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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**LIBRARY FUNDING: A STUDY TO IDENTIFY RELIABLE AND EQUITABLE SOURCES OF
PUBLIC LIBRARY FUNDING IN KENYA**

THESIS PRESENTED IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

BY

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MRS. GRETCHEN SMITH

JUNE 2005

DEDICATION

**This thesis is dedicated to my dear wife Pauline, our children
Somolong, Hillary, Angela and Kangogo.**

ABSTRACT

The premise from which this research project begins is that public libraries particularly in the developing world, are unable to fully finance their services and thus should seek alternative sources of funding. This project attempts to identify sustainable funding options for the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) with specific reference to user fees for library services.

In order to put the study into perspective, an outline of library history in Kenya is presented together with an overview of social, economic, technological, and social factors which influence the provision of library and information services. The literature review traces the origin of the user fee debate and summarises the arguments for and against fees in libraries. It also attempts to determine whether economic theory could present a theoretical perspective in reconciling the divergent views. The review shows that the issue of charging for library services is hotly contested within the LIS profession and that there is no easy solution. The position of the public libraries within the African continent is contextualised by briefly detailing prevailing conditions, particularly the pressures brought to bear on library budgets during difficult economic periods. An overview of user fee policy in Kenya and the current position of library funding and income generation in South Africa are presented.

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. A survey method was employed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The study used questionnaires and personal interviews to collect data from users in 20 of the 36 KNLS branches. The questionnaires contained both open and closed ended questions. In total, 249 library users from all 20 sites responded to the questionnaire. Using descriptive and relational statistics, the data from the survey were analysed using the STATA software package to establish specific and general aspects of the study and opinions relating to the ability and willingness of the respondents to pay user fees. This was then followed by an in-depth analysis of interviews with 20 willing library users who had taken part in the initial survey. The aim was to establish underlying reasons for the users' perceptions. Interviews were also conducted with senior librarians drawn from five of the KNLS branches,

specifically to elicit their professional views on the topic of user fees and to determine whether the KNLS has the legal framework to support such a policy.

The results show that while the majority of the respondents were willing to pay user fees, they were not willing to pay for the traditional 'core' library services. It emerged, however, that although the respondents were willing to pay for annual subscription fees, the amount likely to be generated would be of little significance since the patrons were only willing to pay a minimal amount. It is clear that while the respondents have the will to pay subscription fees they lack adequate income to translate their willingness into a tangible contribution.

The study demonstrates that the issue of user fees is complex and the project further shows that the complexities are exacerbated by the nature of the public library, in itself a complex institution. The public library is one of those institutions tied into legal, economic, educational, social and political processes. Therefore, the issue of user fees transcends the library. It is a public policy issue.

The study indicates that the introduction of fees for specific library services would have a range of undesirable effects, and would not solve the library's funding problems. In addition, the study shows that user fees will negatively affect those who are in most need of the service but may be unable to pay. Taking into consideration the financial implications and staff time needed to implement and manage the scheme it also became evident that it will not be cost effective for the KNLS to introduce user fees. The researcher therefore does not recommend the introduction of user fees, but rather the setting up of sustainable income generating options and cost saving measures which could be adopted by the KNLS.

DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained in this dissertation is essentially my own work unless specifically acknowledged. It is being submitted in fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Library and Information Science at the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted in any other university.

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2/6/05

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I hope this study will render adequate tribute to all those mentioned above.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EALA	East African Library Association
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationists
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
ICIPE	International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology
ICRAF	International Center for Research in Agroforestry
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
KASNEB	Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board
KBS	Kenya Bureau of Statistics
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KIPRA	Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis
KNLS	Kenya National Library Services
LIS	Library and Information Science
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Information Policy
OPACs	Online Public Access Catalogues
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"In the twentieth century of political struggles, state money
has gone into guns, not books"

Nadine Gordimer

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the user fee topic, the rationale and context of the study. The researcher outlines the factors that motivated him to conduct the study within the framework of public library service provision in Kenya a developing country in Africa. The problem under investigation, aims, objectives and research questions that provide the context for investigations are stated followed by an outline of the significance, scope and limitations of the study. The first chapter concludes with an overview of the organisation of the thesis.

The modern public library collects printed and non-printed materials and then organises and makes them available for use. The advent of modern information technologies has further added a new impetus to the public library. Provision of all these materials means the requirement of more than the occasional availability of funds; rather it means the steady supply of sufficient funds that could adequately assist the public library in maintaining its role as a reliable source of information. Every library manager recognises the significance of adequate funding in the provision of library services. Funding is a crucial resource and libraries need to be supported financially by all role players without further qualification. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many instances and public libraries worldwide continue to operate on limited budgets.

The researcher contends that finance impacts on all organisational activities, such as the employment of staff, technology to be applied, buildings to be erected, bookstock and equipment to be bought and adequate services to be provided. Libraries are not regarded as revenue-generating institutions, rather, they are regarded as spending institutions

which depend on parent bodies for funding. These parent bodies are subject to the vagaries of the wider financial world and external economic factors have a direct impact on their revenue generating capabilities and their ability to provide adequate library funding. For instance, when the parent organisation has to cut back on expenditure their libraries are usually one of the first divisions to find themselves to be in an exigent position. This calls on libraries to re-evaluate themselves and determine whether they should continue to depend entirely on subsidised funding, especially at critical moments, or also seek alternative sources of funding.

According to Prentice (1996:3) public libraries are funded as a result of political decisions made in an environment much broader than that of the library. They are subject to overall policy and fiscal policy determined by the public and their elected representatives. Thus public libraries get much of their income from the government and local authorities usually through taxes on real and personal property. Apart from the government and local authorities, public libraries may also obtain part of their income from endowments, gifts, sale of publications, 'friends of the library', and other miscellaneous sources. For a long time, most public libraries in developing countries have however depended largely on traditional sources of funds to run their services, much of which have often not been sufficient to sustain even the basic services of the library.

Having stated the above, it is important to remember that though public libraries are a universal phenomenon and aim to achieve the same goals, it should, however, be realised that the organisational structures and experiences in each country are different. For example, while regional or local authorities fund public libraries in South Africa, the situation is different in Kenya¹ where they are financed by the central government and managed by a centralised body. Taking the above factors into consideration, and the prevailing socio-economic conditions in each country, generalisations cannot easily be made.

¹ With exception of the MacMillan Library run by the Nairobi City Council all public library services in Kenya are managed by the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS).

Over the years public libraries have been subjected to fluctuating financial resources and in many instances this has resulted in financial constraints which have fuelled the debate whether libraries should adopt an enterprise approach in the management of their services and whether they should seek alternative sources of income from within and outside their libraries. Most public libraries worldwide offer their services free or for a small fee. The question however can be asked whether public libraries should generate a part of their income by means of a levy or fee for their services. This would enable them not only to lower existing costs, but also to extend their scope and provide new expanded services (Coleman, 1991:185). Lofgren (1987:73) further argues that "privatisation and profit orientation would make it possible for the libraries to acquire the attributes of a modern business-enterprise".

Oulton (1991:26) has pointed out that when faced with demands for lower expenditure, librarians' primary reactions were to cut book funds, access or staff. The evidence available indicates that librarians do not have a fundamental rationale for managing their services in reduced financial circumstances but rather base their immediate reactions on their personal perceptions of how to save money. Librarians seemed to be making tactical decisions, rather than the strategic ones that were necessary. Planning for a reduced budget does not necessarily imply a reduced role. According to Prentice (1996:7) "a leaner institution will need to meet user needs in innovative ways and respond to information and educational demands as rapidly as ever ... the purpose of financial planning ... is to allocate resources in the most responsive fashion".

It is the researchers' view that although this debate has been covered fully in the professional literature, it has mostly reported the views of library and information service (LIS) professionals and particularly those from developed nations. Very few studies have been done on the views of the public in this regard, and even less on the situation in Africa. In Africa, public library funding is generally at such a minimal level that it has been difficult to sustain even the most basic services. This situation has been further exacerbated by the last world-wide economic recession. This has had severe repercussions in the developing world where governments have been forced by these and

other economic constraints to severely cut back on public service spending. Libraries have generally been one of the worst affected public sector services under these circumstances.

The researcher was exposed to the contrast between public library provision in developed Western nations and developing countries in Africa during his undergraduate studies in the United Kingdom. In that period he experienced the advantages of functional library systems, new technologies and modern management techniques. Upon his return to Kenya he, however, it proved to be a daunting task to try and put the skills he had acquired into practice in his home country. The greatest obstacle to innovation within the Kenya National Library Services where he worked was the lack of funds. Whereas the researcher had great ideas on how to revamp the dormant mobile library service and introduce a dedicated school library service and services to the housebound, prisoners, etc., none of this could even be considered due to lack of funds and adequate budgetary provisions.

Public libraries in most African countries generally face a myriad of problems, the most serious being the lack of financial resources and often they thus cannot perform their functions adequately. In many of these countries public libraries receive little financial support from government and often do not have qualified personnel, suitable facilities, reading materials and other resources required to meet their users' needs. The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) sponsored a study in ten African countries in 2000 to identify and clarify the nature of these problems. The study highlighted the following problems facing public libraries in Africa (Issak, 2000):

- “Financial constraints, due to diminishing budgetary allocations from funding agencies and governments;
- Low priority given to library services by governments and community leaders;
- Poor levels of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) in library services;
- Inadequately trained human resources;

- ❑ Obsolete and inadequate reading and other information materials;
- ❑ Inadequate infrastructure and physical facilities;
- ❑ Education systems that discourage a reading culture by putting a excessively high premium on examinations;
- ❑ High illiteracy levels;
- ❑ Lack of national information policies”.

In order to better understand the framework and the financial position of the public library within the African continent, it is necessary to give an outline of their objectives, their sources of income, and the effect of economic factors during recent years on their budgets. The early promise of libraries has not been fulfilled in Africa in general. Buildings and other facilities have generally not been maintained and shelves are either empty or full of out-of-date and irrelevant material, funding is insufficient and the percentage of the population using services is negligible.

According to Rosenberg (1999:13) “this scenario also pertains, albeit at different levels, to many other libraries in the public sector in Africa, whether academic, public or special. In many instances the situation if not similar is worse than the above”. For example, the practice of spending a certain percentage of the total budget on the library is no longer followed. In public, special, and school libraries the book budget is usually non-existent or on paper only, meaning that the money budgeted for purchasing new materials is never released. It does not come as a surprise therefore that in the public libraries of Africa it is sometimes only the buildings and librarian’s salary that remain. The major part of the library budget is often spent on staff costs resulting in books and other materials no longer being purchased, new branches that could serve the expanding population not being built and nothing to fund the introduction of new technologies. The chief and most obvious immediate cause for this decline is that governments are no longer able to adequately finance libraries (Rosenberg, 1993:14).

Public libraries operate within a framework and are vulnerable to the political process in a country. Government decisions affect libraries' funding levels and service priorities. In Africa, support for the library and information sectors has declined over the years and libraries now receive far less financial support from their governments in comparison to other continents. This is in contrast to the early stages of independence when libraries were highly regarded and obtained similar commitments as other essential services such as hospitals and schools. This was partly because of the thirst for education which gripped Africa at independence and the hope that libraries would contribute significantly towards achieving this cherished goal (Mchombu: 1991:30). Due to the problems which have faced the African continent as a result of corruption/mismanagement, war, disease and famine, libraries have thus not been accorded the due consideration they were originally promised.

According to Raseroka (1994:54), all public libraries in Africa face the following crucial questions:

- How to justify to governments a more equitable share of the national budget in addition to the various demands such as defence, health and education budgets?
- How can the cost-benefit relationship between library services and development be established?

Libraries still need to prove that they could be notable development and change agencies. A lack of such proof adversely affects governments' opinion of libraries and their funding. It, however, has proven to be a very difficult task to convince the general public and government that libraries are of benefit, and particularly to the illiterate such benefit is not always evident (Harvard-Williams, 1994:15). The researcher suggests that the problems which have caused the ineffectiveness of libraries as a catalyst are rooted in the generally poor economic situation that most of Africa has experienced in the last few decades and the historical development of public libraries in some African countries.

The slowing down of African economies and the attendant hardships related to the lack of access to basic necessities such as food and good health have reduced the finances that are available for library services and any other social services. Income is being redistributed and while governments accept direct responsibility for such social services as health, education and defence, libraries are relegated to the bottom of the priority list. Unlike education, the provision of library and information services is not considered to be a basic social function to be fulfilled by the government, despite the supportive functions these services fulfil (Zaaiman and Roux, 1989:13).

In Africa, libraries have a classic life cycle. They are usually launched with fanfare and publicity, which is followed by slow decline and eventual closure. According to Rosenberg (1993:34), "long term sustainability of these new initiatives can only be provided by a stable ongoing administrative structure that will support the library service and make provisions for its future activities". Mchombu (1991:29), in turn, advises that "unless the actual problems facing libraries in Africa are mapped out accurately, there is real danger that whatever prescription is suggested, it will only cure the symptoms rather than the disease".

There is nothing new about addressing the sustainability of library development in Africa. It is a problem that has been well recognised for over twenty five years, and both African librarians and donor agencies have tried to address it. But none of these initiatives have succeeded in revitalising libraries and, because most have been donor-led, they have only served to increase dependency on outside funding. As public funding has dwindled, some libraries in Africa begun to embrace the strategy of costing services and charging at the point of use, a strategy in line with the market philosophy promoted world wide in the 1980s. According to Rosenberg (1999:18), public libraries, for example in Tanzania, are charging subscriptions or entrance fees while in other countries university libraries expect student fees to include a library element and are charging for photocopying, inter-library loan, e-mail, etc. Income is generated from binding, hiring out facilities, and operating bookshops and restaurants.

Evidence, however, suggests that user fees can never bring sustainability. For one thing fees cannot be levied at a sufficiently high rate. For example, at private universities, where a library levy has always been added to student fees and been part of the funding structure, they do not even cover the cost of all new acquisitions. This is true even if the fees charged are high in relation to the levels of income in the country. For example, the high levy charged at the University of East Africa in Kenya only meets the cost of journal subscriptions (Rosenberg, 1999:18).

It is the researchers' view that for Kenya to achieve its full potential it needs a reading and information literate society. The researchers' argument is that to obtain this, public library services have to be radically improved and expanded to embrace a far larger proportion of the population. This can only be achieved if an adequate funding structure is achieved.

All the factors outlined above would suggest that there is an urgent need to identify funding structures that would provide a more viable financial model to ensure the survival of public libraries in Africa.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, MOTIVATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Like many other developing countries Kenya is faced with a myriad of problems including the scarcity of resources to fully finance its public services. Economic and financial constraints have in the past thus forced the government not to rely exclusively on conventional tax revenue to finance its public services. Among the reform policies that have been introduced to generate additional financial resources was the implementation of a 'user fee policy' in such areas as health care and education.

The Kenyan government and the LIS profession have, however, after forty years of independence, not adequately addressed the decline of public library funding and the resultant poor provision of services. There are currently less than forty public libraries serving a population of over thirty million in Kenya, and many of these would not qualify

to be described as libraries in the traditional sense of the word. Although many factors have contributed to public library services in Kenya being severely disadvantaged and under-financed the researcher would like to suggest that the main factors are the:

- Poor national economy and scarcity of financial resources;
- Low priority given to library and information services on the national development agenda and;
- Lack of professional will to promote library and information services.

In 1998, the Kenya government formulated a policy – The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework- which gave government organisations greater autonomy in the prioritisation of their activities and allocation of resources. This was against the background of decreasing government grants and ceilings imposed on the budgets of government ministries and state corporations. For the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) the traditional financial sources had already proved inadequate, and other attempts to engage in some sort of fund-raising had also yielded little success (Atuti, 2003:3).

In response to the above factors, the KNLS decided to organise a series of workshops to address the problem. The workshop held in Nairobi in 1998 embraced the theme entitled ‘Visible Income-Generating Activities for Implementation in KNLS Branches’. Several recommendations were made during the workshop, amongst others the possibility of user fees. This issue was however not resolved and this was largely due to the fact that most of the participants were convinced that this was not a feasible option: firstly, the legal framework was lacking and secondly, there was doubt whether the public would embrace the idea of user fees for public library services. The librarians’ views could be largely attributed to the fact that at that time the users’ willingness to pay for services had not been explored in any depth. Although the KNLS did conduct a study in 2000 to determine user needs and to identify impediments to the provision of public library services in Kenya, this survey (KNLS/Carnegie, 2000) only touched on the aspect of user fees and did not provide sufficient input on the topic.

It is clear from the above that the KNLS Board supports the principle of income generation efforts in order to supplement its income base. For example, in 1998, S.K. Nganga, then KNLS director, hinted that the Board would consider offering its services on a cost-sharing basis and would venture into income generating activities. According to Atuti, (2003:5), the Board recently submitted a Cabinet Memorandum and recommendations to government to propose amendments to its legal instruments to enable it to charge for certain services. These changes to the legal instruments could mark the beginning of a long journey for the public library to transform its traditional services to those of a 'modern' self-sustaining library of the 21st century.

This researcher, however, is of the opinion that the user fee issue contains a minefield of controversial factors that require to be addressed before it can successfully be implemented. In view of the foregoing discussion the researcher argues that there is a need for an empirical study to establish the ability and willingness of users, and other interested groups, to pay for services if fees were to be charged by the KNLS, and further, to identify viable alternative sources of income for public libraries in Kenya.

The financial crisis facing public libraries in Kenya and the effect this has on service provision thus motivated the researcher to undertake an investigation into finding solutions to overcome the problem. In specific terms it can be stated that the following factors served as motivating framework and rationale for the study:

- The researcher has worked for the Kenya National Library Service for the last eighteen years and has over the years been confounded by the problems caused by inadequate funding.
- The researcher consequently developed a special interest in the problems currently facing the public library service sector in Kenya and wishes to investigate possible solutions. Foremost of these problems was how to resolve the lack of adequate funds which hamper the delivery of services.
- Many librarians have suggested to the KNLS management that they should look at the possibility of introducing charges for some of the services. These suggestions were made by the librarians when they realised that they were

unable to offer effective services due to lack of funds occasioned by the cuts in government funding.

- With the help of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the KNLS aims to revitalise library and information services in Kenya. However, the question that arises is how these services will be sustained financially after the end of the contract.
- The Kenyan government is currently implementing major restructuring programs in the provision of basic public services that have suffered severely because of the poor economic situation experienced since the early 1990s.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS²

The aim of this study is to identify sustainable funding options for public library services in Kenya with specific references to user fees. It will attempt to assess the feasibility of introducing a charging scheme and the implications thereof in the light of the legal, social and economic realities prevalent in Kenya. The study will also look at alternative income generating options that can be introduced to generate additional income, and how the KNLS could utilise available revenue more efficiently. It is hoped that the findings will assist decision makers at the KNLS to formulate policies and guidelines which could be used in future to alleviate its funding problems. It is also hoped that this study will provide solutions to other third world countries not able to sustain public library services.

The specific objectives of this study are thus to:

1. Assess the financial sustainability and acceptability of user fees among the various stakeholders, e.g. users, and librarians;
2. Estimate the revenue likely to be accrued if such measures were to be introduced;
3. Assess the impact of fees on library utilisation and perceived quality of services;
4. Review the equity impact of an exemption policy both in theory and in practice;
5. Identify alternative income generation sources;
6. Identify cost-saving measures and prudent financial management initiatives.

² The nature of the study predicated research questions and not hypotheses to serve as framework for the study.

The realisation that there are a number of knowledge gaps pertaining to sustainable funding options and specifically on the issue of user fees for public library services in Kenya, and arising out of the problem statement outlined in 1.2, the researcher derived the following research questions to serve as a framework for this study:

1. What are the main uses of public library services in Kenya?
2. Are the users aware of the services offered by the KNLS?
3. Does the quality of current library services warrant the introduction of fees?
4. Are library users willing to pay for library services if user fees were to be introduced?
5. For which services are the users willing to pay if charges were to be introduced?
6. Would the revenue likely to be generated be sufficient to justify the introduction of subscription fees?
7. What are the merits and demerits of user fees?
8. How should the revenue likely to be collected be utilised?
9. Apart from user fees, what other alternative sources of revenue could be introduced?
10. Would there be a need for exemptions if fees were to be introduced?
11. Are there any policy and legal frameworks in Kenya to facilitate the introduction of user fees and alternative income generation options?
12. Is the KNLS receiving an adequate share of government funding?

1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study addresses the poor funding of public libraries in Kenya and ways to alleviate this problem. It further attempts to determine whether the introduction of user fees and other alternative funding sources would be a feasible solution to the problem facing Kenyan public libraries. Although the literature review refers to examples that the researcher deemed were significant to the study from all types of libraries throughout the world, this study is grounded in the field of public librarianship in Kenya. Within this field the thesis is further limited to the concept of expanding the funding base by means of two specific aspects: the ability and willingness of library users to pay user fees, and

the identification of alternative sources of funding. In trying to achieve this, the study attempts to identify stable and equitable sources of revenue generation, and also to establish the possible effects of implementing a user fee policy from the perspective of key stakeholders such as the users and staff of the KNLS in Kenya.

Although the researcher acknowledges that non-users and politicians are major stakeholders when it comes to issues related to library funding/user fees the researcher consciously designed the study not to include them in the sample for the following reasons:

- The study is extensive and parameters had to be set and by excluding non-users a more manageable sample could be attained;
- Creating an adequate sampling frame for non-users would have been problematic in the Kenyan context with its extensive rural areas that are difficult to access and the sketchy demographic data available in the country;
- One of the main objectives of this study is to determine the willingness to pay for library services, and it was thus necessary to obtain informed opinions from actual users on this very complex issue. The researcher is of the view that non-users in Kenya would not have been able to express an informed opinion on the topic. One reason why this is so, the researcher would argue, is because public libraries are not widespread in Kenya ³(cf. 2.5.2) very few people are even aware of the public library phenomena, the possible benefits that they might hold for the public and the country as a whole, or other issues relating to public libraries.
- Politicians were left out because during the empirical research component of the study Kenya was preparing for general elections and most politicians were preoccupied with campaigns and the effect of a potential change in government. During this period there were also campaigns for a new Constitution to be enacted following alleged misrule by the then ruling party that had been in power

▪ ³ Unlike the case in other countries where a substantial number of the population have access to libraries the case is different in Kenya. For example, whereas in 1995 about three fifths (24 million adults aged sixteen and more) of the British and Welsh population regularly visited libraries (Aslib, 1995:113) only 147,652 Kenyans or 0.005% of the Kenyan population were registered with the KNLS in 2004.

for forty years since independence. In view of this, the researcher was of the opinion that the political situation in Kenya at the time was not conducive to soliciting the politicians' objective opinion on library issues. Although political dispensation has changed and a more vibrant parliament has been instituted⁴, this came into place subsequent to the empirical study being conducted.

The researcher thus acknowledges that these aspects are limitations that should be specifically addressed in subsequent studies.

The study gathers both primary data by means of library based surveys in particular branches of the KNLS and secondary data from documentary sources. Both these methods have inherent shortcomings. With regard to the secondary data it should be realized that the international user fee debate was in vogue during the 1980s and much of the literature used in this study was published during that period. A further limitation relates to the use of survey instruments when gathering income-related primary data.

1.5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

This section gives a brief definition of the key terms that underpin the main theme of the study.

Fees

The term fees in the context of this study refers to the levying of charges for public sector services, and specifically libraries, to recover some or all of the cost of providing such a service. Other terms commonly used include user charges, service tariffs, and cost recovery charges. For the purpose of this study, fees are defined as charges levied against individual consumers of publicly produced services and commodities and publicly granted privileges on a cost-per-unit basis. According to Giacoma (1989) "in the broadest definition, fees includes charges for specialised database searches performed by public libraries, for electricity produced by city-owned facility, and for liquor licenses. In each

⁴ For example, a select committee on library matters has been set up by the current parliament.

of these cases, an individual can avoid the charge by consuming zero amount of the service, commodity or privilege”.

Funding

A general term meaning (a) money to carry-out a project, (b) the way in which money for a project is provided e.g. grant, loan, etc. The term funding is used in this study to denote the financial resources required to carry out a wide range of library services.

Public Libraries

These are general libraries for public use providing a broad range of services to all groups in the community (Roberts, 1998:17). According to IFLA/UNESCO (2001:2) a public library is:

“An organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some form of community organization. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment”.

National Library

This implies a focus of a central library or a number of libraries on some national function. These libraries usually benefit from legal deposit legislation. In some countries the national library also serves a public library function. This is the case in countries such as Kenya and Botswana in Africa (Roberts, 1998:17).

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The main structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter One

This chapter presents the rationale for the study. Thus, critical issues such as the position of public libraries in Africa and the need for sustainable sources of funding, statement of

the problem, the significance of the study, the aim and objectives and the underlying research questions are presented here. The chapter also highlights the limitations of the study and defines the key terms that underpin the main theme of the study.

Chapter Two

This chapter firstly outlines the environmental setting of the study. Secondly, a brief description of the historical development of libraries in Kenya and the objectives, strategies, new initiatives, and the financial position of the KNLS are presented. The last section in this chapter discusses the revitalisation of public libraries in Kenya.

Chapter Three

Here the international literature on the user fee debate on public libraries is evaluated taking into consideration the views of both its proponents and opponents. The social, ethical and political issues with regard to the fee debate are highlighted.

Chapter Four

This chapter outlines the research approach and methodology adopted for this study. It describes how the survey was executed and the data collected by means of tools such as: questionnaires, interviews and documentary sources.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents the demographic profiles of the respondents. These include the proportion of the respondents by age, gender, location, occupation, personal income, etc.

Chapter Six:

This chapter presents the views of the users with regard to their interaction with the library and their perceptions of the services it offers. The chapter looks specifically at the ratings of the various features of the library, awareness of the potential of the KNLS to offer specific services, the main reasons for using the library and factors which influence the use of the library.

Chapter Seven

This chapter presents the respondents' opinions regarding the user fee concept in place in the health sector and previously in the education sector in Kenya, and whether the KNLS should implement a similar policy. The acceptability of a user fee policy, perceived quality of service, amount to be paid, benefits of user fees, exemptions and waivers are specifically addressed.

Chapter Eight

This chapter discusses the main conclusions and recommendations, and further highlights future challenges and areas for investigation.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER TWO

PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

2.1 Introduction

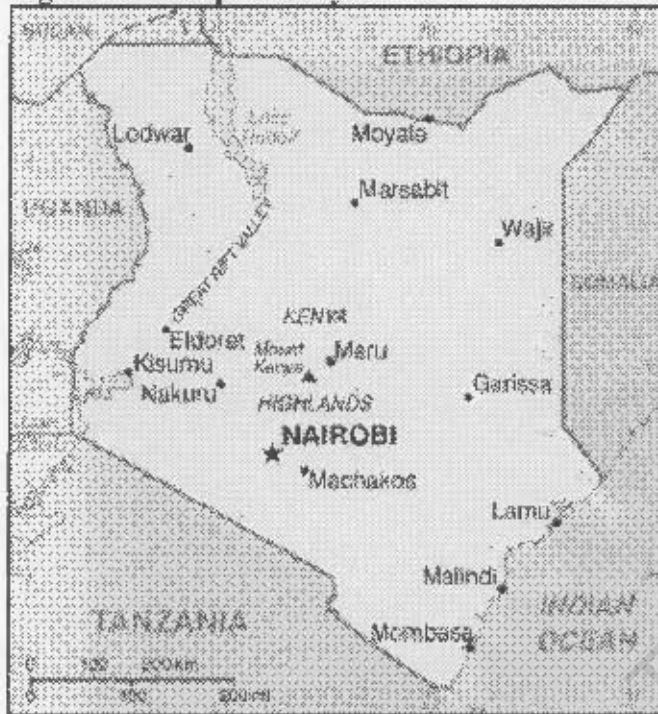
This chapter presents a brief profile of Kenya, the environmental setting of the research project. This is followed by an overview of social, economic, technological, and social factors which influence the provision of public library services in Kenya. It also provides a historical perspective of the development of public libraries in Kenya with specific emphasis on the KNLS. A brief description of the objectives, strategies, new services and the financial position of the KNLS are outlined. The last section discusses the revitalisation of public libraries currently taking place under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York in selected libraries in Africa.

2.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE OF KENYA

2.2.1 Introduction

The environmental setting for this study is Kenya (cf. Figure 2.1), a country in East Africa, which lies on the equator and which has a varied landscape and vegetation. It is bordered by Uganda to the West, to the North by Ethiopia and Sudan, to the North East by Somalia, to the East by the Indian Ocean and to the South by Tanzania. Kenya's land mass is characterized by diverse physical and climatic regions, varying from the arid north to the semi-arid plateaus in the south and wet rolling highlands in the center. There are seven main geographic regions in Kenya: the Coastal region, the Coastal hinterland and Tana plain region, Northern plain-lands region, the Kenya highlands region, the Rift Valley region, and the Western plateau region (Nelson, 1983).

Figure 2.1: Map of Kenya



Source: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ke.html>

Kenya has a long history that dates back many centuries to the internal diaspora or the early settlements and migrations. Then came the formation of the various language groups who developed their own religions, traditions, governments and ruling systems in which they dictated their way of life and method to keep alive by their trade and occupations. This was followed the British colonial period from the 1800s to the early 1960's. The fight for liberation that gave birth to the Mau Mau freedom fighters and the rise of the Kenyan heroes culminated with complete independence in 1963 with Jomo Kenyatta as the first president. Kenyatta died in 1978 and his position was taken over by Daniel Arap Moi who led the country for 24 years until 2002 when he handed over to incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki.

Kenya has a centralised system of government and it is divided into eight administrative regions with the seat of government in Nairobi the capital city. Kenya's legislature consists of a single chamber, 224-member, National Assembly; 210 members are directly elected every five years in single-seat constituencies; 12 members are appointed; the

Speaker and the Attorney General serve in an ex-officio capacity. Executive power is held by the president who is also directly elected for five years (Kenya Government, 2003).

According to the 1999 census the population stood at 29 million people, derived from 42 communities (Kenya Bureau of Statistics: 2000). The majority of the population lives in rural areas, and most of them are small-scale farmers. The few large-scale farms dominate in the export oriented sector of agriculture, producing mainly coffee, tea, cereals and livestock products. The overall population density is 38 persons per square kilometre but the rich, high potential agricultural regions to the west and central regions show densities of 200-300 persons per square kilometre. The urban population is estimated at 23% of the population, and more than a third of this is accounted for by the Nairobi Metropolitan area (National Research Council, 2003).

2.2.2 Economic Activities

Kenya is one of the few African countries which was expected to register extensive economic growth after independence but this did not come to fruition. This is generally attributed to poor management of the economy. Nyong'o (1988) has made the interesting observation that "as Africa enters the 21st century, the basic structures and approaches of the colonial era have remained in place. The preoccupation of the state in most African countries has been to consolidate authority rather than foster the economic empowerment of its people. This has been fuelled by strengthening institutions of government, particularly the bureaucracy it had inherited from the colonial period". The net outcome has been that while consolidating their authority at the centre, governments in Africa have failed to cater for social development. It is the researcher's view that the only visible outcomes of independence have been persistent authoritarianism, low levels of state legitimacy and the failure of the African state to manage economic and social development in an effective manner.

Prior to the 19th century, Kenya was mainly inhabited by indigenous African peoples and its economy was almost entirely at a subsistence level. Because money, as we know it

today, did not exist, any exchange of domestic production was done predominantly on a barter form of arrangement. Trade with the outside world was almost non-existent except for some Asian and Arab traders along the coast. The situation changed with colonisation in the 19th century and during this period the construction of the Uganda Railway and a further influx of white settlers in the 20th century marked a major development in the Kenyan economy. The settlers introduced plantation agriculture of such crops as coffee, tea, sisal, wheat and pyrethrum. The settlers also introduced livestock ranching (Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), 2003).

At present, Kenya has an agricultural-based economy and about 80% of the population make their living from agriculture with tea and coffee being the major sources of foreign exchange. In addition, Kenya has a well-developed tourism industry and the country has some of the best tourist destinations in the world. Although the economy is agrarian based, the Kenyan industrial and commercial sector is more developed than those in other countries within the East African region. The per capita income for Kenya is about US\$340 compared to Tanzania's and Uganda's average of US\$140 and US\$160 respectively. The income distribution is, however, extremely inequitable, with the top 20% of the population receiving 60% of the national income, while the bottom 20% receives less than 3%. It is considered that with a population growth rate of about 3%, the population will double in less than 25 years, placing further pressure on the labour market, the provision of social services and on the amount of land per person (Kenya Government, 1999:3).

It is generally accepted that independent Kenya did not effect a radical ideological or structural break with the colonial state and all she did was to expand the former colonial administrative and economic infrastructure. Kenya chose to pursue a market-oriented approach to development, and economic five-year plans were prepared and are still on the agenda. Ochieng (1992:262) points out that "although the state was involved in many instances in direct economic activity directly, private enterprise, with the participation of local and foreign investors, was also encouraged. The government professed a socialist

ideal for the nation but carried it no further than occasional rhetoric, a stand that stood in sharp contrast to its neighbours who collectivized and discouraged the private sector”.

Kenya initially showed remarkable economic growth after independence in 1963, but starting in the late 1970s and continuing through the 1980s, the global recession caused economic output in Kenya to shrink on a per capita basis. The economy again recovered by the mid-1980s, with an overall real growth rate of 5%. This growth, however declined drastically in the early 1990's. It was alleged that this was due to corruption and mismanagement and this resulted in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank introducing structural adjustment programs to curb the decline. In 1993, the government of Kenya implemented a program of economic liberalisation and reform that included the removal of import licensing, price controls, and foreign exchange controls. With the support of the World Bank, IMF, and other donors, the reforms led to a brief turnaround in economic performance. Kenya's real GDP grew 5% in 1995 and 4% in 1996, and inflation remained under control. Growth however slowed down again during 1997-99. Political violence damaged the tourist industry, and Kenya's Enhanced Structural Adjustment Program lapsed because of the government's failure to maintain reform or address public sector corruption (Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), 2003).

The net effect of the above economic scenario has been increasing levels of poverty in Kenya. Corrective measures have been considered, and are now being implemented, but the returns are slow. For instance, the government of Kenya has recently developed and adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), but its full implementation is likely to move at a slow pace, largely due to resource constraints (KIPPRA, 2003).

2.2.3 Social Spending

Kenya spends far more on social services than its immediate neighbours. For instance, Kenya spends about 35% of its national budget on education, which is much higher than almost all other comparable countries. In addition, Kenya is currently undertaking review studies to evaluate the proportion of income devoted to basic social services and the

quantity and quality of services received by disadvantaged groups. In 1991 it was proposed that the following items should be included in a basic social services expenditure assessment (Kenya Government, 1991:35):

- Basic education for all;
- Basic health care and nutrition for all;
- Reproductive health and family planning;
- Safer water and sanitation at low cost;
- Creating institutional capacity for delivery of these services.

The Kenya Government acknowledges the importance of information in her national development plans. For example, in the 1997-2001 development plan, the government stated that, “the objective of information resources and management is to provide an effective means of institutionalising systematic flow of and access to such information in the country” and that, “the development of information centres will be given priority during the plan period” (Kenya Government, 1999:60). However, there is no indication as to how this objective is to be achieved. It is unfortunate to note that while the government acknowledges the importance of information in national development, it does not clearly stipulate the role libraries (specifically the KNLS) can play in achieving this endeavour. Added to this, the government has not shown a clear commitment to provide adequate funding for public library services, particularly the KNLS.

2.3 A BRIEF OUTLINE OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN KENYA

There is no record of the general existence of libraries during the pre-colonial period, other than one that is thought to have been established in Kilwa on the East African coast. The history and culture of most of the communities of those times were communicated and passed to future generations by oral tradition and the arts. The philosophy of Islam, the dominant religion and influence on the east coast, further did not generally encourage reading, as this was thought to be the preserve of a small literate ruling class. Therefore, libraries would not have played any specific role in the society at the time (IFLA, 1999).

Libraries were, however, slowly introduced during the colonial period (1887-1963) and by 1930 a limited rural circulating library service was in operation. The Kenya Carnegie circulating libraries were set up to bring books to the white settlers who were scattered over a wide area of the country. At the end of 1932 thirty-three libraries had been opened in a variety of locations which included hotels, clubs, bomas, shops and garages. A library service for Africans was operated through the provision of book boxes and the introduction of a postal lending service. About forty centres were set up, mostly in social halls or premises rented from Municipalities or District Councils (Rosenberg, 1993:31).

Public subscription libraries emerged later, and were mainly established by philanthropists or groups of people mainly for use by the European and Asian communities. The first among these was the MacMillan Memorial Library which was started in 1931 from funds provided by Lady MacMillan. This was in memory of her husband, Sir Northrup MacMillan, and was for use by the European community only. This library was taken over by the Nairobi City Council in 1962 and is now the headquarters of the Nairobi City Library Service.

The other subscription library was the Desai Memorial Library in Nairobi. This was set up in 1942 by the Indian community in memory of Mr. Manilal Ambalal Desai, a member of the Kenya Legislative Council, who had died in 1926. The library's goal was to explicitly and exclusively serve the reading interests of the Indian community.

In 1945, Mrs. Elizabeth Huxley was appointed to inquire into the popular literature needs of the East African people and make proposals as to how these needs could be met. Following her report which advised that the government should control the provision of literature to the now considerable African reading public, the East African Literature Bureau was set up in 1948, with Charles Richard as director and George Annexley as the Bureau librarian. The Bureau also had a publishing division which was meant to encourage African authorship by publishing indigenous literature. Training of staff to run the centres was also included.

The Rahimtulla Trust, an Ismailia organisation, constructed the first public library building open to all people in Nairobi in 1953. The Trust set out to acquire books that would be representative of all the subjects and to allow readership of all walks of life regardless of creed, colour or religion.

A further major step was taken in 1958 when the East African Library Association (EALA) held its first conference at Muguga, Kenya, where it was unanimously approved that statutory library boards should be set up in East Africa. The East African governments accepted the request by the EALA and announced their willingness to make grants available for the development of library services. In 1960 the British Council appointed Sydney Hockey to produce a report on the state of the libraries in East Africa. The report was published in 1960 and among the recommendations was the establishment of Library Boards in each of the three East African countries. Kenya was the last of the three countries to establish a library services board as its government did not initially provide funds for recurrent expenditures. It was thus only in 1965 that the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) Board was created and the Kenya public library services inaugurated (Rosenberg, 1993:32).

With the growth of educational institutions, especially universities and colleges, libraries have been established as each new institution has been founded. The most recent and modern such acquisition is the Margaret Thatcher Library at Moi University. Although computerised, it is yet to accumulate a sizeable book stock. Other important academic libraries are the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library at the University of Nairobi, and those at other public and even private universities such as Daystar, Baraton University, the United States International University (USIU), Kabarak University, etc.

