LWVI in particular that have occurred since 1945?

From Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

1. What are the changes in curriculum of special schools in general and for the LWVI in particular that have taken place since 1945?
2. What are the changes in educational objectives for the LWVI that have taken place since 1945?
3. What are the developments in in-service programs for the special schools teachers that have taken place since 1945?

Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Former Church Leaders/ Former School Officials/ Significant Leaders

Information to the Informant

The purpose of this study is to gather information on the development of special education for the persons with visual impairments in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with specific reference to Thika School for the Blind. Your assistance in providing information and sacrifice in terms of time will be useful and highly appreciated. The information provided and your identity will only be revealed with your consent.

Interview summary sheet

Name of informant _____ Place of Interview_____

Age_____ Date(s) of Interview_____

Position as related to the study_____ Time (s)_____

Current Occupation_____ Reference No. _____

1. In what ways did the Salvation Army Church contribute to the development of special education for the Blind in Kenya?
2. What activities led to the establishment of TSB in 1946?
3. Apart from the SA church, what role did the local church, other Christians and non-Christians play in the establishment of TSB?
4. What kind of relationship existed between the SA and the school between 1946 and 2003?
5. In what ways has the local church contributed to the development of TSB?
6. In your opinion how did the SA tradition affect the development of special education in Kenya?
7. How do you compare the standards of this school to other non-special schools both in academics and non-academics over the years up to 2003? In case of any differences, what in your opinion could be the cause?
8. In your opinion, how has this school benefited the persons with persons with visual impairments in Kenya?
9. In your opinion, what kind of impact has this school had on the socio-economic and political development of the Kenya?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule for TSB Former Students

Information to the Informant

The purpose of this study is to gather information on the development of special education for the persons with visual impairments in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with reference to Thika School for the Blind as case. Your assistance in providing information and sacrifice in terms of time will be useful and highly appreciated. The information provided and your identity will be only be revealed with your consent.

Interview summery sheet

Name of informant _____ Place of Interview_____

Age_____ Date(s) of Interview_____

Current occupation_____ Time (s)_____

Reference No. _____

1. When were you a student at TSB?
2. What made you choose to study at this school and not any other?
3. What qualification or conditions made you merit admission to this school?
4. What distinct features existed in this school during your stay there?
5. What are some of the challenges you encountered in the course of your education at TSB?
6. Were there any significant improvements in any aspect during your stay at TSB?
7. How do you compare the standards of this school to other non-special schools both in academics and non-academics over the years up to 2003? In case of any differences, what in your opinion could have caused these differences?
8. Apart from being a student, did you have other responsibilities in the school? If yes, which ones?
9. Up to which level did you study at TSB and what qualifications did you leave with? What are other competence skills that you acquired from TSB?
10. Were there any differences between TSB and other special schools in other parts of the country? If yes, what are these differences?
11. Did you use Braille in the course of your study? If yes, how was the experience like? How has Braille literacy benefited you in life?

Appendix D: Interview Schedule for Former Teachers

Information to the Informant

The purpose of this study is to gather information on the development of special education for the persons with visual impairments in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with reference to Thika School for the Blind as case. Your assistance in providing information and sacrifice in terms of time will be useful and highly appreciated. The information provided and your identity will be only be revealed with your consent.

Interview summary sheet

Name of informant _____ Place of Interview_____

Age_____ Date(s) of Interview_____

Current occupation_____ Time (s)_____

Reference No. _____

1. When did you teach at TSB? What was the name of the school by then?
2. What made you to be posted to TSB?
3. Had you been a teacher before your appointment to teach at the School? If yes, where and for how long?
4. How did you receive the news of your appointment to this school?
5. What academic and non-academic activities did the students engage in and how did the school compete with other schools in these activities?
6. What are some of the challenges you encountered as a teacher at TSB? (Probe for the nature and if they were addressed or solved).
7. What are some of the challenges that your students at TSB encounter? (Probe for the nature and if they were addressed or solved).
8. How do you compare the standards of this school to other schools both in academics and non-academics over the years up to 1985? In case of any differences, what in your opinion could have caused the differences?
9. What kind of relationship existed between the school and the SA Church? (Probe for any support from the church and the influence on the running of the school).
10. In your opinion, how did this school influence the development education for persons with visual impairments in central region and the country as a whole?
11. What kind of influence has this school had on Kenyan community over the years?

