

Visually Impaired University Students Quest for Information and the Challenges Faced in a Rural University Context

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ABSTRACT Most of the institutions in South Africa, especially, a rural-based university like the University of Limpopo, admit students from diverse background and health conditions - some of which are visually impaired - into various programs. Despite the social and economic importance of educating the visually impaired and the positive influence they have on the society, library management practices in rural-based South African universities have been less favourable to their plight. This study examined the quest by visually impaired university students to access information and the challenges they face in a rural university context. The study used a semi-structured questionnaire to examine the quest by disabled university students to access information and the challenges they face in a rural university context. The findings revealed that the neglect to meet the information needs of visually impaired students has negative consequences at improving their academic performance as well as the future development and benefit of a rural based society. The study suggested that librarians, as well as university administrators, should consider investing more resources in information sources to meet the needs of the visually impaired and other disabled students so as to lessen their dependence on society for survival.