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**Investigation of information needs and
information-seeking behaviour of Members of
Parliament in Lesotho**

By

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the award of the Degree of
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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Signed by candidate

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Glossary of abbreviations and terms

APLESA	Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa. Parliamentary Librarians who are members of this association meet every year in a form of a conference to share and discuss issues related to proper running and management of parliamentary libraries.
Basutoland	means land of the Basotho, the inhabitants of Lesotho. This name was commonly used during the time when Lesotho was under the British colonial rule before 1966.
Bicameral	the parliament of Lesotho is bicameral in the sense that it is composed of two Houses, namely the upper house or Senate and the lower house which is also known as the National Assembly.
Bill	a draft Act of Parliament presented to the House of Parliament. In the case of Lesotho parliament, a bill emanates from the National Assembly which is one house of Parliament, and is taken to the Senate another house of Parliament for scrutiny before it becomes law.
CAS	Current Awareness Service.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer. In the case of Lesotho Parliament, the Clerks of both Houses function as the CEOs of their respective departments viz the Senate and the National Assembly.
CD-ROM	Compact Disk Read Only Memory
Clerk of the House	the chief of the permanent officers of the House. One of his/her other functions is to advice the Speaker or the President and MPs on matters of parliament procedure and rules. Each House has its own Clerk.
Constituency	an area for which someone (who later becomes an MP) is elected as a representative in parliament. In Lesotho, there are 80 constituencies country-wide, therefore each constituency has a representative in the National Assembly. The membership of the National Assembly is 120. Out of 120, 80 MPs are directly elected to parliament by the public whereas the remaining 40 get seats in parliament through Proportional Representation.
COSC	Cambridge O-Level School Certificate. This is a high school certificate awarded to pupils who have successfully completed their high school education. After acquiring this qualification, one can further one's studies at the tertiary institutions.

CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Meetings of the association are held each year for member MPs to share and discuss issues of parliamentary interest. Lesotho parliament is a member.
Email	electronic mail.
Government Gazettee	an official document where notices of public importance such as acts of parliament and laws are published.
Hansard	an official recording of verbatim proceedings of both Houses of Parliament. This document is produced overnight for MPs so that they can read what they have been saying in the House the previous day. Volumes of these documents are bound into volumes and kept in the Library of Parliament. General public can also have access to this information.
HIV & AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus & Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
House of Commons	the lower House of the UK Parliament which is also known as the Westminster. The upper house here is known as the House of Lords hence the Parliament is bicameral. Lesotho parliamentary system is similar to the British. Both parliaments are made up of two Houses.
IFLA	International Federation of Library Association
LCD	Lesotho Congress for Democracy. A ruling party with the majority seats in the Lesotho National Assembly. It has 79 seats out of the 140 in the National Assembly. This party is the result of the breakaway from the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) in 1997.
LPC	Lesotho People's Congress. This party is the result of the breakaway from the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) in 2001. It is the only opposition party which won one constituency during the 2002 national elections. However it still has four other compensatory seats which puts the total number of LPC seats in the National Assembly at five.
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project.
Motion	a proposal by an MP to the House that the latter do something with regard to some matter or issue.

MPs	Members of Parliament. The Lesotho Parliament consist of two Houses, namely, the Senate and the National Assembly. The Senate is the upper house and has 33 members (22 Principal Chiefs and 11 nominees by the King at the advice of the Prime Minister). The National Assembly is the lower house and it has 120 members out of which 80 are directly elected while the remaining 40 seats are compensatory. The total number of Lesotho MPs is therefore 153. MPs can also be referred to as Parliamentarians.
NUL	the National University of Lesotho. It is the only university in the country.
Parliament	an institution where laws of the country are made. Parliament chambers are places where MPs' debates take place. At the parliament building of Lesotho, there are both the Senate chamber and National Assembly chamber.
PLS	Parliamentary Library Service. A parliamentary library can also be referred to as the legislative library.
President of the Senate	is mainly responsible for chairing the proceedings of debates in the Senate. The President is elected by Senators whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the President, that is, at the commencement of a new parliament after national elections or after the dissolution of parliament. The President of the Senate of Lesotho is elected in accordance with section 6 of the standing orders of the Senate.
SACU	South African Customs Union
SADC PF	South African Development Community Parliamentary Forum. Lesotho parliament is a member of this institution which amongst other things assists member parliaments in capacity building of both MPs and parliamentary staff. This body also coordinates and initiates election observation missions in member countries' national elections. Membership of this body is made up of parliaments of SADC countries.
SDI	Selective Dissemination of Information. For instance, in the case of Lesotho Parliament library, issues of interest to the MPs are identified from both the international and national newspapers received by the library, for MPs. For example, where the name of an MP appears or where there is a burning issue of parliamentary nature, such issue is copied and put on the notice board where everybody can see.