Appendix E: Interview Schedule for MOE Officials/KSB Officials/Current Head Teacher

Information to the Informant

The purpose of this study is to gather information on the development of special education for persons with visual impairments in Kenya from 1945 to 2003 with reference to Thika School for the Blind as case. Your assistance in providing information and sacrifice in terms of time will be useful and highly appreciated. The information provided and your identity will be only be revealed with your consent.

Interview summary sheet

Name of informant _____ Place of Interview_____

Age_____ Date(s) of Interview_____

County_____ Time (s)_____

Current occupation_____ Reference No. _____

1. What has the government done to cater for special education in general and education for the LWVI?
2. What are some of the challenges do learners with LWVI experience in the course of their study?
3. What is the government and special schools doing to address these challenges?
4. How would you compare development in education for students with no impairments and that for learners with impairments?
5. Through history, have we had enough trained teachers for special education? If no what are the reasons for the low numbers?
6. Do you think LWVI are well suited for the current curriculum? What improvements can be done on curriculum for the LWVI learners and other impaired children to best address their needs and limitations?

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

Study Title: The Development of Education for Learners with Visual Impairments in Kenya: a Case of Thika School for the Blind, 1945-2003.

Dear Sir/Madam, you are invited to participate in this research study conducted by **David Kavinje Chikati** (**E84/52718/2018**), a PhD student from the **University of Nairobi**.

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your **resourcefulness in the information concerning education for the LWVI in Kenya**.

Your participation is **voluntary** and would consist of interviews by the researcher. In addition to consent to participate in the study, the researcher requests for your consent to be cited by name as an **Informant** in the research write-up. This is however **optional** and is not tied to your participation in the research.

There are no anticipated risks to your participation and there are no direct benefits to you taking part in this study.

If, you have any questions about this research study, please contact the researcher through the contact details attached.