Most of the larger NGOs in Kenya, especially those in Nairobi, have libraries or information centres. Examples are, among others, the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) and Mazingira Institute. Research institutes generally have libraries that are amongst the best run and stocked in the country. Examples are the libraries of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Kenya Industrial Research Institute (KIRDI), International Centre for Insect

Physiology and Entomology (ICIPE), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), International Centre for Research on Agroforestry (ICRAF). Other well-endowed libraries are certain parastatal libraries, such as that of Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and of foreign governments such as the British Council and the United States Information Service. There has been a proliferation of religious institutions, especially those affiliated to the Catholic Church, and most of them have library or information units to cater for their needs. Some of those with big libraries are Hekima Theological College, Tangaza College, St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Consolata Seminary and Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST).

Most of the major financial institutions such as the Standard, Barclays, and National Bank have special libraries for use by their staff. These libraries are either situated in their headquarters or in their training schools. In addition, most of the big industrial and business enterprises such as Unilever, Kenya Breweries, Bamburi, etc. also have libraries.

2.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE PROVISION IN KENYA

A number of economic, political, technological, and social factors have influenced the provision of library and information services in Kenya. These could be summarised as follows:

Technology growth and innovation is linked to issues such as the level of development and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), energy resources and situation, telecommunication systems, etc. In recent times, Internet and email facilities have gained prominence in Kenya. Kenya has a relatively well-developed information and communication technology infrastructure in the major urban centres such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret and Nakuru. Computers are widely used and the use of the Internet, especially in major organisations and institutions of higher learning, has become common. There are two mobile telephone companies currently operating with a total base of well over a million customers. This has improved communication greatly as the

landline telephone system operates mainly only in the major urban areas. In contrast to the urban situation, many rural areas lack the basic infrastructure for the use of ICTs. In many areas, the roads are in a very bad condition and electricity and communication facilities are non-existent.

Poverty in Kenya is widespread and many people are unable to purchase their own books, either for academic or leisure reading purposes. The inability to acquire reading materials by individuals and the paucity of academic libraries has resulted in the reliance of public library services. The introduction of parallel/distance degree programs by most of the public universities also implies that the public libraries have to cater for the services of this particular group of students.

On the social environment, there are several factors which influence the provision of library and information services. The low literacy level in Kenya has meant that a sizeable proportion of the population is excluded from readership. A further problem is that the dominance of materials in the English language in public libraries in Kenya has meant that people with basic literacy skills in vernacular languages but not in English are largely excluded from the use of public libraries. The needs of the illiterate and semi-literate who require materials in local languages should therefore motivate the public libraries in Kenya to offer services relevant to their clientele.

According to Odingo (2002), while linguistic and cultural diversity is part of the world's cultural wealth it is also a significant barrier to communication. In Kenya, the multiplicity of tribes, large and small, each speaking its own vernacular language, creates an even greater problem. It is clearly impossible to base a large information service on the small number of books that could be produced in readers' mother tongues. Odingo adds that "most books and journals in the country are written in English, and this is therefore the language on which information services are based. The language barrier is, in fact, a major obstacle to the free flow of information in Kenya". Thus, the national language, Kiswahili, would have been a better language on which to base information services, since it is better understood and more commonly spoken in the rural areas than English, but unfortunately there are very few books written in Kiswahili.

A reading culture is yet to be fully developed in Kenya. It is considered that due to the lack of a reading culture most Kenyans spend their social time in recreational places such as bars, hotels, stadiums, and churches rather than in libraries. This has resulted, to some extent, in attitudes, with regard to budgeting, which negate investment by the government and individuals in books and other reading material. This leaves the burden of satisfying readership needs to the KNLS, the major public library service, but the KNLS is under funded and unable to cope with this added burden.

As mentioned above (cf. 2.2.5), Kenya like many other developing countries, has registered a downward economic growth in the last decade. The net effect is high unemployment rates, a weak currency, and diminished public spending. These economic conditions, combined with liberalisation and globalisation trends, offer both opportunities and challenges to library and information services. For instance, according to the KNLS strategic paper (2000:18):

- “High rates of unemployment and school or college dropouts calls for expanded library and information services in specialized skill areas, and continuing education;
- The weak Kenyan currency leads to high cost of imported books, raw materials for local book publishing and other equipment, especially ICT equipment, for library operations and management;
- Economic stagflation has led to expensive goods and services to the KNLS in the local market;
- Diminished public spending calls for new and innovative strategies for financing both the development and recurrent budget of the KNLS. It can thus be queried whether library services can remain a free social service”

Compared to other countries in East and Central Africa, Kenya has the most active book industry, however, this is mostly in the area of textbook publishing and not in technical or leisure reading. It is commendable that the industry has managed to grow in spite of a fairly weak skills and needs base from its modest beginning to its present form. Together with the government that played a leading role in the development of educational

publishing in the first decade of Kenya's independence, private publishing firms also flourished. The number of local private commercial publishing houses registered in Kenya grew, notable examples being the East African Publishing House and Trans Africa Publishers. In the recent past, this growth has continued. At present there are more than 40 publishing firms in Kenya which include multinational firms, indigenous commercial publishers and state-owned publishers, including the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, the Kenya Literature Bureau and the Government Press (Odini, 2002).

Although Kenya has no comprehensive information policy, there are several sectoral policies in the form of legislation, regulations and guidelines covering, for instance, public libraries (the KNLS Board Act), and archives (the Public Records Act). Despite advances in private sector initiatives, the government of Kenya has been slow to embrace information and communication technologies for social and economic development. However, this is changing and the interest in harnessing ICT for development in Kenya is gaining ground. The government recently declared that ICT is one of the key areas of social and economic development as part of its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). It has established a national taskforce that is being headed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Transport and Communications with a strong team of experts working on key areas of ICT for development in Kenya. This includes governance, human resources development and creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment (Economic Commission for Africa, 2002).

2.5 THE KENYA NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES (KNLS)

2.5.1 Introduction

The Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) is a statutory body of the Kenya Government, which is empowered by law to provide public library services in the country. As already mentioned, the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) was established by an Act of Parliament in August 1965, but the first Board of Directors only commenced its functions on April 1st, 1967. The main functions of the Board, according to the KNLS Act (1965, Cap 225), are:

- “To promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries in Kenya as a National Library Service;
- To advise the Government, local authorities and other public bodies on all matters relating to library documentation and related services;
- To provide facilities for the study of, and for training in the principles, procedures and techniques of librarianship and other related subjects as the Board may from time to time decide;
- To advise the Government on library education and training needs for library, documentation and related services” (KNLS, 1999).

The KNLS commenced business with an initial stock of about 40,000 volumes which was inherited from the former East African Literature Bureau in 1967 and this stock has grown to a total library collection of 800,129 volumes. This figure is inclusive of books available both at the headquarters and branch libraries. Other than books, the KNLS rarely keeps record of other materials (KNLS, 2004).

The size of the staff has also continued to grow and the KNLS now has a total of 970 staff, of which 97 are professional librarians. The rest comprise library assistants, library clerks, administrators, accountants, secretaries, etc. The number of registered library users in the entire system, including mobile library users is 147,652. These figures comprise 73,082 adults and 59,794 children (KNLS, 2004).

2.5.2 KNLS Structure and Development

The KNLS Board had originally pledged to establish branch libraries in all the provinces and in each of the 42 districts by 1980. Unfortunately this was not achieved and there is no hope that this will be achieved in the near future. To add to this problem, the administrative districts were increased by the government to 72 in the 1990s. As shown in Figure 2.2 by 2003 only 36 branch libraries had been established which comprised of 8 Provincial Libraries, 7 District Libraries, and 13 Community Libraries, and 8 are being commissioned. The first of the Provincial Libraries was opened in Kisumu in 1969 with funds provided by the British Council. This was followed by Embu library in 1970. The Nyeri Branch was opened in 1965 through funding from Norad. The Kakamega branch

The KNLS network is structured to reflect the political and administrative structure in Kenya. The libraries within the system are broadly classified into the following categories:

□ **Nairobi Area:**

The largest branch of the KNLS which also houses the KNLS headquarters from where the library service is run is based in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

□ **Provincial libraries:**

These are located in the provincial capitals. Apart from providing regular library services they are also supposed to oversee the other branches within the province and to provide guidance in the development of future public libraries.

□ **District libraries:**

These are located in the main centre of each district and are mandated to meet the needs of the public within the specific district. They are usually smaller in terms of building, staff, and book stock when compared to the Provincial libraries.

□ **Community libraries:**

These are libraries set up by the KNLS in collaboration with the community. They are located either in rural or urban areas.

2.5.2.1 Extension Services of the KNLS

The framework in which the rural information services of the KNLS had to originally evolve was that of a centralised national library network. Such a centralised approach worked against the establishment of rural libraries through local initiatives. According to Musisi (1981:29) the decision to have a centralised library system in Kenya can be attributed to the report by Sydney Hockey who had been appointed by the colonial government to organise libraries in East Africa. Hockey (1960) believed that the only satisfactory way of developing library services in East Africa was to set up a central library organisation in each country which was financed by the government.

Limited funding from the government and the limited success of the centralised library system, forced the KNLS to adopt different approaches in the provision of its services from the early 1990s onwards. This resulted in the introduction of novel initiatives in

collaboration with local communities and NGO's and included the establishment of community-based libraries, the camel library service and the school book-box service. The community library scheme entails that the KNLS in partnership with the local community sets up a local community service. This scheme implies that the community provides financial support for the construction of the library and the purchase of the initial book-stock, after which the KNLS takes over the management of the library and the provision of funds to purchase the subsequent book-stock. Many communities have offered to enter into partnership with the Board in order to bring library facilities to their areas. Since 1991 the Board has been involved in establishing ten such community libraries in various parts of the country.

The primary school book-box service is a pilot project which was started in the Karatina branch. It addresses the reading demands of the students in the area that were not met due to the inadequate school library services and book-stocks. The program is managed by means of a partnership between the KNLS, primary schools, and the local education authorities. Each participating school contributes money annually for the purchase of books which are stored in the branch library. Special boxes were designed which can contain up to 200 titles. The branch library delivers these boxes to schools and after one month the books are exchanged with those from other schools. This system ensures equitable distribution of books and there are plans to extend this service to other branches in the future (Ngumo, 2003).

The Camel Library Service, launched by the KNLS in 1996, is based in Garissa in the North Eastern Province of the country. Following its successful implementation, the program was replicated in Wajir town in 1999 (KNLS, 1999). The Camel Library Service is targeted at village centers and settlement schemes which are within the territory of the regional library. In these pastoral lands, settlements are thinly spread in clusters of dome-like grass thatched huts (*manyattas*), or the pastoralists are nomadic and move around in search of pasture for their animals. To initiate the project the KNLS bought camels from the local community and also hired special handlers to take care of them. Special book boxes were designed to carry the books on the camels' backs. While some camels carry

the books, others carry the staff and tents to erect temporary libraries in the nomadic schools and other locations. These camels traverse areas which would otherwise be inaccessible by vehicle (KNLS, 1999).

In addition to the services mentioned above, the KNLS also started a mobile library service in 1972 which was instituted in Nairobi, Eldoret, Embu, Kisumu, Mombasa, Nyeri, Kakamega and Kabarnet. However, due to lack of funding for maintenance of vans and purchase of new books, only four of the mobile libraries are currently still operational.

2.5.3 KNLS Funding

The KNLS receives its funding from the central government. According to the KNLS Act (1984, Cap 225) the funds and resources shall consist of:

- “Such sums as may, from time to time, be provided by Parliament for the purposes of this Act;
- Any sums or property which may in any manner become payable or invested in the Board in respect of any matter incidental to the carrying out of its functions; and
- Any sums or property which may be donated to the Board: provided that the Board shall not be obliged to accept a donation for a particular purpose unless it approves of the terms and conditions attached to such donation”.

Though the government has clearly stipulated the sources of funds, the KNLS has, however, had to contend since its inception in 1967 with inadequate funding, which has resulted in staff shortages, an inadequate book-stock and the general restriction on development and growth. Atuti (2003:2), the librarian in charge of planning and development, emphasises this point by stating that “funding for library services in Kenya is very much dependent on government grants. However, these grants to the library authority have proved inadequate and continue to dwindle owing to the country’s fragile economy”. This situation worsened following the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the early 1990s by the IMF and the World Bank as a condition for funding to the Kenya government.

Because of these financial constraints, certain development projects have had to take place in alternate years. That is, KNLS recruits staff, purchases books, and trains staff in separate years. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that for a number of years the government grant that the Board has received has only been sufficient to meet the Board's expenses with respect to salaries and administrative costs. Atuti (2003:5) asserts that "during the 2002-2003 financial year, the KNLS Board received only Ksh.267, 518,160⁶ from the exchequer of which 82.05% of the grant, i.e. Ksh.227, 390,436, was consumed by personnel emoluments".

The poor economic situation and the resulting cutbacks in government expenditure has clearly had an effect on all service organisations and particularly the KNLS. However, while acknowledging that money is generally scarce in Kenya, many in the LIS profession in Kenya believe that besides the lack of funds the KNLS lacks innovative thinking. They suggest that this has resulted in the library service not being sufficiently pro-active in lobbying for its due share of available finances from the government, nor have creative alternative avenues of funding been pursued.

2.5.4 Revitalisation of Public Library Services in Kenya

The regeneration of public library services in Kenya has been made possible by the public library systems program in Africa of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This follows the successful submission of a proposal and award of US\$2,074,400 by the Carnegie Corporation to the KNLS Board. The public library revitalisation program supports the development of selected public libraries. The goal is to create model centres of excellence that help the library system within which they exist to lobby for greater resources and public support. These libraries should be attractive, well stocked and serve the needs of the communities they are located within. Based on criteria such as relevance to the country and community, types of library services provided, and strength of leadership, the Carnegie Corporation has provided support to public library systems in Kenya, Botswana and South Africa (Carnegie, 2002).

⁶ 78Ks = 1US \$

The five model libraries in Kenya are Kisumu, Mombasa, Nyeri, Eldoret, and Central/Headquarters library in Nairobi. The project focuses on the following areas:

Table: 2.1 KNLS/Carnegie Project

Upgrading of bookstock	US\$	890,700
Staff training and development	US\$	60,700
Acquisition and installation of ICTs	US\$	703,600
Establishment of a development office	US\$	169,300
Advocacy, Public Relation, and Marketing	US\$	107,000

Source (KNLS, 2002)

In finalising the preparation for the implementation of the project the KNLS Board has agreed to undertake the following measures:

1. Continue strengthening partnership with other development partners;
2. Recruit and re-deploy professional staff to the model libraries;
3. Strengthen publicity and marketing campaigns on project activities;
4. Lobby for continued support for the project with the Government of Kenya;
5. Ensure the future expansion of facilities to accommodate increasing demand and cater for diversified user needs (INASP, 2002).

It should, however be noted that all benefits that accrue from these revitalisation efforts would be negated if the KNLS does not secure sustainable funding in future to maintain and develop its services.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Information provision in Kenya has long been relegated to a position of minor importance and it did not even feature as a subject in the government's Development Plans until recently. The situation has fortunately changed and its importance has now been recognised and this is an important step forward. Information provision has to be thought of as an essential service without which a modern country cannot function effectively. The prediction of future trends, especially concerning the rapidly developing

technologies, is an uncertain business. However, Kenya's libraries of the future may need to undertake radical changes to meet changing user needs. These include identifying adequate and sustainable sources of funding to enable them to meet the changing needs. This is one of the pertinent issues this research project aims to investigate.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER THREE

PUBLIC LIBRARY FUNDING AND USER FEES

‘I was and still am ambivalent about admission charges,
because they are discriminative. But economic facts of life call
for pragmatism, and I see no virtue in saying,
“Never will we charge” ’

A. Wilson

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to address public library funding and specifically the question of user fees by providing a summary of the arguments presented in the literature on these topics. Beyond that, it also attempts to discern whether economic theory can provide a rational theoretical perspective in reconciling the variant view points. The latter aspect is viewed from a non-economist perspective. The last section provides an overview of user fees in Kenya and South Africa

The literature review process for this study entailed the following four stages:

- *Problem formulation*: Identifying the component issues of the topic to be examined;
- *Literature search*: Finding materials relevant to the subject being explored;
- *Data evaluation*: Determining which literature makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the topic;
- *Analysis and interpretation*: Discussing, interpreting, synthesising and integrating pertinent literature into the thesis.

The literature review further also comprised of the following elements:

- Providing an overview of the subject, issue or theory under consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review;
- Dividing the works under review into categories (e.g. those in support of a particular position, those against, and those offering alternative views);

- Selecting only the most relevant views that make the greatest contribution towards understanding the topic under review. The literature on the topic is extensive and the researcher thus used his judgment as to what he considered to be the most relevant aspects for inclusion in his thesis.

The researcher carried out an extensive survey of the literature in books, journals and several databases and obtained as much literature as he could while studying in South Africa. In order to contextualise the study, the researcher examined an extensive body of KNLS documentation and other publications produced in Kenya. The researcher borrowed extensively from the IFLA/UNESCO guiding principles on public libraries. This has been done deliberately in order to provide an international, non-regional view against which to examine the situation in Kenya with regard to the role and functions of public libraries.

The question of fees for library services has been a hotly contested issue within the field of librarianship. Halliday (1991:327) notes that “polarisation has developed between those who regard fees as a practical solution to pressing financial realities and those who regard them as a threat to the traditional values of their profession”. Jaeger (1999:50) adds that “proponents of fees almost exclusively use arguments of a teleological or pragmatic nature, while those against fees have their core arguments from a communitarian context”. However, while this debate continued many commentators not directly connected with librarianship, have wondered why librarians have so often and so strongly opposed fees for information services. For those within the profession, an opposition to fees is often expressed with considerable emotion. The anti-fee position is rooted in a long standing historical relationship between libraries and communities served.

The strong opposition to fees could be explained in part by looking at the occupational identity and values of librarians. One key occupational value is the provision to the larger society of access to information without any impediment. Thus, any barrier to

information access, whether it is a poorly designed cataloguing system or a fee for admission, is discouraged (Nielsen, 1989:212).

Before presenting the various viewpoints relating to user fees, as discussed in the library literature, a brief overview of the role and services offered by the public library is presented. This is done in order to put into perspective the uniqueness of the public library and the important role it plays in society by giving individuals access to a variety of services. The latter aspect provides the human perspective in the discussion, an important factor to consider whenever a decision is to be made whether or not to introduce user fees for public library services.

3.2 THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

As indicated above, one of the reasons for the creation of the public library is that individuals need free and easy access to information. However, according to Cartmil, (1992: 25) “the public library’s main claim to public support rests not only on the desirability of its services but also on the benefits which it provides in general”. According to Kinnell and Sturges (1996) the public library’s role as a key information provider and local archive, as a safe environment in which people can socialise, browse and use materials, and as a meeting point for leisure, learning and entertainment makes it unique amongst institutions.

Aslib (1995:155) defines the benefits of public libraries to the users and communities they serve in terms of functions and couched in terms of direct, prospective, and indirect values, viz:

- “The *direct* value. The many active users of library space, stocks and services should receive direct benefits when they use a public library;
- For *prospective* users, the public has a ‘contingency’ value. When they need to use it at some time in their lives, its services are available... If difficult or urgent problems arise, they can visit the library and elicit information and guidance on events, remedies and possible courses of action;
- *Indirectly*, the public library is an asset that can enrich life in the locality. A good library service should contribute to civic pride, education, leisure, democracy ...”

Compared to other libraries, the public library has a difficult role in that the community it serves, as the needs it must meet, are not clearly specified and are as vast and varied as society itself. Van House (1983:12) points out that “the generalness of purpose makes it difficult to set priorities or evaluate the library’s performance”.

The role of the library in providing information services, to a large extent, is to empower citizens, and by these means help to bridge the gap between the ‘information rich’ and ‘information poor’. According to Greenhalgh et al (1995:15) “genuine self-improvement and empowerment involves a strong element of economic emancipation. Without a measure of economic self-sufficiency it is unlikely that individuals and in age of shrinking public sector resources will ever be truly empowered to transform their dreams and aspirations into reality”.

Greenhalgh et al (1995:15) further add “that information and knowledge are now equivalent to capital. This idea is a truly paradigmatic shift – the implications of which our society has not yet fully absorbed. It is similar in importance to barter and political patronage on which the feudal economy was based and to money exchange which is the basis of the mercantile economy. Knowledge, as the key source of power and wealth, focuses our attention sharply on the need to provide adequate access to information sources in whatever form they may be”.

The essential ethos of the public library and other public cultural institutions such as museums, derives from the fact that they are indeed public. They are not like the private library of a gentleman’s club that requires qualification to join, or a commercial library. They are open to all. This seems a very simple and admirable principle. Underlying it, however, is a complex history and a set of ideas about what makes societies work. According to Greenhalgh et al (1995:15) “these ideas which together form the traditional of public goods and values, civic virtues and ideas are in greater difficulty today than they have been before”.

The public library service has evolved over time, responding to new needs and interests in the wider society. The promotion of the public library as a community educational resource may be regarded as the wheel completing its full circle. The development of open learning facilities in libraries is, in a sense, a return to original values and the philosophy that established the public library system. According to Kinnell and Sturges (1996) “certain elements have always been significant, despite their valuable importance over time. Links to education have continued to figure strongly, with the broader social benefits of an educated workforce very much at the forefront of early and later advocacy for libraries”

It is evident from the above exposition that the public library offers an extremely wide and varied range of services. As well as the collection and lending of books to members of the public, other services available include, amongst other, internet access, loans of journals, records, cassette tapes, videos, software and toys, reading room and reference facilities, photocopying, query answering, story telling and book selling. The public library also supplies services to specific groups in society, for example, the elderly, the disabled, along with materials to help adults to acquire skills needed to contribute to society, and it also offers schools the support system they need to perform their educational function efficiently.

In the following sections, overviews of the several functions or roles of public libraries are summarised.

3.2.1 Meeting the Needs of the User

According to the IFLA/UNESCO guiding principles (2001:23) to be successful in fulfilling its goals “the public library service must be fully accessible to all its potential users”. IFLA/UNESCO (ibid:23) add that “any limitation of access, whether deliberate or accidental, will reduce the ability of the public library to fully achieve its primary role of meeting information needs of the community it serves. It has to aim to serve all citizens and groups, including people of all ages and at all stages in life, individuals and groups of people with special needs, and institutions within the wider community network”.

3.2.1.1 Lifelong learning

According to Greenhalgh et al (1995:14) “education is currently expanding beyond the narrow confines of institutional provision and is happening everywhere in society as and when people need it. Job skills are no longer the property of the company but for individuals to own and develop as they change jobs or skills many times in their lives. In future, the public domain could become an educational domain, that is, not in the conventional sense confined to schools but in the sense of the massive expansion of further and higher education and life-long learning”.

Usherwood (1989:9) notes that “the investment in education has long been a major one on the part of the public library service, though it is true that some early protagonists of the public library movement saw the education function as a useful alternative to drink and crime ...”. Usherwood adds that “from these rather strange beginnings, the public library in the United Kingdom has developed to be every person’s university, complementing the formal education system and providing major support to part-time education”.

One of the main reasons for the foundation and maintenance of most public libraries has been the need for an agency to support formal education. Today it remains one of the core purposes for the public library, particularly in Africa. In order to meet daily challenges people require education either at formal institutions, for example, schools, colleges and universities, or in a less formal context related to their employment and daily life. IFLA/UNESCO (2001:2) emphasise that “learning does not end with the completion of formal education but is, for most people, a lifelong activity”. In an increasingly complex knowledge society people need to acquire new skills at various stages of their lives and the public library has an important role in assisting in this process.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the public library therefore should provide material and appropriate media to support formal and informal learning processes. It

should strive to help the user to make use of these learning resources effectively as well as providing facilities that enable people to study. In addition, Public libraries should cooperate with educational organisations in teaching the use of information resources and also ensure that newly-literate people gain easy access to appropriate reading materials to enable them maintain and develop their skills.

3.2.1.2 Social-Informational Role

Public libraries play a major role as suppliers of recreational material and it would be wrong to underestimate the social importance of this. According to Usherwood (1989:12) “in the past, some librarians took a rather narrow view of the libraries’ recreational and cultural role. A social-informational response is increasingly important in a world where the ordinary citizen is confronted and confused by a vast number of important issues which he/she needs to understand and evaluate. Effective access to information and ideas increases the citizen’s ability to be informed on the questions of the day”.

People further also need information to support their leisure time interests and meeting this need by a range of resources in a variety of formats is another key role of the public library. Other aspects that public libraries must be aware of the cultural, social and economic changes in the community to enable them to develop services that are sufficiently flexible to adjust to these changes. The public library should also help to preserve the culture, history and traditions of the local community to make them readily available (IFLA/UNESCO, 2001:30).

Thus the public library, by organising activities and exploiting its resources, should encourage artistic and cultural development in people of all ages. The library is also an important social centre for individuals and groups to meet both formally and informally. This is of special importance in communities where other meeting places are not available. Berry (1993) reminds us that many people use the library for fun. They come to borrow things to read, view and hear and they come to make contact with other people. Thus Berry (1993) cautions that “before we rush to lock up the building, replace the books with online terminals, and drive off down the information superhighway, we must

take cognisance of the constituency of adults and children who use the library mostly for many pleasures it provides”.

3.2.1.3 Service Provision to Diverse User Groups

Public libraries provide a range of services, both within the library and in the community, to satisfy their users' needs. Thus, the library should facilitate access to its services for all, including those who have difficulty reading print. According to IFLA/UNESCO (2001:26) “public libraries have a special responsibility to support the process of learning to read, and to promote books and other media for children”. In order to attain this objective public the public libraries must provide special events for children, such as story telling and activities related to the library's services and resources”. By doing this, children would be encouraged to use the library from an early age and this would more than likely instill lifelong enjoyment of reading. Experience in Kenya has clearly shown that due to the paucity of libraries most of the population has not developed a reading culture.

It is a fact that young people between childhood and adulthood develop as individual members of society with their own culture. It is therefore imperative for public libraries to understand their needs and provide services to meet them. Materials, including access to electronic information resources that reflect their interest and culture should be provided. We have to contend with the reality that we live in a dynamic society is dynamic and users' needs change with time. This means that libraries have to acquire materials that represent youth culture, in a variety of media that have not traditionally been part of a library's resources, for example, television series, teenage magazines, posters computer games, graphic novels. It is important to enlist the help of young people in selecting these materials to ensure that they reflect their interests. Relevant programs and talks to young adults should also be provided (IFLA/UNESCO, 2001:27).

IFLA/UNESCO (2001:28) add that “adults will have different requirements of an information and library service related to a variety of situations they will encounter in their studies, employment and personal life”. This implies that continued user surveys

should be conducted periodically in order to glean user needs and services should be developed on the basis of these studies.

IFLA/UNESCO (2001:32) advocate that “potential users who, for whatever reason, are unable to use regular services have a right to equal access to library services”. This implies that libraries should, therefore, devise ways of making library material and services accessible, for example, to the housebound, the sick, prisoners etc. Unlike in the past when library materials had to be delivered physically services for people with special needs can now be enhanced by the use of new technology, for example, speech synthesizers for visually impaired persons, online access catalogues for those in isolated areas or unable to leave their home, connections to remote sites for distance learning, etc.

3.3 ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

To better contextualise this study it was decided to examine relevant economic theories to discern whether a rational theoretical perspective could be found to reconcile the variant views on public services funding and the user fee debate. It should, however, be restated that this discussion is based on a librarian’s rather than an economist’s perspective.

3.3.1 The Economics of Information

It is suggested that the discussion of public library funding can be related to the notion of public goods, private goods, merit goods, etc. Jaeger (1999:56) believes that “finding a proper place of the library within that continuum is vital in determining its funding base and other matters of policy”. Thus, this section will discuss these concepts in order to determine within which category the public library resorts, viz., a pure or a private good or a type of merit good and how this would impact on funding.

Public Goods

The definition of a public good in economics is narrow. In economics theory, a “public good” has two characteristics:

- 1) “The cost of providing the service does not depend on the number of consumers who benefit from it.

- 2) It is not feasible to exclude those who do not pay from benefiting from the service".
(<http://www.william-king.drexel>)

Adam Smith's example of a lighthouse is often used to illustrate this concept. The lighthouse exists to warn passing ships of a dangerous coast and all ships that come within sight of it benefit from it. The cost of maintaining the lighthouse is a fixed cost, and does not depend on the number of ships that benefit from it. It would, at best, be difficult to intercept ships as they come within the range of the lighthouse and demand that they pay a toll for using it - but even if it were done, it would do no good, because the ships would know their position simply because they are asked to pay, and would correct their course to avoid payment thus getting the benefit without paying
(<http://www.william-king.drexel>).

The economic theory of public "goods" was first advanced in the 1950's. According to Halliday (1991:331) Samuelson hypothesised that "certain goods and services would not be provided by the free market for a simple reason that it is not possible to deliver some products exclusively to paying customers without also providing benefits to non-payers. In such cases, those who pay, by definition, subsidise those who do not. This is known as the "free rider" problem".

Private Goods

We could define a private good as a good which has the following characteristics. (most of the characteristics are the opposite of the characteristics of a public good):

- "Beneficiaries can be charged for their use of a private good without difficulty, and if they do not pay they can be prevented from enjoying the service. The marginal cost of the good is positive and at least as great as the average cost". (<http://www.william-king.drexel>).

Quasi-Public Goods

In the middle ground of the spectrum are the quasi-public goods. A quasi-public good is almost a public good, but not quite. That is, quasi-public goods share the following characteristics:

- “It is difficult or costly to charge the beneficiaries in some or all cases, but it is possible to charge at least some of them. The marginal cost of the good is less than the average cost” (<http://www.william-king.drexel>).

According to Kinnucan (1998:156) “although the distinction between public and private goods is often presented as a dichotomy, economists are actually more inclined to think of it as a continuum”. Several economists have developed and carried out analyses that might help to measure the degree of publicness of various services. They for example argue that for a good to be considered a public good the consumption of the good should be invariant with the population average income. Kinnucan (1998:156) points that “this hypothesis stems from the definition of public goods as being nonexcludable and nonrival”.

Merit Goods

Another category of goods, falling between the public and private continuum, is that of merit goods. These have been described as goods which a community provides for both the benefit of the user and the overall good of the community.

According to Jaeger (1999:57) a merit good is “a product that, while not qualifying as a public good, traditionally has been provided for, and has received funding from the community. Such a ‘merit good’ is recognised by the community in a special way and they thus provide for its funding through municipal or regional revenues”. Halliday (1991: 331) provides further insight by stating that a merit good is “a product which offers benefits of such magnitude that the cost of providing it is less than not providing it”.

Van House (1983:31) adds that “a merit good is one that the community provides a user for his or her own good and such goods are subsidised for any of several reasons. For example, the consumer may lack the information to make a choice, or the consumer may undervalue future benefits, while the government recognises the benefits and the long-term effects. Merit goods are thus generally provided out of altruism”.

Public education is a good example of a merit good since children are required to attend school up to a certain age because education will be of value to them, though there are other options such as entering the workforce at a younger age. The community, however, takes a longer view by considering the distant benefits of education.

3.3.2 Externalities, Rivalness, Excludability and Invisibility

When some people bear costs that they are not paid or compensated for, these benefits are said to be external benefits. In general, if there are either external benefits or external costs, they are defined as externalities. “The idea is that the decision-maker, who does not pay for the costs nor get paid for the benefits, does not take them into consideration in deciding how resources shall be allocated. S/he has no motive to produce benefits that s/he does not get, nor to cut back on costs that he does not pay. The benefits and costs are “external” to his/her maximisation of his/her own net benefits” (<http://www.william-king.drexel>).

Kinnucan (1998: 185) notes that “a ‘good’ exhibits rivalness to the extent that consumption by one person precludes consumption by another. Private goods are excludable and rival while public goods are not. An important element of a public good, connected with excludability, is that there are spillover effects where those who do not pay still benefit from its existence”. According to Jaeger (1999:56) “one most commonly mentioned example of a pure public good is national defence, where everyone shares in the benefits of the service even if only a portion pay for it, and the addition of recipients has no effect on the cost of the good”.

In the case of public goods, there are two reasons why markets do not allocate resources efficiently: invisibility and externality. Since it is not practically possible for people to get charged for the benefits from the lighthouse (for example), the benefits are “external”. In addition, the costs of the public good are invisible, a condition that could create problems in itself. However, when government provides the public good for free, the externality is considered to balance the invisibility and free provision is efficient. Thus, economists have traditionally argued that, because of those characteristics, public goods should not be supplied by a profit oriented market economy. If they are to be supplied at all, government must supply them (<http://www.william-king.drexel>).

Following on from this point it can be said that in the case of “public goods” it is practically impossible to charge people for the benefit they get from the “public good” and that creates inefficiency problems. In other words, where there are goods, services, and other resources that people can get without paying for them at a market-related price, inefficiency will be the result. Hence the use of the term “externality” in economics for this phenomenon.

3.3.3 Information as a Commodity

The question then arises whether libraries and their services are public goods? There are different ways to answer this question. In one respect it can be treated strictly as an economic question and in this instance public goods and private goods can be differentiated along several dimensions. According to McCain (1988:278) “if information is considered a public good, a persuasive economic argument can be made in favour of the public provision of library services”.

According to Nielsen (1989: 213) “for librarians, the notion of information as a commodity involves a fundamental if not obvious, value change. Armed with such tools as cost-benefit analysis and private/public goods theory those librarians who are pushing for the adoption of new information technologies find that they can legitimise their arguments for charging for this service”. McCain (1988:278), in turn, argues that “it seems clear that libraries are not public goods. Public libraries have neither of the

characteristics that define a Samuelsonian public good since it is quite feasible to exclude those who do not pay (rental libraries do exist), and moreover, while the cost of the library service may be independent of low rates of use, it is most unlikely that it will remain so at high rates of use”.

Van House (1983: 27) further states that, “in the most narrow sense, the library is both rival and excludable”. As indicated above, the entrance could be monitored and only people with library cards admitted. Some private libraries do just that. In addition, the use of library resources by one person makes them temporarily unavailable to others. Van House (ibid) adds that “on the other hand, the library’s major product, information, also exhibits public good qualities. It is nonrival in that one thing can be known by more than one person at a time, a person can “give” information to someone else and keep it at the same time. It is nonexcludable in that the creator of new information cannot control its use once one other person knows it, as it would then be automatically disseminated”.

Byrd (1989:195) adds that “while it is temporarily possible to sell information to an individual buyer and to exclude the general public, information has a tendency to “leak”. Free information “ridership” will always occur although not necessarily in an organised fashion, and while some attempt to prevent this will be more successful, others will be less so”. Thus, information will at times display some of the characteristics of a public, and at other of a private good. Van House (1983:27) further points out that “information may be a public good, but the form in which it is embodied may have private characteristics. The more specific a user is about the form in which it is embodied, and the shorter the time period, the more private the good will tend to be”. For example, the reading of a book by a single person does not diminish what is left for later users, although in the short time only one person can read it.

According to Van House (1983:31) “without a measure of relative magnitudes of public and private benefits from library use it is impossible to determine the extent of public subsidy that can be justified by externalities. Private benefits can be approximated by looking at what the public would be willing to pay for a private alternative when such

exists, but public benefits of the library and of most public services are diffuse and impossible to measure". Hsieh (n.d.) notes that "we still lack methods for finding the technically correct solution for separating the private and public good elements". Nielsen (1989:216) adds that "the conceptualisation of information as a commodity has, however, better served the interests of those in the business of selling information-bearing packages than those with an occupational commitment to education (teachers, librarians and many other social service occupations".

Lau (1993:153), in turn, argues that "information is perhaps best described as a merit good. While it has benefit for the individual as well as working for the good of the community, its external or spillover benefits to society generally outweigh its benefit to the individual. Society values an informed citizenry and many perhaps approve of the public library and agree with the free provision of information even if a minority uses it". This altruism may, however, dwindle in lean financial times and the public willingness to support the free provision of information in public libraries wane.

Jaeger (1999:58) notes that "the idea of a public library as a community good points to the long-standing relationship between the library and the community, where the former regards itself as a service provider of the latter, and the latter recognises this through tax support. This relationship is a kind of informal contract that, from the library's perspective, shapes its decision-making and influences its actions at all levels".

3.3.4 Information as a Gift

Many economists, however, make their cases for fees in the public domain using the public good theory, not as an end, but as the beginning of their argument. They are concerned with allocating scarce resources not only between various services within the library but also between the public library and other government agencies. Theodore Schultz (cited in Nielsen, 1989:216), winner of the 1979 Nobel Prize in economics, counselled against "considering educational outlay as consumption, and that a similar error is committed by those who argue that information is a commodity". An alternative way to conceptualise information in this context is the notion of information as a gift.

According to Nielsen (1989:216) “such a conceptualisation offers new ways of considering the options libraries may have for making fundamental allocation decisions in a changed technological environment”.

According to Nielsen (1989:216) “the notion of ‘gift’ is distinguished from ‘commodity’ by the placement of greater emphasis on human control of social exchange relationships”. Nielsen (ibid) adds that “seeing information as a gift also makes explicit the fundamental differences between information and any other commodity – transferring it from one person to another does not deplete the information stock of the first person, and thus may not require compensation”.

From the foregoing exposition it is evident that while the public library is a public institution, it does not neatly fit within Samuelson’s framework of collective consumption. In particular, it is not price independent because, if a significant number of users are added, the cost of providing the service to them also increases. As stated earlier, it is quite feasible to exclude those who do not pay.

3.4 SOURCES OF LIBRARY INCOME

A library or information agency’s income is derived from a number of sources and when discussing major funding patterns, it is appropriate to group them by the major types of governance settings within which they are found. These vary with the governance structure within which the information service operates and the public library, particularly in developing nations, is still firmly set in the local funding environment. This, in turn, is a product of the local historical, economic, environmental, and cultural forces (Prentice, 1983:139, 140).

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1999) states that “adequate levels of funding are crucial to the success of a public library in fulfilling its various roles. Without suitable levels of funding over the long-term, it is impossible to develop policies for service provision and make the most effective use of available resources”.

The IFLA/UNESCO (2001:18) document identifies a number of primary and secondary sources of public library funding and further suggests that the proportions of funding from each source will vary depending on local factors in each country. The primary sources are:

- “Taxation at local, regional or central level;
- Block grants from central, regional or local government”.

Secondary sources of income may include:

- “Donations from funding bodies or private individuals;
- Revenue from commercial activities within the library e.g. publishing, book sales, sales of works of art and handicrafts;
- Revenue from money generated by the library e.g. fines or fees implemented;
- Sponsorship from external organizations;
- Lottery proceeds allocated to specific activities”.