Speaker of the National Assembly	is mainly responsible for chairing the proceedings of debates in the National Assembly. The Speaker is elected by members of the National Assembly whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Speaker, that is, at the commencement of a new parliament after national elections or after the dissolution of parliament. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho is elected in accordance with section 6 of the standing orders of the National Assembly.
The Internet	a network of computers which enables computer users to connect with other computers all over the world. The Internet is commonly used to search and access information on almost anything. It contains a vast amount of information, databases and websites. In the case of parliaments, parliaments websites are regularly accessed and searched on the Internet to search and share information. The Internet is also used as a communication tool through the use of electronic mail.
The table of the House	Clerk's table in the House or chamber. The Clerk of the House and his/her assistants sit at the table with their backs to the Speaker (in the National Assembly chamber) or to the President (in the Senate chamber). Newly elected members come to the table to take the oath which is administered by the Clerk of the House. All documents which are presented to the House for the information of members are laid upon the table and thereafter can be sent to the library. Notices of motions and questions to ministers must be handed in at the table where they are scrutinized by Clerk's assistants to ensure that they are in order. The Clerks carry out this function under the Speaker's (in the National Assembly) or the President's authority. In carrying out this function, the Clerks and assistants are commonly referred to by members as "the Table" or the Table Office.
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
Users	users or clients of the library service.

Abstract

Information plays a crucial role in people's lives. Members of Parliament (MPs) as decision makers therefore need to be equipped with information so that they can be able to make sound decisions based on facts. They need to have access to different types of information sources such as newspapers, both local, regional and international, journals and books. Libraries of parliaments are and should also be seen to be making it easier for MPs to access information. This study investigates the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of MPs of the Lesotho parliament.

A survey was done where questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from 120 members of the National Assembly and 33 Senators who all comprise Members of Parliament of Lesotho. The questionnaire consisted of both the open-ended and closed-ended questions. Through the open-ended questions, the researcher was able to get more details which could not be found in short-ended questions. Interviews were also used to give the respondents the opportunity to say more of what they could not be able to say in the questionnaire. However only a selected questions were picked where the researcher felt that the respondents could further express themselves. Only five willing respondents were used in the interviews as others were not willing to be interviewed. Telephone interview was chosen as more convenient by respondents since they do not have much time during the day due to their parliamentary work commitments.

MPs in Lesotho have indicated their information needs as all information that can be helpful in their parliamentary work such as during debates, when attending meetings be it

workshops, conferences and interviews on political issues. Besides other information sources, such as newspapers, reports and the Internet, MPs rely mostly on books. They also use other fellow parliamentarians as sources of information.

The results showed that MPs do understand what information is and realize its importance in their parliament work. Even though MPs find the library of parliament helpful in supporting them in their parliamentary work, a couple of problems have been identified as hindering factors to enable MPs access information in a manner that best suits them. Such problems were identified as small library space, insufficient library opening hours, not enough library staff to service them and lack of advanced information and communication technologies. The respondents also made suggestions that the above mentioned problems should be adequately addressed to make it easier for the former to access and use information effectively in their parliamentary work.

