CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The objective of the present chapter is to highlight concepts of public library system, public library legislation, and explanation of concepts to specify objectives, limitations, and methodology and conspectus of the study.

1.1 Preamble

Prosperity, freedom and the development of society and individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the aptitude of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play a vigorous role in society. Productive contribution and the development of democracy depend on acceptable education as well as on free and unlimited access to thought, culture and information. As per UNESCO public library manifesto (UNESCO, 1994), the public library, the local gateway to information make available a basic condition for lifelong knowledge, sovereign decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

Manifesto declares UNESCO’s belief in the public library as a breathing force for education, culture and information, and as an indispensable agent for the nurturing of peace and spiritual wellbeing through the minds of men and women. UNESCO therefore supports national and local governments to maintain and actively take part in the development of public libraries. The enormous amount of information produced per second worldwide front is a greatest challenges to library system more so the public libraries in the history of publication. With advancement of standards through IFLA/UNESCO public libraries are stirring from the conventional and conservative services to expansion of database and information sharing through network accessibility of resources.

Public libraries crop up in multiplicity of societies, in different culture, historical background, technological and at different phases of economical development. However, their service delivery has universal characteristics although in a varied contexts in which they operate. They primarily provide resources in a variety of media to meet the both diverse users and needs. Public libraries represent an indispensable link in the scientific system chain, a crucial
role link in the development and maintenance of wide range and intensity of knowledge modernization and ideas in society and at individual level.

1.2 Proposed Research

Many information scientists have used different terms for public library system study. The recognition of public library first took place in western-Saxon countries. The term public library first appeared in Latin (bibliotheca publica) as a technical term in 17th century to distinguish the general university libraries of Oxford and Cambridge by then from those of endowed libraries. The historical combination of the growth of printing, public education, democratic institutions and urbanization during 19th century led to the establishment and development of public libraries in USA and UK. UNESCO stated that ‘the public library is the principal means whereby the records of man’s thoughts and ideas and the expression of his imagination are made freely available to all’

In 1977 D J Fosket describes the public library system as ‘the central feature in the concept of whole entities, whose past are linked by specific pattern of relation; the system as a whole is greater than the mere sum of its parts by virtue of this pattern.

Kumar (2004) defined public library system as ‘a combination of people, activities, events and object resources working together to convert inputs to outputs’

Public libraries are libraries serving the community or region with multipurpose information- education –culture, agency in respect of information dissemination services, free of charge or at nominal fee (Thompson, 1974).

The term system has been incorporated in the public libraries in recent development to denote all segments of the library i.e. legislation, funding, manpower, collection, services, building and ICT. Although in practice all those segments are often inseparable in any public library

1.2.1 Statement of Research title

Since public libraries are breathing force for education, culture and information plays important role in development of elite citizens, researcher has
chosen the topic on public library system. So far no study on evaluation of legislation and public library system in Kenya has been done hence the present research ‘Public Library System in Kenya: An Analytical study’ has been undertaken.

1.3 Explanation of concepts:

**Public library**. The Public Library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.

**Public library system** it is the communication of ideas and information for any type of users for their inseparable utilization in the promotion of democratic development of education to raise their economy as a result of sincere participation. Mostly it takes a pyramidal structure in nature with, state central libraries, district central libraries and village libraries. (Iyer, 1999)

**Public library legislation.** The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation both at national and local government’s level. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education. All legislation work is done by parliament of each country. To ensure nationwide library coordination and cooperation, legislation and strategic plans must also define and promote a national library services.


Board is empowered to develop public library services in Kenya to fill the vacuum that existed before and soon after independence regarding the provision of public library services hence bridge the level of literacy. The headquarters library in Nairobi opened its doors to the public in 1969. Currently, the Board is responsible for managing 8 libraries in 8 provinces and other 24 libraries spread throughout the country at district level.
1.4 Objectives of the study

The fundamental principle of creating a national public library network is to provide information and library services to users. The basic purpose of the study was to evaluate the performance of KNLS network, resources, services, manpower, finance, legislation and ICT applications. The specific objectives of the study are:

1) To compare development of public libraries and its legislation in Kenya with that of India;
2) To evaluate the performance of public library system in Kenya;
3) To Survey users of the public libraries in Kenya;
4) To suggest model public library and information services Act for Kenya.