UNESCO encourages librarians to be imaginative in seeking external sources of funding for the library. However, they should not accept funding from every source, if by doing so the fundamental status of the public library as an agency available to all is compromised. Commercial organisations, for example, may offer funding with conditions that might prejudice the universal nature of the services provided by the public library. Bawa, et al (1998:16) thus caution that “although funding from non-governmental organisations and donor funding could be canvassed this should be done with the realisation that this method of acquiring funds is not generally sustainable in the long term”.

3.5 THE ORIGIN OF THE USER FEE CONTROVERSY

The user fee debate was not fanned only by the impact of technological innovations on service provision, but also according to Lofgren (1987:70) “by the relative deterioration in the overall economic situation”. According to Weinland (1987:53) “the ever changing financial environment and advances in technology revolutionised the concept of the library, and ever declining budgets made the topic of fees integral to that revolution”.

Cartmil (1992:25) points out that “all these factors thus begun to impinge on the traditional stability of the library. With the introduction of new technologies, new service expectations are raised and this has further placed an additional burden on the public library”. However, according to Giacomini (1989:1) there are many other librarians who dispute the view that “fees are a late 20th century contagion into the previously uninfected public library”. He further points out that “surveys conducted in the 1920’s, 1940’s, and 1950’s found that an almost constant 50 percent of responding public libraries offered rental collections, which provided rapid access to duplicate copies of popular titles for a minimal charge”.

According to Breivik and Gibson (1979:1) the relatively stable and well-endowed financial situation of libraries during the 1960’s was followed by a severe financial crisis in the middle of the 70’s. Cutbacks in a variety of forms were the general response to the budget slump and unfortunately, such cutbacks seldom considered the long-term impact on users and service provision. Nielsen (1989:212) notes that “apart from economic factors, it became evident in the early 1970’s that computerisation would have a tremendous social impact and that librarianship was becoming an important player in this major social change”.

A number of factors influenced the revival of the fee-or-free issue in the early 1980’s. Not all these factors centred on the issue of fees alone, but concerned the fundamental issues of broad library goals, the goals of higher education, changing economies brought on by new technologies, and questions about the allocation of values (Nielsen, 1989:213). Commenting on this, Robinson and Robinson (1994: 420) noted that “during this period libraries were being asked to downsize, economise, and streamline, while at the same time improve quality and provide customers with services they value”. Because of these changing conditions, the application of library fees was economically justified by many. They argued that libraries have to look elsewhere for new sources of revenue to cope with the financial implications of offering extended services brought about by the explosive growth of information technology. Thus, the charging for online searching became a viable and justifiable option.

According to Lofgren (1987: 70) “the rapid adoption of online services and changes in the political and social environment thus further fuelled the fee controversy and this has had far reaching consequences. It has encouraged librarians and others to reformulate their ideas about the services offered by public libraries and who should pay for them”. According to Giacoma (1989:5) online services offer particular features that make the levying of fees feasible. They provide a customised product for each user and the cost to offer the service is thus easily identifiable and attributable.

As indicated above, the economic and financial pressures on most libraries have grown enormously over the years. Roberts (1998:10) provides the following synthesis of the various sources of cost increase that apply particularly to Africa;

- ❑ The extensive increase in the unit cost of published materials, magnified for developing countries by the need to purchase foreign materials at a time when currency exchange rates are very volatile.
- ❑ The continued but varied and complex forces of growth in the number of published documents of all kinds which form the potential pool of library acquisitions; this is compounded by the steady increase in the price of documents and academic materials.
- ❑ The ever growing demands from users for a wider range of materials results in greater loads on library staff and resources.
- ❑ Ever growing wage and salary increases further inflates the staff sector of the budget which is almost always the largest segment in any budget.
- ❑ Fixed or contracting library budgets in real terms, means that staff costs absorb an even higher proportion of the budget if no reduction in establishment levels can be made.
- ❑ Pressure to adopt new technology is becoming intense, and although often justified in terms of long-term savings, the short-term demand on capital is often great.

Woolridge (1990:9) further notes that “when tough financial times hit the public library, it would appear as though options that allow continued quality library service are dissipated”. He thus suggests that a public library manager should adopt at least one of the following three possible strategies:

- Cut services. This requires the ability to identify priorities, to rank them, and to make reductions in a rational manner;
- Increase organisational productivity. This challenge is particularly relevant in a time of retrenchment.
- Expand existing financial resources or identify new resources to supplement existing ones.

3.6 USER FEES: CONFLICTING ISSUES AND VIEWPOINTS

It is evident that the question of user fees is not only complex but also an emotionally charged issue that is heatedly debated and reported in the literature. Lau (1993: 153) notes that opinions can be divided into two broad categories: There are those who believe that fees have a negative effect by basing users' access to information on their ability to pay rather than on need. Conversely, there are those who believe charging is beneficial to the dissemination of information, and to the development and expansion of library services.

The main points against charging were summed up in a Library Association policy statement in 1977 (in Cartmill, 1992:28) which claimed that the introduction of direct charges would:

- “Narrow the concept of the library by imposing financial restraints and hamper its position as a focal point of educational, recreational and cultural life;
- Discourage intellectual curiosity and penalises the purposive reader;
- Result in excessive dependence on the income from such charges, placing undue emphasis on the purchase of high turnover stock;
- Seriously undermine the complex network of interlibrary co-operation which makes such effective use of library resources of all kinds”

On the other hand, Lau (1993:154) and the Colorado Municipal League (in Giacoma, 1989:21) sum up the arguments advanced by proponents of user fees as follows:

- “Fees provide additional revenue to libraries allowing the introduction, development and expansion of services;
- Fees are preferable to not providing a service at all;
- Fees for services motivate citizens to give some thought to the value of the services that they received;
- Services with no charge attached to them may lead to overuse, overcrowding, and waste of services ultimately resulting in public pressure to expand those services;
- Demand for services for which there is a fee reflecting full cost can serve as a guide for public decision makers in determining which services citizens want and are willing to pay for;
- Fees or penalties for excessive use or abuse of public services can encourage citizens to reduce the number of these incidents and can offset the costs of providing the service”.

As indicated earlier, numerous strategies have been outlined which public librarians can use to justify additional funding. Amongst others it has been suggested that public libraries might adopt user fees to augment public support (Beach, 1985:27). However, this strategy was rejected by many librarians as constituting a fundamental change in the public nature of the public library. While many would agree that librarians should seek additional funding sources they are, however, divided about whether keeping faith with its traditional roles means that the public library ought to be primarily supported by public funds.

It was further seen that paying for various information services and facilities is not new, and is a growing phenomenon. According to Norton (1983:3) charging for library services has, however, become an emotive issue largely because of the conflict in approach between:

- “The tradition of a “free” public library and unfettered access to information, and
- The concept of information as a tradeable commodity”.

Cartmil (1993: 25) adds that “this conflict raises many questions for both users and librarians about issues such as the fate of the free service, and where one draws the line as to what is to be fee based and what is to be free”. This concept will be discussed in greater detail in the section on administrative implications of user fees.

The issues discussed above clearly raise a number of economic, political and social considerations regarding the provision of information services and how they will be financed. Govan (1988:36) suggests that “the notion of information as a commodity is taking precedence over its value as a merit good. Changing attitudes are moving librarianship into the direction of the business world. However, there is fear that traditional library goals will be relegated to a secondary position”. Usherwood (1989:62) warns that “privatised information services will favour the profitable markets to the detriment of the non-profitable but essential services such as community information services, housebound services, and services to the aged and to people with disabilities”.

According to Lau (1993:155) “a serious consequence of charging for services, particularly if they were previously provided free, is the likelihood of a reduction in demand”. The fear here is that people who cannot afford the fee are likely to look for alternatives or go without. Wilmott (In Hazell, 1992:20) points out that “public libraries have been shown to be very price sensitive, and the imposition of charges for membership/loans/reference service has resulted in an immediate and drastic decline in the use of the library”. Thus, how essential the fee-based service is will determine what effect this has on users. A further concern is that the cost of administering and collecting fees may outweigh the benefits. The literature suggests many public libraries implemented fee programs without proper investigation of the costs involved or of the impact of such practices.

While it is commonly argued that fees deny access to information, the converse can also be argued that by not charging fees access may be denied if libraries are then unable to afford to provide services based on sophisticated and expensive technologies. Halliday

(1990:330) believes that “free access to information increases demand and puts more strain on a service that is not financially self sufficient in the first place, making a free service the equivalent of no service”.

The most important ethical consideration inherent in the fee debate is that fees place a barrier between people and their right to know by making access to information dependent upon ability to pay. According to Wilmott (1992:18) “the existence of free public libraries is a major factor in lessening the division of society into the information rich and the information poor”. Lau (1993:156) adds that “there is also the question of whether it is ethical for libraries to charge for services simply because they are of a different format (e.g. online services), or because the library has decided not to collect certain materials and relies on document delivery to provide them”.

Another set of arguments deals with the subject of inequity. The idea here is that fees are discriminatory, contrary to the traditional role of libraries as a place of free access, and involve unfair double or triple charges in that the government taxes helped create some of the very systems that users will now again have to pay to utilise. On the other hand, proponents of user fees question why the public should not pay for library services while they are paying to access museums, art galleries and some parks which are also publicly funded.

Public libraries operate within a political framework and are vulnerable to the political process. Government decisions affect libraries’ funding levels and service priorities. According to Lau (1993:155) “public libraries are founded on the premise that the market-place cannot be depended on to provide sufficiently for the information needs of society. Because information provision was considered essential to the well being of the community, the role was handed over to the government”. However, despite the divergent views, there is evidence from the literature that continued political and financial pressure has resulted in the implementation of user charges for some library services.

3.7 THE LIBRARIAN'S DILEMMA

Information service providers operate under one of two basically incompatible philosophies regarding the value of library services. According to Penniman (1990:4) "the first is the philosophy most commonly held among traditional library leaders that asserts that information organisations provide services of immeasurable value. The second derives from the business sector and argues that information services/products should have a measurable value".

Librarians who favour the premise that a library is a public good argue that their institutions exist because of the benefit they provide and need not adopt any measure of this in terms that might be quantified. The converse is true for those that consider the 'private good' premise to be valid. The greatest problem facing those librarians is the significant change in orientation that is required. For example, how do they begin the process of transforming their organisation from one philosophy to the other - the immeasurable to measurable?

Organisations outside the public domain, chiefly commercial and industrial organisations, have long seen the LIS sector as one which needs to operate as any other agency. They argue that libraries should be accountable and able to justify expenditure. The view is here is that libraries should be able to generate income. However, Giacomini (1989:25) points out that "charging fees has the potential to dramatically change the operations of a library and could act as a catalyst for change". Thus, the question arises whether the fee-based library should be fundamentally different from the free library. The idea is that, once fees are instituted, a whole new set of problems arises.

Braverman (1982:197) outlines his concern that as soon as you begin charging fees, "you initiate a process of interpreting the library as a private venture rather than as a public service institution". A further aspect is the fear of waning public support when fees are in place. According to Jaeger (1999:59) "an aspect of this is the danger that, when there is user fees, users will view the public library as a different, perhaps self-serving, institution". Thus, charging user fees could severely damage the reputation of the library.

Another aspect, perhaps building on the previous, is that the government/community might reduce revenue to the library.

Taken together, these arguments suggest that the deepest problem regarding user fees involves the library's loss of community relationship, traditional integrity, and self-identity. Jaeger (1999:60) believes that, "whatever benefits might be derived by user fees, whether in terms of finances, a demand regulation, library functioning, or anything else, is far outweighed by the risks involved through such charges". It is evident from the above sentiments that the public library a character which has been developed for many centuries would be endangered through use of fees.

However, Giacoma (1989:5) takes a different dimension by arguing that "while charging fees will not be the ideal, the public will not abandon the public library because it levies charges". While librarians may prefer to preserve equal access by funding public libraries entirely from taxes, however, some commentators believe that given a choice between offering a service at a fee, or significantly reducing the service, or eliminating it completely a strong argument should be made for charging. Giacoma (ibid:5) further poses the question "isn't it better, even for the economically disadvantaged, that the library offer a given service for a modest fee rather than leave them to the profit-making segment of the information industry, which may or may not find it profitable to sell the service at all, and if it does sell the service, charging citizens not as a tax-subsidised service, but at a cost plus profit margin?"

From the foregoing exposition it is apparent that after the theoretical advantages and disadvantages of fees have been resolved, practical decisions remain to be made. For example, if fees are to be introduced services must be singled out for full or partial fee-based financing. Conversely, if fees are rejected, some services must either be given new infusions of tax support or be curtailed. A further aspect is that library staff and other stakeholders should be fully informed and engaged in the debate. Thus, decision makers must understand the long-term implications of fees on the clientele they serve, the character their libraries will take on, and the role their libraries will play in society.

3.8 FEES AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Many proponents of fees believe that fees can improve the allocation of resources by assisting administrators in identifying those services that the public truly prefers. Thus, the UK Office of Arts and Libraries (1988:4) argue that “the object of these charges would be to encourage public libraries to assess the value of the services they supply, to help them to provide more high quality, user-oriented facilities, and to enable them to obtain additional money for overall development of their services”.

Lofgren (1987:72) gives a summary of reasons why library managers should introduce fees:

- “They may serve to limit or redirect the demand for products and services;
- They can contribute to more efficient and effective management and can provide information on, for example, the extent to which the library satisfies the market demand;
- Fees could above all contribute, to a more up-to-date and efficient management approach, making it possible for the library to expand into new areas of activity and an up-to-date information facility”.

When the promise of improved efficiency is added to the revenue potential of fees, they become a doubly attractive revenue option. For example, some public libraries charge non-resident fees for service. In nearly all instances this acts as a control mechanism to reduce excessive use and often serves a better purpose than recouping the cost of providing the services (Giacoma, 1989:22, Prentice, 1983:161).

As indicated above, apart from the prospect of additional revenue, proponents of user fees argue that fees could be used as a mechanism to force users to make more thoughtful choices about uses of services and that fees can also help librarians react to altered users behaviour and by monitoring use and expenditure patterns satisfy user needs more effectively. Charging itself, according to Webb (1994:2), is seen as “playing an important role in clarifying need and usage for resource planning”. However, some commentators

dispute the notion that fees reduces excessive use or abuse by the public. For example, Wilmott (In Hazell, 1992:19) points out that “the concept that charging discourages ‘wasteful’ or ‘frivolous’ use of library services makes ultimately indefensible, value judgments about the kind of use made of services”. Wilmott (Ibid: 19) adds that “it is not possible to relate particular types or categories of material to types or categories of use e.g. a novel may be read for pleasure, in the pursuit of improved literacy, or academic research”. Thus, it is not possible to determine which use takes precedence.

Libraries considering charging are increasingly faced with decisions of what services should be priced and how. Weinland (1987:64) notes that “before considering introducing user fees, library administrators must obtain better information on the costing of library services and manage that information more effectively”. However, very little detailed information can be found on costing specific services and how much money it might take to increase the level of performance on that particular service. This creates a problem for librarians wishing to operate on a cost recovery basis.

According to Akeroyd (1990:40) “information is often regarded as a commodity, yet as a commodity it has peculiarities not common to many other tradeable commodities which makes pricing a complex issue”. The problem as seen earlier (c.f. 3.3.3) is that information has, of itself, no intrinsic value except the cost for the paper or material involved. Its value derives entirely from the value perception of its recipient and user.

Snyder and Davenport (1997:117) further also highlight a number of problems that relate to pricing in libraries:

- “If a library prices its services too low, it may lose money on a service meant to make money.
- Prices limit or stimulate the demand for a service.
- Prices set too low can generate so much demand that a library’s resources are overwhelmed.
- Artificially high prices have the effect of reducing demand or eliminating it all together.

- Poor pricing may prevent the library from providing services that it genuinely wants and needs to provide to the community”.

According to Snyder and Davenport (1997:119) “profit-making enterprises often discuss setting prices on a ‘cost-plus’ basis or accounting to market forces. In the latter case, customer demand and the behaviour of competitors are the greatest influences on price setting”. Thus, if libraries are interested in maximising revenue and competing in an open market, market-driven pricing may be the preferred method of price setting. However, such a method requires knowledge of markets and customers that most libraries do not have. Moreover, libraries and other non-profit entities are not concerned with maximising revenue, but rather with maximising use.

It can however be argued that libraries are more likely to be concerned with recovering costs than making profits. Many libraries, in fact, might only be interested in providing subsidised services below cost. Prentice (1983:161), however, argues that “providing an information service is costly, and that although charging the full cost of use may be prohibitive, a fee structure that takes levels and types of use into consideration could be helpful”.

From the foregoing exposition it is evident that meeting the library users’ information needs in a rapidly changing information driven society calls for a fresh assessment of the manner in which libraries are to be administered. As professionals, librarians on the one side, have moral and ethical decisions to make about fees and equal access, and on the other, administrative decisions to make about whether or not to implement fee-based services and for which services. They have decisions to make about the role the public library has to play in a democratic society, and whether this should be based on economic principles or the traditional tenets of librarianship.

Any decision about fees also relate to the future of the public library as a whole. The decision to charge or not to charge is also a choice about whom the library will serve, what information needs the library will satisfy and which will be left to the private sector

to meet or which will not be met at all. According to Giacomini (1989:13) “the decision to charge or not to charge fees also involves a choice of which values the library is going to advance- values of efficiency, values of majority rule, or values of justice and equality”.

3.9 THE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE OF USER FEES

Having discussed the various view points held by LIS professionals regarding the debate on user fees, this section will highlight the user fees concept in Kenya. It also presents an overview of studies done on the funding position of public libraries in South Africa. The decision to only investigate the situation in these two countries was based on the fact that the study was located in Kenya and the researcher wishes to compare this with South Africa which has one of the most sophisticated public library systems in Africa.

3.9.1 Kenya

According to Odada et al (1989:4) “cost sharing is not a new concept in Kenya. The concept is rooted in the principles of “African socialism” and in the African security system”. Right from independence in 1963, Kenyans have raised money through “*harambee*” (fund raising) to build schools, health centres, teachers’ houses, etc. The budgetary constraints imposed on the Kenyan government by the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) and which resulted in reduced allocation for the provision of basic needs further motivated the government to institutionalise cost sharing in the 6th national development plan (1989-1993). To that end, the public was expected to accept the reduction in government provision of basic services such as education, health care and social infrastructure and help provide these services through cost sharing arrangements (Odada et al, 1989:4).

One of the bases for advocating cost sharing is that funds realised in the process would be used to improve the quality and quantity of the services. It was argued that by improving the quality of the service it would increase the willingness of the users to pay for the service (Kenya Government, 1999:40). The health, education, transport and communication sectors were initially targeted for cost sharing, but many argued that for cost sharing to provide relief to the national budget there was a need for the scheme to be

broadened. This is one of the driving forces behind this study; i.e. to determine the feasibility of cost sharing in the public library sector.

The manner in which cost sharing schemes were undertaken in the health and education sector unfortunately did not take into account the need for safety nets for the poor in the event that these measures might affect them negatively. There is now strong evidence to suggest that the objectives of the cost sharing strategy are not being met. For instance, enrolments for primary education did not rise and hospitals still lack essential drugs despite the contribution made by households. The burden on many, especially poor households, is great, and this compelled the government to re-introduce free primary education in 2003 and there are further plans to scrap charges in government hospitals.

Some form of charging for library services in Kenya can be traced as far back as the 1930s when the municipal library authorities in Nairobi introduced an annual subscription fee. This was after the realisation that nobody was willing to take responsibility to finance the libraries in the city and that donations received were far from adequate to fund the services. The MacMillan Library started charging an annual subscription fee ranging between Ksh.12.50 and Ksh.40.00 depending on the residency of the library user. This was considered a large amount at the time.

Another library, which had some form of charging, was the Seif Bin Salim Library and Free Reading Room in Mombasa. Its constitution of 1940 stated that: "there shall be two classes of membership: first and second⁷. The fees for the first class shall be Ksh.2.00 per month, and the fee for the second class shall be Ksh.1.00 per month". The fees were payable in advance for every month. Life members were admitted upon payment of Ksh.500.00 (Mombasa Times, 1940:19). Despite the classification of members into classes, which was based on racial lines, this was an attempt to supplement library funding.

⁷ The first class members comprised the white community and the second were Indians. Indigenous Africans were not allowed to use the library. This categorization continued until the advent of independence in 1963 when it was abolished.

The Kenya National Library Services and the Macmillan Library (run by the Nairobi City Council) are the only libraries which offer public library services in Kenya. The KNLS does not charge fees, but as indicated earlier, the Macmillan Library has been charging registration fees since the 1930s as a way to cover running costs. There are a number of libraries in Kenya run by foreign embassies which play a major supplementary role in the provision library services in Kenya. These libraries are open only to members who pay annual subscription fees and these range from the British Council's fee of Ksh. 3,000⁸ to the American Cultural Centre's fee of Ksh. 1000, to the French Cultural Center's fee of Ksh. 250.

3.9.2 South Africa

South Africa has one of the most sophisticated library systems in Africa and it has its roots in the British and American models. However, like the society of which it was part, the library system had many flaws, principally because it was not developed or funded for the sort of democracy that emerged in South Africa after 1994 (Hooper, 2000:156). There is very little documentation which reflects the current position of library funding and income generation in South Africa. However, there have been a few studies and some reports of library funding in newspapers from members of LIASA. According to Mametse (2003) in an article titled "on the brink of collapse" which appeared in the Mail and Guardian, February 14-20 2003, cash strapped South African libraries are facing fresh financial hardships that could cause many to collapse.

An empirical survey conducted by Leach in 1998 addresses amongst others, the issue of user fees. The aim of this study was to ascertain and provide an overview of the post-1994 situation regarding the public library sector in South Africa. The study was carried out in nine provincial public library services (PLSs) and ten independent public libraries (IPLSs)⁹. The study covered various aspects facing public librarianship and views were elicited only from the heads of the libraries. As already mentioned, these included finance and the issue of user fees.

⁸ Ksh. 78=\$1

⁹ The IPLSs are public libraries that derive most of their funding from their local authority in contrast to PLSs that derive their funding from the provincial government.

On the issue of funding, the study indicates that local authorities and the provincial government are the primary sources of funding. Other sources of funding include money raised by some of the libraries themselves through, for example “Friends of the Library” and user fees. With the exception of one PLS whose funding was “stable”, all the remaining libraries were experiencing decreases in funding to a greater or lesser degree. The reduction of funding has impacted negatively on the provision of services. The respondents listed numerous effects of the above. These included staff shortages (lack of funding to fill vacant posts), negative effect on service delivery, cut back on library and information material delivery, cut in the purchase of material, cut back in the creation of new libraries in townships, rural areas, etc. The study shows that even though there have been funding increases in some libraries these were not sufficient to offset the increase in book prices and increased readership (Leach, 1998:7).

According to Leach (1998:7) the issue of user fees as an alternative source of funding is complex, and in the South African context in particular, a politically sensitive one as well. When the respondents were asked the extent to which PLSs and IPLs were considering the implementation of user fees to deal with financial constraints, one PLS noted that the issue was not applicable. Six of the remaining eight PLSs were categorical in their rejection of user fees. Leach (ibid) adds that “one of the reasons given by respondents was the need to bring about equity and address past imbalances – “the poor will be deprived of a service they so desperately need”. Given the position of public library funding it is perhaps not surprising that the two remaining PLSs were considering user fees”.

Four of the IPLs were also emphatic in their rejection of user fees as an alternative source of funding. The reasons given were varied. One respondent pointed out that many people were out of work in their city. The city also further contained a high proportion of youth, learners and elderly residents all of whom would possibly be denied a library service should user fees be introduced. According to Leach (1998:8) one of the libraries opposed to user fees pointed out that “in order to make a realistic contribution to library

income, the fee would be so high it would not be affordable to most users...". Of the remaining five IPLSs, two were charging users annually for lending services, and one was charging for the use of the library as a study facility.

According to Leach (1998:8) "the inability of fees to make a realistic contribution is borne out by the comments made by two of the three fee-charging libraries". Leach (ibid) adds that "one librarian pointed out that the income (generated from user fees) is minimal in comparison to our expenditure. While a second noted that "funds generated in this way form 1% of the library's total expenditure". One IPL was considering alternatives such as public/private sponsorships.

It is apparent from the above study that before a library embarks on a system of charging, it is vital to clarify the reasons for doing so. In some instances charging could be seen as a political move, even though there might be valid underlying reasons.

One of the most recent studies on income generation in South Africa was conducted by Penny Thompson of Westville Public Library in 2003. According to Thompson (2003:19) "income-generation is a recent development in libraries which have, until now, been wholly funded by the local authority for operational costs and some capital expenses". However, with the restructuring of local authorities in the area, departments are being reviewed in terms of their cost and viability and there have been rumours that libraries should become self-sufficient. It is envisaged that income-generation will become much more important in the future.

According to Thompson (2003:19) "current income-generation activities are largely initiatives of individual libraries, not of the local authority. Many of them have evolved from special needs to provide a service to the community. Some charging activities have even developed from a need to cover the cost of existing services that were being abused".

South African public libraries, having generally rejected the notion of charging user fees, are examining alternative funding generation activities to supplement their shrinking budgets.

3.10 SUMMARY OF THE RELEVANT POINTS OF THIS REVIEW

It is clear from the foregoing exposition that one of the most quoted reasons for setting up a priced information service in the public library sector is to generate sufficient income to supplement other traditional sources of income. The chapter also highlighted practical or pragmatic arguments by the proponents of the user fee debate who assert that by charging user fees the quality and quantity of the services and acquisitions will improve. It is argued that if libraries fail to play an active role in the "information economy", other players such as information brokers will fill the gap at a price, which may serve to further polarise society into two classes: the information rich and the information poor.

It also became clear that though librarians have vehemently resisted the pressure to accept library charging, there is evidence that some form of business approach to library management should be applied. It was established that in many instances the librarian's financial responsibility has widened to incorporate some form of income generation. It was further noted that libraries in the developed world were no longer regarded simply as an "overhead". The library may sell its services to other departments within the parent organisation. In public libraries, there is pressure to diversify the financial resource base of the library, thus reducing the dependency on centrally allocated funds.

The negative impact of user fees should, however, not to be underestimated. It has been pointed out that in instances where user fees have been introduced, both the membership and circulation of items of the library have declined. It was also apparent that libraries may not be able to recover all their costs likely to be incurred, if one includes staff time spent carrying out, planning, and training for, and marketing the service, and other direct costs and overheads.

It was established that there was fear in some quarters that by introducing user fees public libraries will become elite bodies for privileged groups who can afford them, while those who are socially and economically under-privileged will be discriminated against. Thus it is imperative to remember that the basic principle of the public library is that it is a community-shared resource and not an institution for the elite. Accordingly, opponents of user fees reiterate that librarians and library boards have a responsibility to see that the resource is freely accessible to facilitate the cultural and personal growth needs of the community regardless of their social or economic status.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the research design of the study and the methods of data collection used. This research study combined quantitative and qualitative methods using documents, questionnaires and interviews as data collection tools, and it was divided into two phases. The first phase of the study involved a conceptual overview of the literature on user fees in the library and information science (LIS) field and other related sectors. The second involved an empirical study carried out in 20 public libraries in Kenya to establish users' and librarians' opinions on the topic

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research involves the application of a variety of standardised methods and techniques in the pursuit of valid knowledge. Precisely because scientists aim to generate truthful knowledge, they are committed to the use of objective methods and procedures that increase the likelihood of attaining validity in research. In selecting a research methodology, it is important for the researcher to keep in mind the sources of the desired information, the nature of the data to be collected and the major purpose of the research. There is a wide range of methods which a researcher can use to collect data for research purposes (Powell, 1991:54, Mouton, 1996:35). The four basic kinds of data (historical, experimental, descriptive, and analytical) demand different methodologies, the most common being the historical method, the experimental method and the survey method (which may be descriptive or analytical).

There are a variety of techniques that can be used to collect data. The basic aim and purpose of many methods is to attempt to collect specific data from the public. Therefore, choosing an appropriate instrument for data collection is essential. Having investigated all the above factors in relation to the main thrust of the research project indicated in

Chapter One (cf. 1.3) the researcher was of the opinion that the survey research method was the most appropriate for this study.

4.2.1 Survey Research

Survey research is perhaps the most widely used research design in the social sciences. One of the most important factors that contribute to the popularity of the survey method relates to advances in statistical software and computer technology, which have made the analysis of large data sets possible (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:230-232). Survey research has characteristics common to most other research methods, but at the same time, it exhibits certain differences. For example, survey research is generally used to gather contemporary data, while historical research is primarily concerned with past data. It can be used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes.

Surveys are particularly useful in describing the characteristics of a large population. A carefully selected probability sample in combination with a standard questionnaire offers the possibility of making descriptive assertions about any population (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:263). According to Busha and Harter (1980:54), “survey research is characterised by the selection of random samples from large and small populations to obtain empirical knowledge of a contemporary nature. This knowledge allows generalisations to be made about characteristics, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of the entire population being studied”. Powell (1991:54) states that “survey research is generally considered to be more appropriate for studying personal factors and for the exploratory analysis of relationships than other methods”.

Survey research is chiefly used in studies that have individual people as the unit of analysis. Although this method can be used for other units of analysis, such as groups or interactions, individuals usually serve as the respondents. According to Bailey (1994:288) “most surveys are based on cross-sectional designs, the most important feature being that they take place only once and that they reflect characteristics, behaviour, and opinions that are prevalent at that time”.

According to Smith (1981:150), “the descriptive, enumerative or census type of survey usually attempts to describe a situation, its purpose being essentially fact finding and inventorial in nature. By investigating the distribution of some datum in the population, it describes a distribution or makes a comparison among distributions”. According to (Powel, 1991:56), the basic purpose of descriptive surveys usually are to describe the characteristics of the population being studied, estimate proportions in the population, make specific predictions, and ‘test’ relationships. An analytical or explanatory survey on the other hand, seeks to establish connections between events or series of actions and tries to explain these connections. It examines or investigates relations among particular variables, and it is designed to establish why a casual relationship exists.

Many of the surveys conducted by librarians could be classified as status surveys because they merely assess conditions in the library, such as collection size, kinds of facilities and services available, amount of financial support, use and non-use of the library, etc. In general, many of these surveys have been fact gathering in nature; they are conducted to record the *status quo* rather than to determine relationships between variables or to test hypotheses (Busha and Harter, 1980:55).

This study follows a combination approach in that while on the one hand it describes the situation it also analyses users and librarians opinion regarding the user fee debate.

4.2.2 Validity & Reliability

Validity can be defined as a “descriptive term used for a measure that accurately reflects the concept that it was intended to measure - i.e. does the methodology measure what it was intended to measure? Does the methodology serve to distinguish variables that it is designed to distinguish? ...” (Lewis-Beck, 1994:363). McMillan and Schumacher (1993:171) see validity as “the extent to which the inferences made on the basis of scores from an instrument are appropriate, meaningful and useful. It is a judgement of the appropriateness of a measure for specific inferences or decisions that result from the scores that are generated”. In short, it refers to the degree to which the instrument measures what it purports to do.

Oppenheim, (1992:162) identifies different types of validity:

- *Content validity*, which seeks to establish that the items or questions are a well balanced sample of the content domain to be measured;
- *Concurrent validity*, which shows how well the test correlates with other, well validated measures of the same topic, administered at about the same time;
- *Predictive validity*, which shows how well the test can forecast some future criterion such as job performance, recovery from illness or future examination attainment;
- *Construct validity*, which shows how well the test links up with a set of theoretical assumptions about an abstract construct such as intelligence, conservatism or neuroticism”.

Reliability is a central concept in measurement, and it basically means consistency. There are two main aspects to this consistency: consistency over time (or stability) and internal consistency (Punch, 1998:98). Consistency over time, or stability, means the measurement retains stability over time. In this case, reliability can be achieved if the instrument attracts the same response or carries the same meaning to an individual or group of people over time. It suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomena.

Internal consistency or reliability relates to the concept-indicator idea of measurement. Since multiple items are used to help us infer the level of a latent trait, the question concerns the extent to which the items are consistent with each other, or working in the same direction. This is the internal consistency of a measuring instrument (Punch, 1998:98).

The objective of a reliable measure then is to minimise or eliminate the influence of chance or other extraneous variables not related to the intent of the measure. Some of the possible sources of instrument unreliability include: ambiguity in wording, lack of motivation, reaction to specific items, and inability to comprehend instructions. Attaining

reliability can be a problem if there is ambiguity in question wording. This is when the questions are not clear or attract several responses. One of the problems in research is the inability of respondents to grasp what the questionnaire demands. Unreliability can also arise if the questions cover issues which the respondents feel uncomfortable to answer or find too personal.

Thus, during the research design stage the researcher considered the different factors that could prevent him from making valid inferences. This included avoiding selection of only those views and arguments supporting the researcher's views. Moreover, care was taken with the wording of the questions in order to reduce the researcher's own bias. In order to minimise systematic bias the researcher decided to adopt a triangulated approach during the data collection stage by utilising both self administered questionnaire and an interview approach. The research instruments were also designed to facilitate replication if necessary. In addition, the supervisor and a number of colleagues read through the draft questionnaire and gave very useful suggestions which were incorporated before the instrument was piloted. After the pre-test, any question items that were not clear to the respondents were corrected by re-wording or re-framing before the final instrument was compiled and used.

The question of relevance did not prove to be a major problem since the information sought concerned a topic which is known to most of the respondents. The length of the questionnaire was also kept as short as possible, confining its items to issues related to the user fee concept in Kenya and the possibility of introducing such a fee in the provision of public library services.

4.3 DEFINITION OF THE POPULATION & SAMPLING

The researcher will first discuss pertinent issues relating to sampling and then in 4.3.3 outline the measures he used.

4.3.1 Survey Population

According to Babbie (1995:201) “a study population is the aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected. The terms ‘population’ and ‘universe’ are used interchangeably, however, the former is the more specific concept and provides a better definition than ‘universe’ - it is in effect a designated part of the universe”. Selection of the population must precede the selection of the sample, assuming a sample is to be drawn, and is crucial to the success of the sampling stage. Powell (1991:61) adds that selection of a population must be done carefully with regard to the selection criteria, desired size and the parameters of the study. It is also important to consider costs, in terms of money, when selecting the population. If the population is too large and expensive to manage, then the study is handicapped from the start. The members of the population must further also be readily available to the researcher; otherwise it will be difficult to collect the necessary data.

From the above it is evident that the first step in sampling is to clearly and accurately define the population under study. It is also imperative to consider the practicalities of conducting a survey and obtaining the widest definition of what the ‘target’ population will be. The target population is the actual segment that will be studied. For instance, when considering registered library members as the study population, one might realise that some may be ill, absent or otherwise unavailable for the duration of the study, or might wish to target only the adult segment of the study population.

4.3.2 Sampling Overview

According to Fowler (1993:135) “sampling is an essential aspect of surveys since it is seldom possible to survey the complete population even the ‘target population’”. Bailey (1994:83) defines a sample as “a subset or portion of the total population which must always be viewed as an approximation of the whole rather than as a whole in itself”. Ideally, research should cover all the subjects in the target group. However, such a study is impossible in that it would demand enormous resource inputs in terms of capital and time. Daunting difficulties in the administration of the research project and interpretation

of the results will also hamper it. Given the problems incurred in trying to use a given population, researchers often use samples for a study and make inferences which can be generalised for the whole population.

4.3.2.1 Sample Size

One of the most difficult questions to answer in survey research is how large a sample should be (Bouma, 1993:127). It is considered that the correct sample size is dependent upon the nature of the population and the purpose of the study. Usually the size of the sample depends on the confidence level the researcher wishes to attain, the level of heterogeneity, the number of variables, the level of statistical analysis and, to a large extent, the size of the population. The more homogenous, the smaller the sample needs to be. Although general rules are hard to make without knowledge of the specific population, it is considered that 30 cases are minimal for studies in which statistical analysis is to be made. However, many researchers believe that samples should not be less than 100 to achieve fairly accurate levels of validity (Bailey, 1994:96).

Taking the above into consideration it was decided to draw a sample of 300 users from 20 branches of the KNLS network. In addition, in-depth interviews were also conducted with 10 senior librarians in 4 libraries. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with 20 users to clarify ambiguities that arose during the questionnaire survey.

4.3.2.2 Sampling Frame

According to Mouton (1996:136) “defining the population is a two way process: first the target population, from which one wishes to generalise, must be identified and second, the sampling frame must be constructed”. The sampling frame is the sub-set of people that have a chance to be selected, given the sampling approach that is chosen. The key concept in sampling is representativeness. Mouton (ibid) adds that “unless the sample from which one may generalise ‘truthfully’ represents the population from which it is drawn, there is no reason to believe that the population has the same properties as those of the sample. The ‘sampling frame’ provides the means by which a sample may be collected. In its simplest form it is a list from which respondents may be selected”

4.3.2.3 Sampling Categories

Sampling can be divided into two major categories: non-probability and probability sampling. In non-probability sampling, there is no way of forecasting, estimating or guaranteeing that each element in the population will be represented in the sample. In probability sampling, the researcher can specify in advance that each segment of the population will be represented in the sample (Leedy, 1989:200). In probability sampling, the composition of the sample is derived by selecting units from those of a larger population by randomisation. Randomisation, an inferential technique, implies that the samples are selected in such a way that each individual has an equal chance of being selected.

Non-probability sampling can also be divided into two types: convenience or accidental sampling, and quota sampling. Bailey (1994:960) states that “in convenience or accidental sampling, the investigator merely chooses live persons as respondents”. Powell, (1991:63) adds that “in utilising a convenience technique, the researcher simply selects the cases that are at hand until the sample reaches the desired or designated size. Obviously, there would be relatively little, if any assurance, that the sample would be representative of the study population”. Powell (1991:63) states that “quota sampling is a type of non-probability sample that improves somewhat on the simple accidental sample. Quota sampling is the same as accidental sampling except that it takes steps to ensure that the significant, diverse elements of the study population are included”.

4.3.3 Sampling Method used for this Study

The survey population for this study comprised both registered and non-members who were present during the period of the study at the 20 selected branches of the KNLS. All patrons under the age of fifteen were excluded from this study. The decision to exclude this category of users was arrived at after the realisation that they were too young to be sufficiently informed on the research topic. The study thus aimed to solicit the views of adults and older teenagers only. Individuals who were returning books on behalf of patrons were furthermore also excluded from the study. However, those individuals who

were using the library even though they were not registered were included in the study. All persons who corresponded to the characteristics outlined above and who visited the various libraries in the period, January to March 2002, were included until the maximum sample size was reached. As indicated earlier (c.f. 1.4), non-users were not included because the researcher was of the opinion that they would not be able to provide an informed view of the user fee issue. Politicians were also left out as they were heavily engaged with election campaigns and constitutional reform issues during the empirical stage of this study.