The study therefore concurs to respondents suggestions by recommending that a proper library should be built and be well resourced to enable staff effectively meet users information needs which is not the case at present. The library staff should also be given enough exposure and training by way of attachments to other parliaments and short training courses to refresh their skills and knowledge. The library committee should also be established to work with the library staff in some administrative and procedural issues of the management and running of the library. The library opening hours should also be increased to give MPs more time of library use.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Members of Parliament (MPs) are entrusted by the people who have elected them to parliament to represent their concerns, make legislation as well as to present their questions to the executive. In order for MPs to carry out all of these requirements, they need to be well informed and equipped with the necessary facts and figures in order to fruitfully participate in the debates, interviews with the press, workshops and conferences and other matters that have not been mentioned here. The parliamentary library therefore has to play an important role in this regard. Bannenberg argues that

The parliamentarian perhaps more so than most library users must have at his command the most current information available over a wide subject area. It is the obligation of the parliamentary library to provide a means of fulfilling this requirement at a level of competence superior to possible alternative sources available to members (1975: 210).

Although the above quotation is from a somewhat dated source, the situation reflected in it still applies today. The only thing that differs is the volume of information currently available which is overwhelming. The development of advanced information technology has made it possible for people to access huge amounts of information in various formats, for example, from the Internet, various electronic databases and many others. So, the role of the parliamentary library is to give access to the existing information sources in print as well as those available in other formats. According to the Parliamentary Centre Reference Guide (n.d: p.7) together with traditional information sources such as books, newspapers, journals and others, the Internet and other web-based sources play an important role in parliamentary libraries. Through these advanced technologies, parliamentarians are able to access specific, current and specialized knowledge that they require. Communication with colleagues

globally is also enhanced by the advent of advanced information networks such as the electronic mail. The new methods of information storage and retrieval have had a positive impact on parliament libraries today since the users (MPs) are always under pressure to search for information and they require parliament librarians to deliver such information which should be current and delivered to them as fast as possible.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The role of the MPs in parliament is to represent their constituents' concerns in parliament as well as to make legislation for their respective governments and countries, hence MPs need information in order to effectively carry out these tasks. Some of the tasks for which MPs need information, to name but a few, are the following: participating in parliament debates, asking parliamentary questions, making speeches, answering correspondence, appearing in the media, communicating with the electorate, visiting their constituencies, other regions or countries and ensuring their re-selection as candidates and re-election as MPs (Martell as quoted by Serema, 1999).

The library of parliament is therefore regarded as a necessary tool to assist MPs with the information they need to address the above-mentioned tasks. Authors like Wilson (1995) have advocated that studying users' information needs and their information-seeking patterns is essential to ensure that the information system in place is designed appropriately in line with what users want. Since working for the library of parliament in Lesotho from 1997, the researcher observed that only a limited number of MPs use the library. It is against this background therefore that the researcher was motivated to carry out the study to investigate Lesotho MPs' information needs and their information-seeking behaviour. It is believed that once these have been established the library service of the parliament of Lesotho can be redesigned in such a way that it

addresses users' needs effectively. User needs assessment should be an ongoing process that is done periodically to support changing needs of the users.

1.2.1. Objectives of the study

With a view to improving information provision to MPs of the Lesotho parliament, the study has been carried out based on the following objectives:

- Establish MPs' understanding of information.
- Establish MPs' information needs.
- Establish what MPs' information sources are.
- Establish the degree of assistance MPs require in acquiring information.
- Determine the adequacy of the parliamentary library in addressing MPs' information needs.
- Determine the views of MPs about the parliamentary library and finally,
- Suggest ways of improving the parliamentary library service in Lesotho as well as developing a marketing strategy to strengthen awareness of the availability of the library service so as to encourage maximum use of service by the MPs.

1.2.2. Research questions that were investigated

Based on the above objectives, the researcher formulated the following questions the study has sought to answer with respect to information provision for members of the Lesotho Parliament:

1. What are the information needs of the MPs?
2. How do the MPs search for information?
3. What sources of information do the MPs consult in search of information?
4. How can the parliament library assist MPs in searching for and using information?