1.5 Hypotheses

The researcher, initiated the process of investigation, and so it resorted to the following hypothesis for the study:

1) Cultural and social situation of the country has its impact on public library system;
2) Public libraries in Kenya are economically disadvantaged;
3) Public libraries in Kenya both in service; staff, policy and collection are in the developing stage;
4) Public libraries in Kenya are meant for student population.

1.6 Scope and limitations

Scope of the study was limited to the public library legislation and public library system in Kenya and its users.

The researcher also made a survey of the existing literature on public libraries in Kenya. It was observed that there is scarcity of literature on Kenyan public library system as a whole and librarianship in Kenya in general. There has been little research and writing in the area of library and information science in Kenya and much less on the sphere of public library libraries. Librarians in Kenya have not been publishing much either in journals or books and much research that has taken place lies more or less in theses form.

Another problem encountered was related to library statistics. In the course of the study it became evident that statistics on library expenditure and collection growth were not regularly maintained and in some cases the researcher had to go by estimates. Indeed this was a big impediment such that some statistics such as
those on use, users and interlibrary loan had to be discarded because they were scanty and did not facilitate comparison.

1.7 Population sample

The researcher used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) statistical table (Table1.1) for sampling. In all there are 32 public libraries functioning in Kenya hence researcher had included all 32 (100%) libraries in the study as per table 1.1.

In all 32 public libraries in Kenya had 55904 registered members. As per table 1.1, researcher had randomly chosen a sample of 382 users from 32 libraries and distributed questionnaire to 382 users. Of the 382 users all i.e. 100% users had returned the questionnaire giving 100% response.

Table 1.1: Table for determining sample size from a given population

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Note: “N” is population size
“S” is sample size.
1.8 Research methodology

Present study used survey method as well as comparative method. A survey is one of the most effective and sensitive instrument of research which produces much needed knowledge.

The study also used comparative method for comparing the development of public libraries and library legislation in India and Kenya. Comparison is the process of searching for likeness in difference, or difference in likeness. In its fully developed form; it seems to involve a transition of attention to and fro between the objects compared.

1.8.1 Data collection

The techniques used by researcher to collect data were:
- Questionnaire
- Interview
- Observation

1.8.1.1 Questionnaire: Researcher had prepared two sets of structured questionnaire to collect data: i) the questionnaire to librarians. ii) User questionnaire.

Users’ questionnaire (Appendix C) consisted of: users’ profile, use of resources, use of services and satisfaction level.

The librarians’ questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted of the following sections and details:

Section A: It was on general data which consisted of the name of the library, category of library, years of establishment, owners of the premises, library committee, legislation and library mission and vision.

Section B: About collection development which consists of the following, books and other reading materials, number of reading materials acquired 2005-2009, number of collection in fiction and nonfiction, ranking of both fiction and nonfiction, children collection, adult collection, periodicals, newspapers, selection of library materials, main library income, planned expenditure, reference resources and inter library loaning.

Section C: It is on finance, resources and organization which consist of the following: income, expenditure on reading materials, expenditure salary and
allowance, donations, membership profiles, registration and subscription of members and stock taking.

**Section D:** This section is about users and services which consist of the following: borrowing of main collection for 2005-2009, borrowing of periodicals for 2005-2009, in house borrowing, home borrowing, membership fees, adult borrowing, children borrowing, inter-loaning and bulk loaning and queries asked by users.

**Section E:** This section is about manpower development and it consist of the following: name of manpower, designation of the staff, level of education of the staff, salary of the staff, refresher courses and names of fresher course taken during last two years.

**Section F:** This section is about others which consist of the following: computerization, sections computerized, extension and cultural programs, the floor areas of the library, number of furniture and shelves, sitting capacity for children and adult and librarians comments.

**1.8.1.2 Interview:** Scheduled interview was conducted with Director of KNLS as well as librarians using a structured interview schedule which consisted of interview and observation on policy, budget and funds, planning, total users, lack of skills, etc. (Appendix D).

**1.8.1.3 Observation:** Non-participant observation technique was used by the researcher for collecting data. It assisted the researcher especially in the studies related to the behavior, it was used to obtain the correct picture of what was happening during that particular time of the survey, without influence by neither past nor future intentions or attitudes of respondents. Observation being a systematic viewing coupled with consideration of seen phenomena which ordinarily can’t be expressed by users in a clear way. It supplemented limitations of questionnaire and interview methods where feelings and verbal information were not capably given (Appendix D).