Since this was a countrywide survey, proportional regional representation of the libraries where the respondents were to be drawn from had to take precedence. Thus, apart from accessibility, geographical and socio-economic factors of the various regions in Kenya were taken into consideration when selecting libraries from which users would be sampled. The target sample was also divided proportionally to represent the actual ratio of the users in each category of library in the KNLS network (c.f. 2.5). The total respondents were drawn from these libraries as follows: 150 from provincial libraries, 50 from the Nairobi Area Library, 60 from district libraries and 40 from community libraries. Though the Nairobi Area Library is regarded as a provincial library, a larger than normal proportion of respondents were sampled here due to its uniqueness. Apart from being situated in the Kenyan capital, it also houses the Kenya National Services (KNLS) Board headquarters and it has a high membership registration

Compiling a sample frame for this study was impossible because of the following factors:

- The KNLS like other public libraries is patronised by diverse groups of the society and it was not easy to stratify them into specific groups. This diversity ranges from age, gender, education level, occupation, income, etc.
- Lack of up-to-date list of KNLS members as registers are rarely updated making it impossible to determine the active library members.
- A substantial number of citizens use the library although they are not registered and the researcher wished to include them in the survey. Their views were considered invaluable since they can be regarded as potential members.

Taking the above factors into consideration a quota sampling procedure was adopted for this study. Thus the sample for this study were selected by approaching library users who were present in the library at predetermined intervals during the study period. However, conscious efforts were made to ensure that diverse groups of the library users were included in the sample. These groups included those who resided in urban and rural areas, female and male users, students and non-students, etc.

4.4 SOURCES OF DATA

Data collecting techniques may be categorised in a number of ways depending on whether the data being collected is new, or whether existing data will be used and the nature of the source of the data. The following summary table of objectives, data requirements and data sources helped to provide a framework for the empirical component of the study. The summary was derived from the research questions for this study as outlined in Chapter One (c.f. 1.5).

Table 4.1: Summary of objectives, data required data sources and data collection method.

Objective	Data required	Data sources & collection
Adequacy of KNLS funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual allocation of KNLS budget and its utilisation - Views of branch librarians - Views of finance staff in the KNLS HQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewing finance staff and senior librarians. - KNLS Annual Audit report
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Net revenue likely to be generated from user fees - Willingness to pay and ability to pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering questionnaires and interviewing librarians
Perceived quality of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Users' perception of availability of library materials, staff competence and attitudes, facility appearance, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering questionnaires and interviewing users
Services which can be offered at a fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views of users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering questionnaires and interviewing users
Acceptability of user fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views of users - Willingness to pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering questionnaires and interviewing users
Likely impact of user fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views of users and librarians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering questionnaires and interviewing users and librarians
Alternative sources of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views of users and librarians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering questionnaires to users and interviewing librarians.

Employment/utilisation of funds likely to be collected from user fees	- Views of users and librarians	- Interviewing finance staff at the KNLS HQ - Administering questionnaires and interviewing users and librarians
Exemption policy	- Views of users and librarians	- Administering questionnaires - Interviewing users and librarians

Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect the data required for this study. Primary sources refer to sources from which original, unprocessed data is collected. This included the users and staff who were questioned by means of questionnaires and interviews as well as unsynthesised unpublished (primary) records and manuscripts.

Secondary sources refer to published or unpublished recorded materials in the compilation of which primary sources have been used and synthesised. Secondary data for this study was obtained from KNLS and government publications, and literature survey. The secondary data highlighted the user fee policy, its objectives, implementation, etc. in the health and education sector in Kenya. This data was important in helping to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the fee policy system in Kenya.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The choice of data collection mode - e.g. mailed questionnaires, telephone interviews, personal interview or group administration of questionnaires - should be directly related to the research topic, characteristics of the sample, and the number of research assistants and facilities available. It is therefore one of the most far-reaching decisions a researcher must make. According to Fowler (1993:54) "there are choices about how to present the questionnaire to the respondents which the researcher has to decide. For example, should an interviewer ask the questions and record the answers, or should the survey be self-administered?".

Although it is practically impossible for any researcher to identify and control all observer effects, he or she has the responsibility to plan and execute the study in a manner that will minimise various threats to validity. One of the methods used to control these effects is triangulation or multiple operationalisms. According to Mouton

(1996:156), “the underlying assumption is that because various methods complement each other their respective shortcomings can be balanced out”.

Having taken the above factors into consideration the researcher decided to employ different data collection methods in combination, i.e. questionnaires, interviews and documentary sources. The main method of collecting data from the library users was by means of self-administered questionnaires that were later followed-up by means of interviews to validate responses, to obtain further in-depth data, and to clarify ambiguities. These were further substantiated by information collected from both primary and secondary data sources.

4.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are often used in surveys as the primary data collection instrument. However, care must be taken to develop the kind of questions, or survey items, that will accurately measure what the investigator wants to know. The purpose of research is to obtain valid and reliable information so that specific hypotheses can be tested or research questions answered (Busha and Harter, 1980:61). The best and most systematic approach to this task appears to be the identification of all relevant facets that pertain to the specific research problem.

The empirical research for this study was preceded by a four-stage development process of the questionnaire. In the first stage ideas were developed. To stimulate the process, the researcher conducted a review of the relevant literature and undertook a critical analysis of the user fee concept in Kenya. The aim of this stage was to gain an understanding of the various viewpoints held by LIS professionals and to establish the impact of user fees in the health and education sectors in Kenya. It was during this stage that the researcher refined the research questions that set the framework for the study and the questionnaire and through this approach, the researcher was able to generate items for the questionnaire. The second stage entailed the construction of a questionnaire and identification of the procedures to be followed in administering it before a pre-test is done. Using these two stages as a basis, questions were formulated to serve as the

framework of the third stage, the preliminary pilot study. The final stage was achieved after the incorporation of suggested improvements during the pilot study and the finalisation of the questionnaire.

4.5.2 Construction of Questionnaires

According to Mouton and Babbie (2001:236) “the format of the questionnaire is just as important as the nature and wording of the questions asked. An improperly laid-out questionnaire can cause respondents to miss questions, confuse them about the nature of the data desired, and even lead them to throw the questionnaire away”. The researcher made efforts to catch the interest of the respondents by designing the questionnaire for this study in a simple but attractive manner. Questions were kept as short as possible to avoid ambiguity and simple English was used to facilitate easy comprehension taking into consideration the fact that the potential respondents were from diverse educational backgrounds. Emotional words were avoided as far as possible.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:232) point out that “in asking questions, researchers have two options. They may ask open-ended questions in which case the respondent is asked to provide his/her answer to the question”. Alternately with closed-ended questions the respondent is asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher. It is considered that closed-ended questions are more popular because they provide a greater uniformity of responses and are more easily processed. However, they can also be restrictive since the options available might be limited to the researchers’ view or knowledge of the subject. Open-ended questions in turn create problems since they must be coded before they can be processed for computer analysis, opening the possibility of misunderstanding and research bias. Chances of respondents giving irrelevant responses are also high. The main advantage of open-ended questions is that they allow more freedom to the respondents to give their own opinion. Considering the advantages of both categories, it was decided to use both closed and open-ended questions for this study.

Closed questions were used when the researcher felt fairly confident that he could think of all possible response categories. The respondent was required to answer by choosing

between a number of alternatives. The alternatives were designed to reduce the possibility of obtaining ambiguous answers and were used to obtain straightforward answers. In the construction of the closed-ended questions, an effort was made to ensure that the response categories provided were exhaustive by including all the possible responses. In addition, the respondents were given the opportunity to specify their own optional answers by always being given an “Other” (please specify...) category.

The open-ended questions were designed to produce detailed answers to complex problems, to obtain the opinions of the respondents and also to give them the opportunity to express their attitude towards the topic of the study. The open-ended questions enabled the respondents to formulate and record answers using their own words and without being prompted.

In order to get different opinions or strength of preferences, a rating scale was used where appropriate. According to Moore (1987:18), “a rating scale provides more scope for the respondent to express an opinion, but retains a sufficient amount of control to ensure that information is capable of being analysed”.

To further refine the questionnaire, the researcher considered the introduction of contingency questions where appropriate. Quite often in questionnaires, certain questions will be relevant to some of the respondents and irrelevant to others. This sort of situation often arises when you wish to ask a series of questions about a certain topic (Babbie, Mouton, 2001:240). Thus, for those questions which were designed to elicit more detailed information from specific respondents, contingency questions were applied by asking respondents to give explanations to preceding questions (e.g. If your answer to question 6 is **NO** which of the following answers would support your reason?).

4.5.3 Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire consisted of four major parts:

- The first section introduced the topic and clarified the purpose of the study, highlighting the fact that the views of the users were of paramount importance to

the study and assuring respondents that confidentiality was guaranteed. The respondents were also instructed how to mark their preferences in the questionnaire.

- The second part solicited demographic information from the respondents. These included the gender of the respondents, age of the respondents, locality, duration of library use, other household members using the library, membership of any other library and the type, education level and income per month.
- Part three, consisted of questions that were related to the perceived quality of library services offered by the KNLS. It is generally regarded that the quality of library services greatly influences the willingness to pay user fees.
- Part four consisted of questions regarding the respondents view of the user fee concept, in general and whether the KNLS should implement a similar policy. In addition, their opinion was sought on their willingness and the ability to pay for services, the likely impact of user fees, utilisation of potential income generated, alternative sources of income and suggestions regarding special exemptions if user fees were to be introduced. The respondents were also given an opportunity to make general comments.

4.5.4 PRE-TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:244) no matter how carefully one designs a data collection instrument such as a questionnaire, there is always the possibility of error. One is certain to make some mistakes. Oppenheim (1992:47,49) adds that “questionnaires do not emerge fully-fledged. They have to be created and adapted, fashioned and developed to maturity. Every aspect of the survey has to be tried beforehand to ensure that it works as intended”. Thus, it is essential to pilot every question, every question sequence, every inventory and every scale in the study.

According to Fowler (1993:102) “self-administered survey instruments require even more careful pre-testing than interview survey instruments, because during the interviews problems that researchers did not solve in the design of the survey instrument can often be resolved”.

It is therefore evident that the surest protection against errors is to pre-test the questionnaire. A pre-test gives the researcher an opportunity to identify questionnaire items that tend to be misunderstood by the participants. Powell (1991: 99-100) notes that “in addition to testing the actual questionnaire items, the pre-test should include interviews with some or all of the pre-test participants”. Such pre-tested interviews are necessary to identify problem questions, poor instructions, and unnecessary or missing questions, and to obtain general reaction to the instrument. A pre-test also offers certain advantages beyond helping to refine the data collection instrument. It can permit a preliminary testing of the hypothesis or research question, point out a variety of problems not anticipated that relate to the design and methodology, and facilitate a practice run of the statistical procedures to be used.

In order to test the validity of the questionnaire, a pre-test was carried out in five libraries with a total of 30 respondents. This was done in November 2001 in the same locations where the actual data collection eventually took place between January and March 2002. During the pilot study, the respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire as they would in an actual survey. After completing the questionnaires the researcher had a discussion with the trial respondents in order to clarify ambiguities regarding the questionnaire. Issues that were discussed related to whether the instructions were clear, and whether there were any problems in understanding the questions. Prior to the pre-test, the researcher also distributed some questionnaires to professional colleagues in Kenya and their inputs were also incorporated in the final questionnaire.

This pilot study was very useful as it generated valid comments that enabled the researcher to amend the original questionnaire accordingly. Particular attention was paid when wording the final questionnaire to dispel fears which became apparent during the pre-test. It was evident that most of the pre-test respondents thought that the study was seeking their views to enable the KNLS to introduce user fees. The pre-test also enabled the researcher to establish how long it took to complete the survey instrument.

4.5.5 Administration of Questionnaires

According to Babbie, (1995:258) there are three main methods of administering survey questionnaires to a sample of respondents. Although, the mail survey is the typical method used in self-administered studies, there are several other common methods. At times it may be appropriate to administer the questionnaire to a group of respondents gathered at the same place at the same time. Recent experiments have been conducted with regard to the home delivery of questions and e-mailed questionnaires.

Self-administered questionnaires were utilised for this study, and they were administered to library users above the age of 15 in 20 branches of the KNLS network. Both a “hand-delivery and postal” method was adopted to distribute the questionnaires. The distribution of questionnaires was carried out between January and March 2002 after a pilot was conducted in November 2001 in five branch libraries. The questionnaires were distributed during this three-month period until the target sample size was achieved.

Before visiting a branch or posting questionnaires, the researcher communicated by phone with the branch librarians and informed them about the purpose of the study and also solicited their support. Appointments were sought from those librarians to be visited while those who were to receive questionnaires by post were given instructions. The researcher further had the opportunity to seek appointments directly from some of the branch librarians who were attending a meeting in Nairobi.

Due to the number of libraries to be visited during the research period and the vast distance between them, the researcher decided to divide the libraries into four sectors taking into consideration their regional positioning and proximity. The first sector included libraries in the Coastal Province and part of the Eastern Province. The second sector covered libraries in part of the Eastern Province and the entire Central Province. The third sector covered part of the Rift Valley Province and the entire Western and Nyanza Provinces. The fourth sector included part of the Rift Valley Province and the Nairobi Area Library. The researcher visited most of the libraries with the exception of four which were difficult to access (two in the Nyanza Province, one in North Eastern

Province and one in the Eastern Province). The questionnaires for two of these libraries were posted while the rest were given to their librarians who were attending a meeting in Nairobi during the period of the research.

Upon arrival at a branch, the researcher briefed the librarian and asked him/her to appoint two competent staff to assist. The researcher was not able to hire the services of permanent research assistants since it would have been very expensive to travel with them to all the branches. However, a token cash amount was given to the staff who assisted the researcher in order to motivate them. Before the questionnaires were distributed in any branch, the researcher took time to instruct the librarian and research assistants on the research procedures to be followed and clarified and explained all the questions to ensure uniformity. A simulation was done with one or two questionnaires and the assistants were made aware of the problems with incomplete questionnaires or any other defects which could be rectified by the respondents before collection.

The questionnaires were issued at different points of the library (reception, issue desk, reference and a few in the study area). The questionnaires were distributed only in the morning when a high readership turnout is recorded and also to avoid any duplication. Readers were approached as they came for service at the above points and asked to participate as respondents. A few readers were also approached in the reading area but extra caution was taken not to infringe on their time and privacy. During the subsequent days, the respondents were asked whether they had already participated in the study to avoid duplicate responses.

Before the questionnaires were handed out, the respondents were given an oral indication of how long it would take to complete the questionnaire. Questionnaires were then handed out to those patrons who were willing to participate and they were encouraged to return the questionnaires on the same day. However, a substantial number of respondents preferred to take the questionnaires away and returned them later. Some of the respondents who lived far from the library requested to return the questionnaires during their next visit to the library and this meant waiting well over two weeks at times. The

research assistants kept a register of all the questionnaires and indicated the date issued and returned.

The researcher spent about two days at a branch and took delivery of the completed questionnaires during that period. The research assistants continued with the distribution of the remaining questionnaires, but were given a time frame to complete the exercise (usually two weeks). Once the questionnaires were returned they were handed over to the branch librarian who in turn posted them to the researcher by courier or registered mail. Some of the questionnaires were delivered to the KNLS headquarters in Nairobi and were collected by the researcher in person.

Out of a total of 300 questionnaires which were distributed in 20 branches, 249 were returned, constituting a high response rate of 83%. The analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.6 TIMING OF THE STUDY

It is considered that the timing of research can affect its results. Taking into consideration the timing of this study, it is possible that some factors may have influenced its results. Primary data for this study was collected between January and March 2002. This was an unexceptional period for working adults and students at college and university. However, seeing that this period covered the school term period, it could have affected those students over the age of 15 who were included in the sample. The reason for this is that most of the students in primary and secondary school in Kenya mainly use the library during the weekend and their school vacations in April, August, and December. This is largely due to the fact that most schools in Kenya have boarding facilities and students are rarely released from school except for vacations. Judging from the large student and younger user response, the timing did not appear to affect the study.

In addition, the prevailing economic conditions at the time may have also influenced the results of this study. Kenya was and is in a period of economic recession which has eroded the purchasing power of most households, especially those with limited income.

This may have impinged on the respondents' views with regard to user fees. It is likely that the respondents may have had different opinions under different economic climate.

4.7 INTERVIEW SURVEY

Conducting an interview survey is an alternative method of collecting survey data. According to Nachimas (1996:132) a personal interview is "a face-to-face, interpersonal situation in which an interviewer asks respondents questions designed to elicit answers pertinent to the research hypothesis. The questions, their wording, and their sequence define the structure of the interview". Personal interviews can be divided into three subsets, viz: schedule-structured interview, focused interview, and nondirective interview.

In the scheduled interview the number of questions and wording of the questions are identical for all of the respondents and the process is directed by an interview schedule.

According to Nachimas (1996:134) the focused group interview has the following characteristics:

- "It takes place with respondents known to have been involved in a particular experience.
- It is focussed on topics that are specifically related to the research questions. Interview guides can at times be used to direct the proceedings".

The nondirective interview is non-structured. Nachimas (1996:235) adds that "here the researcher does not employ a schedule to ask a pre-specified set of questions, nor are the questions asked in a specified order". Respondents are encouraged to relate their experiences and to reveal their opinions and attitudes as they see fit with little or no direction from the interviewer.

Interview surveys offer many advantages. For example, they generally produce fewer incomplete answers and the response rate is high. Although respondents may skip

questions in a self-administered questionnaire, this is not likely in an interview survey (Babbie, 1995:261). The main advantage of an interview survey, however according to Moore (1987:28), is that “they make it possible to achieve a complex response with different categories of a sample, and thus enhance the validity of the results”. A further advantage is that “it is possible to obtain qualifying answers and generally to probe and secure results in greater depth” (Moore, *ibid*).

The main disadvantage with interview surveys is that the information obtained is often difficult to analyse quantitatively.

4.7.1 Interview Process for this Study

The interview method was used both as a primary and secondary data collection technique for this study. Two series of interviews was conducted for this study. The first one involved a sample of twenty respondents who took part in the original questionnaire survey. This was carried out from November 2002 to January 2003 in the libraries where the initial survey research were conducted in Kenya. This was done in order to clarify underlying issues and anomalous responses which arose from the analysis of the original survey data. The researcher identified the categories of users from whom he required in-depth clarification of issues such as: (a) why students, who were generally unemployed, were prepared to pay for library services, (b) why the respondents indicated that the positive effects of user fees would outweigh the negative effects, (c) why there was a lack of consensus among the respondents regarding who should be exempted if user fees were to be introduced. The researcher was then assisted by the various branch librarians to identify appropriate interviewees who had participated in the original survey questionnaire and who could assist in clarifying these issues.

The second interview study involved senior librarians in the KNLS on the topic of user fees. A total of ten librarians were interviewed in the KNLS headquarters in Nairobi and in three other libraries, namely, Kabarnet District Library, Eldoret District Library and Kapsabet Community Library. Both the focus group interview and personal interview methods were employed and conducted during January 2003. The focus group interview

was conducted with three senior librarians based in the KNLS headquarters. Personal interviews were conducted with librarians at the KNLS headquarters who were in charge of various units, while those who were interviewed in the branches included librarians and senior library assistants.

An interview schedule was developed to direct the interview with users subsequent to the questionnaire survey to clarify certain ambiguities that were observed after the preliminary analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire survey. For example it became evident that in some cases the respondents were willing to pay user fees while they had no income, in other instances a number of respondents were opposed to fee exemptions and this was contrary to expected response. To obtain an insight into the cause of such responses the interview schedule focused on these aspects.

Appointments were sought by telephone with all the librarians who took part in the second interview study. Before the interview started the interviewees were made aware of the purpose of the study and asked to be as objective as possible. Questions were designed to be direct and uncomplicated as possible. The interview was recorded manually since interviewees had reservations about being tape-recorded. An interview schedule was used to direct these interviews.

4.8 DATA PROCESSING AND DATA ENTRY

Data analysis or tests provide the basis for making interpretations or deriving meaning from data. Statistical tests enable the researcher to make comparisons of data sets by indicating the significant level of observed relationships or differences between variables under study. Before the data analysis was done, the descriptive information of the respondents and their responses were coded. The data for this study was processed using the STATISTICA and STATA statistical packages. STATISTICA was used mainly to generate descriptive data while STATA was utilised for multivariate analysis and chi-square tests because of its versatility. Charts were plotted using both STATA and Excel software. Different levels of analysis were done in the course of this study. These included univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis. The respondents' characteristics

in terms of age, gender, location, occupation, income, duration of KNLS membership, membership of other libraries and type of library, education, and income were cross tabulated with the dependent variables in the study (section II and III of the questionnaire). In order to establish whether there is any significant relationship between the respondents' characteristics and their views regarding the library and user fees, chi-square (χ^2) tests were done. This was done specifically to determine two issues, viz. reasons which might influence the use of the library, and to identify those factors which might influence willingness and ability to pay user fees.

A decision has to be made on the significance from which the existence of a relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be determined. For this study, the level of significance chosen is 0.05. This means that for a significant relationship to be seen to exist, the p -value (the probability of χ^2 value appearing by chance) had to be equal to or less than 0.05.

4.8.1 Response Rate

Out of a total of 300 questionnaires which were distributed to library users in 20 branches of the KNLS, 249 were returned (cf. Table 5.1). The response rate of 83% that was achieved is considered to be very good (Babbie, 2004:261). Of these, a total of 8 questionnaires were discarded. These included those that were found to be incomplete or contained invalid answers. Thus, the sample size for the purpose of analysis is 241 respondents representing 80% of the total questionnaires distributed.

Table 4.2: Response Rate

Library Type	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Questionnaires Received	Response rate (Percent)
Community	40	37	93%
District	60	59	98%
Nairobi	50	37	74%
Provincial	150	116	73%
Total	300	249	83%

The findings of this study are presented and discussed in Chapter 5, 6 and 7

CHAPTER FIVE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the demographic profiles of the respondents are outlined. The demographic data collected provided important information regarding the profiles of the respondents, especially since very little demographic data regarding users are available within the KNLS. All users' records are kept manually by the KNLS and are generally fairly outdated and inadequate. On the basis of the 241 returns received, and analysed, a number of demographic generalisations could be made about public library users in Kenya. These are outlined in Table 5.1 below with demographic characteristics presented as percentages of the total sample.

TABLE 5.1: Summary of Demographic Data

AGE	Count (N=241)	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent (N=241)
15-24	98	98	40.7	40.7
25-34	84	223	34.9	75.6
35-44	41	139	17.0	92.6
45+	18	241	7.5	100.0
Missing	0	241	0.0	100.0
GENDER	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
Male	183	183	75.9	75.9
Female	58	241	24.0	100.0
Missing	0	241	0.00	100.0
LOCATION	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
Urban	184	184	76.23	76.23
Rural	57	241	23.7	100.0
Missing	0	241	0.0	100.0
OCCUPATION	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
Student	118	118	49.0	49.0
Teacher	39	157	16.2	65.2
Professional	20	177	8.3	73.3
Other	64	241	26.6	100.0
Missing	0	241	0.0	100.0
LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
0 to 4	161	161	66.9	66.9
5 to 9	44	205	18.3	85.1
10 to 14	15	220	6.2	91.2
15 -	21	241	8.8	100.0
Missing	0	241	0.0	100.0
MEMBER OF ANOTHER LIBRARY	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
Yes	51	51	21.2	21.2
No	190	241	78.8	100.0
Missing	0	241	0.0	100.0

LIBRARY TYPE	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
Academic	21	21	41.2	41.2
Macmillan & Cultural Centers	27	48	53.0	94.2
Research	3	51	5.9	100.0

EDUCATION	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
Still studying	118	118	49.0	49.0
University degree	54	172	22.0	71.0
College diploma/cert	48	220	20.0	91.0
Secondary certificate	17	237	7.0	98.0
Primary school cert.	4	241	2.0	100.0

INCOME	Count	Cum. Count	Percent	Cum. Percent
None	119	119	49.4	49.4
Low	15	134	6.2	55.6
Middle	47	181	20.0	75.1
High	60	241	24.89	100.0

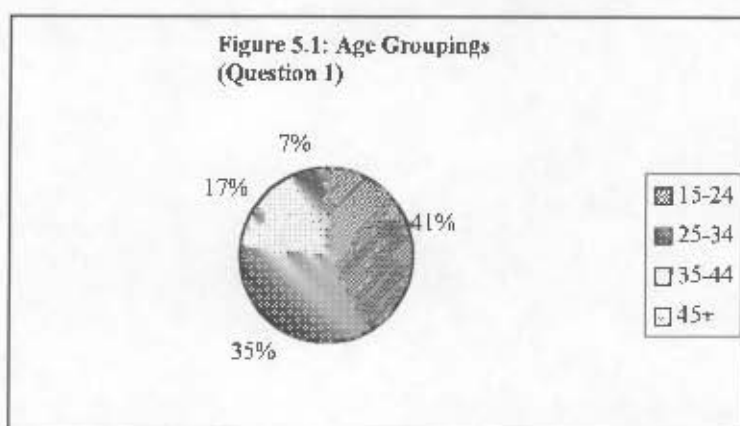
Source: Survey Data

The research results show that the respondents exhibited a variety of characteristics and that the sample was heterogeneous. Given that public libraries generally serve a broad section of the society this was expected. In the following sections the distribution of the respondents by their demographic and other characteristics will be discussed.

5.2 Age

(cf. Question one of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

The questionnaires were completed by respondents over the age of 15 who were mainly using the adult library with a few exceptions of parents borrowing books for their children from the junior section. A decision was made to exclude children under 15 years since their responses could skew the results taking into consideration the fact that at their age most of them may not be in a position to comprehend the research topic in order to make informed decisions. Kenya has an 3-8-4-4 system of education. This involves three years in pre-school, 8 years in primary school, 4 years in secondary school, and 4 years of university education. Children generally start school at the age of six, thus most pupils over the age of 15, in most circumstances, would be in secondary school.



Source: Survey data

Figure 5.1 shows that the greatest proportion (41%) of the respondents' were in the age group 15-24 years. Those within the 25-34 age group comprised 35%, while the 35-44 age cluster comprised 17% and only 7% were older than 45 years. In terms of age, it is evident that the KNLS is used mainly by relatively young people, and as expected, most of them were students (cf.5.5). This corresponds well with studies done elsewhere. For example, a Gallup Survey conducted in the US in 1979 found that the typical public library user is in the 18-34 years age category (Drake, 1981).

There are, however, a number of factors which may explain why the KNLS, specifically, is used mainly by relatively young people.

- There is a long held belief that the education system in Kenya does not stimulate reading upon completion of studies. Students are not encouraged to develop a reading culture and to read beyond their educational needs.
- An additional factor might be that the kind of materials stocked by the KNLS is not ideal for adult readers in search of general non-educational material. One rarely finds books in local languages and fiction and newspapers are also in short supply.
- Another factor is that the poor state of the Kenyan economy forces most adults to engage in several concurrent income-generating activities thus leaving little time for reading.

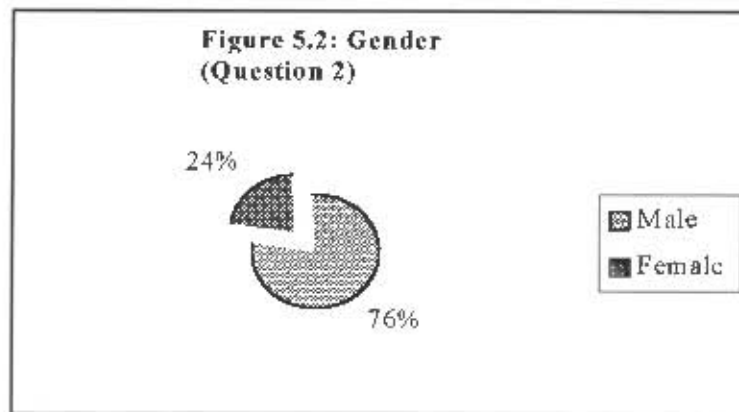
Experience has shown that cultural issues pertaining to age also impact on public library use. Older people in Kenya generally believe that libraries are mainly for use by students. This situation is further compounded by some local customs which do not encourage free interaction between young and old people. Thus, some parents would find it rather difficult to sit in the library with their own children since they would perceive that this may lower their status. Most adults would thus rather gather at social places where they interact only with their peers.

It has been observed by the researcher that although the KNLS has not generally addressed this issue, the Nyilma Community Library in the Nyanza Province (Kenya) has come up with an innovative program to solve it. They have introduced services which specifically target adults, both literate and illiterate. This included putting up several traditional African huts outside the library where adult users congregate either to read or engage in other leisure-time activities. Following the introduction of these services, the library has witnessed a marked increase in adult readers and most of them have shown appreciation of this unique and innovative service.

5.3 Gender

(cf. Question two of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

All adult library members were selected randomly in the libraries and asked to complete the questionnaire and no effort was made to screen the respondents according to gender. The survey results indicate that the majority of the respondents (76%) were male while only 24% were female (Figure 5.2 below). The substantial difference between the number of male and female respondents could suggest that the sampling method might have resulted in an atypical gender selection. However, the membership records kept by the KNLS show a similar gender representation and the researcher's personal experience as a librarian at the KNLS further also confirms this disparate gender distribution.



Source: Survey data

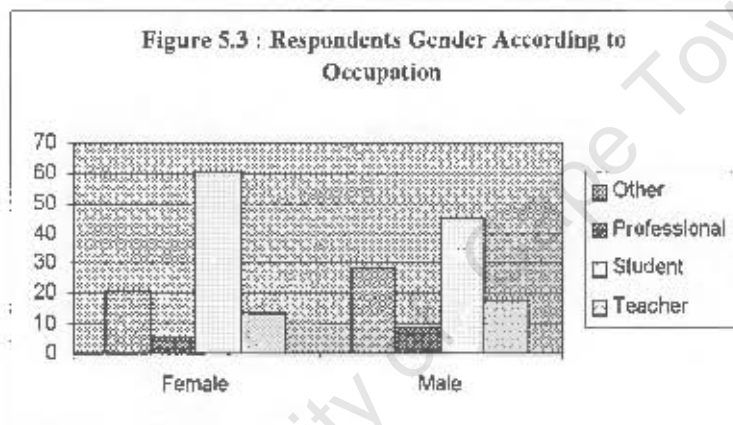
Whereas the Kenyan population statistics shows that the ratio of males to females is almost equal (Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 2003) the question thus arises why there is such a great disparity between the number of males and females utilising library services. It is suggested that the answer can be found in a number of social and cultural practices that pertain in Kenya.

According to UNICEF (1999), girls in most developing countries do not receive the same educational opportunities as boys. Even when given the opportunity to be educated, the girls typically face formidable barriers in the course of their studies. While virtually all girls in Kenya are initially enrolled in primary school, approximately 65% of them drop out before completing Standard 8 (FAWE¹⁰, 2002). Some of the causes for girls dropping out of school in Kenya include early marriage, pregnancy, and lack of gender appropriate facilities in schools. The traditional preferential treatment accorded to boys also diminishes the value of girls' education. There is also a tendency for women not to develop their careers once they are employed and they end up in engaging in activities which may preclude them from visiting the library.

All the factors listed, it is suggested, clarifies the considerable difference between the genders in their use of public libraries in developing countries in general and Kenya

¹⁰ Forum for African Women Educationalists

specifically. A further analysis of the data where males and females are compared with regard to their occupations is shown in Figure 5.3 below. It can be seen that out of the total group of female respondents, 60% were students, 21% were categorised as from the “Other” occupation, 14% were teachers, and only 5% were professionals. Amongst the male respondents 45% were students, 28% were categorised as “Others”, 17% were teachers¹¹, and 9% were professionals. From these figures it is clear that the males were more equally distributed amongst the occupational categories and that the females were predominantly students. This would appear to reinforce the earlier assertion that many women are not granted the opportunity to develop their careers, or pursue further studies upon completion of their formal school education.



Source: Survey data

5.4 Location¹² of Respondents

(cf. Question three of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

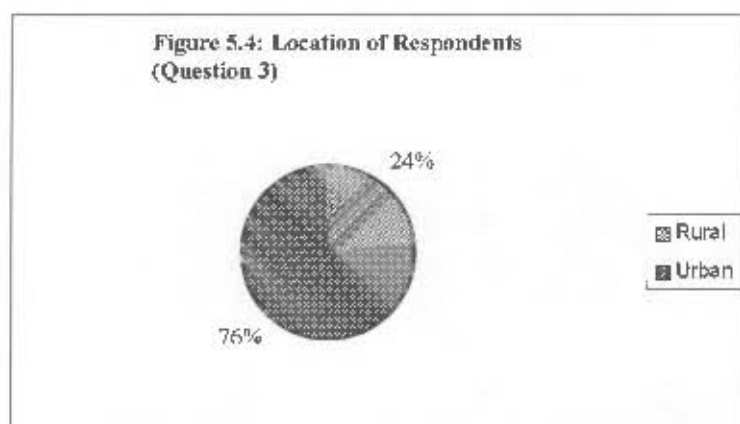
In an effort to capture the diverse population groups and socio-economic conditions prevailing in Kenya, the researcher collected data from all eight administrative regions. The respondents were further also asked to indicate whether they resided in a rural or urban area¹³. This categorisation was done in order to understand whether there are any

¹¹ Though teachers are also regarded as professionals, they were however categorised as a single group since they stood out in the study.

¹² “Location” here refers to the place where the respondents reside.

¹³ The term “urban” denotes any residential area within an urban municipality, whereas “rural” denotes any other area outside this jurisdiction.

unique and distinct differences in terms of library usage and needs between the rural and urban dwellers.



Source: Survey data

The survey results indicate that there is a significant difference in the number of urban and rural based library members. It can be seen that while 76% of the respondents reside in urban areas only 24% reside in rural areas (Figure 5.4). This disparity is not unexpected given that almost all the libraries in the KNLS system are located within major urban areas with the exception of a few community libraries.

Another reason which may explain why the majority of the respondents are mainly from urban areas is that there has been a mass rural-urban migration of the more educated strata of the Kenyan population since independence in 1963. Job opportunities are limited in the rural areas and many people have migrated to urban areas in search of better opportunities. As a result, most of the educated, thus literate people who would be library users, are found in urban areas. In addition to the above, most of the educational institutions are located in urban areas and most rural people have to move temporarily to a major town in order to study.

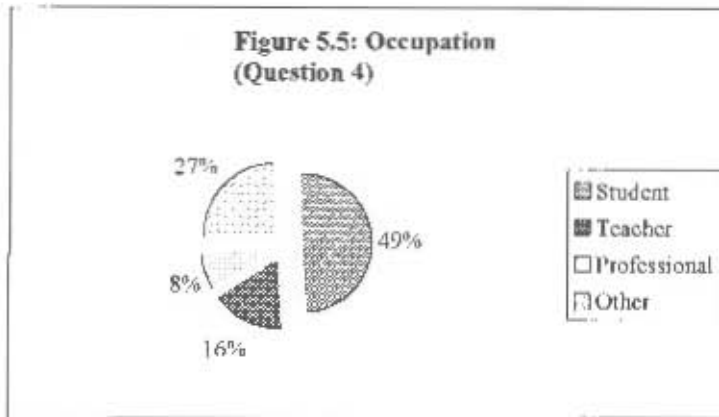
5.5 Occupation

(cf. Question four of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

Public libraries worldwide serve a broad spectrum of society and the wide range of occupational groups that emerged from the survey data was thus not unexpected. This diversity however presented a problem when it became necessary to categorise the respondents into occupational groups and no suitable coding schemes could be found. Babbie and Mouton (2001:413) have also experienced this problem and noted that although the occupation variable has many pre-established coding schemes, none of them is very good. One such scheme distinguishes professional and managerial occupations, clerical occupations, semi-skilled occupations, and so forth. Another scheme distinguishes among different sectors of the economy: manufacturing, health, education, commerce, and so forth.

After the initial analysis, it became apparent that students, teachers, and professionals were the only clearly definable occupation categories. The "professional" category was used to denote respondents whose occupation fell into a recognised professional body such as law, medicine, journalism etc. Teachers from all levels of educational institutions were a sufficiently large and distinct group to justify grouping them in their own category rather than with other professionals. The remainder of the respondents constituted a wide and disparate range of occupations and included farmers (2%), business people (5%), pensioners (1%), civil servants¹⁴ (2%), unemployed (4%), technicians (3%), paramedical staff (4%), those working in industry (3%) and in hotels (3%). They were all grouped together as the 'Other', occupational category.

¹⁴ Some civil servants are also professionals e.g. teachers, accountants and were categorised as such rather than in the 'Other' category.



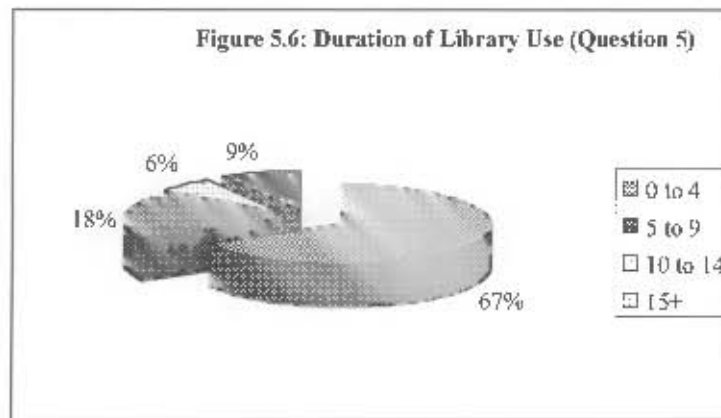
Source: Survey data

From the results it emerged that students (49%) were the most dominant occupation group that used the KNLS followed by the heterogeneous 'Other' category (27%). Teachers comprised 16% of the sample and the remaining 8% of the respondents belonged to the professional category. This has fitted well with research from other parts of Africa which indicates that students form the majority of those who use public libraries (Raseroka, 1994:156).

5.6 Duration of Library Membership

(cf. Question five of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

During the design of the study, it was found prudent to establish how long the respondents had been using the library. This information was deemed important as it was thought that those who have used the library for a longer period would be in a better position to rate the library services and also to make more informed decisions about user fees.



Source: Survey Data

The survey results, as shown in Figure 5.6, indicate that the majority (67%) had used the library for only a short period ranging from 0 to 4 years. The other responses ranged from 18% for those who had used the library between 5 to 9 years, to 6% and 9% for those who had used the library for periods between 10 to 14 years and 15 plus years respectively. It is thus clear that most of the respondents had used the library for only a short period and only a small percentage had been life-time users.

This result correlates with the fact that the largest proportion of the library users were under the age of 24 and were students. It is thus apparent that once the students leave their educational institutions they rarely use the library again. This would also appear to confirm the belief held by many that people in Kenya do not generally read in adulthood.

5.7 Other Members of the Household that Use the Library

(cf. Question six of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

This question was designed to help in determining whether there is a need to consider separate charges for library users who have more than one member of the household registered or utilising the KNLS facilities. The respondents were also later asked to indicate whether they would prefer to pay an annual fee either as an individual or as a family. The survey results indicate an almost equal division between the small majority (58%) who had other household members using KNLS facilities, and the 42% who had none.