1.3. Justification and motivation of the study

The MPs form a special group of citizens, highly important by virtue of their status to amend and to make legislation for the country. Therefore, support services like the parliamentary libraries should be effective in their functions of providing the best information to the MPs when needed. In order to adequately carry out this enormous task, the library should establish its users' information needs so that it provides the needed service accordingly based on users' needs (Wilson, 1995). The times today have forced librarians from various sectors and organizations to redefine their role and change from their traditional role of being protectors of information to proactive providers of information. Accordingly libraries have changed to reflect this. Mbambo (1996: 229) argues that today "libraries have changed from being mere store houses of books and information to power houses of information".

A study of this nature has not been done at the parliament of Lesotho before, so the researcher was motivated and realised the need to carry out the study in order to find out about the information needs and the information-seeking patterns of the MPs in Lesotho. In this way the comparison could be made with other studies that have been carried out in the legislatures of other countries. Secondly, it is envisaged that some lessons that would be revealed by the findings of this study will help the library management and the parliament management as a whole to try and design the information service in line with the users' information needs which will also support their ways of searching for information as well as delivering it in their preferred way.

Thirdly, it is hoped that the study will contribute towards the literature on information needs of the parliamentarians especially in Africa since other researchers have pointed out that there is a lack of research in this area. Some authors, like Thapisa (1996: 274) and Wilson (2000), have also shown that earlier studies were mainly concerned with

establishing how users use the information systems not what their actual needs are. So, with this study it is hoped that the users' information needs will be established based on the information gathered from them as well as through observation, hence not only the information system will be studied even the users themselves. This study will also advance the knowledge in the field of Information and Library Science (ILS) especially in the area of parliamentary librarianship and the information needs of the MPs.

1.4. Background information about Lesotho

Lesotho is a small land-locked country of 30,355 square kilometres, completely surrounded by South Africa. It has a population of about two million inhabitants. The country was formerly known as Basutoland (which means land of the Basotho) and the long conversional name is the Kingdom of Lesotho (The SADC PF Election Observation Mission Report, 2002: 6). Even though it is widely believed that the country got its present name in 1966 after gaining its independence from the British colony, Kolane (1975: 635) who is also a former long-serving speaker of the Lesotho National Assembly disagrees with this statement saying that the country has always been known as Lesotho by the Basotho nation.

As far as her economy is concerned, half of the total population of Lesotho is poor and the country is marked by high income inequality. Since it is completely surrounded by South Africa, Lesotho's economy depends entirely on South Africa. The economy is based on limited agricultural and pastoral production (Hassan, 2002: xv). The SADC PF Election Observation Mission Report (2002: 6) states that most of the Basotho live in the western cultivation areas because of the uneven distribution of arable land in Lesotho. This situation has therefore given rise to aggravated soil erosion, strong competition for public services and employment. This has further led

to migration of Basotho to South African mines, on which the economy has depended for migrant remittances for years. However, in the current years most of the migrant labourers have returned home due to retrenchments and a new kind of migration has emerged as that of skilled workers to South Africa from Lesotho (The SADC PF Election Observation Mission Report, 2002: 6). According to Hassan (2002: xv), besides agricultural and pastoral production, Lesotho's economy is also supplemented by light manufacturing of textiles, clothing and leather as well as some royalties from supplying water to South Africa through the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP).

English and Sesotho are the only two official languages of Lesotho.

Lesotho is a democratic country and therefore has one parliament which is made up of two houses, the upper house which is also known as the Senate and the lower house which is the house of the representatives or the National Assembly. The next subsection looks at the background of the parliament of Lesotho.

1.4.1. Background information of the Lesotho Parliament

The parliament of Lesotho dates back to 1909. It adopts a similar bicameral style to its colonisers, following the British Westminster style. Being bicameral means that the parliament is made up of two houses namely the National Assembly which is also known as the lower house and the Senate which is the upper house. Bills emanate from the National Assembly and go to the Senate to be scrutinised before they can finally be passed as laws.