Name: _____

Consent for participation in the Study: Yes ☐ No ☐

Consent for Identity to be revealed: Yes ☐ No ☐

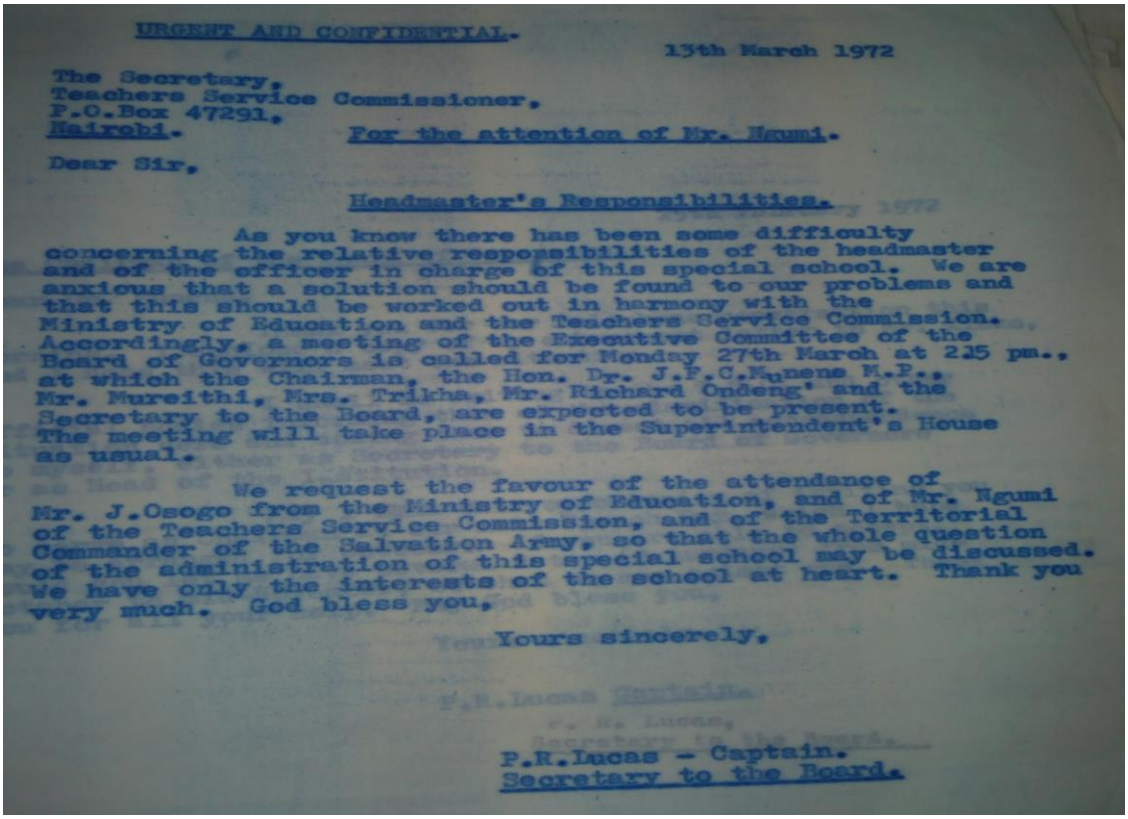
Sign: _____

Appendix G: Documentary Analysis Schedule

Type of Document	**Initial Use**				**Relevance to Development of Education for LWVI**		
• Artifact • Newsletter • Minutes of a meeting • Photograph • Letter/Correspondence • Memos • Official records (Attendance register, admission records, staffing records, financial records, academic performance records) • Relics	What was it used for?	Who produced it and for what reason?	When was it produced and used?	Is the document complete?	What does it tell about education for LWVI?	What is inferred from it?	What is the recommendation?
1. 2. 3. 4….							

Appendix H: Sample of Documents Accessed

1. Sample of correspondences between the TSB and TSC, 1972



URGENT AND CONFIDENTIAL.

13th March 1972

The Secretary,
Teachers Service Commissioner,
P.O.Box 47291,
Nairobi.

For the attention of Mr. Ngumi.

Dear Sir,

Headmaster's Responsibilities.

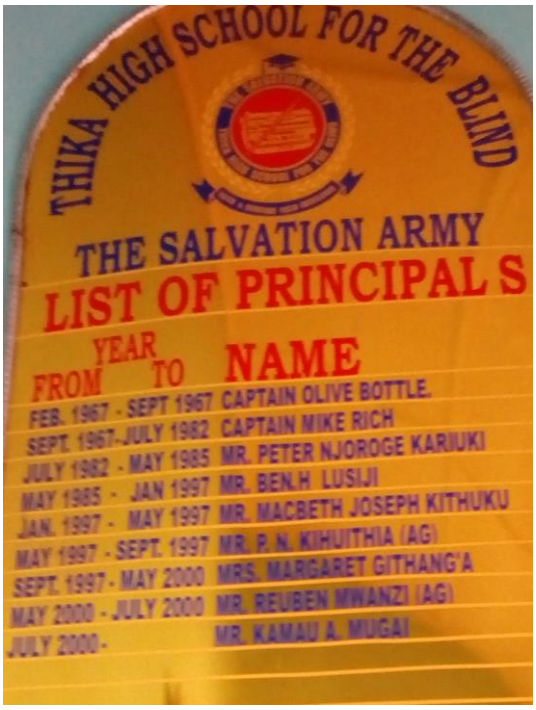
As you know there has been some difficulty concerning the relative responsibilities of the headmaster and of the officer in charge of this special school. We are anxious that a solution should be found to our problems and that this should be worked out in harmony with the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission. Accordingly, a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors is called for Monday 27th March at 2.15 pm., at which the Chairman, the Hon. Dr. J.F.C.Munene M.P., Mr. Mureithi, Mrs. Trikha, Mr. Richard Ondeng' and the Secretary to the Board, are expected to be present. The meeting will take place in the Superintendent's House as usual.

We request the favour of the attendance of Mr. J.Osogo from the Ministry of Education, and of Mr. Ngumi of the Teachers Service Commission, and of the Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army, so that the whole question of the administration of this special school may be discussed. We have only the interests of the school at heart. Thank you very much. God bless you,