5.8 Respondents Utilising the Resources of Other Libraries

(cf. Question seven of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

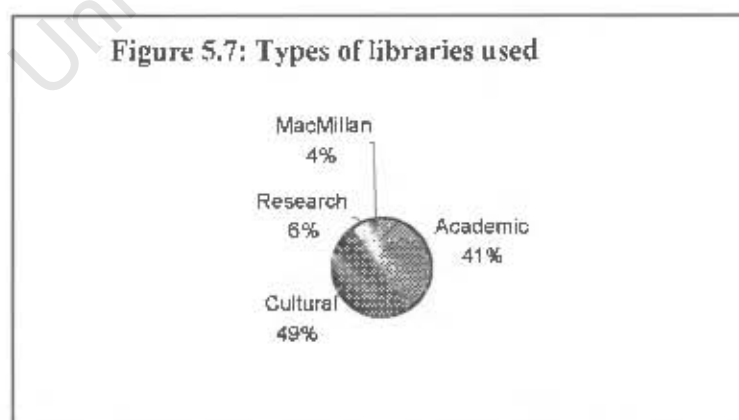
One of the reasons often advanced against the introduction of user fees is that it will disenfranchise many and it may result in mass exodus from the library especially by those unable to pay. Thus, this question was asked to determine the proportion of library users who were members of other libraries and thus had other alternative options should they be unable to pay user fees. This question was also asked with the premise that those who are members of other libraries (e.g. British Council) are better placed to give informed suggestions on the topic.

TABLE 5.2: Respondents Utilising Resources of other Libraries (Question 7)

Member	Count	Cum. Count	Percent
YES	51	51	21.2
NO	190	241	78.8
Missing	0	241	0.0

Source: Survey Data

Table 5.2 above indicates that the vast majority (79%) of the respondents were not members of any other library. The respondents were also further asked to indicate the specific libraries they used if they did belong to other libraries.



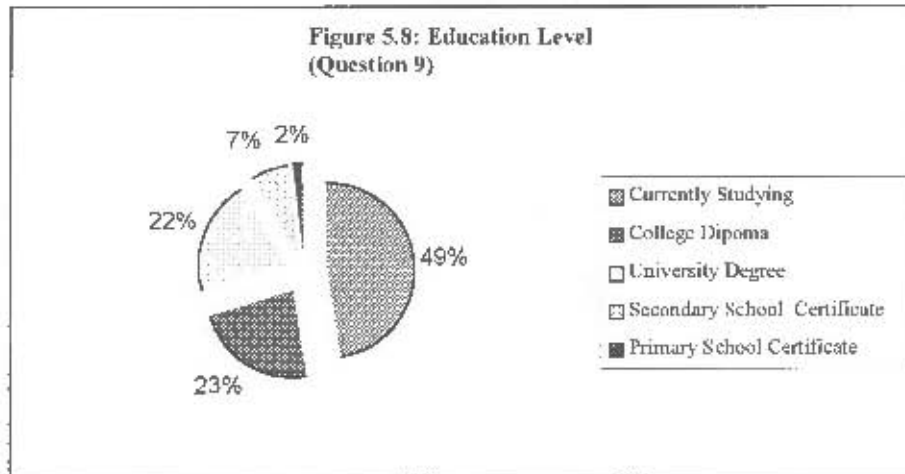
Source: Survey data

From Figure 5.7 above it is apparent that of the few (21%) respondents who used other libraries, 49% were members of cultural libraries run by several foreign embassies in Kenya (e.g. the British Council Library, the American Cultural Center, *Alliance Francaise*, etc.), 41% were members of academic libraries, 6% used research libraries, while only 4% were registered with the Macmillan public library run by the Nairobi City Council. The reason why very few of the respondents utilised the resources of other libraries could possibly be attributed to the fact that most libraries in Kenya (other than the KNLS, MacMillan and academic libraries) charge high subscription fees which is beyond the reach of many Kenyans. In addition, most of the materials in these libraries are very specialised and not relevant to the needs of KNLS users, of whom the largest proportion are students (cf. 5.5).

5.9 Level of Education

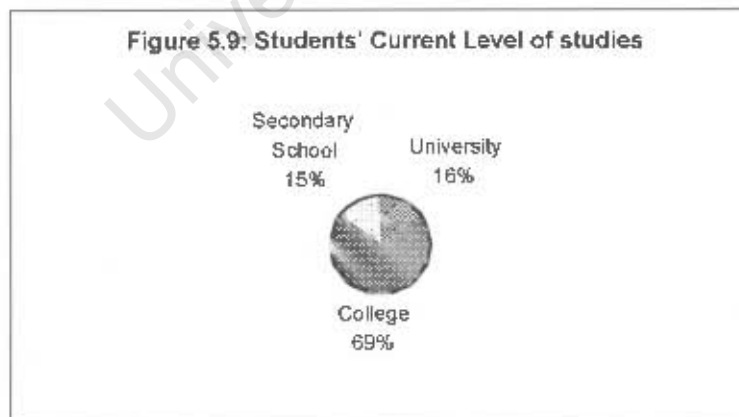
(cf. Question nine of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

Before looking at the education level of the respondents, it is imperative to be aware of education situation in Kenya. Kenya is considered to have one of the most educated citizenry when compared with other countries within the East African region. This has been attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, Kenya was one the first countries to be colonised in East Africa and the impact of western education was felt much earlier than in other East African countries. Secondly, Kenya is signatory to the right to free education as provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1945. Thirdly, Kenya spends an average of 20% of the national income (GDP) on education (Daily Nation, January 5, 2003). Despite this positive picture Kenya has also suffered, like many other sub-Saharan countries, from the exodus of many of its best brains to the west due to lack of local opportunities.



Source: Survey data

As seen in 5.5 and again in Figure 5.8 above, the largest proportion (49%) of the respondents were students who were still studying (either at school or at a tertiary educational institute). It can be seen that of those who were not students, 23% of the respondents had college diplomas, and 22% had university degrees while only 7% had attained a secondary school leaving certificate (KCSE) and a mere 2% had a primary school certificate (KCPE). When the student respondents are classified according to their level of education as shown in Figure 5.9 below, it became evident that the majority (69%) were in middle colleges, 15% were in secondary¹⁵ school, and 16% were pursuing university degrees.



Source: Survey data

¹⁵ This can partially be attributed to the study only selecting respondents over the age of 15.

The high number of college students could be attributed to an agreement signed between the KNLS and the Kenya Accountants and Secretaries Board (KASNEB) in 1999 that stipulated that certain of the KNLS branches would act as liaison offices for the KASNEB and would also be designated as examination centres. In addition, it was agreed that these branches would stock materials for use by students registered with the KASNEB. A substantial number of university students study privately as most Kenyan universities have started private degree programs. Since most of these students do not reside within the campuses they mainly utilise the KNLS facilities rather than their own libraries.

It is thus apparent from the survey results that the KNLS is used mainly by the more educated stratum of the population, i.e. college students and Kenyans with some form of tertiary education. Studies done in other countries have also shown a similar trend. According to Egholm and Jochumsen (2000: 302) recent surveys in Denmark show that there is a significant connection between public library use and level of education.

5.10 Personal Income

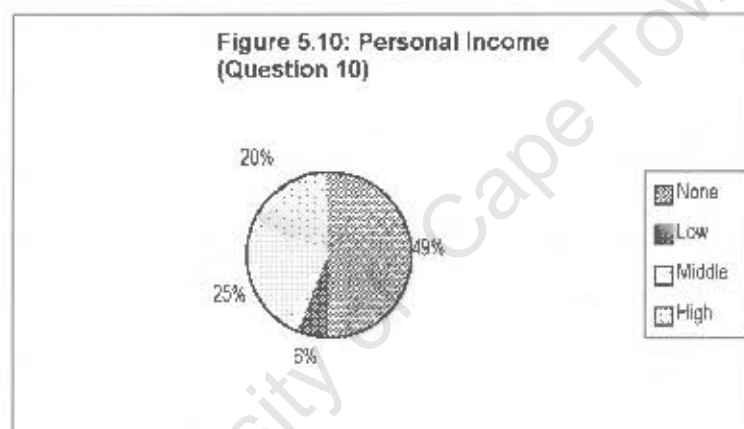
(cf. Question ten of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

Personal income is generally an important factor in understanding financial matters that relate to choices and preference and has particular relevance for this study. The income ranges that were presented in the questionnaire were congruent with the income categories published by the Kenyan government in the Poverty Eradication Plan of 2000. Thus, those respondents with less than Ksh. 5000 would be regarded as low-income earners, those with an income between Ksh.5000-15000 fell within the middle-income bracket, and those earning over Ksh.15000 could be regarded as high-income earners.

Before looking at the income range of the respondents, it is important to understand the socio-economic situation in Kenya. According to the Government of Kenya Economic Survey (2000), approximately half of Kenya's rural and urban populations (53% and 50%

respectively) are classified as "poor". Kenya ranks high on the list of countries in the low-income economy category and in addition has a skewed concentration of income - 10% of the population controls 35% of the nation's income. In Kenya, most households survive on an income of Ksh 1, 239¹⁶ per month in the rural areas and Ksh2, 648 in urban areas. Thus, a very large proportion of Kenya's population of 30 million people lack sufficient income to meet their basic needs and about two million people are unemployed.

Given the high poverty levels in Kenya, it was thus surprising that such a high proportion (45%) of the respondents were in the middle to high income categories. It was on the other hand, not surprising that just over half of the respondents (55%) had either no income (49%) or a very low income (6%) (cf. Figure 5.10 below).

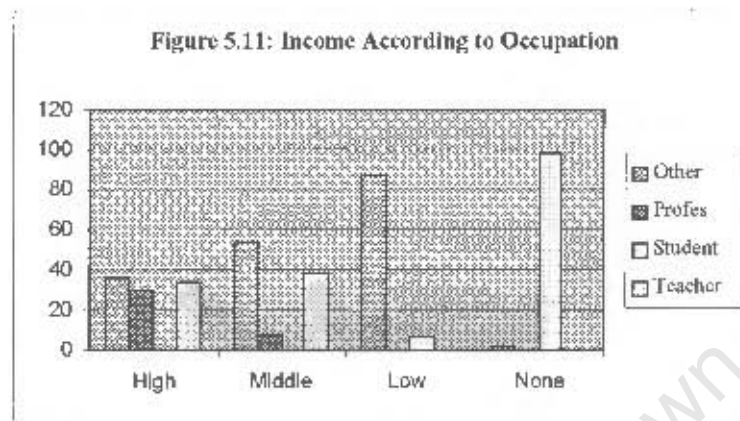


Source: Survey Data

If these results are further analysed as shown in Figure 5.11 below, it can be seen that almost all the non-income respondents were students (98%) an outcome that was not totally unexpected as they comprised 49% of the study population. The low income respondents, in turn, mostly belonged to the 'Other' occupation category (87%) and as indicated earlier, this group encompasses a cross section of society that includes low income earners such as subsistence farmers, the unemployed, housewives, technicians and many others who did not have formal employment. The high proportion of users with middle to high income category confirms the belief held by many that libraries are

¹⁶ 78Ksh = \$ 1

utilised by the middle class who can afford to pay for services. This assertion is supported by Skrzewski (1985:137) who points out that “the typical library user is seen to be middle classed and reasonably well-off”.



Source: Survey Data

It can further be argued that as almost all the users with no income were students who were mostly pursuing some or other tertiary educational qualification (85%), they have the potential to earn adequate salaries in future. This further substantiates the assertion that public library users are predominantly from the middle classes. This argument, however, does not detract from the fact that 55% of KNLS users are indigent albeit with potential to earn adequate salaries in future. A further aspect that should not be ignored is that the proportion of users who are students will in the future always remain high.

The small proportion of low-income respondents, other than students, might be attributed to Sehuhula's (2002:35) view that: “to those for whom obtaining food, shelter and clothing is a struggle, reading is not a priority”. This implies that the poor have no time to visit libraries since they are too busy trying to make ends meet.

CHAPTER SIX

USERS' INTERACTION WITH AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LIBRARY SERVICE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the views of the users with regard to their interaction with the library and their perceptions of the services it offers. The chapter will look specifically at the awareness of the potential of the KNLS to offer specific services, the ratings the users awarded to the various features of the library, the main reasons for using the library and factors which influence the use of the library.

6.2 Awareness of Library Services

(cf. Question eleven of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

The cardinal principle in marketing is that a product cannot sell if the potential consumers are not aware of it. This question was thus designed to determine the degree of awareness that the respondents had of the potential of the KNLS to offer several services. This question was also asked as the researcher wanted the respondents to provide their views on cost sharing taking into consideration their knowledge of services the KNLS offers, or had offered in the past. The researcher further hoped that responses from this question would also help to determine whether there would be a need for the KNLS to initiate a marketing campaign in order to make people more aware of its services if user fees were to be introduced.

When one examines the aims and objectives of the KNLS (c.f. 2.6.1) it becomes very clear that when the library service was originally mooted, the planners had very ambitious ideas. However, after almost 40 years of existence the KNLS has not achieved many of its stated objectives especially with regards to service delivery. Experience has shown that although the KNLS has the potential to offer a variety of services, only a limited number of services are available in all the branches. Some of the services which

have been dormant in many branches include: interlibrary loans, postal library service and the reference service.

The inter-library loans (ILL) service was discontinued at many branches during the 1980's when it became too expensive to run. A further factor is that the KNLS does not have online access catalogues and many librarians thus found it difficult to offer the service as the only way for one to know what is available in other libraries is by telephone or post and both these communication services are unreliable and expensive. The postal library service was originally designed to benefit the public who live a great distance from a library, but it has been dormant for a number of years because of the expense to run it. Many librarians were further discouraged to offer the service since many books were not returned and it is difficult to trace defaulters. A further problem of the service is that of inadequate and limited stock. A specialised reference service has not been offered in most of the KNLS branches for many years. The Nairobi branch was the only division that had a designated reference and information section, but even this was dispensed with in the early 1990's following the exodus of qualified staff and the need to create more reading space.

The researcher, nonetheless, decided to test the users on their awareness of the book reservation, ILL, postal, institutional, mobile and reference services despite the complete or partial suspension of many of these services. His reasoning was twofold:

- He expected some users to have experienced them even if only in the past and
- He wanted to arouse their awareness in anticipation of testing their willingness to pay for such services in subsequent questions.

TABLE 6.1: Awareness of Services (Question 11)

Service	% Unaware	% Aware
Book reservation	22.9	77.2
Inter-library loans	66.4	33.6
Postal service	72.2	27.8
Institutional service	30.3	69.7
Mobile library	22.9	77.2
Reference service	14.5	85.5

Source: Survey data

The responses are analysed in Table 6.1 and it did not come as a surprise when the survey results showed that 66% of the respondents were unaware of the existence of ILL services and 72% did not know of the postal library service. It came as a surprise, however, that such a vast majority indicated that they were aware of the reference service (86%). The researcher, however, suspects that the respondents may have confused a dedicated reference service with the reference collection.

The specialised services that are still operational are the book reservation service, the mobile library and institutional membership. It was thus not an unexpected result that a substantial majority of the users were aware of these services. Follow-up interviews however indicated that although 77% of the respondents were aware of the availability of the book reservation service many of the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of this service and were hesitant to use it. The problems experienced with the service is largely due to the card catalogues that are not regularly updated and the far from effective manual issuing system. The large proportion of respondents who were aware of the institutional service (70%) and the mobile library service (77%) is probably due to the fact that a substantial number of the respondents were students and teachers and these services are tailored mainly for use by schools or colleges.

6.3 Users Perception of the Quality of Library Services

(cf. Question twelve of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

One of the main objectives of this study was to establish whether users are able and willing to pay for library services, but, like with any other consumer goods, clients cannot be expected to pay for library services if they do not attach much value to the service. It was therefore necessary to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding the quality of the services offered by the KNLS as the researcher is of the opinion that patrons would not be prepared to pay for poor library services. Another reason for this question was that it would identify any areas requiring improvement and this is very important as the improvement of services should be one of the guiding principle when considering the introduction of user fees.

TABLE 6.2: Likert Scale of users' perception of library's service (Question 12)

Users Perception of Library	% Good	% Fair	% Poor	% Total
Availability of relevant books	40.2	47.0	12.9	100
Availability of newspapers, magazines, etc.	76.3	15.8	8.0	100
Staff competence	83.8	15.8	.41	100
Building Appearance	59.3	36.1	4.6	100
Reading environment	63.5	29.9	6.7	100
Overall quality of service	66.8	32.0	1.2	100

Source: Survey Data

The respondents' perceptions relating to the availability and relevance of library materials, staff assistance, building appearance, the reading environment and the overall quality of service are outlined in Table 6.2 above.

It is clear from Table 6.2 that in all instances, except as far as the relevance and availability of books, was concerned, the majority of the respondents thought that a 'good' service was being provided.

The less than satisfactory response with regard to the bookstock prompted the researcher to further test this aspect during the follow-up interviews that he conducted. As stated by Webb (1994:3), "there is no point in charging a fee for services which have always been free without offering a counter reward, such as improved reading materials. People might look for alternative places to obtain the same material or do without it". Responses obtained during the follow-up interviews confirmed that the users considered the book stock to be far from adequate and often irrelevant to local needs. A study conducted by the KNLS in 2000 (KNLS, 2000:59) further corroborated that the book stock was inadequate in terms of quantity, quality and diversity. It has been observed by the researcher that the book stock is generally outdated and has not kept pace with the changing information needs and socio-economic conditions of Kenyans. For example, the rural population's very specific needs for information sources relating to agriculture, basic technology, community health, etc. are not being met and the KNLS has not been able to maintain an appropriate purchasing policy to keep up with the continuous changes in the school curricula in Kenya.

The researcher contends that the main reason for all these inadequacies and the deterioration of the book-stock has been the funding problems the KNLS has been experiencing for a number of years. Lack of funds has resulted in very few books other than donations being added to the stock each year. Donations are mostly made by organisations in the United Kingdom and these materials are often not relevant to local needs. Another consequence of the poor funding situation has been that the KNLS has not been able to maintain a book repair services and many books have been withdrawn from the library that could otherwise have been repaired and kept in the stock.

The researcher, however, further suggests that inadequate funding is not the only reason for stock deficiencies. Inappropriate book selection could be another contributing factor. The KNLS has a centralised acquisition policy and book selection is managed by the head office in Nairobi with very little local input. The result is that when the meagre funds that are available are used to acquire new books, they mostly do not meet the diverse needs of the users at local branch level.

Apart from a few purpose built buildings, more than half of the KNLS library buildings were originally designed for other purposes and were later acquired by the KNLS and adapted to serve as libraries. Many of the buildings in rural areas lack such basic amenities as lights and running water, while those in urban areas are also lacking in facilities such as inadequate reading space and some are located in less than ideal environments. Interviews that were conducted with branch librarians specifically indicated that many of the buildings are located in areas that are difficult to access and in many instances unsafe to visit. It is generally thought that many municipal authorities do not rate libraries highly and thus only allocate land with little commercial value to the KNLS. Considering all these factors it was therefore deemed necessary to know from the respondents whether the state of the buildings impacted negatively on their interaction with the library. From the responses obtained it would appear that this seems not to be a drawback. From Table 6.2 above it can be seen that the majority (63%) of the

respondents rated the reading environment as "Good" and 59% indicated that the appearance of the buildings was "Good".

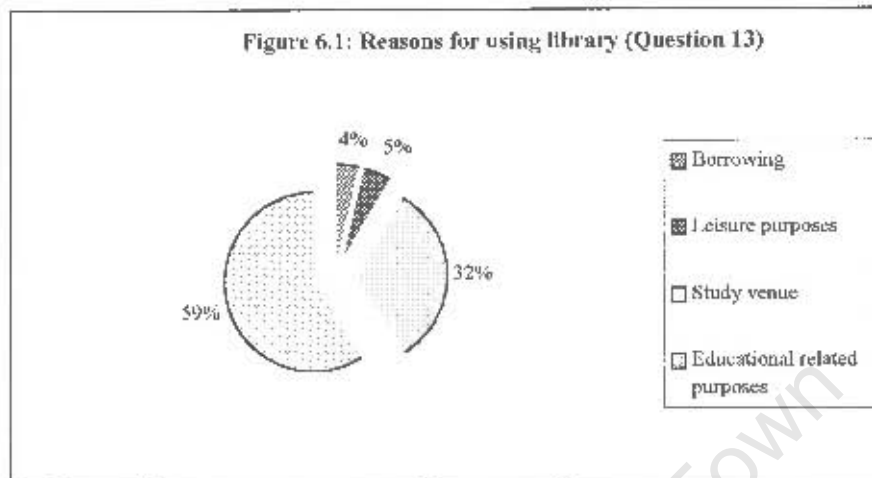
The last section of this question asked the respondents to rate the overall quality of service. This question was designed as a check question since it could not be guaranteed that all the respondents had the ability to rate the services objectively. However, it became apparent that the overall 67% positive rating correlated well with the responses obtained from the respondents with regards to specific services reported above.

6.4 Reasons for Using the Library

(cf. Question thirteen of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

The public library, because of the heterogeneous nature of its users, is generally used for a variety of reasons. It was, thus, important to know the respondents' main reasons for using the KNLS libraries. The researcher presented the respondents with five categories from which they could select one as the main reason why they used the KNLS libraries. These categories included using the library as a study venue, the use of the materials for educational purposes, leisure purposes, and borrowing purposes and a final option of 'Other' reasons they could stipulate. The latter option was not pursued by any of the users.

The option 'study venue' implied that the respondent had his/her own reading material and was merely using the library facility to work and study in. The 'educational purpose' category referred to the situation where the respondents were mainly using the library materials for education purposes. The concept 'leisure purposes' implied that the respondents were utilising the library facilities for recreational reasons such as reading newspapers and magazines, attending free public lectures, and watching video shows. The 'borrow' category referred to instances where the respondents borrowed books for purposes other than formal educational reasons.



Source: Survey Data

The survey data as represented in Figure 6.1 clearly indicates that the respondents mainly used the library for some or other academic purpose as almost all the respondents either used the library to gain access to the library's educational materials (59%) or as a study venue (32%). This could mainly be attributed to the fact that the largest proportion of the respondents were students and to a lesser extent teachers. The study further shows that the library was hardly used for general borrowing (4%) or leisure purposes (5%).

6.4.1 Variables that could affect Library Use Patterns

This data was further analysed to establish whether demographic factors such as education, occupation, etc. could have affected library use patterns. The researcher thus created cross tabulations between the seven independent or classification variables (the demographic factors) and the dependent variables related to library use. Chi-square tests were done on STATA to identify the significant results and these are reported in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3: Relationship Between Library Use & Respondents' Characteristics

	AGE				p-value
LIBUSE	15-24	25-34	35-44	45+	
Borrow	1.02	4.76	7.32	5.56	0.000 **
Educational	70.73	50.00	64.29	55.56	
Leisure	1.02	3.57	9.76	22.22	
Study venue	33.67	41.67	12.20	16.67	
	GENDER				
LIBUSE	Female	Male			
Borrow	6.90	2.73			
Educational	58.62	60.11			
Leisure	1.72	6.01			0.906 ns
Study venue	32.76	31.15			
	LOCATION				
LIBUSE	Rural	Urban			
Borrow	3.51	3.80			
Educational	63.16	58.70			0.9038 ns
Leisure	3.51	5.43			
Study venue	29.82	32.07			
	OCCUPATION				
LIBUSE	Other	Professional	Student	Teacher	
Borrow	3.12	21.05	0.00	7.50	
Educational	51.56	52.63	56.78	85.00	0.000 **
Leisure	17.19	5.26	0.00	0.00	
Study venue	28.12	21.05	43.22	7.50	
	DURATION LEVEL				
LIBUSE	0-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15+ yrs	
Borrow	1.86	9.09	13.33	0.00	
Educational	61.49	50.00	53.33	71.43	0.015 *
Leisure	2.48	9.09	6.67	14.29	
Study venue	34.16	31.82	26.67	14.29	
	EDUCATION				
LIBUSE	Studying	Less Sec	Secondary	College	University
Borrow	0.00	0.00	5.88	6.25	9.26
Educational	56.78	25.00	52.94	68.75	62.96
Leisure	0.00	50.00	17.65	4.17	9.26
Study venue	43.22	25.00	23.53	20.88	18.52
	INCOME				
LIBUSE	High	Medium	Low	None	
Borrow	10.64	6.67	0.00	0.00	
Educational	57.45	70.00	46.67	57.14	0.000 **
Leisure	10.64	5.00	26.67	0.00	
Study venue	21.28	18.33	26.67	42.86	

**-Significant at $p \leq 0.001$; *- Significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ns- not statistically significant

From Table 6.3 it can be seen that the age of the respondents appears to be significantly related to their reasons for using the library. The Chi-square statistic for this item was found to be significant at the 0.001 level, ($\chi^2=31.3409$; $p=0.000$). It is apparent that although 'borrowing books' is generally not a prominent reason for using the library, the youngest age category borrowed by far the least books (1%) of all the age groups. Borrowing then increases with increase in age to the 34-44 age bracket (7%), and then it shows a slight drop for the oldest category (6%). It is evident that the use of the library for educational purposes was remarkably high amongst all the different age categories with peaks at the 15-24 years (71%) and the 35-44 age categories (64%). Even though the

use of the library for leisure purposes was generally also not favoured by the respondents, its popularity increased considerably from the youngest (1%) to the oldest users (22%). The use of the library as a study venue is the highest among the younger age categories, particularly the 25-34 age category (42%), and then it drops considerably for the older age categories to ratings of 12% and 17%.

If the gender and location variables are considered, it is clear that they did not produce significant results (cf. Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 further shows that there is a highly significant relationship between the occupation of the respondents and the reason for using the library. This is confirmed by the chi-square statistic which was found to be significant at the 0.001 level, ($\chi^2=66.9317$; $p=0.000$). The professional category made the most extensive use of the library for borrowing purposes (21%), while teachers (7.5%) also used the facility more than the sample aggregate of 4%. The use of the library for educational purposes was high for all the occupational category groups and by far the highest for teachers (85%). The use of the library for leisure purpose was fairly well supported amongst the respondents categorized as "other" (17%), much less so by professionals (5%), and not at all by students and teachers. The use of the library as a study venue was well supported by students (43%), much less so by the "other" category (28%) and professionals (21%), and hardly supported by teachers (8%).

The duration that the respondents had used the library also produced significant results when cross tabulated with the reasons for using the library. The Chi-square test indicates that there is a significant relationship at the 0.05 level, ($\chi^2=20.4317$; $p=0.015$). The borrowing of books from the library increases steadily from 2% to 13% as the duration of membership increases from 0-4 to 10-15 years. This is then followed by a total decline in borrowing by respondents with a membership of longer than 15 years. The use of the library for educational purposes is high for all categories of membership duration, with a slightly higher score for the shortest period (62%) and appreciably higher for the longest period (71%). The use of the library for leisure purposes is highest for those who have

used the library for more than 15 years, and then progressively less for those who have used it for 5-9 years, 10-14 years, and 0-4 years respectively. It is apparent from the results that the use of the library as a study venue is the highest among those who have used the library for 0-4 years (34%) and slightly less so for those with a membership of 5-9 years (32%) and 10-14 years (27%). The respondents, with the longest membership (15+ years) made the least use of the library for study purposes (14%).

Results from the chi-square test clearly indicate that the level of education of the respondents and the use of the library are highly related. The relationship is significant at the 0.001 level ($\chi^2 = 51.6923$; $p = 0.000$). The borrowing of books from the library is low amongst all the educational groups, ranging between 6% for those with a secondary school certificate and college diploma to 9% for university graduates, while those who are still studying and those who have less than secondary school qualification do not use it for this reason at all. The use of the library for education purposes was high for all educational categories, with the highest level for college diplomates (69%) and university graduates (63%), and the lowest for those with lower than secondary education (25%). The use of the library for leisure purposes was by far the highest among respondents with lower than secondary education qualifications (50%). The use of the library for this purpose then drops considerably for those respondents with a secondary education (18%), college (4%) and university qualifications (9%), while those who are still studying did not use the library for this purpose at all. The use of library as a study venue is the highest for students (43%), and then it drops to almost equal ratings for those with lower than secondary education (25%), secondary education (24%), college (21%) and university qualifications (18%).

The chi-square test also suggests that income and the reason for using the library are highly related at the 0.001 significant level, ($\chi^2 = 46.4979$; $p = 0.000$). It is apparent that using the library to borrow books is the highest for those with a high income (11%) and then it decreases to 0% as the level of income reduces to a zero rate. The use of the library for educational purpose was high amongst all the different income categories with a peak for those with a middle income (70%). The use of the library for leisure purposes

was by far the highest for those with a low income (27%), lower for those with a high income (11%), and considerably less for those with a medium income (5%). The use of the library as a study venue was the highest for those with no income (43%), and then significantly less for those within the low (27%), high (21%), and medium (18%) income brackets.

If the reasons for using the library are considered in relation to the independent variables the following profile emerges:

- As far as educational use is concerned it is clear that it was generally given a high rating by all subcategories of the study. The one exception was the 'less than secondary school' educational category with only a 25% rating. The highest scores for this use was given by the teacher occupational group (85%). This is understandable given that teachers have to read constantly in order to improve their teaching and to keep abreast with the changing educational needs in Kenya. The use of the library by students for educational related purposes is also understandable given that they require educational material for their studies and library facilities are very poor in schools and colleges. It is however not very clear why many of the other subcategories of this study also indicated a high use of the library for this purpose. One explanation could be that many people in Kenya associate libraries with educational use thus automatically indicated this reason. Another reason could be that many respondents were furthering their education informally.
- When one looks at the utilisation of the library as a study venue, it emerges that those respondents who make the most use of this facility were those who are within the 25-34 age category (42%), the student occupational group (43%), those who have used the library for less than 4 years (34%), and lastly those who have no income (43%). The use by students, those with no income, and the shortest membership duration did not come as a surprise since they were expected to use the library for this purpose – particularly the poorer students who have no where else to study and those students enrolled at the many private colleges that have no

library facilities. The use of the library as a study venue by the respondents within the 25-34 age category was surprising but could be attributed to resurgent interest in higher education in Kenya after many public universities started running parallel degree programs in the 1990's for those students who could not get admission into the subsidised programs and are prepared to pay tuition fees. Although the program initially targeted secondary school leavers it has attracted more interest amongst those already working in government or the private sector.

- As far as book borrowing is concerned, it is clear that it was generally given a low rating by all subcategories of the study population. It would thus appear that public library users in Kenya read for educational purposes and not as a recreation or for general information purposes. This could be attributed to a number of underlying factors. The lack of use of the library for borrowing purposes could be attributed to the long held belief that many Kenyans avoid reading especially after leaving school. A further factor could be the general nature of the information and reading resources stocked by the KNLS. It is possible that most users are unable to find material other than educational material which they would be interested in borrowing. As indicated earlier, limited financial resources has prevented the KNLS from updating its stock and most of the resources are no longer relevant to current user needs. A further factor could be that the centralised acquisition policy could affect the relevancy of stock as far as local needs are concerned. The respondents who make the most use of this facility are those who are in the 35-44 age category (7%), who are in the 'professional' occupation group (21%), who have been members of the library for between 10 to 14 years (13%), who have higher educational qualifications, particularly university graduates (9%), and who are in the high income category (11%)

- As far as the use of the library for leisure purposes is concerned, it is apparent that it was given a low rating by all subcategories of the study population. The one exception was those with less than secondary education (50%). This was expected given that this category of respondents would generally have the lowest literacy competency and would not have any specific information needs and would thus mainly use the library facility as a place to meet friends, read newspapers and generally pass the time. The general non-use of the library for leisure activities might be attributed to the fact that majority of the users are using the libraries for educational purposes.

A number of pertinent facts and issues have emerged from this study with regard to the use of the KNLS libraries. Although the KNLS as the major public library system in Kenya was established to offer a variety of services and to serve diverse user groups it is apparent that it is used mainly for educational purposes and as a study venue. It has further emerged that the 'teacher' occupational group used the library far more for educational purposes than any other group, and that this category and students constitute the major user categories of the KNLS. What this implies is that apart from diversifying its services the KNLS should also place more emphasis on its educational role.

It has also clearly emerged that very few users utilise the KNLS for leisure and general information reading purposes. The researcher however contends that the blame for the non-use of the library for general reading purposes does not lie solely with the KNLS. The researcher suggests that the genesis for this lack of a reading culture in Kenya can be traced to the education system in Kenya which does not encourage and foster a general reading culture other than for examination purposes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OPINIONS RELATING TO USER FEES

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the respondents' opinions regarding the user fee concept by first obtaining their views on such initiatives that are in place in the health sector and previously in the education sector in Kenya, and then to establish whether they think the KNLS should implement a similar policy. This section also presents specific views regarding willingness to pay user fees, fee categories and amount that can be levied, preference for payment, the likely impact of user fees, alternatives to user fees, exemptions and waivers and the respondents general comments on the issue. The last section presents the results of interviews with senior librarians in the KNLS.

7.2 Cost Sharing in Kenya

(cf. Question fourteen to seventeen of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

Before the respondents were asked specific questions on user fees in relation to the KNLS it was necessary to determine whether the respondents fully comprehended the user fee concept. In order to put this into context, the respondents were asked if they were aware of the cost sharing scheme in the health and education sectors in Kenya. The scheme has been in place since 1990 and was introduced by the government in an effort to generate additional funds to supplement the funds allocated from the central budget. The objective was to inject more money into these essential services without increasing the annual budgetary allocations.

As shown in Table 7.1 below, the survey results indicate that a substantial number of the respondents (85%) are aware of the above scheme and of these a large proportion (65%) have contributed towards cost sharing. Further analysis of the data showed that the vast majority (73%) of those who were not aware of the scheme as well as those who have not

paid for services through the scheme were students, 18% were from the 'Other' occupational group, while teachers and professionals comprised 5% respectively.

TABLE 7.1: Awareness of User Fees (Question 14 & 15)

Aware of user fees in the health and education sector	Count	Cumil Count	Percent
Yes	206	206	85.47
No	35	241	14.52
Paid for services through user fees			
Yes	157	157	65.15
No	84	241	34.85

Source: Survey Data

It is generally believed that the introduction of cost sharing in the health and education sectors in Kenya has not had the desired benefits hoped for and many people who are not able to pay these fees have been denied essential education and health services. There have further been claims of the misappropriation of fee money in hospitals and the cost sharing scheme in the education sector has also been discredited. Of major concern has been the inability by the government to improve the delivery of services. The reduction in the number of people using health facilities perturbed even the government as it was feared that many citizens might revert to seeking treatment from traditional healers who are perceived to be cheaper than conventional health care.

It would thus appear that the intended purposes of the cost sharing schemes have not been achieved to date and the government is considering abandoning them totally. As a first step in that direction free primary education was re-introduced in 2003 and the following extract from the Daily Nation (January 5, 2003) clearly expresses the negative public opinion with regard to cost sharing in the education sector:

“Education must be seen as a free public service and not as a traded service. What Kenya needs is a rights-based education policy and education strategy. We need a blueprint that would specify the key aims of the education, identify priorities, including the elimination of financial obstacles, assign responsibilities, and detail institutions and procedures for the monitoring and enforcement of the right to education.”

TABLE 7.2: Achievements of User Fees (Question 16)

Achievement	Count	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No achievement	122	54.22	54.72
Objectives achieved to some extent	53	23.56	77.78
Objectives achieved	50	22.22	100.00
Total	225	100.00	

Source: Survey Data

It thus did not come as a surprise that, when the respondents were asked to state whether the government has achieved the objectives which motivated the introduction of user fees in the health and education sector, a substantial proportion (54%) indicated that the schemes have been unsuccessful (Table 7.2). On the other hand, 22% of the respondents believe that the objectives have been met, and 24% of the respondents believe that the objectives have been attained to some extent.

TABLE 7.3: Options for KNLS (Question 17)

Option	Count	Cumulative Count (n=241)	Percent	Cumulative Percent (n=241)
Other	31	31	12.86	12.86
Introduce user fees	152	183	63.07	75.93
Reduce administrative costs	56	239	23.23	99.17
Reduce services	2	241	.829	100.00

Source: Survey data

What was surprising was that when presented with a number of options in this study (c.f. Table 7.3) that could be used to assist the KNLS to reduce its financial deficit caused by decreased government funding, a clear majority (63%) of the respondents thought that the introduction of user fees would be a viable option. It can further be seen from Table 7.3 that 23% of the respondents proposed that the KNLS should consider reducing administrative costs and concentrate on core library services. About 13% of the respondents had other varied opinions such as fundraising, seeking donations from publishers, lobbying for government funds, etc, and less than 1% of the respondents supported the suggestion that the KNLS should reduce its services.

This was a paradoxical outcome considering the negativity shown towards cost sharing in the previous question. It is further also interesting that the respondents were willing to support a user fee system rather than opt for one of the other alternatives, none of which had direct financial implications for them.

A major survey of professional librarians, users and non-users conducted by Aslib in 1995 in England and Wales produced different results compared to those obtained in this study. During the Aslib study respondents were given several options (which included some of the above) to indicate appropriate sources of funding for library services that were operation under financial pressure. According to the Aslib report (1995:213) far fewer of the respondents (40%) were in favour of charging for library services including charges to borrow books, than the 63% who were in favour of user fees in this study.

Having introduced the topic of cost sharing and obtained the respondents general views, the researcher decided to ask more specific questions relating to the respondents' willingness to pay user fees.

7.3 Willingness to Pay User Fees

(cf. Question eighteen of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

It was seen in Chapter 3 that the question of charging for library services has been hotly debated in the library literature. According to Egholm and Jochumsen (2000:300), an often-overlooked aspect in this debate is the question of the attitude of the public towards payment generally. Here the essential question is: Are users as negative towards user fees as professional librarians? It was thus with this question in mind that the researcher specifically asked the respondents whether they would be prepared to pay for library services should the KNLS introduce a cost sharing system.

Once again it can be seen from Table 7.4 below that contrary to expectations almost two thirds of the respondents (66%) indicated willingness to pay for library services, while only 34% were not willing to do so.

TABLE 7.4: Willingness to Pay User Fees (Question 18)

Willing to Pay	Count	Cumul. Count	Percent	Cumul. Percent
No	83	83	34.43	34.43
Yes	158	241	65.56	100.00

Source: Survey Study

The responses are particularly strange taking into consideration that Kenyans rank low on the world income index (albeit not the poorest in East Africa). The World Bank (2000), for example rated Kenya as the 17th poorest nation in the world in 2000. Apart from being poor it is also considered that Kenyans are some of the most directly taxed people in the world. Francis Atwoli, the Secretary General of the Confederation of Kenyan Workers (COTU), has for example stated that "For Kenya's top earners, taxation is not deemed to be excessive, but for middle and lower level earners, it is the difference between sustaining a child in secondary school and having him/her loiter or engaging in child labour regardless of what the law says" (East African Standard: May 3, 2003 [online]).