**1.8.1.4 Information sources:** Researcher used both primary and secondary sources like historical records and other relevant information was collected from documentary sources either in print or electronic form about and on public library which formed part of review of literature. Secondary sources were used by the researcher to obtain information relevant to this study this was through literature
review the documents related to public library systems, KNLS Act and policies, etc.

The researcher had done a comparative study of public library system in India and Kenya covering public libraries system in India and Kenya in context with: geographical, historical, government, political, economical, cultural, and educational and public library legislation in both countries and their detail structures.

1.8.2 Data analysis

The tabulation of data received in every question was the essence of research more so on Questionnaire techniques, so the researcher in this study has combined both quantitative and qualitative data. However, a presentation of data was not in the same sequence of the questionnaire. Also to increase the cohesiveness and readability of the findings, related questions were analyzed together. The data collected with various techniques like questionnaire, observation and interview schedules was analyzed and clubbed together to give a full picture of the particular situation. Mostly the data analyzed was represented in table forms and graphs.

The descriptive statistical measures like averages mean and percentages were used for the analysis of data wherever required. The research findings, recommendations and conclusions are drawn from the analyzed data. For possible improvement in public library system in Kenya the amendment to KNLSB Act has been suggested with the help of model Kenya public library and information services Act (Appendix A) in order to attain standards of the services and long term goals and objectives of the nation.

The data on the comparison chapter have been analyzed on the parameters namely library movement, national library authority, state library council, municipal and other library council, state central library, district library, other libraries, finance, and manpower, etc.

1.9 Summary of major conclusions and implications:

1.9.1 Conclusions

As compared to India, Kenya has failed to reach at grass root level, to eradicate illiteracy to develop reading interest and habit amongst Kenyan’s. Due to several limitations of the KNLSB Act 1967, KNLSB has failed to perform its functions.
India has more than 2 lakhs public libraries. Mostly they are spread up to grass root level and trying to achieve objective of one village one library, representing one library for the population of 5900 people. While in Kenya, in all there are only 32 libraries, with one library representing population of 1,218,750 people.

Total collection of books combined in all 32(100%) libraries in Kenya was 483882. Kenya provided. 0.012 books per person, 0.017 books per literate person in the country while 8.5 books per registered member of public library service which is far below IFLA/ UNESCO guidelines. Public libraries in Kenya do not have books collection even in the ratio of 1:1. This confirms the hypothesis ‘public libraries in Kenya both in service, staff, policy and collection are in the developing stage’ (hypothesis No 3).

Kenya’s national budget for year 2009/2010 was 850 billion Ksh, whereas the budget allocation for the same period for Kenya national library service was 603,411,563 million which constituted 0.07 %. The national education budget for the same period was 150 billion. Which also presents 0.4% against the total budgetary allocation for the Kenya national library service is 0.4% of education budget; hence, they have rendered very ineffective and inefficient services to the users. This confirms the hypotheses ‘public libraries in Kenya are economically disadvantaged’ (Hypothesis No 2).

Government provides grants to KNLSB. However, KNLSB in turn does not provide grants to individual libraries in Kenya. KNLSB does all the expenditure on behalf of branch libraries. The sources of finance for KNLSB for five years under study were government grants 99.50% to 94.92%, donations 0.37% to 5.03%, and membership fees and fines 0.13% to 0.05% Main donor agency was book foundation. KNLSB has centralized system of procurement. In KNLSB Act, 1967 there is no provision for maintenance grants, however, KNLSB provides lump sum amount from government grant to individual libraries for maintenance and other expenditure. Library deposit is not taken from the users.

Income received by KNLSB during 2009 on average per registered member was KSH 11370.79. KNLSB had received income on an average KSH 1.63 per person and KSH 2.22 per literate population. It can be further noted that on an average 605,671,747 KSH were received by KNLSB during last five years under.
survey which is meager hence. This confirms hypothesis ‘**public libraries in Kenya are economically disadvantaged**’ (Hypothesis No 2).

KNLSB acquired 160,323 books during 2004-05 to 2008-09. On an average per year 32064.6 books were acquired; which is far below IFLA/UNESCO guidelines. It can also be noted that on an average per library 5010 books were acquired per library while KNLSB acquired on an average 2.86 books per registered member, 0.004 per person and 0.005 per literate population, which is far below the IFLA/ UNESCO guidelines.