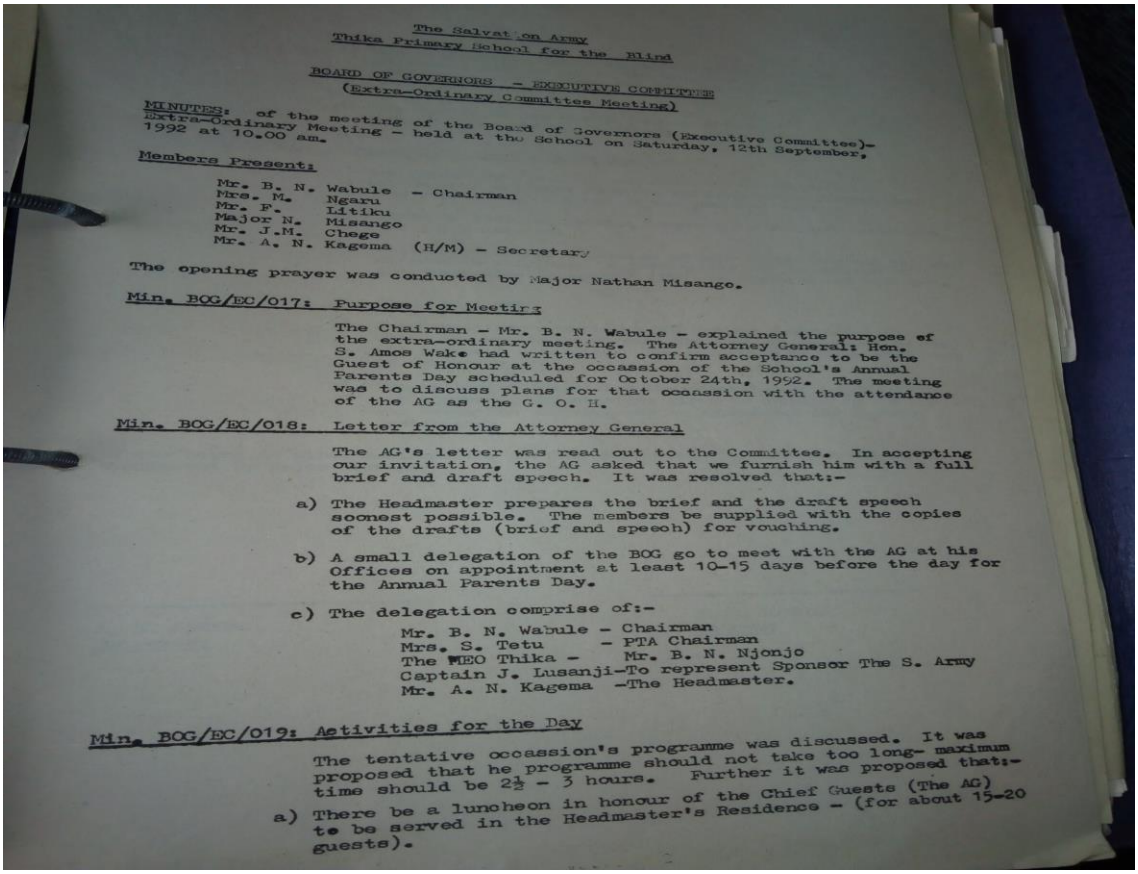
Yours sincerely,

P.R.Lucas - Captain.
Secretary to the Board.

2. List of the TSB leadership at primary and secondary schools



3. Sample of TSB Minutes of BOG meeting, 1992



The Salvation Army
Thika Primary School for the Blind

BOARD OF GOVERNORS - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(Extra-Ordinary Committee Meeting)

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Board of Governors (Executive Committee)- Extra-Ordinary Meeting - held at the School on Saturday, 12th September, 1992 at 10.00 am.

Members Present:

Mr. B. N. Wabule - Chairman
Mrs. M. Ngaru
Mr. F. Litiku
Major N. Misango
Mr. J.M. Chege
Mr. A. N. Kagema (H/M) - Secretary

The opening prayer was conducted by Major Nathan Misango.

Min. BOG/EC/017: Purpose for Meeting

The Chairman - Mr. B. N. Wabule - explained the purpose of the extra-ordinary meeting. The Attorney General: Hon. S. Amos Wako had written to confirm acceptance to be the Guest of Honour at the occassion of the School's Annual Parents Day scheduled for October 24th, 1992. The meeting was to discuss plans for that occassion with the attendance of the AG as the G. O. H.