The question thus arises why the respondents were so supportive of paying for library services. The researcher suggests that a number of factors might have influenced the respondents' willingness to pay user fees. Firstly, it is evident from this study that the KNLS is used by the more educated citizens of Kenya who obviously value public library services and are therefore prepared to pay in order to continue receiving these services.

Secondly, it should also be borne in mind that the "*harambee*" (pooling resources together) spirit has been in place since Kenya attained independence in 1963. Through this unique fund raising scheme people come together to raise funds for community projects such as schools, hospitals, churches, etc. Thus, the respondents might have viewed the concept of user fees in that spirit. As indicated earlier, a number of community libraries have been built through community initiatives, and some of the respondents might have also taken this factor into consideration.

According to Giacoma (1989:95) library communities differ in both expenditure and revenue patterns, yet there has been little research to ascertain the variables associated

with these differing patterns. Giacomini (ibid) adds that research on community characteristics, which lead to varying degrees of support for user fees, is also inconclusive. However, it should be noted that surveys of the public's willingness to pay for public goods might be affected by bias due to the nature of the questions posed. In addition, public library users are from diverse educational backgrounds and the degree of comprehension of questions might vary.

Following on Giacomini's comments the researcher decided to further analyse the data to ascertain whether the various attributes of the respondents (the independent demographic variables) had an effect on their views with regard to their willingness to pay user fees. It was found that willingness to pay varied significantly for occupation, income, education and age (statistical significance at the .05 level), but not for duration of library membership, location and gender.

Table 7.5: Factors that influence willingness to pay user fees

	AGE					p-value
WILLINGNESS	15-24	25-34	35-44	45+		
NO	45.92	28.37	21.95	27.78		0.017 *
YES	54.08	71.43	78.05	72.22		
	GENDER					
	Female	Male				
NO	36.21	33.88				0.745 ns
YES	63.79	66.12				
	LOCATION					
WILLINGNESS	Rural	Urban				
NO	35.09	34.24				0.906 ns
YES	64.91	65.76				
	OCCUPATION					
WILLINGNESS	Other	Professional	Student	Teacher		
NO	25.00	26.32	46.61	17.50		0.001 **
YES	75.00	73.68	53.39	82.80		
	DURATION					
WILLINGNESS	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 -		
NO	36.63	34.09	40.00	14.29		0.228 ns
YES	63.35	65.91	60.00	85.71		
	EDUCATION					
WILLINGNESS	Studying	Less Sec.	Sec.	College	University	
NO	47.46	50.00	17.65	16.67	25.95	0.002 **
YES	52.24	50.00	82.35	83.33	74.07	
	INCOME					
WILLINGNESS	None	Low	Middle	High		
NO	47.06	26.67	25.00	17.02		0.001 **
YES	52.94	73.33	75.00	82.98		

**-Significant at $p \leq 0.001$; *- Significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ns- not statistically significant

From Table 7.5 above it can be seen that while a majority from all the population subcategories supported paying for library services the support varied from 50% to over 80%. It is significant to note that:

- The occupation category that was the least supportive was the student group (53%) while the most supportive were the teachers (83%) followed fairly closely by the 'other' (75%) and professional (74%) occupation categories;
- Willingness to pay fees increased with increase in income levels and this ranged from a 53% support from those with no income to a 71%, 75% and 83% support from the low, middle and high income earners.
- With regard to education it can be seen that the least supportive were those respondents with less than secondary education (50%) and those still studying (53%), while the most supportive were the university graduates (74%), secondary school leavers (82%), and college graduates (83%).
- While the youngest age category (15-24 years) was the least willing to pay (54%), all the other age categories returned high support ratings that ranged from 71% to 78%.

From the above it can be generalised that the support for paying library services was the strongest among:

- Non-student respondents, i.e. those with some or other qualifications (other than the small segment with lower than secondary qualification), and some or other qualification,
- Respondents who were earning some or other income (even at the lower level), and
- Respondents who were older than 24 years of age.

In 5.10 it was seen that almost all the respondents who were less than 25 years old, and who had no income were students and the question thus arises whether the overriding factor that determined the level of support was the fact that they were students or not, or their age, or whether they earned some or other income or not.

It was mentioned previously that that the overwhelming support for user fees was an unexpected outcome, but what was even more puzzling was why so many (over 50%) of the students, and thus also the youngest respondents and those with no income, were at all willing to pay for library services. These questions thus prompted the researcher to conduct follow-up interviews with a number of students to try and clarify these queries and also to ascertain how they expected to pay for fee-based services.

It became apparent from the follow-up interviews that the students were very passionate about the library and depended on the KNLS to provide their study materials and venue. It was further evident that although most students had no fixed income, many of them were willing somehow to find the money to pay such a fee. For example, those students who were studying at university indicated that they could easily raise money from their annual student loans, while others indicated that they would take the money from their personal savings and pocket money. Others, mostly college students indicated that they would find money from the allowances paid during their field attachment. One of the students, from a college for paramedics, explained that:

“It shouldn’t be a problem to pay for some of us in medical college if fees were to be introduced by the KNLS. I should be able to raise the money from my pocket money. In addition, we are paid during our internship and some of the students work in hospitals and clinics during the vacation ...”

Most of the students in secondary school said they expect their parents and guardians to help them to pay if user fees were to be introduced. They pointed out that their parents and guardians had been very supportive towards their studies and they did not see how they would refuse to pay for a worthy cause like library services. Said one student:

“My parents should be in a position to pay for me since they understand the role the library plays towards my studies. They know very well that my school doesn’t have a library and I can get supplementary books from the KNLS. I am sure they would rather have me in the library during the holidays instead of hanging around on the estate with my friends...”

Some students were even prepared to engage in income generating activities in order to raise funds. Said one student:

The interviewees were however far more sympathetic towards those pensioners who had retired with small payouts. They felt that the pensioners should be encouraged to use the library and that by exempting them from fees this could be achieved.

The researcher contends that while there should be a commitment to protecting vulnerable groups if subscription fees were to be introduced, there could be substantial practical obstacles for librarians to ensure successful implementation of an exemption policy. The following are the main problem areas that the researcher has identified:

- **Assigning exemption decisions to local leaders.** The major problem with this method is that considerable personal knowledge and discretionary judgment is required of the local leaders which might leave the system open to abuse.
- **Issuing of cards indicating eligibility for free services to those who qualify for exemptions.** This system is prone to several problems. Firstly, administration costs will be high. Secondly, it is difficult to devise an infallible mechanism to determine who qualifies for exemption. Thirdly, there is the problem of abuse of the system, such as cards being lent to friends and relatives who would not be eligible to free services. Fourthly, there are problems relating to the validity period of cards. If the period is short, administrative costs will be higher as the frequency of the issue period is increased. Conversely, if there is a long validity period, the likelihood of individuals' eligibility status changing is increased.
- **Charging differential fees for each income group.** The problem of establishing users' income equally arises. As indicated earlier, it is extremely difficult to determine income levels in Kenya. This is largely due to the fact that most people in the informal sector do not declare their income or pay taxes on a regular basis.

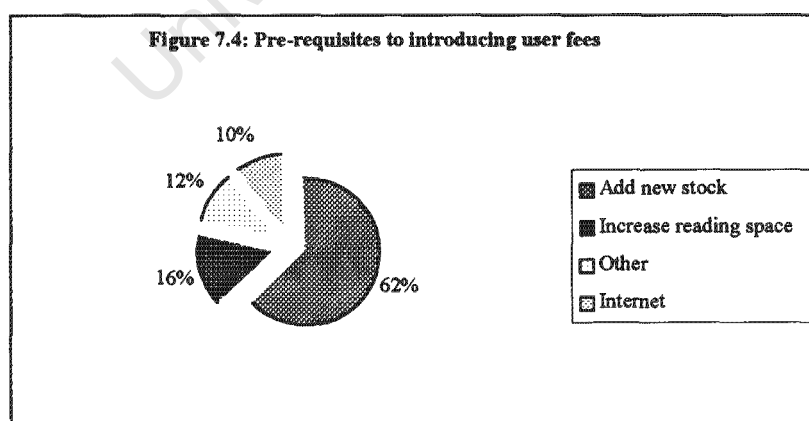
It is therefore evident that librarians will have to devise innovative ways in order to ensure that there is fair and equitable fee structures for all.

It is apparent from the foregoing exposition that if charges were to be considered for library services, exemptions would clearly have to be made. This is to avoid the more vulnerable groups in society from being subjected to further hardship and also not to exclude them from exactly those services they often urgently need. It should, however, also be realised that these groups (e.g. students) could form a high proportion of the user corps, and their need for exemption could seriously erode the potential income that would otherwise have accrued. A further factor to consider is that managing such exemptions could incur unacceptably high administrative costs and effort.

7.6 Prerequisites to User Fees Being Introduced

(cf. Question thirty three of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

The question of charging fees for public library services will clearly always give rise to much debate. Thus, apart from convincing users that there is a need for fees, a library may first be compelled to promise to improve its services before introducing user fees. This may include a commitment to purchase new stock and introduce new services. It was thus decided to test the users on their views with regard to pre-requisites that should be met contingent on user fees being introduced. The responses to the open-ended question that was put to the users were grouped into the following categories: purchasing additional library materials, increasing reading spaces, Internet provision and a variety of other pre-requisites that were put together in an 'Other' category.



Source: Survey data

From Figure 7.4 above it can be seen that by far the most respondents (62%) indicated that they would expect the library to purchase new stock which is more relevant to their specific needs. Far fewer respondents wanted the reading space to be increased (16%), had 'Other' varied reasons (12%), or required the introduction of Internet services 10%). The 'Other' varied reasons mentioned included a need for staff to improve interpersonal relations, an increase in the loans period, reduction of noise, etc. As indicated earlier, very few books have been added to the stock in the branches over the last number of years. These few additions have mainly been donations from the United Kingdom and are generally not relevant to local information needs. It once again became abundantly clear that the KNLS urgently needs to acquire new editions and books relevant to the users' needs and that they (users) may very well not be willing to pay fees if these requirements are not met.

7.7 Respondents General Comments

(cf. Question thirty four of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

The last open-ended question gave an opportunity to the respondents to provide their own general comments on the topic of user fees, library service and other aspects related to the study. The question yielded very valuable information and unearthed many of the underlying issues behind responses given in the more structured question discussed above. Three main issues emerged from this open ended question, viz: the possibility that funds likely to be collected might be misused; the state of the Kenyan economy and the impact it is likely to have on the willingness and ability of users to pay user fees; and the need for more up-to-date and relevant library materials.

A number of respondents expressed the fear that any fees likely to be collected might be misappropriated. The levying of user fees in the health sector was quoted as a classic example of how millions of shillings have been collected without any visible improvement to the health services being observed. This was generally attributed to misappropriation, and many of the respondents were convinced that services in the health sector had even actually deteriorated since the inception of user fees.

For the last ten years the Kenyan economy has registered a negative growth and this has impacted negatively on most Kenyans. There is currently a very high unemployment rate and the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. It was thus not surprising that many of the respondents questioned the rationale for introducing user fees at a time when people cannot even meet their basic needs and were specifically concerned about the adverse effect on the poor.

Other respondents, on the other hand, indicated that user fees would be accepted as long as the money which is likely to be collected will be put to proper use, for example, the purchasing of new books, and the introduction of an Internet service and a video library. As indicated earlier, it is evident that the users would wish to see any revenue likely to be collected to be channeled towards setting up services which are of direct benefit to them.

7.8 USER FEES: LIBRARIANS' PERSPECTIVES (cf. Interview Schedule Appendix C)

7.8.1 Introduction

This section discusses the results obtained from conducting interviews with senior librarians in Nairobi and in three other branches selected for this purpose. The interviews were designed to elicit views from the librarians on the topic of user fees and covered the following specific aspects: the position of KNLS funding, legal issues, ethical issues, marketing, sustainability of services, impact of user fees, and exemptions and concessions. The role of the KNLS in the new political dispensation and the implication of the proposed free education policy was also discussed.

7.8.2 Policy, Legislation and Funding

With regard to legislation the librarians were critical of the fact that the prevailing KNLS Act is out-dated and does not fully reflect present realities. They pointed out that since its enactment in 1965, many changes have taken place in the information field, and the demand for library services has grown beyond what the Act anticipated. The librarians

therefore felt that the biggest challenge ahead for the KNLS Board is to lobby with parliamentarians to facilitate the review of this Act so as to enable the Board to operate more effectively in the current environment. In addition, the librarians also proposed that there was a need to upgrade the status of the KNLS to become a strategic statutory body¹⁹ so that it may attract more government funding. This would then also enable it to freely solicit for funds and engage in income generating activities to improve its funding position.

Although the librarians acknowledged that all public institutions in Kenya, including the KNLS, have experienced considerable budgetary cuts, some of them believe that the KNLS has failed to attract its legitimate share of available finances from the government. This is mainly because it has failed to clearly articulate the role it plays in national development. They further also stated that the KNLS has not fully explored all other possibilities to supplement the funds allocated to it by the government. With reference to this aspect one librarian noted that:

“While one may understand that the KNLS receives very little from the government, it has not also fully exploited all possible avenues for generating income in order to supplement income from the exchequer.”

The librarians agreed that there is a need to formulate a comprehensive National Information Policy (NIP) and the role the KNLS plays in national development should be embedded in this policy. By proclaiming the important role it plays in information provision and development, the KNLS may attract more funding from the government. For instance, the KNLS might attract a portion of the funding set aside by the government for free primary education to support the contribution it makes to education. They further argued that such an allocation could be used to set up a fully-fledged school library service.

¹⁹ The KNLS is a free service parastatal in category F (government parastatal are categorized as A, B, C, D and F). Those higher in the hierarchy attract more funds.

7.8.3 Sustainability of Services

During the 1980's the demand for library services had grown to such an extent that the KNLS had been compelled in 1990 to embark on an ambitious expansion program. One of the priority areas in this expansion program was the establishment of community-based libraries. During the interviews a number of the librarians raised the issue that although the role and function of the KNLS in the community library project was clearly stated in the founding policy document, the KNLS has not met its obligations as originally stipulated. The librarians attributed the failure of the KNLS to fulfill its obligations to the fact that:

- The projects had been hurriedly implemented for purposes of political expediency, and the result was that they did not meet the needs of the rural communities they were supposed to serve.
- The KNLS overestimated its ability to sustain these services. It was noted that while this expansion was taking place the KNLS budget remained static and this slowed down the provision of the additional services required by the community libraries.

Several suggestions were made during the interviews as a means to revitalise and facilitate the continued partnership between the KNLS and the communities. One librarian suggested that:

“The community should be allowed to own the project in partnership with the KNLS. This is the only way communities will feel obliged to continue funding the project. For sustainability, the libraries should also be allowed to engage in income generating activities.”

As indicated earlier, the KNLS is currently modernising services in five of its branches under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Most of the librarians felt very positive about the Carnegie project and the opportunity for development it provided the KNLS, particularly in view of inadequate government funding for so many years. They however, at the same time also warned that that the KNLS should learn from previous experience which has shown that donor funding can not be depended on forever. Reference was made to problems experienced in the late 60s and early 70s as follows:

“The development of libraries was made possible by the generous contributions from NORAD, UNESCO, and the British Council but the Kenya government was unable to sustain these projects to the detriment of the KNLS.”

During the interviews a number of the librarians came forward with the following suggestions with regard to the sustainability of donor-funded projects:

- First and foremost, there is a need to clearly determine the viability of the projects. Many donors have in the past imposed projects without determining their suitability.
- There is also a need to guarantee continued funding of the projects upon completion either by the Kenyan government or the funding agency. Thus, contractual obligations should clearly stipulate this factor, when the contract is being signed between the KNLS and donors.

7.8.4 User Fees and Professional Issues

One of the highly contested issues that has been discussed in previous sections of this thesis (particularly in 3.6 and 3.7) is whether it is ethical for public librarians to charge user fees. It is considered that the notion of charging fees challenges the traditional professional culture of free library access. The main argument is that public libraries are established to offer free services to all. Thus, apart from determining the willingness of the users to pay fees, it was also important to obtain the views of the KNLS librarians on this issue.

The interview results revealed a wide range of values and attitudes held by the librarians, and there were marked differences in opinion between the responses from the librarians at the headquarters in Nairobi and those in the branches. A substantial number of the librarians in Nairobi felt that it was against their professional beliefs to charge user fees since it would impact negatively on their users. This concurs with the views held by professional librarians in England and Wales where according to the 1995 Aslib survey (1995:213) they favoured council tax, or other public sector sources of funding rather than the introduction of user fees. The branch librarians in outlying areas, on the other

hand, took an opposite view and felt strongly that since they were operating on much smaller budgets than their Nairobi colleagues and any additional source of income could mean the difference between offering a service or not. There was however a general consensus amongst all the librarians that certain value-added services, such as interlibrary loans, Internet and photocopying services, could be charged for.

A further concern expressed by many of the librarians was that in their view the poor quality of the services currently offered by the KNLS did not warrant the introduction of user fees. One librarian aptly summarised these views as follows:

“It is unfair to ask users to pay for services which don’t measure up to the expectations. The KNLS will have to overhaul its entire stock before the thought of charging fees is considered. Failure to do so will amount to stealing from the public.”

Another librarian’s view was that whereas the government had recently promised to offer free primary education, the KNLS would be in conflict with government policy if it were to charge for its services. However, whatever view is taken, the KNLS faces a dilemma. Free primary education will almost certainly place an additional burden on the already limited resources of the KNLS, and the question asked by many of the librarians was whether this might validate charging for services. On the other hand it was argued that the KNLS has to be careful not to be carried away by the notion of making money (i.e. by means of user fees) at the expense of its mandate. A significant comment of a branch librarian was that:

“Although the government has promised to set aside Ksh.400 per child a year for the 5.8 million pupils in public primary schools to make it possible to provide free and compulsory primary education, any parent will tell you that Ksh.400 is peanuts and can only buy just a few books. And that is where the role of the KNLS comes in by providing free services.”

7.8.5 Fees Structures

Having obtained the librarians' divergent opinions on user fees, they were asked to indicate the most suitable charging option and whether they agreed with the principle or not. The same three options were presented to them as to the users, viz.: annual subscription fees, entry fees, or security deposits. The majority of the librarians indicated that annual fees would be the most appropriate as it would be the easiest to manage. They recommended that the fees should be paid either at the end or the beginning of each year in order to minimise administrative effort and costs. The librarians felt that entry fees would be very cumbersome to administer taking into consideration the number of people who visit the library on a daily basis. However, it was acknowledged by some that entry fees would be the best option for patrons who do not use the library frequently, especially students who use the library either over the weekend or during the holidays. The librarians indicated that a security deposit would be appropriate for those wishing to obtain temporary membership. This deposit could be refunded upon termination of the membership minus a small administrative fee.

The librarians were not asked to indicate specific amounts that could be paid by users but rather to comment in general on this aspect. The overall consensus was that such a fee should be as realistic and as affordable as possible to all. An innovative incentive system that was suggested by one of the interviewees was that of a point system. It was proposed that for each year a user was registered he or she would accumulate points and after a predetermined period users who had accumulated sufficient points would not have to pay fees anymore.

7.8.6 Exemptions and Concessions

In order to put the question of exemptions and concessions into perspective the librarians were asked to reflect on their users and the socio-economic groups they represented. The librarians were generally in agreement that the majority of public library users in Kenya are from the middle to upper income categories. They attributed the non-use of the library by the poor to a number of factors:

- KNLS branches are situated mainly in urban areas where poverty levels are lower than in rural areas.
- Within these urban areas, the libraries are situated either in the city centre or in wealthier suburbs thus excluding the poor. For example, Nairobi with a population of well over two million has only two libraries both situated in the city centre.
- The services offered by the KNLS are generally not suitable for the needs of the poor who specifically require access to material that would help them to enskill themselves.

Having contextualised the issue, the librarians were then specifically asked to express their views on exemptions and concessions for specific groups in society should user fees be introduced.

Whereas the librarians acknowledged the need for concessions for vulnerable groups in society, they however pointed out that it might be very difficult to design an infallible system which will not be misused either by the KNLS staff or users. Of particular concern was how to positively identify vulnerable persons who could qualify for exemption and how to implement such a policy. Establishment of proof of employment would be a point in case.

Despite the reservations expressed concerning the implementation of concessions, the majority of those interviewed still indicated that the following categories of users should be considered for exemption from fees: (1) the disabled and visually impaired, (2) the unemployed, (3) students (4) and the poor.

7.8.7 Alternatives to User Fees

When the librarians were asked to identify alternative revenue sources, other than user fees, several suggestions were made. A fee-based photocopying service was most frequently suggested as a viable source of income, followed by Internet services, letting of rooms, a bindery service, and consultancy services. The librarians implied that they

have had frequent requests from users that such services should be offered and in their view by offering these services the KNLS could generate considerable income. The librarians further indicated that numerous proposals had in the past been forwarded to the KNLS management in this regard.

7.8.8 Cost Saving Issues

A number of general issues relating to cost saving were aired during the interviews. The librarians specifically expressed fairly strong opinions on the outsourcing of certain non-professional tasks. They were particularly concerned by the large number of non-professional staff employed and queried their relevance and cost of employment to the KNLS. A specific example that was mentioned was the logic of the KNLS employing a number of tailors at great expense to produce uniforms that could easily be procured from textile firms at cheaper rates. The librarians further pointed out that the KNLS had successfully contracted out security services in three branches and this they felt could easily be extended to all the branches. The general view was that if the KNLS contracted out such non-professional tasks it would achieve considerable savings which could then be diverted to essential needs such as the acquisition of new books and the introduction of new technologies.

The above sentiments concur with the proposals on contracting put forward by the Office of Arts and Libraries (1988) in the UK which pointed out that “contracting out could be a way of improving value for money by using existing money more effectively and, by reducing administrative costs, of reducing money for redeployment on basic and charged services. It could also be a means of providing a new revenue earning service”.

In Chapter 8 the major findings are summarised.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, RECCOMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect back on the research questions and to establish to what extent they have been answered, and to draw the major conclusions that arise from this study. Based on the main findings, it finally presents a model for a sustainable plan for public library development in Kenya by referring specifically to legislation and policy issues, funding structures, alternative income generation, cost saving measures, and how to manage the income generation system. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

The principal aim of this study was to identify sustainable funding options for public library services in Kenya with specific reference to user fees. The study has attempted to present various viewpoints in the literature regarding user fees in the public library setting. It has recognised that information, and access to information is of enormous economic and social value. It has also demonstrated that access to information plays a vital role in the development of individuals, which seems to be an inalienable right in a democratic society. We thus on one hand have the need to provide free access to information for all, but on the other hand we have problems, particularly in Africa, to attract or obtain adequate funding to provide sorely needed library and information services. One solution would be to impose user fees, but the researcher contends that, even though the public may be willing to pay user fees, the impact of charging a fee for services rendered should not be overlooked as it has been shown that fees can impact negatively on those not able to pay. This is the conundrum that this study attempts to resolve.

The environmental setting for this study is Kenya and is based on the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS), a statutory body of the Kenya Government that is empowered by law to provide public library services in the country.

The empirical component of this study was based on a questionnaire and interview survey of a sample of KNLS users in 20 of its branches. Apart from the views of the library users, senior librarians from the KNLS were also interviewed to mainly clarify policy issues and also to establish whether the KNLS is sufficiently equipped, in terms of information resources and personnel, to facilitate the implementation of a user fee strategy. As indicated earlier (c.f. 1.4), non-users were not included because the researcher was of the opinion that they would not be able to provide an informed view of the user fee issue. Politicians were also left out as they were heavily engaged with election campaigns and constitutional reform issues during the empirical stage of this study.

8.2 THE RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The study has shown that:

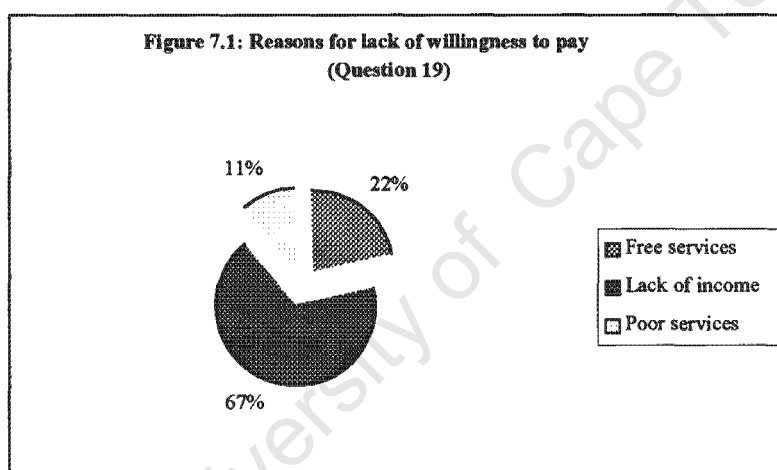
- The library is used by diverse occupational groups, but students comprise the majority of users which is a clear reflection of the trend in most public libraries in Africa, albeit that most of the students in this study were in tertiary institutions. This can be understood given that, due to the paucity and deficiencies of libraries in schools and colleges, many students rely on the KNLS for library services;
- The KNLS is patronised mainly by relatively young people and most of the respondents had used the library for less than five years. This concurs with the general observation that most Kenyans do not read after leaving school or college;
- The majority of the users are male. This disparity could largely be attributed to the formidable barriers some girls face in Kenya in the course of their studies, particularly the low value placed on girls' education by certain communities;
- Most of the libraries and users are urban based. This could largely be attributed to the high concentration of educated people and libraries in urban areas;

“My parents are poor, but if it is a must that we have to pay for library services, I will find a way of making money by engaging myself in activities such as poultry keeping. I will also try to save some of the money I am given by my parents each term ...”

7.3.1 Reasons for Lack of Willingness to Pay User Fees

(cf. Question nineteen of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

It was seen in 3.6 that the literature is fraught with arguments why user fees should not be introduced. One such objection that has frequently been raised against the introduction of user fees is that it will lead to a society of information “haves” and “have nots”- i.e. the rich will have unrestricted access to information while the poor will be denied access due to their inability to pay. To obtain the users views on this matter, the researcher thus asked those respondents who were against user fees to indicate why they were not willing to pay.



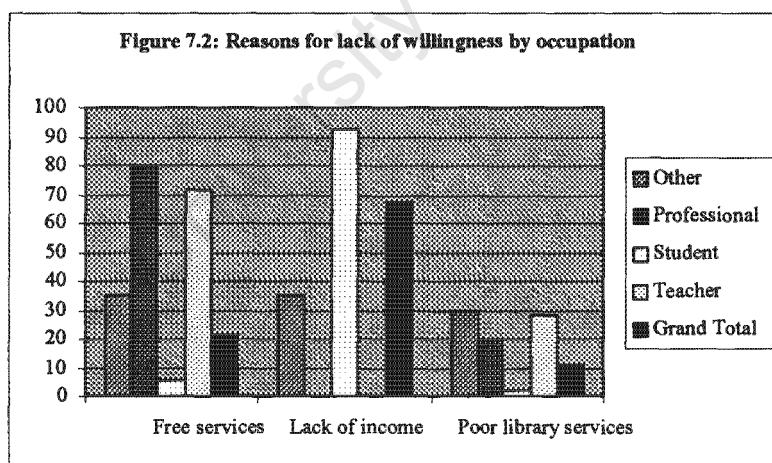
Source: Survey data

The respondents were presented with three fixed options and an open ‘Other’ option to select as responses (Question 19). All respondents selected one of the fixed options and from Figure 7.1 it can be seen that the main reason why the respondents were unwilling to pay was lack of income (67%) while only 22% indicated that library services should in principle be free and no fee should be levied, and an even a smaller proportion (11%) indicated that they were unwilling to pay due to poor library services.

The results obtained above provided valuable information that could serve as a guide for exemptions should fees be introduced. The establishment of safety nets for those who

may not be able to pay is crucial as was seen when user fees were introduced in the health sector in Kenya. These factors were not originally taken into consideration and the scheme had to be suspended for a while to enable the policy makers to come up with a system affordable to the majority of the citizens.

To obtain further insight into this matter the researcher decided to cross tabulate the reasons given by the respondents for not wanting to pay user fees with their occupations. The results obtained were significant at the .05 level for the χ^2 statistic and are presented in Figure 7.2 below. It can be seen that the largest group of respondents who believed that services should in principle be offered for free were those from the 'Professional' occupational category (80%) and the teachers (71%). Only 35% of the 'Other' category and 6% of the students held this view. Almost all (93%) of the students indicated that they were not willing to pay user fees because they had no income, while 35% from the 'Other' occupational category also gave this reason. The respondents who indicated that they were not willing to pay user fees due to poor library services were fairly equally distributed among the 'Other' occupation category 29%, teachers 29%, and the professionals comprised 20%, while only 2% of the students gave this as a reason.



Source: Survey Data

It is thus clear that those who were the most concerned about the principle of free library services were the professionals and the teachers. The students were the main group who were not willing to pay because of lack of income. The few respondents who gave poor

library services as the reason for not wishing to pay for services were fairly evenly distributed among all the occupation categories other than the students.

7.3.2 Willingness to Pay for Specific Library Services

(cf. Question twenty and twenty one of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

It has been argued in the literature that in order to avoid full-scale user fees, charges should be confined to a few services such as the loan of popular material borrowed for entertainment rather than serious study, or that charges should be imposed on all loanable materials, with students and pensioners exempted, or for specific tangible items such as application forms, identification and borrowing cards. The counter argument would be that it would be very difficult to draw a line between what services can legitimately be charged for and those that can be exempted. For example, Cartmil (1992:29) questions the suggestion that charges could be made for the borrowing of popular fiction only by arguing that this leads to the question of definition. Cartmil (ibid: 229) thus asks “what is ‘popular fiction’? should a child studying Jane Austen or Thomas Hardy at school be charged for borrowing popular fiction? On the other hand, should all items be charged with some vulnerable groups singled out for exemption?”. In order to establish the respondents’ views on this issue, they were asked to indicate if they would be willing to pay for certain specific services.

The first aspect that was addressed related to the feasibility of charging for application forms, identification, and borrowing cards (cf. Question 20). This question was motivated by the fact that the KNLS still issues books using the traditional card system and branch librarians with their very limited financial resources often find it difficult to fund applications forms and borrowing cards, items that may seem trivial for a well-endowed library. Currently these items are available free of charge in most branches, but some charge a fee which varies from branch to branch. Many of the branch librarians believe that uniform charges should be levied and by making users pay for the forms the KNLS would not only recoup some of the costs, but more important also avoid wastage as charging will deter those people who collect application forms and who are not serious about the library.

Table 7.6: Willingness to pay for application forms and borrowing cards (Question 20)

Willingness	Count	Cum. Count	Percent
No	64	64	26.55
Yes	177	241	73.44

Source: survey results

From Table 7.6 above it is clear that a very large proportion (73%) of the respondents were willing to pay for application and borrowing cards. This once again provided evidence that the users (including the many students without income) were sufficiently concerned about sustaining library services that they were prepared to make a financial contribution.

TABLE 7.7: Willingness to Pay for Specialised Library Services (Question 21)

Service (n=241)	NO	YES
Book reservation	82.99	17.01
Mobile library	82.57	17.43
Inter-library loans	80.08	19.92
Reference service	78.83	21.16
Postal service	75.93	24.07
Institutional membership	72.62	27.39
Study/reading facilities	64.73	35.27
Book loans/borrowing	57.26	42.74

Source: Survey results

The researcher further wished to determine whether the users would be willing to pay for specialised library services such as designated reference service, interlibrary loans, book reservations, etc. They were thus asked in question 21 which of the services listed they would be prepared to pay for. The responses to this question provided startling outcome. Whereas the respondents had hitherto been very supportive of paying for library services in general, the resounding majority rejected the idea of paying for specialised services. When these responses are ranked according to level of unwillingness to pay for the specific services it can be seen from Table 7.7 above that the highest negative response was given for book reservation services and the mobile library (83% each), followed by interlibrary loans (80%), reference services (79%), a postal library service, (76%), institutional membership (73%), study/reading facilities (65%), and book borrowing (53%).

These results however correlate with other studies reported in the literature. For example, a survey done in 1997 by the Nova Scotia Provincial Library (Canada) also showed that most respondents opposed fees for using reference materials and special books, getting assistance from library staff and using children's services. The majority (61%) of these respondents, however, strongly supported user fees for ancillary services such as providing audio-visual materials, Internet access and inter-library loans (Nova Scotia Provincial Library, 1997). A study in Denmark, in turn, found that the majority (76%) of users did not approve of the library demanding payments for "librarian assistance in connection with larger, complicated services" (Egholm and Jochumsen, 2000:301). This implies that users worldwide are fairly selective of the services they are prepared to pay for.

In order to better understand these responses, especially after the overwhelming support for services levies in general, and the positive rating given to library services, the researcher asked for further elaboration during the follow-up interviews. Several aspects emerged from the interviews that could explain the respondents' unwillingness to pay for the above services. The main reasons that the interviewees gave for not wishing to pay for a number of the specialised services were lack of awareness of a service, the poor book stock, current inadequacies in the provision of certain of the services, and lack of income. Many of these issues were previously also raised by the respondents when queried on their awareness of services and perception of the quality of services (cf. 6.2 and 6.3).

A number of the interviewees indicated that they would not be prepared to pay to borrow books because the book stock was inadequate, outdated and generally poor. One respondent fairly vehemently stated that:

"Under normal circumstances, one pays for services which are worth his/her money. The KNLS should first consider improving the current stock before thinking of charging fees."

It also emerged from the interviews that a large number of the users were not registered library members, and merely used the library as a study and general reading venue. Many of the students indicated that this was because the book stock held by the KNLS did not meet their needs, and they thus used their own material while reading or studying in the library.

Many of the interviewees indicated that while they were aware of the existence of services such as the reservations, inter-library loan and postal services they were not sure if they were actually offered. Others again stated that they were totally unaware of such services and if they were being offered the KNLS should be more proactive in making them known to the public. The following response provides a good synopsis of these views:

“There is rarely any orientation done when one is new in the library. In the long run most of us conclude that the library only offers books for loan and free reading space... how do you expect people to pay for services of which they have no inkling ... The lack of enthusiasm to pay for these services could be reflective of the lack of awareness. I have visited the library on a number of occasions to enquire about books not on the shelf but nobody has ever told me about the availability of a book reservation or inter-library loan service.”

Apart from lack of awareness, a fear was also expressed by the respondents that if only certain services were to be paid for, the KNLS might end up discarding those services which might not generate enough profit. They said that this could result in only a few services being offered at high cost. The library will thus end up being too expensive for them and many of the services will only be enjoyed by the privileged users. They suggested that instead of charging for specific services the KNLS should levy an annual fee covering all the services that is affordable for all members.

A few non-student respondents indicated that they were unwilling to pay to read in the library since there was inadequate reading space and students often overcrowded the libraries. They however indicated that a willingness to pay if the KNLS was to set up special reading rooms or study carrels. A few older respondents suggested that the

KNLS should introduce control mechanism to deter students from hanging around the library without using it at the expense of more serious readers.

Most of the students and teachers who were interviewed indicated that they were not willing to pay for mobile library services and institutional membership since they believed that it should be part of the services offered by the schools and that the KNLS should rather encourage schools to set up their own libraries. It was further stated that secondary school children have to pay school fees and should thus not be expected to pay further fees for school-related library services.

7.3.3 Suggested Fee Categories

(cf. Question twenty two of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

User fees in public libraries can be levied in a variety of ways. At the user level, the fee may be a fixed amount, or may depend on the services received. It may cover one visit or all visits or it may be a pre-payment covering all visits over a specified period. It is important, if user fees are to be introduced, to establish at the outset what method of charging the users would prefer and the respondents were thus asked to select the option they preferred from amongst an annual fee, an entry fee, or a cash deposit (cf. question 22). They were not asked to express an opinion on charging for specific library services as it was realised during the design stage of this study that it would be very difficult to calculate the specific charges for many of these services. According to Butterworth (2000), a database was being developed in Singapore that included a charging module in order to overcome the above problem. It was intended that this module would manage the entire charging system, from calculating the amount to be charged (incorporating factors such as administration fees, specialists' time, fax charges, photocopying costs, delivery charges, etc.) to monitoring if and when payment was actually made. Such a sophisticated system which depends on an integrated and automated library system will not be feasible in the KNLS while its operations are still manually run.

TABLE 7.8: Suggested Fee Categories (Question 22)

Fee category	Count (n=241)	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Annual subscription fee	176	74.26	74.26
Entry fee	55	23.21	97.47
Cash deposit	6	2.48	100.00

Source: Survey data

The responses received for this question clearly shows that the vast majority (74%) of the respondents preferred to pay an annual subscription fee, while only 23% indicated a preference to pay an entry fee, and a mere 2% opted for a cash deposit (cf. Table 7.8 above). To understand the underlying reasons behind these preferences the respondents were asked to elaborate on their responses during the follow-up interviews.

Those respondents who selected to pay an annual fee indicated that this was the most economical option for them as it would then enable them to utilise the library as many times as they want without having to pay whenever they visit the library. One student voiced his opinion as follows:

“It is not easy to remember to carry money each time one is to visit the library. In addition, parents will equally find it hard to give money each time one is to use the library. An annual fee will therefore be more convenient.”

Various respondents further queried whether the library has the manpower to process entry fees on a daily basis. Apart from the feeling that entry fees will be cumbersome to implement, the respondents also felt that they might end up paying more than if they were paying an annual fee. One respondent summed it up by saying:

Looking at it casually one might be tempted to think that an entry fee is cheaper than an annual fee. However, given that you pay each time you visit the library, in the long run this might prove to be very expensive. The figure might end up being higher than if you were to pay once per year.

When asked their specific views on cash deposits¹⁷, most of the respondents indicated that they could not conceptualise the idea or the rationale behind such a charge and most of them avoided the question all together.

Experience in Dutch public libraries also shows that public library members have a tendency to accept annual fees rather than a price per unit. According to Egholm and Jochumsen (2000:303), this can be explained by the fact that an annual fee is seen to be a lesser burden in everyday life than a price per unit.

A further important factor to consider when determining which fee structure to adopt is the administrative cost involved. For example, it is evident that entry fees can be cumbersome and expensive to administer in terms of staff time. Trott (in Hazell, 1992:28) makes this point clear by pointing out that “staffing of entry fee collection points adds to salary costs, posts, health and safety issues, requires expensive building renovation and may even be impossible to install on the mobile library”.

