

**BLINDNESS**

# BLINDNESS

- Definition: WHO defines blindness in two ways ;
- 1. Visual acuity less than 3/60 in the better eye with possible correction
- 2. Visual field loss in each eye to less than 10 degrees from fixation.
- Low vision is visual acuity of less than 6/18 but equal to or better than 3/60 in the better eye with best possible correction.

# BLINDNESS CONT.

- **WHO CLASSIFICATION OF VISION**
- Normal-6/6 - 6/18
- Visual impairment  $< 6/18 - 6/60$
- Severe visual impairment  $< 6/60 - 3/60$
- Blind  $< 3/60 - \text{NPL}$

# BLINDNESS CONT.

- About 285 million people are visually impaired worldwide. 39 million are blind and 246 million have low vision. 90% of worlds visually impaired people live in developing countries. 1.4 million blind people are children Aged below 15yrs. 82% of blind people are aged over 50years despite this age group comprising only 20% of world population.
- 80% of causes of visual impairment is preventable.

# CAUSES OF BLINDNESS

- In Africa;
- Cataract
- Trachoma
- Corneal diseases
- Glaucoma
- Vit A deficiency
- Onchocerciasis and uncorrected refractive error

- Number of blind people is increasing in poor countries due to;
- Increase in population
- Increase in life expectancy
- Inadequate eye care services
- 1% of zambia population is blind

# PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

- Prevent the disease from occurring through-
- 1. immunisation against measles.
- Good nutrition and vit A supplementation.
- Routine eye examination from birth and in later years of life (clean eye of new born)
- Screening and treatment of pregnant women with STIs in ANC.
- Improve sanitation.

- Avoid application of harmful traditional eye medication.
- Wear protective glasses against the sun and when working in environment with dangerous objects or chemicals.
- Prevent loss of vision from established disease through seeking early treatment.
- Restore vision to some blind patients with curable conditions e.g cataract through surgery.



# REHABILITATION

- Blind people need to have improved quality of life through rehabilitation.
- Psychological support alone is not adequate.
- **DAILY LIVING SKILLS**
- People who have just become blind have difficulties in mobility and to do daily activities of daily living.

# ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

- Blind people need to be trained in being independent in moving from one place to another by use of guides, walking cane, dogs etc. Qualified trainers are able to make movements easier.

# OCCUPATION

- Blind people are equally capable of performing some work after undergoing formal or informal education. e.g some are teachers, telephone operators, pastors and musicians.

# EDUCATION

- Blind people are able to learn at deferent levels of education and became useful and productive citizens as long as they are exposed to the right schools and learning aids e.g braille, talking computers.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Establishment of home or schools for the blind is done in some communities but this promotes stigma. Infrastructure should be built in a way that blind people can easily access the services in that community.

# VISION 2020(THE RIGHT TO SIGHT)

- Aim: An initiative of WHO and international Agency for the prevention of blindness(IAPB) for global elimination of avoidable blindness by the year 2020.
- The approach is based on improvement in human resource, Infrastructure/ equipment and disease control. 80% of blindness can be avoided through treatment and prevention measures.
- Model vision2020 programme has priorities in;

# PHASE 1

- Cataract
- Refractive errors
- Trachoma
- Vit A deficiency and Onchocerciasis.

## PHASE 2

- Glaucoma, and Diabetic Retinopathy