Min. BOG/EC/018: Letter from the Attorney General

The AG's letter was read out to the Committee. In accepting our invitation, the AG asked that we furnish him with a full brief and draft speech. It was resolved that:-

a) The Headmaster prepares the brief and the draft speech soonest possible. The members be supplied with the copies of the drafts (brief and speech) for vouching.

b) A small delegation of the BOG go to meet with the AG at his Offices on appointment at least 10-15 days before the day for the Annual Parents Day.

c) The delegation comprise of:-

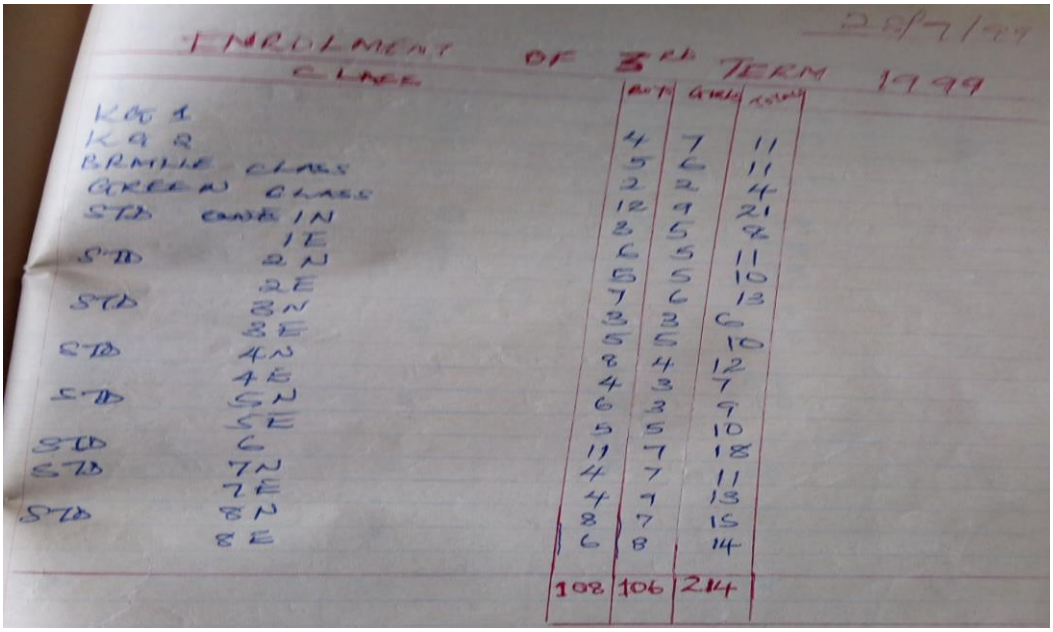
Mr. B. N. Wabule - Chairman
Mrs. S. Tetu - PTA Chairman
The DEO Thika - Mr. B. N. Njonjo
Captain J. Lusanji-To represent Sponsor The S. Army
Mr. A. N. Kagema -The Headmaster.

Min. BOG/EC/019: Activities for the Day

The tentative occassion's programme was discussed. It was proposed that he programme should not take too long- maximum time should be 2½ - 3 hours. Further it was proposed that:-

a) There be a luncheon in honour of the Chief Guests (The AG) to be served in the Headmaster's Residence - (for about 15-20 guests).

4. Sample of enrolment records at TSB, 1999



ENROLMENT OF 3RD TERM 1999

CLASS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
KG 1			
KG 2			
BRAILLE CLASS	4	7	11
GREEN CLASS	5	6	11
STD 1N	2	2	4
1E	12	9	21
STD 2N	3	6	9
2E	6	5	11
STD 3N	5	5	10
3E	7	6	13
STD 4N	3	3	6
4E	5	5	10
STD 5N	8	4	12
5E	4	3	7
STD 6	6	3	9
STD 7N	5	5	10
7E	11	7	18
STD 8N	4	7	11
8E	4	9	13
	8	7	15
	6	8	14
	108	106	214

Appendix I: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. DAVID KAVINJE CHIKATI
of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 0-1000 THIKA,has been permitted to conduct research in *Kiambu , Nairobi Counties*

on the topic: *THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED LEARNERS IN KENYA: A CASE OF THIKA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, 1945-2003*

for the period ending:
2nd March,2019

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/77628/21475
Date Of Issue : 2nd March,2018
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2000

.....
Applicant's Signature

.....
Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

Appendix J: Research Authorization

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone:+254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax:+254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No. **NACOSTI/P/18/77628/21475**

Date: **2nd March, 2018**

David Kavinje Chikati
University of Nairobi
P.O. Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on ***"The development of education for the visually impaired learners in Kenya: A case of Thika School for the Blind, 1945-2003,"*** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kiambu and Nairobi Counties** for the period ending **2nd March, 2019.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education, Kiambu and Nairobi Counties** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

GP Kalerwa
GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kiambu County.

The County Director of Education
Kiambu County.