According to Trott (in Hazell, 1992:28) “although superficially attractive, there is little merit in an annual fee. The fundamental problem is that it does not generate income in accordance with the cost of services utilised”. Thus, many libraries that have introduced annual fees have found out that it is often difficult to calculate in advance the correct fee to charge to adequately cover budget deficits. These libraries thus often also charge for other services other than subscription fees. For example, Wanganui authority in New Zealand, started charging for loans and other services after they realised that the revenue they were collecting from subscription fees did not meet all their revenue needs. A further argument used by the Wanganui authority was that a multiple charging system spreads the financial burden and lessens the impact for those who use the library infrequently (Butterworth, 2000).

In addition to the above problems with subscription fees, Trott (in Hazel, 1992:28) adds that “a single personal membership could service an entire family ... Lending of

¹⁷ This is paid to the library to serve as a security if a user fails to return library material, or damages them. It is refunded upon termination of membership less administrative fees.

membership cards would quickly widespread in order to avoid paying fees. Individual membership would drop dramatically but usage and therefore workloads and costs would remain high. Initial income generation would progressively decline over time”.

It is therefore evident that although the respondents in this study were clearly willing to pay annual subscription fees, implementing such a system could be problematic and the costs involved could outweigh the income generated. As Trott (in Hazell, 1992:28) suggests “the major obstacle to an annual or other membership fee is the enormous administrative cost involved”

7.3.4 Fee Amounts

(cf. Question twenty three of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

Having queried the users on their willingness to pay fees, the researcher further wished to establish the amount they recommended that should be paid if an annual fee was to be introduced. The researcher did not include the entry fee and cash deposit options in this question as he firstly did not want to confuse the users with too many fee categories, and secondly wished to obtain an overall indication of the likely income that would be generated. The KNLS has four categories of membership, children, students, adults, and institutional, and the respondents were thus asked to indicate how much they suggest each of the categories of users should pay as their annual subscription fees. From the amounts suggested for the various categories, the researcher calculated the mean amount for each category and this result is displayed in Table 7.9 below. It can be seen that the suggested amounts (mean figures) range from Ksh. 96¹⁸ for children, to Ksh. 190 for students, to Ksh. 235 for adults to Ksh. 942 for institutional members.

Table 7.9: Proposals for annual subscription fees (Question 23)

User Category	Amount (mean)
Child	Ksh. 96
Student	Ksh. 190
Adult	Ksh. 235
Institution	Ksh. 942

Source: Survey data

¹⁸ 78 Ksh = 1US \$

In order to estimate the total revenue the KNLS would likely accrue each year if the users' proposals were accepted, the average of the amounts suggested for each user category (except institutional members whose records were not available) was multiplied by the current KNLS membership figures that were derived from the latest annual report (KNLS, 2003-2004). From these calculations it appeared that the likely revenue that could be collected would amount to Ksh. 19,645,754 which represents only about 7% of the current KNLS budget. This is a rough estimate and it serves merely as an indication of possible revenue that could be collected and one should be cautious about any conclusive inferences made. Membership records in KNLS are poorly kept and a proper audit should be conducted before any final fee-related decision is taken.

However if these figures are taken as a guiding estimate it is evident that the revenue that will be generated using the respondents' fee structure will contribute very little to improving the KNLS's financial position. This proved to be a decisive factor for the research project and one can thus conclude that though a high proportion of the respondents are willing to pay user fees the amount they consider adequate to pay is minimal – a factor that could have a serious impact on any fee-based strategy. This correlates with the view, which is often expressed in the literature, that libraries rarely collect adequate funds by means of fees. According to Webber (1990:222), it is unlikely that the majority of the information services being offered at a fee are capable of recovering all costs, that is if one includes all direct and indirect costs and overheads needed to implement and manage the scheme.

Other studies have also indicated that charges from user fees contribute very little to the total library budgets. For example, studies done in six Nordic countries show that fees contributed less than 10 percent of the gross operating costs in the public libraries surveyed (Egholm and Jochumsen, 2000:299). It should however, be stated that these charges were mainly for fees for special services such as reminder notices, overdue book notices, lost or damaged materials, reservation of books and data searches and not for overall library services.

A further factor that should be considered is that the total revenue likely to be collected by the KNLS could be even less considering the fact that the imposition of fees may discourage a number of users from using the library. It is, however, interesting to note that the Roodepoort public library in South Africa experienced the converse when they introduced fees. It is reported that after the introduction of fees at the Roodepoort library the membership appeared to decline dramatically. A thorough investigation of record keeping however followed and it became apparent that membership figures had previously been inflated by failure to weed out dormant and lapsed membership. The consequence was that the record-keeping was streamlined and it later became clear that membership was growing despite the fee system (Harmse1989: 28). The conclusion that can be drawn from the Roodepoort case study is that the imposition of fees will not deter the more dedicated members from continuing to use the library and might in fact be a useful mechanism to filter out non-active and less serious members.

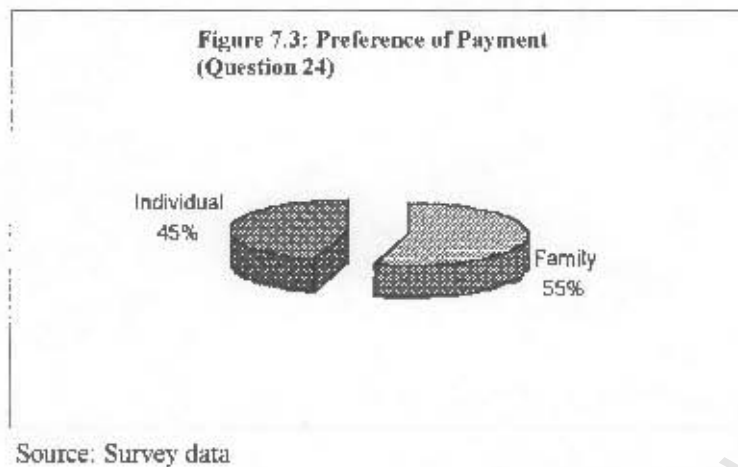
To summarise, a large number of issues should be taken into consideration when determining the most appropriate fee structure. One needs to decide which services and categories of users should be targeted initially. It is essential that a thorough investigation be undertaken to assess the administrative feasibility, revenue generating potential and the possible impact of a particular fee structure.

7.3.5 Preferences to Pay as an Individual or Family

(cf. Question twenty four to twenty six of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

During the pre-tests the question of payment as a family or as an individual arose and it was consequently decided to give the respondents the opportunity to express their preference with regard to this option should fees be introduced. It is apparent, as shown from Figure 7.3 below, that just more than half (55%) of the respondents expressed the wish to pay as a family, while 45% preferred to pay as individuals. If these responses are further cross-tabulated it is apparent that there is a significant correlation (the χ^2 was significant at the .05 level) between the respondents who had other household members using the library facilities and those who preferred to pay as a family. Of those who had

other household members using the library facilities 60% wished to register as families. This implies that if user fees were to be introduced the interests of those who wish to register as a family or individuals will have to be considered.



The respondents were further asked to provide reasons for electing to pay either as an individual or as a family. Those respondents who wished to pay as a family indicated that their main reason was that it would make economic sense as they would pay less, and that it might also encourage other household members to take up reading as a hobby. Those who wished to register as individuals indicated that reading is a personal hobby and they might be inconvenienced if they were to register as a family since they were not sure if all household members would be interested in reading and whether they would take good care of the library materials.

Having asked the respondents to indicate their preferences to pay either as families or as individuals, and the reasons for these preferences it was also necessary to know how much they would be willing to pay should they pay as a family. This was a contingency question and only those who wished to pay as a family were expected to answer.

If the mean is calculated for the total amount suggested by those who wished to pay as a family it shows that a family would pay an average of Ksh.250 per year. Although this amount is higher than the amounts for the individual categories, it is not significantly higher and taken with the fact that the total membership multiplication factor will be

reduced, it becomes clear that an even lower revenue would probably accrue. It is thus evident that while family membership would minimise the financial outlay for individuals it is not a viable option for the KNLS if the users' proposed amounts are adhered to. Another factor that should be considered is that such an arrangement could also create considerable administrative problems such as the number of books a family can borrow, the number of borrowing cards to be issued and to whom, and who will be held responsible for material borrowed, etc.

7.3.6 The Merits and Demerits of User Fees

(cf. Question twenty seven to twenty nine of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

The theoretical and empirical literature has highlighted both positive and negative aspects relating to user fees. The critical factors which have been discussed include amongst others the impact of charges on the utilisation of library services, and the level of revenue likely to be collected. Many arguments have been put forward as to why charges should be levied, and according to Lofgren (1987:72) the main positive reasons for introducing user fees is that:

- They may serve as a source of finance,
- They may serve to limit or redirect demand for products and services,
- They contribute to more efficient and effective management in that they provide information on, for example, the extent to which the library satisfies market demand.

For each argument that has been advanced in favour of fees, there have been many more that oppose fees in public libraries. According to Lau (1993:152) the public library has an essential informational, educational and cultural role in society. It supports a democratic form of government through public access to information and knowledge. It serves not only as the collective memory of society, preserving information over time, but as a living force in the community in terms of its ability to inform, educate and enrich the lives of its patrons. For these reasons, Lau thus is convinced that any fees imposed on public library services will be an impediment to the communities' right to unencumbered access to information.

With these contradicting arguments in mind, the researcher thus decided to ask the respondents what they thought would be the likely positive and negative effects if user fees were to be introduced. The users were presented with a possible list of positive and negative effects to choose from, or they could indicate their own 'other' possibilities (cf. question 27-29). The options were not ranked and the users could select more than one merit or demerit.

Table 7.10: Positive Effects of User Fees (Question 27)

Likely positive effects	Yes	No
To control an influx of non-library members	24.48	75.52
Improvement of service (e.g. buying new books)	87.14	12.86
To renovate buildings and purchase furniture	38.17	61.83
To fully/partially recover increased running costs	36.93	63.07
Cover loss of or damaged of library material	47.30	52.70
To introduce new services (e.g. Internet)	62.64	37.76

Source: Survey data

Table 7.10 above shows that the respondents considered that the main positive effects of user fees would be the improvement of service provision such as the acquisition of new books (87%), and the introduction of new services such as access to the Internet (63%). It is clear that the respondents were considerably less positive about the benefits of charging fees to cover the loss of damaged library material (47% rating), or to renovate buildings and purchase new furniture (38% rating), or to fully/partially recover increased running costs (37% rating), or to control an influx of non-library members (24% rating). No 'Other' positive options were suggested by the respondents.

TABLE 7.11: Negative Effects of User Fees (Question 28)

Likely negative effects	Yes	No
Affects free flow of information	64.32	35.68
Leads to reduction of library users	75.10	24.89
Discriminates against the poor	65.97	34.03
Money might be diverted for other uses	56.53	46.47
Overcharging in order to collect more money	33.20	66.80
Produces insufficient financial returns	17.84	82.16
Government might reduce funding	37.76	62.24

Source: Survey Data

Table 7.11 above provides a synopsis of the respondents' views on the possible negative effects of a user fee system. The negative effects that the respondents considered would possibly be the most detrimental are that it could lead to the reduction of library users (75% rating), that it might discriminate against the poor (66% rating), that it would affect the free flow of information (64% rating), and that money might be diverted for other uses (57% rating). The respondents were far less concerned that user fees would produce insufficient financial returns (18%), lead to overcharging in order to collect more revenue (33%), or that it might result in the government further reducing the KNLS subsidy (38%). No 'other' negative effects were suggested by the respondents.

Some commentators such as Harmse (1989) and Pritts (1992) believe that although the cancellation of membership could be an initial effect, it is temporary and membership numbers soon recover with time. Moran (1986:23), on the other hand, takes a different view and refers to cases where user fees have led to both the permanent decline of membership and the circulation of items. According to Wilmott (In Hazell, 1992:20) "... experience shows that where direct charges for library services have been lifted, growth in the use of the services has increased just as dramatically". The researcher therefore warns that the negative impact of user fees on membership and the complexity of the issue should not be underestimated.

The impact of charges on the poor has long been recognised as a vital concern and has been one of the most hotly debated aspects of user fees. According to Harmse (1989:3) user fees result in the formation of an information elite with the socially and economically under-privileged being further marginalised and denied use. Giacomini (1989:23) points out that economically disadvantaged groups are extremely sensitive to price, and fees can thus exclude such citizens from using fee-based library services. Even those who support fees recognise this point. It is feared that poorer households may forego use of library services rather than strain their already limited resources. However, the effects of charges on the poor can be extremely difficult to assess and the few empirical studies that have been conducted that cover this issue have provided little insight into the effect of user fees on the poor. It is thus insightful that a substantial

majority (66%) of the respondents in this study were of the opinion that user fees would lead to the discrimination of the poor and needy.

Another major argument raised in the literature against user charges lies in the traditional notion of freedom of access to information and a free basic service. This is certainly one of the most emotional arguments used, and has a strong appeal. The main claim of the argument is that imposing charges limits the access of those who cannot pay the fee and shifts the resources of the library to paying clients (Cartmil, 1992:30). It would appear that the majority of the respondents in this study are in agreement with the argument that the introduction of fees would affect the free flow of information.

Another detrimental effect of fees that a large proportion of the respondents (57%) highlighted was the fear that the revenue likely to be collected might be diverted for other uses than those it was originally intended for. Following the introduction of user fees in the health sector in Kenya, there have been constant complaints that despite the large amounts collected there has been no marked improvement in health care services and that substantial sums of money have been misappropriated. It is likely that many respondents had this fear in mind when responding to the above question.

It is generally agreed amongst fee proponents that the primary purpose of user fees is to reduce fiscal deficits. However, many observers are sceptical about this as a primary purpose, pointing out that there often are other hidden motives. User fee antagonists believe that fees could be used as instruments for controlling, or even limiting the use of library services. Interestingly, during follow up interviews some of the respondents, especially those who were older were of the opinion that user fees should be introduced in order to limit the number of students in the library. Most of them complained that they rarely found space in the library since it was always full of students. The researcher would like to argue against this viewpoint as he is of the opinion that any kind of financial barrier that is imposed on children and students would introduce an element of rationing and distort the use of the library's resources and this would be undesirable.

Another fear that is often expressed is that once user fees are introduced the library will be tempted to overcharge in order to collect more money. Braveman (1982:401) stressed this concern by noting that as soon as you begin charging fees, you initiate a process of interpreting the library as a private venture rather than as a public service institution. Thus profit becomes the driving force and this could lead to discrimination against people who are not able to pay. In addition, there is suspicion that libraries might be tempted to discontinue non-profit making services. Having noted these views, it was thus illuminating to discover that almost two thirds (67%) of the respondents do not think that the KNLS might abuse the situation and overcharge in order to collect more money if user fees were to be introduced.

A valid argument that has also been raised is that the public library, as a tax support institution, faces the danger that the government would see externally raised funds as a substitute for adequate internal funding. This could then be used as an excuse to even further reduce its financial support. Lau (1993:156) suggests that it would be prudent for libraries that embark on a charging policy to obtain guarantees for an agreed, and adequate level of funding from their parent organisations. It is thus interesting to note that the majority (62%) of the respondents from this study are not convinced that the introduction of user fees would encourage the government to further reduce its funding in the hope that the library will collect adequate funds internally.

Having asked the respondents to voice their opinions on the positive and negative aspects of user fees they were then asked to weigh the opposing factors and indicate their overall conclusion. It is very interesting to note that the majority of the respondents (57%) believe that the positive effects of user fees will outweigh the negative effects (Table 7.12 below). It would thus appear that the majority of users, even after careful consideration of all the possible effects, are on the balance in favour of user fees.

Table 7.12: Benefits of User Fees (Question 29)

Benefits of user fees	Frequency	Percent	Cum
Greater	123	57.48	57.48
Less	91	42.52	100.00
Total	214	100.00	

Source: Survey data

A number of pertinent and often conflicting issues were raised in the above sections that require serious consideration before user fees can be introduced. The researcher thus suggests that even though the majority of the respondents supported the user fee concept, specific attention should be given to: (a) reasons for not wishing to pay, (b) the amount the respondents are willing to pay, and (c) the improvements in library service the respondents require should user fees be introduced. According to Giacoma (1989:25) after the theoretical advantages and disadvantages of fees are considered, practical decisions remain to be made. Services must be singled out for full or partial fee-based financing. "For the puzzle to fit together properly, decision makers must face the full range of questions about fees and understand well the long-term implications of fees for the blend of services their agencies will provide, the clientele they will serve, the character their agency will take on, and the role their agencies will play in society".

7.3.7 Suggestions for Appropriation of User Fees

(cf. Question thirty of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

The magnitude of the revenue that is likely to be generated through user charges is by no means the only indicator of success of a user fee policy. Another important aspect is how the revenue will be appropriated and who has control of its use. What also matters is whether the fees collected should be spent on replenishing stock, improving physical facilities, hiring extra staff or improving the pay and conditions for existing staff. A further aspect that should be considered is how much of the revenue raised at the point of collection should be retained by those libraries and the affect this would have on allocation from central resources. Some commentators suggest that the motivation and incentive to raise revenue from user fees might be lacking if the benefits are not invested

at the local level. In addition, it is generally agreed that the success of the scheme will also depend on whether the library community is involved in managing the revenue likely to be collected. It is submitted that by involving the contributors in suggesting how the funds should be used, a sense of participation would be induced and this would negate any fears that their contributions would not be used to their benefit.

With the above ideas in mind, the respondents were thus asked to suggest how the revenue likely to be generated from user fees should be utilised. The choices given were not mutually exclusive and the respondents could have selected more than one answer. As shown in Table 7.13 below an overwhelming majority (90%) indicated that they would like to have the money spent on the purchase of books, journals and newspapers, followed to a far lesser extent by the wish for Internet and video services (58%), and a book repair service (51%).

The respondents generally did not agree that user fees should be used for the renovation of library buildings (39%) nor to maintain the mobile library (33%), nor to pay staff allowances (15%), nor for general utility costs (12%).

TABLE 7.13: Appropriation of User Fees (Question 30)

Suggested use	Yes	No
Purchase books, journals and newspapers	89.63	10.73
Renovation of library building	38.59	61.41
Repair of books	51.04	48.96
Pay staff allowances	14.94	85.06
Maintain mobile library	33.20	66.80
Pay water, electricity and telephone bills	12.45	87.55
Set up Internet services and video library	57.68	42.32

Source: Survey data

During follow-up interviews, the respondents were asked to further elaborate on their responses. The interviewees were fairly scathing about the adequacy of the current bookstock and indicated that it urgently required to be updated and made more relevant. They further pointed out that the KNLS should provide access to the Internet, for not only would that assist them to gain access to the most current information it would also

supplement the poor bookstock of the KNLS. A pertinent comment that was made was that:

“While commercial Internet services are doing a roaring business by overcharging users, it is unfortunate that the KNLS has not found it necessary to introduce this service. This is a service which will be welcomed by all and we are willing to pay for it. I only hope that the charges will be realistic and the motive should not be profit. This should be an opportunity for KNLS users to access a variety of [online] information.”

A number of interviewees further raised a related issue by stating that the KNLS should embrace new developments in information technology and seriously consider to automate its services.

One of the major problems currently facing the KNLS is the lack of money to maintain a book repair service. There is evidence that a substantial number of books that only require minor repairs have been withdrawn from circulation in many branches. It was thus encouraging to note that the respondents supported the use of user fees for this purpose, albeit with only a marginal majority (51%).

It is clear that there was general rejection of using any revenue on maintenance of library buildings or on staff allowances, while there was very positive acceptance of suggestions that improved user services. It is apparent from the above that the respondents support the appropriation of any revenue collected on services which directly benefit them. The actualisation of such initiatives may however be undermined by the fact that current policy dictates that all funds collected at the branch level has to be remitted to the head office in Nairobi. This problem was recognised by Cartmill (1992:36) when she noted that “it often happens that any extra income raised is usually siphoned off to central funds, leaving the actual service point with no control over how best to utilise such funds”. This view is supported by a study conducted by INASP (2003) in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and South Africa that found that in most instances, the money from income generating activities is handled by a central treasury and is not necessarily put back into the library that is the actual point of collection.

7.4 Alternative Sources of Income

(cf. Question thirty one of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

Levying user fees is not the only option open to libraries that urgently need to supplement their normal, but insufficient revenue sources. A number of alternative income generating activities are available which a library can engage in to raise more income. Engaging in such activities would not necessarily mean that a library would not also levy user fees, but by using both options, charges could hopefully be kept to the minimum. Breivik (1979:95), however, cautions that although such alternatives are clearly useful in reducing monetary problems, these activities should not distract attention from the main activities of the library or from its primary objectives. The fact however remains that the provision of a good library service is dependent on substantial and secure funding.

After asking the respondents to consider the user fee concept, it was thus also important to obtain their suggestions on what alternative sources of income they thought the KNLS could engage in to generate additional income. The researcher thus presented the respondents with a number of possibilities that they could consider, and they could also indicate their own 'Other' possibilities.

TABLE 7.14: Alternatives to User Fees (Question 31)

Services	Yes	No
Photocopy services	69.29	30.71
Stationery shops	57.26	42.74
Cafeteria services	37.34	62.66
Video library/shows	53.94	46.06
Internet	73.86	26.14
Fund raising (<i>Harambee</i>)	26.97	73.03

Source: Survey data

Table 7.14 above presents the options and the selections the users made as suggestions for alternative income generation. The most favoured options were the establishment at all branches of internet services (74%), photocopying services (69%), stationery shops (57%), and a subscription video library (53%). As indicated earlier many respondents are particularly interested in having access to the Internet. The KNLS main library in Nairobi

already offers fee-based access and there are plans to introduce similar services in five branches with sponsorship received from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It is clear that this service should be extended to all branches in the future.

Although photocopying services, unquestionably have the potential to generate additional income, such a service is currently only available in Nairobi and at the Eldoret branch. Several requests have in the past been made by branch librarians for this service to be extended to all the branches as, apart from generating revenue for the KNLS, such a service would also enable users to photocopy material that may not be removed from the library.

An income generating initiative that the KNLS has been considering for a long time is running stationery shops. Such a facility would not only produce income but also offer a valuable service to users who need stationery and other similar items. The KNLS could further derive benefit by selling its promotional material. It is clear that the majority of users would support such an initiative.

Options that were not generally supported by the respondents were the provision of cafeteria services (37% support) and fund raising (27% support). It is not easy to judge why the respondents were generally negative about these proposals particularly as fund raising (*harambee*) has often been used in Kenya to support development projects. Negative reports in the press at the time of the study that related to fund raising might have contributed to this reaction.

7.5 Recommendation for Exemption and Waivers

(cf. Question thirty two of the questionnaire, Appendix A)

Exemptions and concessions for the disabled, housebound, unemployed, pensioners or other income groups are common considerations in any fee-based system, but they may also cause problems and jeopardise the viability of a user fee system. According to Bartlett (1988:126) all exemptions and concessions could be regarded as being

“subsidised”, either by other borrowers or by the “free service”, and could add another complication to the task of costing loan services.

It was thus important that the researcher test the public's view on exemptions particularly as public library users generally fall into different socio-economic groups. The respondents were thus asked to indicate which members of society they feel should be exempted if user fees were to be introduced.

TABLE 7.15: Recommendations for Exemption (Question 32)

Category of user	Support	NO
The needy/poor	56.0	44.4
Physically challenged	53.1	46.9
Student	49.3	50.6
Unemployed	39.0	61.0
Pensioners	10.0	90.0

Source: Survey Data

It is apparent from the survey results that the respondents were not overwhelmingly in favour of exemptions and certainly not unanimous as to which or to what extent the various social groups in society should be exempted from paying fees. Table 7.15 above shows that 56% of the respondents indicated that the needy and the poor should be exempted from paying fees, and 53% agreed that the physically challenged/disabled should also be exempted. The social groups that the majority of the respondents did not agree should be exempted were students (49% support), unemployed (39% support), and pensioners (only 10% support). No ‘other’ user groups were suggested by the respondents.

Follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify these ambiguities and to obtain a better understanding of the seemingly negative responses.

When the respondents were asked why only a marginal majority (56%) supported the poor being exempted, the general response was that they were not against the exemption per se, but were more concerned about the implementation of the policy. They voiced concern that it would be difficult for the KNLS to positively identify the poor since mechanisms were not generally in place in Kenya to determine a citizen's financial

position. They also feared misuse of the system. Giacoma (1989:24) supports these sentiments by pointing out that practical considerations often obstruct the best intentions of policy makers. Giacoma (ibid) asks “how are we to know the poor from the wealthy when charging fees? ... On the other hand, conducting tests of a person’s means in many service situations challenges administrative ingenuity, adds to the cost of providing the service, and threatens the right to privacy.” Many respondents took a midway stance by suggesting that the poor should make some contribution even if it is in a small way and instead of complete exemption they should be charged reduced fees.

With regard to exemptions for disabled people, many interviewees were quick to point out that disability does not necessarily mean inability or poverty, and in their view a blanket exemption policy would not be fair. One respondent succinctly summarised these arguments as follows:

“The term disabled is an ambiguous term since it can also be taken to mean financial disability. It’s not easy to translate ones physical condition to mean inability to pay library services. Though the proposal might be a good gesture to those who are disabled it should also be borne in mind that some of the disabled people are able to pay. Some of the able bodied people are very poor.”

Another respondent added that:

“We attended the same schools with disabled people and we have all along paid the same fees with them. The library should not discriminate people on the basis of one’s disability. Some of the very poor in society are worse off than some of the disabled people...”

It is interesting to note that despite students comprising a substantial proportion of the study population and most of them having no income, less than half (49%) of the respondents supported student exemptions. When the interviewees were asked to clarify why so many respondents held this view a number of issues were raised: Firstly, it was suggested that it would not be the students themselves who would be paying, but their parents and guardians. Secondly, many of the respondents felt that students take up too much space in the libraries, often merely to loiter. By making them pay, the less serious

student users would be discouraged from using the library and this would free more space for the more 'deserving' users. In the words of one respondent:

"It will actually be a good idea if students were to pay since most of them take up a lot of space in the library while they don't have any serious work to do. A fee will also make them appreciate library services."

Many commentators, however, dispute the above notion that fees reduces excessive use or abuse by the public. Wilmott (In Hazell, 1992:19), for example, strongly argues that it is untenable to suggest that "charging discourages 'wasteful' or 'frivolous' use of library services"

A third reason that was given was that it was considered that students are the main beneficiaries of library services and should thus pay for services. A fourth factor that was raised was that it was perceived that students comprise the largest proportion of library users and the KNLS would forfeit a substantial revenue were they to be exempted.

Regarding the question of whether the unemployed should be exempted, a majority (61%) of the respondents felt that they should not be exempted since this could be a temporary phase in their lives and some may eventually secure employment. They were further concerned that many of the unemployed might not be honest enough to notify the KNLS about their status should they be re-employed. They also expressed concern about the ability of the KNLS to verify users' employment status.

Though by far the most of the respondents (90%) were against pensioners from being exempted from paying user fees, it became apparent from the interviews that the respondents were specifically targeting individuals who have taken early retirement with generous packages. One respondent said:

"Some of the pensioners have retired at a very early age and they should be able to pay for library services. Some of the people who retired were given handsome retirement package by their former employers and they should not have any problem paying for library services. Some of them have even gone back to college after early retirement and there is no reason why they should not pay like other people."

- Other than students, the KNLS is patronised by the better-educated stratum of the Kenyan population;
- Apart from students who are generally unemployed and thus lack income the remainder of the respondents fall in the middle and upper income groups;
- A fairly small proportion of the respondents utilised the resources of libraries other than the KNLS. This could largely be attributed to the fact that, other than the KNLS and academic libraries, most other libraries have restricted access and some also charge high subscription fees which is beyond the reach of many Kenyans.
- The survey results indicate an almost equal division between the small majority of the respondents who had other household members using KNLS facilities, and those who had none.

8.3 REVIEW OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS

The main aim of this study was to identify sustainable income generating options and specifically to investigate the feasibility of charging for services at the KNLS. As stated in Chapter One, the study was based on several research questions and the empirical investigation attempted to answer them. The following section summarises the way in which the research questions were resolved, or not.

1. What are the main uses of public library services in Kenya?

It is generally agreed that the public library plays an essential informational, educational and cultural role in society. However, it becomes clear from this study that although the KNLS is used for a variety of reasons, the major incentive for use was for education-related purposes. This is followed by the use of the library as a study venue.

Only a small proportion of the respondents use the library for leisure purposes. This might be attributed to the fact that majority of the users are using the libraries for educational purposes. Thus, very few people use the library facility as a place to meet friends, read newspapers and generally pass the time. It also emerged that even fewer use the library to borrow non-educational books either for themselves or others. It is

suggested that a number of underlying factors could have contributed to this use behaviour. The education system in Kenya places considerable emphasis on examinations in schools and students are not taught to appreciate lifelong learning. Many people only have basic literacy skills in Kenyan vernacular languages and are thus excluded from using the books stocked by libraries that are predominantly written in English.

2. Are the Users Aware of the Services Offered by the KNLS?

It is generally accepted that although the KNLS has the potential to offer a variety of services, viz. reservations, inter-library loans, postal membership and reference service most of these services have been discontinued or dormant for a long time. It is suggested that a number of factors could have contributed to this abeyance. For example, the ILL service was discontinued when it became difficult to offer it as the only way for one to know what is available in other libraries is by telephone or post and both these communication services are unreliable and expensive. Many librarians were also discouraged to offer the postal service due to attendant problems such as books not being returned and difficulty in tracing defaulters. A specialised reference service has not been offered in most of the KNLS branches for many years and the only one which was available in the Nairobi branch was closed following the exodus of qualified staff and the need to create more reading space. Most of the users lost interest in the book reservation service due to staff inefficiency and lack of relevant books. Apart from the above factors experience has also shown that the KNLS does not promote its services and thus even the few available services are largely unknown to the users. The KNLS also rarely conducts user surveys to gauge user satisfaction and to identify emerging needs.

In view of the above, it thus came as no surprise that, apart from institutional library membership and the mobile library service, most of the other specialised services the KNLS could offer are largely unknown to the respondents. There is no doubt that the lack of awareness of services could have far reaching effects if a user fee policy was to be considered by the KNLS.

3. Does the quality of current library services warrant the introduction of fees?

It is generally accepted that the quality of services offered greatly influences the willingness to pay and the eventual success of a user fee policy. The survey results indicated that in all instances, except as far as the relevance and availability of books, was concerned, the majority of the respondents thought that a 'good' service was being provided.

However, it emerged that despite the high ratings there are specific areas of the library service which the respondents would like to see improved as pre-requisites to user fees being introduced. It is evident that by far, the majority of the respondents indicated that they would expect the library to purchase new stock which is more relevant to their specific needs before user fees are considered. The other less areas which they would also like to see improved include increased reading space, extension of the loan period, and the introduction of Internet services.

The librarians who were interviewed indicated that in addition to improving services as a pre-requisite to introduce users fees there is a need to locate libraries in more accessible and secure areas in order to attract more users to the libraries.

3 Are library users willing to pay for library services if user fees were to be introduced?

The survey results indicate that a resounding majority of the respondents believe that since the introduction of cost sharing in Kenya a decade ago, the government has failed to attain the original objectives they had for setting up the scheme. The healthcare sector, despite the introduction of levies, has not shown any improvements and might have even deteriorated and free primary education was introduced in 2003 after the government realised that enrolments for primary schools had declined to unacceptable low levels. The cost sharing principle in health care is currently also under review.

It was thus noteworthy that, despite the failure of and resentment the respondents have towards the cost sharing policy in the health and education sectors in Kenya, a substantive majority are willing to support the introduction of user fees by the KNLS. The study clearly reveals that the respondents are very passionate about the library service and some students are even willing to use their personal savings (c.f. 7.3) to enable them to pay for services should a charge be levied. However, this picture becomes more varied when the respondents indicate which services they are willing to pay for and how much they were able or prepared to pay (cf. 7.3.3)

The respondents who were not willing to pay user fees cited the lack of income as the main reason. This is understood since students formed the majority of the library users and thus are generally also unemployed. Another reason given by a few was that they feel that the KNLS should, in principle, offer its services for free, while others were of the opinion that the current services do not merit a fee unless they are improved.

5. For which services are the users willing to pay if charges were to be introduced?

This study has shown that the largest proportion of the respondents are willing to pay for application forms, identification and borrowing cards. Most of the librarians interviewed were of the opinion that the KNLS could save a considerable amount of money if these items are to be charged for.

This study has further shown that if the KNLS were to introduce membership fees the majority of the respondents would prefer to pay an annual membership fee. These respondents believe that it would be more economical to pay once per year, and it would further also avoid the inconvenience of having to pay during each library visit. The survey results also indicated that, of those respondents who were willing to pay membership fees, the largest proportion would prefer to pay as families. This is mainly because they thought that they would pay less as a group, and this might also encourage other household members to read. Those who indicated a wish to register as individuals were of the opinion that reading is a personal hobby and they would thus not wish to involve other members of the family in the costs. The librarians interviewed were further

of the opinion that paying as a family could also present extensive administrative problems for the KNLS.

The study has further revealed that although most of the respondents were willing to pay membership fees and for the general items listed above, they were not willing to pay for specialised library services such as reservations, interlibrary loan, reference services, etc. It should, however, be noted that as indicated earlier (c.f. 6.2), most of the respondents are not aware of the potential of the KNLS to offer these services and this may have influenced their responses. The librarians interviewed in this study also do not support the imposition of fees for specialised library services. They feel that it would be difficult to determine charges and that the imposition of such fees would impede access to these services by those unable to pay.

6. Would the revenue likely to be generated be sufficient to justify the introduction of subscription fees?

The introduction of user fees has not only evoked moral debates, but also raised various issues with regard to the financial viability of such a scheme. As Ward et al (2002) point out, at first glance, it might seem that user fees might ease the financial constraints of operating the service, but on closer investigation this often proves to be untrue. The revenue likely to be generated, the cost of implementation, and subsequent administrative costs may not be justified.

This study corroborates the above and has shown that the majority the respondents are only willing or able to pay minimum amounts. The study has further shown that if annual subscription fees were to be introduced at the rate suggested by the respondents it would be negligible and would represent only about 7% of the total current KNLS annual budget. It is apparent therefore that, although a substantial proportion of the respondents have the will to pay annual fees (cf. 7.3.2), most of them lack sufficient income to translate this willingness into a tangible contribution. This inability or unwillingness to make a substantive contribution might mean that the cost of collecting the fees would not be offset by the income generated. In addition, the large proportion who wish to pay as

families at the lowest possible rate further underscores their inability to contribute substantially and the financial viability of a user fee system could be challenged even further (cf. 7.3.4).

7. What are the merits and demerits of user fees?

The most heated debate in the literature has centred on the positive and negative impacts of user fees on library service utilisation. Proponents of user fees believe that libraries are more likely to be responsive to users' needs and concerns and to provide good quality services when users are paying for services. They also believe that if the emphasis of the fee policy is on revenue generation for library services, and if the libraries that collect the fees retain some or all of this revenue, service quality can be improved and/or the provision of services can be expanded.

The probable positive effects of user fees that emerged from the study and which the respondents feel would have the greatest impact are:

- Improvements in service provision, particularly the acquisition of relevant new books, and the introduction of sorely needed new services.

Other probable positive effects that are considered would have less of an impact are:

- The control of the influx of non-library members,
- The utilisation of revenue to fully/partially recover running costs,
- The renovation of buildings,
- The acquisition of new furniture and the purchase of lost or damaged library material.

Opponents of user fees argue that public libraries belong to communities and, as public institutions, they should ensure that a wide range of information, educational, and recreational resources are provided free for all. They point out that any library that becomes dependent on user fees can feel pressured to cater to the paying users and not consider the needs of the greater community. Thus, as a result, these libraries cease to be 'public'. The study has shown that when considering user fees it is important to evaluate

the consumers' ability to pay for services. If this factor is not considered, user fees could lead to polarisation between the well endowed access because they can afford to pay and those who are denied information services because they are unable to pay.

The negative effects that the respondents considered would possibly be the most detrimental are that:

- It could lead to the reduction of library users,
- It might discriminate against the poor,
- It would affect the free flow of information, and
- Money might be diverted for other uses.

The respondents were far less concerned that user fees would:

- Produce insufficient financial returns,
- Lead to overcharging in order to collect more revenue, or
- Result in the government further reducing the KNLS' subsidy.

It is clear that the overall view that emerged from the study was that the users were of the opinion that the positive effects would outweigh the negative effects if user fees were to be introduced. However, the librarians interviewed in this study were divided on this issue with the relatively better funded Nairobi librarians having strong views against user fees and the regional cash strapped librarians taking a more pragmatic stance justifying user fees. Studies in other countries also indicated ambivalent views on this topic.

8. How should the revenue likely to be collected be utilised?

It became apparent from the study that if user fees are to be introduced the respondents would wish to see that the revenue likely to be generated be utilised on services that would be of direct benefit to them. This includes the purchase of books, journals and newspapers and the repair of damaged items. They also support the use of the money to introduce new services such as Internet access and a video library. The respondents firmly reject the possible use of the revenue for administrative purposes such as paying staff allowances, maintenance of plants and buildings, or payment of water and electricity

bills. In summary, if user fees are to be introduced by the KNLS, the respondents would like to see any such income accrued spent on:

- Improving existing library services;
- Expanding existing library services;
- Introducing new library services.

9. Apart from user fees, what other alternative sources of revenue could be introduced?

It has been strongly argued in the literature that libraries should not depend entirely on user fees as their only source of revenue. Thus, in addition to user fees and traditional funding sources, this study explored several alternative revenue sources which could be adopted by the KNLS. A number of alternatives that were supported include:

- Setting up of a bindery unit that could not only provide a service to the KNLS, but which could be opened to the public as a commercial enterprise.
- Establishing photocopy, e-mail and Internet services which likewise could be made available to the public at a fee.
- Starting a video library which could stock material for use in the library and hire by the public at a fee.
- Letting of halls and cafeterias already attached to libraries.

10. Would there be a need for exemptions if fees were to be introduced?

The question whether exemptions and concessions should be granted proved to be one of the most contentious issues in this study. It is apparent from the survey results that the respondents are not unanimous on which of the various social groups in society could be exempted from paying fees. It was interesting, for example to note that, despite lack of income, not all the students agree that they should be exempted from paying user fees. However, follow-up interviews provided a better understanding of these unusual responses and the underlying reasons therefore. It emerged that:

- In principle, the respondents had no objection to exemptions but are mainly concerned that both library staff and users might misuse the policy.
- They feared that those not deserving exemption might benefit since there are no infallible mechanisms in Kenya to determine a person's financial status in society.

11. Are there any policy and legal frameworks in Kenya to facilitate the introduction of user fees and alternative income generation options?

At present the KNLS Act outlines, among other issues, the services to be offered, the role and structure of the Board, and the source of its funding. However, it is silent on the issue of user fees. The librarians who were interviewed in this study have clearly stated that the Act is outdated and it should be reviewed in order to incorporate emerging issues such as charging of services and to enable the KNLS to freely solicit for funding and to engage in income generation. The librarians pointed out that the onus is now on the KNLS Board to lobby with parliamentarians to review this legislation.