The study also found that service provision to the minority users with sight disorder or blind was missing in all the library branches apart from the Head Office and 32 branches only one was offering the service which constituted 3.1%. This service is highly needed in mostly rural setup, where such group of users is found. **This confirms the hypothesis ‘public libraries in Kenya both in service, staff, policy and collection are in the developing stage’ (hypothesis No 3).**

Of the 382 users 67.61% users were unsatisfied about library collection, facilities, staff and other services.

Users were not satisfied about acquisition of nonfiction collection, users were also not satisfied with language of fiction and children’s fiction collection. As regards general facilities users were unsatisfied with size of the library and display of new books.

It can be noted that since students are the biggest group sitting and using library collection, users were satisfied with the services for the longer hours, it confirms the hypotheses ‘**Public libraries in Kenya are meant for student population**’ (hypotheses No 4).

1.9.2 Implication of results

Based on the results of the study following are implications:

- Implications for the government of Kenya
- Implications for Director, KNLSB
- Implications for state/ provincial librarians and district librarians
- Implications for Authors
1.9.2.1 Implications for government of Kenya

- The government of Kenya should give formula for provision of funds.
- Provision of sufficient premises for KNLSB and sufficient premises for provision of library services in each public library.
- Public private partnership (PPP) to integrate the KNLSB management through elaborative strategic plan in all its operations
- The government should provide population statistics up to location level. Census report should be published as it is an important statistical source of information for research

1.9.2.2 Implications for Director KNLSB

- For eradication of illiteracy public libraries should reach at grass root level by establishing network of libraries.
- Autonomy in services provision be given to the state libraries
- Preparation and publication of a national bibliography, which will meet international standards.
- Policy of books for all be adopted
- Recruitment of qualified staff and regular pertinent refresher courses, training programs, needs to be organized especially in the field of IT
- The paradigm shift is needed by KNLSB moving away from the traditional and conventional services to internet services in all its operations.
1.9.2.3 Implications for librarians

1.9.2.3.1 For State/Provincial librarians

- Statistics of all the library services within the province be mandatory i.e. daily borrowing, gender membership, users’ profiles, popular topics and authors, special collection etc
- Co-operation and technical help needs to be extended to other libraries up to location level.

1.9.2.3.2 For district and other librarians

- Statistics of users, services, collection be maintained regularly.
- Based on the census figures collection and services be provided to special group of users.
- Develop links and share resource with other libraries within the district.
- Minority and special groups be identified and services should be provided to such groups.

1.9.2.4 Implication for Authors

As there is very scanty literature on library movement during ancient and medieval period, the researchers in library and information science should create oral history, document the facts and publish it in the form of research papers in journal or elsewhere.

1.10 Contributions to the research

Following are the significant contributions made by the researcher to the existing knowledge:

1) Present study is a comprehensive attempt made by the researcher with regards to public libraries in Kenya in a more comprehensive scale, will significantly contribute to the existing knowledge.

2) The recommendations made by the researcher that; the lacunae in the KNLSB Act have been pointed out and suggested a ‘model Kenya public library and information services Act’
3) The study has used IFLA/UNESCO guidelines and an overview of international scenario worthy emulating, which will be reference part for any given library Act in Kenya.

1.11 Conspectus. The research has been designed in chapters as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter deals with general background of public library, objectives, characteristics and components of public library system statement of the research problem, aims and objectives of the study, scope and limitations, hypothesis and research Methodology.

Chapter II: Review of literature.

The chapter presents the scanned published literature on the subject by the researcher. It provided the background and context for the research. The collected literature is organized under the major headings:

Chapter III: Development of Public libraries and library legislation in India & Kenya

This chapter has presented comparison of public library legislation in India and Kenya by using a comparative method of research.

Chapter IV: Public libraries in Kenya.

In this chapter, researcher has described general information about public libraries finance, resources, and its development, services and manpower in Kenya.

Chapter V: Users’ survey

This chapter, discusses the public library services in Kenya from users’ angle, therefore researcher has surveyed users of all 32 public libraries in Kenya with the help of structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire covers the aspects of personal information, use of resources and services and their satisfaction level.

Chapter VI: Findings/Conclusions and implications

This chapter presents a brief description of the results of the study, significant suggestions and Areas for further study.
1.12 Conclusions

It is essential for any research to survey literature on the topic of research to get the exact idea of the topic; hence, the comprehensive relevant literature on public library system was scanned and presented in chapter 2.