12. Is the KNLS receiving an adequate share of government funding?

Most library schemes in the post-colonial era in Africa were characterised by rapid development with assistance from donors and generally adequate state funding. This period of relative stability, in terms of funding from both the state and donors, came to an end during the 1980's when economic hardships heralded severe fiscal cut backs. This study has clearly shown that the KNLS is under-funded and this has impacted negatively on the provision of library services. Many librarians however attribute the KNLS' poor financial position to its inability to convince the government and other funding agencies to provide sustainable funding to support the role of libraries in national development. Many of the librarians who were interviewed further added that the KNLS' poor financial situation was further exacerbated by incorrect allocation of its limited financial resources.

8.3.1 Conclusion

It has emerged clearly that:

- The respondents value the library, but would like to see improvements;

- The KNLS libraries are mainly used for educational purposes which is not a surprising seeing that students and teachers comprised a substantive majority of users;
- The majority of respondents were not prepared to pay for special services, but were willing to pay annual subscription fees although they are only prepared to pay minimum subscription levies;
- Exemptions are necessary, but might not be easy to implement;
- A range of alternative sources of income that could provide innovative additional funding were supported.

The empirical study has clearly shown that user fees remain an intractable problem.

In the following section, the researcher will put forward recommendations for a sustainable financial model that could serve as a basis for future public library development in Kenya. These recommendations will be based on the researcher's interpretation of the empirical data collected and salient points derived from the literature.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

The results obtained from the analysis of the data collected during the empirical study in many instances produced contradictory results and did not provide clear guidelines to assist in the resolution of the KNLS' predicament. It clearly emerged from the study that:

- A definite mandate was given to introduce annual membership fees, but willingness cannot always be translated into ability to pay;
- The aggregate annual fee the users were willing to pay was minimal and would probably not constitute more than 7% of the current annual budget of the KNLS;
- The cost of administering the service could thus be higher than income accrued;
- Users are not willing to pay for specialised library services and the costing of specialised services would be difficult; and

- The quality and quantity of the current bookstock urgently needs to be improved contingent with the introduction of a fee system.

Many significant issues and important suggestions, however, came to the fore that could provide a possible resolution to the financial dilemma the KNLS finds itself in. Based on these findings and the most salient points derived from the literature, the researcher would like to put forward recommendations for sustainable public library development in Kenya. The recommendations will address the following issues: (a) the legal framework which would have to be put in place to facilitate the introduction of an income generation policy by the KNLS, (b) an appropriate funding structure that incorporates various possibilities that could be adopted to generate additional income, (c) cost saving measures to increase efficiency in the utilisation of existing financial resources, and (d) suggestions that relate to the management and administration of such a system.

8.4.1 Legislative Framework

Public libraries are generally subject, unless specifically exempted, to broadly applicable laws that control several aspects of their funding and other financial aspects, which would include all aspects that relate to fee implementation and income generation in general. These would address the method for instituting such schemes, the pricing structure, and the use of the revenue generated. The law varies from country to country on the issue of library charges/user fees, in some it is silent, in other it clearly specifies and outlines charging parameters. For example, in England the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964, clearly sets out the Government's objectives for public library services. According to the Office of Arts and Libraries (1988:v) "the government wishes to maintain a free basic library service at taxpayers' expense. At the same time, it makes it easier for library authorities to increase their income by joint ventures with the private sector, and by charging for specialized services". At present the law regulating the KNLS is silent on the issue of library charges/user fees and the exchequer is the main source of the KNLS funding. Thus, before the KNLS considers instituting various income generating activities, including a fee system, it will be necessary to first create new policies and a legal framework.

In recent times, the political environment in Kenya has been characterised by a vibrant parliament that tackles legislative reforms aggressively. The current emphasis, however, is on constitutional matters. The government would thus have to be specifically motivated and leveraged to address library development. It is thus suggested that politicians should be persuaded to take up the cause of public libraries as part of their political objectives. Past experience has shown that politicians have spearheaded the development of schools, health clinics, churches, etc. to gain political mileage. In view of this the researcher thus recommends that:

- The KNLS should set up a task force comprising of professional librarians, legal experts and other stakeholders to identify specific areas in the legislation which needs to be amended.

- The KNLS should lobby politicians and convince them that library development may well be used as a campaign tool especially with regard to community development. In this way, proposals for change of legislation affecting library and information services could be expected to receive serious attention from parliament.
- The KNLS should work closely with the parliamentary committee on culture and social services in order to ensure that questions and bills related to library and information services are debated and tabled in parliament.

8.4.2 Funding Structure

There is no doubt that the KNLS is generally under-funded by the state. The researcher is, however, convinced that by actively lobbying to obtain its fair share of the available resources the KNLS could considerably reduce the deficit. Within this framework it is therefore suggested that the KNLS should aggressively seek additional funding from the government and other funding agencies. It is further proposed that the KNLS should seriously consider the implementation of clearly circumscribed annual membership fees. Before embarking on such an initiative the KNLS, should, however, first conduct further investigations to determine the financial viability of the scheme and a fee structure that would be equitable to both users and KNLS. It is further proposed that the KNLS should engage in selected income generation activities. The following income generation structures for the KNLS are therefore proposed.

8.4.2.1 Increased Government Subsidies

As indicated in Chapter Three, in most instances, the central government is the principal supporter of the public library sector in Africa and this has, in many instances, impeded the development of public libraries. It further emerges from the literature that in many instances in Africa, the government guarantees only payment of salaries and does not finance other activities within the sector. Experience in Kenya shows that at present almost all the successful initiatives in the KNLS have sprouted from external donor support. However, in most instances many of these initiatives grind to a halt as soon as the donation/grant period comes to an end. It is thus apparent that librarians in Africa

have to be more pragmatic in promoting library services and soliciting for funds. As Weinland and McClure (1987:53) point out, “it is no longer sufficient to justify the existence of public libraries on the basis that they provide the society’s information needs and are the guardians of culture”. The researcher thus recommends that:

- The KNLS should sensitise policy makers and other funding agencies to the value of libraries and their role in national development and the need for sustainable funding.

In order to achieve the above objective, the researcher recommends that the KNLS should:

- Be actively involved in lobbying in order to express its needs to the decision makers in a more proactive way.
- Lobby at all levels, from local to national, and also involve all stakeholders such as the Kenya Library Association. Experience from other countries shows that where public libraries and library associations have come together policy makers have responded positively.

8.4.2.2 Subscription Fees

It clearly emerged that while a substantial majority (74%) of the users were willing to pay annual subscription fees (c.f. 7.3.3) they were unwilling or unable to translate this willingness into a viable contribution. For example while most of the users were passionate about the library service and some students were even willing to engage in income generating activities in order to raise money to pay such a fee (cf. 7.3), they would or could not commit themselves to a more substantive fee structure. This outcome clearly shows that financial realities often override other more subjective issues. This dilemma could thus render a fee-based service economically unviable, as the costs to manage the system could far outweigh the income generated.

The researcher thus suggests that any decision on annual subscription fees can only be arrived at after further consultation between the KNLS and all stakeholders. Thus, the researcher recommends that:

- The KNLS should set up a technical committee to work out the modalities with regard to subscription fees;
- The committee should be as representative as possible and should comprise all library stakeholders.

The researcher recommends that the following general factors should serve as a framework or guiding principles for such a committee:

- A structure should be put in place that would ensure that all social groups are targeted as inclusively as possible. It is not always possible to determine factors such as employment status and income category that could be used as the basis for inclusion or not;
- The fee should be structured taking into consideration broad age categorisations of the of library users, viz. children, young adults, adults, etc;
- The wishes of those members who wish to register as individuals or as families should be seriously considered and the viability of family membership investigated;
- There should be a constant review of the charges to reflect changing needs;
- The registration process does not interfere with the provision of library service.

The researcher thus recommends that:

- Membership renewal should not fall in the same period for all users since it might result in administrative problems, and/or
- A staggered time frame to collect membership fees should be adopted to prevent disruption of service.

For those libraries that were built in partnership with the community, the researcher recommends that:

- Annual subscription rates should be lower than those of government aided libraries;
- Visitors and those who live outside the library community should pay higher fees than local residents;

- The community should determine which members of the society should be given concessions or be exempted from paying annual fees.

The study has shown that the library is also patronised by a large number of non-members. The researcher contends there is a need to ensure that this category of users continue using the library. The researcher thus recommends that:

- A provision should be made for short-term membership. However, librarians should encourage users to register with the library in order to reduce administrative cost. The main advantage of temporary membership is that that users will also be encouraged to use other library services.

8.4.2.3 Application Fees

Experience has shown that there is considerable wastage of application forms, borrowing and identification cards as many people are negligent and either lose cards or do not bother to return them. Such wastage could be curtailed if users have to pay for cards, forms, etc. and the KNLS could recoup part or all of the cost of such items. The respondents have also shown a willingness to pay for these materials (cf. 7.3.2) and the researcher thus recommends that:

- The KNLS should charge application fees to cover the cost of application forms, borrowing and identification cards.

8.4.2.4 Alternative Income Generation

This section will look at alternative income generation options that the KNLS could adopt to supplement its income base.

8.4.2.4.1 Internet and Computer Services

Most of the Internet cafes in Kenya are used mainly for email services and many users are as yet unaware of the wealth of information available on the Internet. For example, many students are not aware that the Internet is now a powerful supplement to the traditional ways of acquiring information for study and research purposes. Providing a

fee-based Internet service would thus not only generate funds but also assist potential users to access information worldwide. It is thus recommended that the KNLS:

- ❑ Institute a service that concentrates on the informational use of the Internet,
- ❑ Organise workshops, seminars, and training programs to sensitise the public on the unlimited sources of information available on the Internet,
- ❑ Offer information literacy courses for library professionals and other interested persons and organisations,
- ❑ Conduct Internet searches for a fee on behalf of companies or individuals such as researchers, students and teachers, etc.

The implementation of such a service could, however, be impeded by a number of obstacles, the most serious of which would be:

- ❑ Lack of funds to purchase computer hardware and software;
- ❑ Poor communication infrastructure resulting in high connectivity charges by ISPs; and
- ❑ Varying computer literacy levels of the library staff.

In order to overcome the above challenges, the researcher recommends that the KNLS should:

- ❑ Solicit for funds from the government and other agencies such as UNDP, to purchase information technology hardware and software.
- ❑ Price Internet services so that they are competitive within the local market.
- ❑ Apply for a licence to launch two-way VSAT services from the telephone regulator.

In summary, it can be stated that if the obstacles outlined above can be overcome, the establishment of such a service could not only have a very definite potential to generate substantial funds, but it could also:

- ❑ Serve as an important marketing tool;
- ❑ Play an important role in improved and relevant service delivery;
- ❑ Be an important research tool to meet customers' information needs; and

- Eventually form the basis of a national information infrastructure that will allow for seamless communication.

8.4.2.4.2 Bindery and Photocopy Services

The large number of damaged books that require minor repairs and which are withdrawn from circulation because of lack of facilities and funds to repair them is of serious concern. Thus, the need for a decentralised bindery and repair service cannot be over-emphasised. A roll out bindery service would enable branch librarians to repair damaged books quickly instead of depending on the moribund one at the main library in Nairobi.

It is further suggested that an updated and decentralised bindery service would not only increase the potential stock that can be made available to users, it could also generate funds by offering bindery service at a fee to the general public.

There is further evidence that there is a clear need for a decentralised photocopy service in all branches. Apart from generating revenue, the KNLS should regard photocopying as one of the best ways of minimising damage and theft of materials and thus derive equal or even greater benefit to the library than to the user. In order to generate substantial income from a photocopying service, the researcher recommends that the KNLS should:

- Make the service available in all branches;
- Introduce modern coin operated photocopy machines to reduce staff costs; and
- Keep photocopying charges as low as possible in order to compete favourably with commercial enterprises.
- Keep capital outlay as low as possible and rather than purchase the photocopying equipment the KNLS could enter into a lease agreement with the local photocopier vendors.

8.4.2.4.3 Room and Space Rentals

Many of the KNLS purpose-built library buildings have halls which are currently under-utilised. In order to generate income from these facilities the researcher recommends that the KNLS should:

- Make them available for hire for conferences, weddings, video shows, etc.
- Sub-let the halls to be used as offices, shops, etc.
- Organise music and cultural festivals for a fee in collaboration with the department of Culture and Social Services especially in areas where theatres/halls are not available.
- Make the halls available periodically for exhibitions by companies and artists who wish to display their wares or art works.

For those libraries that have purpose built cafeterias, the researcher further recommends that:

- These could be sub-let to private individuals for a specified lease period.
- The KNLS could approach some of the soft drink companies such as Coca-Cola and Kukuru Foods to set up tents which could be used as cafeterias as well to host functions. This will be particularly suited in rural libraries where they can also double up as recreation areas.

8.4.4 COST SAVING MEASURES

It emerged from this study that there is a need for the KNLS to consider employing stringent financial methods and cost saving measures in its operations in order to ensure that a greater proportion of available funds go towards financing the core library business. In view of this, the following suggestions are made:

8.4.4.1 Reducing General Expenses and Wage Costs

A significant proportion of the KNLS government grant goes towards paying staff salaries at various levels, training and other general maintenance costs. A specific concern was the large number of non-professional staff employed by the KNLS, and it is suggested that it would be more cost effective to outsource such services. All these expenses have impacted negatively on the provision of basic library service and there is a

need for the KNLS to reduce future expenses. In order to streamline expenses and to save costs the researcher thus recommends that the KNLS should:

- Outsource the services of non-strategic units, such as tailoring, security, and maintenance,
- Decentralise management to empower librarians to make decisions within their regions. This would not only boost morale but also save cost by reducing the travel to and from branches which the current centralised system necessitates,
- Introduce modern information and communication technologies in order to save on telephone and postal expenses,
- Cut back on existing non-professional staff and freeze other posts until the desired staff number is achieved,
- Employ qualified staff to save on training costs,
- Where appropriate engage the services of volunteers and students especially in community based libraries.

8.4.4.2 Streamlining the Collection of Charges

Although overdue fines are generally not regarded as a source of income, they could supplement the KNLS total income. Overdue charges currently vary among the KNLS branches and this has led to confusion on charging policy. Experience has also shown that not all the money collected is banked into the Board's account. In order to avoid these problems the researcher recommends that the KNLS should streamline the collection of overdues and other library charges by:

- Proclaiming standard overdue rates in all the branches;
- Ensuring proper receipting of payments;
- Supplying all the branches with cash registers.
- Automating the issue system to avoid manipulation of overdue fines by staff.

8.4.4.3 School Library Service

The study has clearly shown that a substantial number of the KNLS users are students who are mainly interested in educational material. In order to meet the needs of this particular category of users the researcher recommends that:

- A dedicated school library service be instituted by the KNLS.

To achieve this objective, the KNLS should:

- Engage with the Ministry of Education and other support agencies in the education sector to obtain the support and funding for such a scheme.
- Make the government and local authorities aware that this is a service which they are supposed to provide and they should thus support and cooperate with the KNLS in setting up the service.

As far as funding of the programme is concerned the researcher recommends that:

- The government should fund the program through the Ministry of Education's free primary school program. The government should be asked to channel a certain percentage of the school grants to the KNLS to be used for the service.
- Local authorities should be approached to assist in funding this service through the Local Transfer Fund (LTF)²⁰.
- Local NGOs and other international bodies with an interest in the educational development of children such as UNESCO and UNICEF and philanthropic organisations like the Carnegie Corporation should be approached to assist in funding this service.

For the scheme to be successful it is further recommended that the following measures should be implemented:

- Sourcing of adequate and sustained funding to purchase new reading materials and to replenish old stock
- The purchase of reading materials in local languages especially for lower primary schools
- The purchase of mobile libraries and non-motorised modes of transport such carts, camels and bicycles for use in the distribution of materials.

²⁰ The LTF supports activities in the following priority areas: social development (with an emphasis on health), public sector reforms, environmental management (with an emphasis on water management) and municipal strengthening (decentralization).

- A senior librarian should be appointed to coordinate the service from the headquarters, while at the branch level a librarian could be appointed to manage the service with assistance from other staff.

Apart from generating revenue, the researcher recommends that the school library service should be geared towards:

- Strengthening relationships with schools by offering them cost-effective quality services;
- Offering services to all phases of primary and secondary education.
- Promoting a reading culture and creating an interest in books especially in rural schools by taking reading materials closer to students who are disadvantaged by the lack of school libraries;
- Reducing the costs incurred by the KNLS to run the current, albeit hopelessly inadequate, service to schools.

8.4.4.4 Efficient Mobile Library Service

The mobile library service is one of the services which has been greatly affected by the poor funding and stock situation. The result has been that a number of branch librarians have been compelled to withdraw the mobile service in their areas. For the KNLS to revitalise the mobile library service, the researcher thus recommends the following cost saving measures:

- The use of smaller mobile trucks or a trailer which can be pulled by even a small pickup.
- Instead of building new mobile trucks, the KNLS could convert freight containers into temporary libraries.
- Reducing the number of staff servicing the mobile libraries by employing a driver-clerk who can assist the qualified staff.
- Institutions and individuals receiving mobile library services should pay annual subscription fees.

- Local authorities and the Ministry of Education could also be involved in the provision of the mobile library service by subsidising the KNLS.

8.4.4.5 Automation, the use of ICTs and Cooperative Schemes

In terms of saving money, as much could be said about the cost-saving possibilities of automation as for networking. Indeed, many of the most promising avenues open to libraries today include networking by means of information communication technologies (ICTs). According to Nawe (2004) the strategies for enhancing provision of services through external support fall under two categories:

- International cooperation and information exchange ensures that libraries all over the world can depend on each other as no single library can meet all the needs of its users at any given time.
- By forming local links, consortia and other forms of cooperative relationships, libraries can cut down on a lot of individual spending by sharing resources.

According to the UK office of Arts and Libraries (1988:7) “joint ventures can be a means to introduce cost-effective and better services” and it adds that “joint ventures can be an excellent way of enabling a library authority to expand a range of its services to its customers: to provide for example, not only a general reference service but also an in-depth service to particular client groups”. Experience has shown that the KNLS has been slow in forging links with other libraries. In order for the KNLS to improve its services and to save costs the researcher thus recommends the establishment of networking and partnership schemes in the following areas:

- Bibliographical databases,
- Collective regional catalogues,
- Cooperative purchasing of books and automation of library systems.

By automating its services the KNLS will among other things be able to:

- Exchange information whether on an international, regional, or national level very quickly.

- Access more and a wider range of materials such as those available on the Internet.
- Improve and expedite issuing, reservations, and overdue procedures.

8.4.4.6 Establishment of Public Private Partnerships for Library Development

One of the major problems the KNLS has been facing is that the government no longer allocates adequate funds for construction of new libraries and to introduce new services. Experience has shown that if the KNLS were to depend on this funding it would have to accumulate it for several years to construct a single library. However, it is not possible to accumulate any money since the law requires that any surplus money has to be returned to the treasury at the end of each financial year. In order to avoid returning the money the KNLS utilises it to repair library buildings.

In view of the above situation the researcher thus recommends that:

- The KNLS should initiate steps to enter into partnership with the private sector to secure funding to fund the construction of libraries, acquisition of books and automation of services. This would enable the KNLS to establish libraries in all the districts as originally envisaged in 1967 and also to revitalise its services.

In order to achieve this objective the researcher recommends that the KNLS should:

- Lobby government through the treasury to procure permission and guarantees to borrow money from the private sector;
- Lobby government to increase its annual allocation for library development to facilitate the repayment of loans.

Apart from entering into partnerships with the private sector the researcher also recommends that the KNLS should:

- Approach charitable organisations, local authorities and NGO's to assist in the provision of specialised library services e.g. the mobile library, camel library and the book box project. NGO's could also assist in donating materials e.g. books, computers etc.

- Lobby through the Local Government Authorities Association in Kenya (ALGAK) to be legally included as one of the beneficiaries of the Local Transfer Fund (LTF).
- Set up 'Friends of the Library' groups to help in fund raising activities for library development and also to solicit for donations from individuals and organisation in collaboration with the library.

Several international organisations such as JICA, NORAD, USAID, and UNESCO that played a crucial role in the development of libraries in Kenya during the formative stages of the KNLS abandoned many of the projects due to political differences with the previous regimes. The current political dispensation however appears to be motivated to uphold social development and the KNLS should utilise this opportunity to invite back these organisations. The researcher thus recommends that the KNLS should:

- Seek technical cooperation agreements with the above organisations to help in the development of library services.

8.4.5 MANAGING THE SYSTEM

For any innovative system to succeed it is necessary to put in place mechanisms and structures to support it. Thus, if the KNLS were to implement the scheme outlined above, the following will have to be instituted in order to ensure success and sustainability.

8.4.5.1 Utilisation of Funds at the Point of Collection

It is clear that an important factor to be considered when introducing a user fee policy is that fees should be linked to the quality of services, i.e. if it is accepted that utilisation of library services and willingness to pay for them is largely influenced by their perceived quality. This implies that the improvement of services should be a mandatory prerequisite to the introduction of annual subscription fees and any revenue likely to be collected should thus immediately be used to improve the quality of services. The implementation of the latter is dependent on the extent to which the library that collects the fees can directly utilise the revenue collected for improvements.

However, a number of important issues that relate to the proposal for utilisation and the control of fees thus arise. It is obvious that the retention of revenue at the collection point greatly influences the ability to redistribute resources to libraries which are least likely to be able to generate their own income. In view of this the researcher thus recommends that:

- Mechanisms have to be employed for redistribution of revenue to poorer areas in order to ensure equitable provision of services;
- It will be necessary to develop managerial and accounting skills as well as adequate information systems at all levels in the KNLS if decentralisation is to be effective;
- Active community participation in all aspects of running the library services, including determining fee policies and in deciding how to utilise the revenue likely to be generated, will be necessary.

In the opinion of the researcher the retention by KNLS branches of at least a portion of the revenue from income generating activities and subscription fees will:

- Improve incentives for fee payment and collection, and will promote greater accountability of the services to the community served.

8.4.5.2 Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

For any income generating activity to succeed the staffing of the new service needs to be considered carefully. The researcher thus recommends that:

- The staff should be made to understand and appreciate the new opportunity and to acquire broader business skills;
- The KNLS should organise training in the form of short courses, workshops and seminars;
- Library schools in Kenya should be encouraged to incorporate entrepreneurship in their curricula.

8.4.5.3 Establishment of a Business Enterprise Unit

If the KNLS decides to implement the revenue generation plans outlined above, it would have to coordinate and systemise efforts and not rely on ad-hoc initiatives as currently implemented by individual librarians. Financially and structurally, income generation should be run as an independent unit and separate from the core library service. It will therefore be necessary for the KNLS to establish a distinct unit with its own identity, separate staff and line management responsibility. In order to achieve this objective the researcher recommends that the KNLS should:

- Engage the services of a business consultant to study the possibilities and also assist with a business plan that will outline all income generating ventures.
- Establish a fully-fledged business enterprise unit headed by a qualified business manager at headquarters to coordinate income generating activities within the KNLS network. This could then be replicated in the branches on a smaller scale.

8.4.5.4 Promoting the System

An income generation policy is often preceded by a comprehensive marketing campaign.

The researcher thus recommends the following marketing strategies for the KNLS:

- Advertising the new services and approaches on the KNLS web page. Users should also be able to submit requests and to communicate with staff via the website;
- Use of brochures and business cards;
- Use of word of mouth and personal contacts;
- By ensuring quality service the KNLS will find that satisfied customers will spread the word to others. It is important to remember that it is cheaper to keep a customer than it is to find a new one.

Apart from marketing the services earmarked for income generation the researcher recommends that the KNLS should:

- Raise the profile of the library and stimulate the use of under-utilised services especially those which are not known by the users, or to make them fully aware of the potential of the KNLS to offer some of these services.

- Conduct regular user surveys in order to gauge user satisfaction and to identify emerging needs.

8.4.6 Summary

It is hoped that the income generation plan outlined above will be adopted by the KNLS and that it will provide the impetus that will widen its income base and thus provide a more effective library service. It is imperative that the KNLS aggressively solicits the government to increase its budget and it should further approach other funding agencies for support. This could be achieved if the KNLS were to convince the government and donors of the important role it plays in national development. In addition, the KNLS should institute stringent fiscal measures in order to ensure that available funds are used for its intended purposes. The proposals made above on alternative income generation has shown that there are several viable opportunities that the KNLS could implement in its quest to achieve a viable and sustainable income base.

8.5 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

The researcher hopes that the issues raised will provide adequate stimulus for further research in other countries particularly in the developing world. Charging fees for library services has always been an emotive issue and this study is likely to spark a variety of reactions. It is hoped that these reactions might give rise to constructive development within public libraries by stimulating interest in income generation especially through user fees. Future research can build on the results of this research. Further research is required which will incorporate policy makers in order to gauge their perceptions with regard to the role of libraries in national development and to establish why public libraries are poorly funded. Future research should further also involve the opinions of non-library users.

8.6 CONCLUSION

The intention of this research project was to make a contribution to an under-studied field in public libraries in the developing world. As indicated in Chapter Three, the topic has been thoroughly investigated and reported on, but mainly from a western and specifically developed world perspective. Thus, it is intended that it would be to the benefit of public

libraries in the developing world to bring to the fore a topic which is of such immense importance, given the poor funding position of many public libraries in Africa.

The researcher firmly believes that information could be one of the most important catalysts for economic, political and social development in Africa. Many African governments, however, upon independence, devised draconian legislation to control the dissemination of information. Thus, libraries and other information agencies could not develop to their full potential under such circumstances. Although there have been positive changes in some countries with regard to press freedom, access to information, and respect for human rights, little has been done to assist libraries to expand their roles and proactively engage in information provision and dissemination activities that would enable them to participate in the development of their countries.

It is a reality that libraries in Africa are in decline due to lack of funds and this situation has not been addressed adequately either by library professionals or African governments. However, it is not just a question of lack of finances that has bedevilled African libraries, but also the lack of political will in prioritising library development. For example, libraries did not improve notably during the oil boom in Nigeria in the 1970s. Although the researcher acknowledges that most African countries are poor and much of her population lives close to the breadline, he however feels strongly that the limited available resources are not utilised properly. One only needs to look at one of the corruption scandals²¹ in Kenya to realise that if these funds had rather been channelled towards social and economic development libraries could be improved and many more established by now.

It is therefore evident that for any meaningful development of public libraries in Africa to take place there is a need to identify sustainable financial sources that will ensure continued development in the future. It has also to be recognised that the final foundation

²¹ The Goldenberg scandal refers to the instance where exporters deposited export earnings in US dollar in the Kenya central bank, and in turn received the equivalent in Kenyan shillings plus 20 percent. The scam started in 1991, almost immediately after the Kenya government executed economic reforms intended to open up the Kenyan economy to globalisation. In this fraud alone, the Kenya government lost 600 million dollars.

for a sustainable information service is the recognition of financial realities. It is hoped that this study will provide a useful guideline that could be used by the KNLS and similar library services to widen their income base and to argue their case for increased funding from governments and other funding agencies.

In closing, the point which this dissertation seeks to advance is that, although library charges seem unavoidable in many instances, libraries should not fall back on charges as the only method of funding. They should convince their governing agencies that their services are for the public good, and continuously petition for more money. Knuth (1994:78) argues that “only those institutions that contribute to national development programs will have access to funds”. Therefore libraries must evolve into centres that contribute to development and that meet local information needs. They should also be aware of the possibilities of alternative revenue sources as has been outlined in this study. Such alternatives should be exploited whenever possible.

The study has clearly indicated that there are no easy solutions to the user fee conundrum. It has shown that, although a substantial proportion of the respondents have no objection to paying user fees, many are only prepared to pay minimal amounts. Introducing fees may thus not be worth the effort since the administrative costs may far outweigh the income likely to be collected. It has also shown that user fees will impact negatively on the poor who are in dire need of the services, especially students and the unemployed. In view of this, the study thus recommends that together with a broad-based affordable fee structure, alternative income generation activities should be introduced and stringent financial management systems should be implemented.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY LIBRARY USERS

CONFIDENTIALITY

All the information that will be gathered in this questionnaire will be treated as confidential. This questionnaire is designed to collect data for the purpose of identifying reliable and equitable sources of public library funding in Kenya.

The views of library users are of paramount importance in meeting this objective. Therefore, your input in this regard will be highly appreciated. Please extend your cooperation by expressing views to the questions asked. In the questions below there are no right or wrong answers. You are asked to be as objective as possible. Please tick [✓] in the appropriate boxes.

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. AGE
- | | |
|-------|-----|
| 15-24 | [] |
| 25-34 | [] |
| 35-44 | [] |
| 45-54 | [] |
| 55+ | [] |
2. GENDER
- | | |
|--------|-----|
| Male | [] |
| Female | [] |
3. LOCALITY
- | | |
|-------|-----|
| Urban | [] |
| Rural | [] |
4. OCCUPATION [_____] (e.g. teacher, student, doctor, etc)
5. For how long have you been using the library? [____ Years] [____ Months]
6. How many other members of your family are registered or use the services of the KNLS?
[_____]
7. Are you a member of any other library?
- | | |
|-----|-----|
| YES | [] |
| NO | [] |
8. If your answer to question 7 is YES please specify the library [_____]
9. What is your level of education and training?
- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|---|
| (a) Currently studying | [] | [Please specify level of studies _____] |
| (b) Primary certificate | [] | |
| (c) Secondary certificate | [] | |
| (d) College diploma | [] | |
| (e) University degree | [] | |
10. What would you say your income range per month is?
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| (a) No income | [] |
| (b) Low [Less than Ksh.10, 000] | [] |
| (c) Middle [Ksh10, 000-40,000] | [] |
| (d) High [More than Ksh. 40,000] | [] |

PART 2: INTERACTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIBRARY SERVICE

In this section, your perceptions regarding the different aspects of the library services offered by the KNLS are sought.

11. Specify if you are aware that the KNLS has the potential to offer the following services:

	YES	NO
(a) Book reservations	[]	[]
(b) Inter-library loans	[]	[]
(c) Postal membership	[]	[]
(d) Institutional membership	[]	[]
(e) Mobile library	[]	[]
(f) Reference service	[]	[]

12. How would you rate the following features of the library?

	[Excellent]	[Good]	[Fair]	[Poor]	[V. poor]
(a) Availability of books	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(b) Availability of newspapers, magazines, etc.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(c) Competence of staff	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(d) Staff co-operation/assistance	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(e) Attitude of staff towards public	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(f) Reading environment (quiet, noisy)	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(g) Overall quality of service	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

13. What is your main reason for using the library?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (a) Educational purposes | [] |
| (b) Leisure purposes | [] |
| (c) Borrowing books for myself or others | [] |
| (d) Study venue | [] |
| (e) Other (please specify) _____ | [] |

PART 3: USER FEES: AWARENESS AND WILLINGNESS TO PAY

In this section we are concerned with your views regarding the user fee concept in the education sector, and whether the KNLS could also implement such a policy. In addition your views regarding the likely impact of user fees, utilisation of potential funds, and alternative sources of funds are sought.

14. Do you know about the cost-sharing concept introduced recently by the government in the health and education sector?

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| (a) YES | [] |
| (b) NO | [] |

15. Have you paid for health services through the above scheme (cost-sharing)?

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| (a) YES | [] |
| (b) NO | [] |

16. In your opinion, do you think the government has achieved the objectives for introducing user fees? (i.e. to improve health and education provision).

17. In the face of reduced government funding of public library services what in your opinion which one of the following options would be the best for the KNLS?

- (a) Reduce services []
- (b) Introduce user fees/cost sharing []
- (c) Reduce administrative costs []
- (d) Other (specify) _____

18. If KNLS were to introduce user fees/cost-sharing would you be willing to pay for its services?

- (a) YES []
- (b) NO []

19. If your answer to question 18 is **NO** which of the following answers would support your reason?

- (a) Library services should be free []
- (b) Lack of personal income []
- (c) Poor library services []
- (e) Other (specify) _____

20. If the KNLS were to charge for application forms, identification, and borrowing cards would you be willing to pay for them?

- (a) YES []
- (b) NO []

21. If the KNLS were to charge for specific services which of the following would you be willing to pay?

- (a) Book loans/borrowing []
- (b) Reference service []
- (c) Interlibrary loans []
- (d) Book reservations []
- (e) Postal service []
- (f) Mobile library []
- (g) Study reading facilities []
- (h) Institutional membership []

22. If a library fee were to be introduced by the KNLS which of the following categories would you prefer?

- (a) Entry fee []
- (b) Annual fee []
- (c) Cash deposit []

23. If an annual fee were to be introduced how much would you recommend to be paid per:

- (a) Child [Ksh. _____]
- (b) Student [Ksh. _____]
- (c) Adult [Ksh. _____]
- (d) Institutions [Ksh. _____]
- (e) Other (specify) _____ [Ksh. _____]

24. If annual subscription fees were introduced would you prefer to pay as:

- (a) A family, OR []
- (b) An individual ? []

25. Please give reasons for the above answer.

26. If you were to pay as a family how much are you willing to pay per year?
[Ksh._____]

27. If user fees/cost-sharing were to be introduced by the KNLS what are the likely positive effects?

- (a) Control influx of non-members []
- (b) Improvement of service (e.g. buying of books) []
- (c) Renovation of buildings and purchase of furniture []
- (d) To fully/partially recover increased costs []
- (e) Cover loss or damage of library materials []
- (f) Introduction of new services, e.g. internet []
- (g) Other (specify) _____ []

28. If user fees/cost-sharing were to be introduced by the KNLS what are the likely negative effects?

- (a) Affects free flow of information []
- (b) Reduction of library users []
- (c) Discrimination of the poor []
- (d) Money might be diverted for other uses []
- (e) Overcharging to collect more money []
- (f) Produces insufficient returns []
- (g) Government might reduce funding []
- (f) Others (specify) _____ []

29. In your opinion will the benefits be greater than the negative effects or vice versa?

30. How would you propose the money collected from user fees (cost-sharing) to be used?

- (a) Purchase books, journals and newspapers []
- (b) Renovation of library building []
- (c) Repair damaged books []
- (c) Pay staff allowances []
- (d) Maintain mobile library []
- (e) Pay water, electricity and telephone bills []
- (f) Set up video library, []
- (g) Others (specify) _____ []

31. As an alternative to cost sharing which of the following income generating activities would you recommend for the KNLS?

- (a) Photocopy services []
- (b) Stationery shop []
- (c) Cafeteria services []
- (d) Video library/shows []
- (e) Internet services []
- (f) Fund raising (*harambee*) []
- (g) Other (specify) _____ []

32. Which of the following members of the society would you recommend for exemption if fees were to be introduced?

- (a) Students []
- (b) The needy/poor []
- (c) The unemployed []
- (d) Physically disabled persons []
- (d) Pensioners []
- (e) Other (specify _____)

33. As a pre-requisite to introducing user fees/cost-sharing which areas of the library service would you like to be improved?

34. Any general comment on the topic (user fees/cost-sharing) will be welcomed

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (LIBRARIANS)

1. Do you think the KNLS Act is still relevant taking into consideration the many changes that have taken place in the information field?

- 2 (a). Given the fact that the government does not fund public institutions in Kenya adequately, what in your opinion would be the best option for the KNLS to address this problem?

(b). What is your opinion with regard to the view held by many that the KNLS has not been effective in seeing that the library service receives its proper share of available finances from the government?

- 3 (a). One of the issues that is highly contested in the user fee debate is whether it is ethical for librarians to charge user fees.
(b) What is your opinion in this regard if the KNLS was to consider charging for its services?

4. (a). If the KNLS were to introduce membership fees which of the following categories do you think would be more suitable? : (1) annual fees, (2) entry fees, and (3) security deposit

(b). What are the main reasons that you attribute to your answer to the above question?

5. In general how would you rate the competence of the KNLS staff?

- 6 (a) Do you think that it will be necessary to devise mechanisms to facilitate the exemption of users who might not be able to pay if user fees were to be introduced by the KNLS?

(b) What are the likely challenges in devising such a policy?

7. If user fees were to be introduced do you think the money likely to be collected should be deposited in the Boards' account or librarians should be allowed to utilise part of the money.

8. Other than user fees which other income generation activities would you suggest for the KNLS?

9. Do you think the KNLS has been able to build an adequate stock in terms of quantity and quality?

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (LIBRARY USERS)

1. In your opinion, what are the reasons why most of the respondents are not willing to pay for specific library services? (e.g. reference, reservation, postal, interlibrary, etc.)

2. Most of the students have indicated their willingness to pay user fees although they lack personal income. As a student where do you expect to get the money if user fees were to be introduced?

3. In your opinion, what would be the main reasons why the majority of the respondents prefer to pay an annual subscription fee instead of an entry fee or cash deposit?

4. In your opinion what do you think are the reasons why the majority of those who preferred to pay an entry fee were students?

5. A large proportion of the respondents indicated that various members of the society should not be exempted from paying fees. In your opinion why do you think that the following groups should not be exempted from paying fees?

- Students
- The needy/poor
- Unemployed
- Disabled
- Pensioners

6. In your opinion why do you think it is necessary for the KNLS to automate its services and also to provide Internet services?



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31 October 2001

To whom it may concern

This serves to introduce Mr P Chebon, a PhD student at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. He is conducting research on the '*Identification of reliable and equitable sources of Public Library Funding in Kenya*'. This is a topic of inestimable importance to the library and information profession in general and even more so in Africa where many countries are not able to sustain the cost of extensive public library services – clearly also a very important topic for Kenya.

I would like to request that you render Mr Chebon all possible assistance to help him collect the data he requires for his studies. I would therefore request that you grant him an interview, and/or allow him to distribute questionnaires that relate to his research project.

I would like to thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs J G SMITH
PhD SUPERVISOR**

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Dear Sir,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to conduct research on, "Identification of Reliable and Equitable Sources of Public Library Funding in Kenya", I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to conduct research in all Kenya National Library Services Offices Countrywide for a period ending 28th February 2002.

You are advised to report to the Director, Kenya National Library Services before commencing your research project.

You are further advised to deposit two copies of your research findings to this Office upon completion of your research project.

Yours faithfully,

A. S. KAARIA
FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY /EDUCATION

CC.

THE DIRECTOR,
KENYA NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE
P.O BOX
NAIROBI

Phone 725550 /1, 718177
718012 /3, 725859
254-02-721749
E-mail Knls@nbnet.co.ke
Website www.knls.or.ke

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

P.O. Box 30573
NAIROBI
KENYA.

Ref: KNL/PF/431/52

Ref: 6th February, 2002

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN - MR. PHILEMON K. CHEBON

The above named person is an employee of Kenya National Library Service. Currently, he is collecting data for his Ph.D. Research Programme.

Any help/assistance accorded to him in this regard will be highly appreciated by this office.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

S. K. NG'ANG'A
DIRECTOR,

SM/nwn