The National Assembly is made up of the constituencies' representatives or MPs. These become members by virtue of being elected by the constituents during national

elections. National Elections are held every five years hence new members are elected each time in the National Assembly with the possibility of MPs being re-elected. The present parliament has 120 members from 80 constituencies. It is a new kind of parliament since it incorporates Proportional Representation type with 80 elected members and 40 members who have been nominated from opposition parties to form representation in parliament (The Lesotho Parliament Website, 2005a).

The Senate on the other hand is made up of twenty-one Principal Chiefs of Lesotho who are not elected but are Senators by status (of being Principal Chiefs). There are eleven other members who are nominated by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister to the Senate. This then brings the number of Senators to thirty-three (The Lesotho Parliament Website, 2005b).

Within the parliament there are various departments which are meant to support the activities of the parliament generally and those of the MPs to enable them to effectively carry out their parliamentary duties. These departments consist of the office of the Clerk which oversees the matters pertaining to parliamentary procedures and practices. The Hansard section is responsible for production of the daily proceedings of the house also known as the Hansard. There is also the Accounts section which is responsible for all the financial requirements of the MPs and staff. There is a Human Resource office which oversees all matters regarding the staff of parliament and the well being of the MPs. Last but not the least there is a Library of Parliament which is responsible for all the information services to the MPs and staff of both houses of parliament. The next sub-section provides background information about the library which has an influence in this study as far as information needs of MPs are concerned (The Lesotho Parliament Website, 2005c).

1.4.2. The Lesotho Library of Parliament

There is only one parliamentary library that serves both houses of parliament, government ministries, senior government officials, parliament staff, researchers, scholars and other people who have been permitted by the Clerk of National Assembly or Senate to make use of the library service.

The library is manned by three staff members comprising the Senior Librarian, the Assistant Librarian and Library Assistant. Prior to 1994, the library had not been run by professional library staff as it was used as a store room for books and other documents and the parliament staff helped themselves to books when the need arose.

The present collection was organised by the Senior Librarian when he assumed his duties in 1994, then as an Assistant Librarian. Although the library contains mostly outdated materials, it is slowly acquiring new materials and has the Internet connection and e-mail, which are accessed by the librarians only. However, if users need the Internet or email service, librarians do the searches for them (Englefield, 1995: 4).

The size of the library is small and it serves as the reference area, the reading room and the office for all the library staff. It is located within the parliament premises hence is conveniently located within reach of the users. The library is open for service on weekdays only, between 8:00 a.m and 5:00 p.m when parliament adjourns for the day. However, there are times when the parliament proceedings continue beyond 5:00 pm and in such cases the library also stays open until such times as when the parliament adjourns. At the time of writing this report, the senior management in parliament has been considering the possibility of extending library opening hours following a plea from members that such matter be considered. This change will only

be implemented after looking at the possibility of employing extra staff as well as providing allowances for staff that will be working extended hours.

1.5. Definition of terms

This section aims to explain some of the concepts that form the basis of this study. These major concepts have been drawn from the title of the study and their explanations are given below. The definitions and discussion on information needs and information seeking behaviour have been extensively dealt with in chapter three under the literature review.

i) Parliament

According to Limon and McKay (1997: 9), the word “parliament” was first used in England in the thirteenth century to describe a large meeting of the King’s Council, which used to be attended by barons, bishops and prominent royal servants. The role of these gathered people would be to advise the King on law-making and administrative matters, as well as hearing his judicial decisions. In the case of Lesotho, the parliament has been established through the constitution and it consists of the King, a Senate and a National Assembly (Constitution of Lesotho, 1993: 56). The King of Lesotho is a constitutional monarch and the Head of State (Constitution of Lesotho, 1993: 49). For the purpose of this study both parliament and legislature will be used interchangeably.

ii) Lesotho

Lesotho is the name of the country inhabited by the Basotho people.

iii) The Senate

Section 55 of the Constitution of Lesotho (1993: 56) also states that “the Senate shall consist of the twenty-two Principal Chiefs and eleven other Senators nominated in that behalf by the King acting in accordance with the advice of the Council of State”.

iv) The National Assembly

The National Assembly has been established through the Lesotho Government Gazette (2001: 179) under section 2 of the fourth amendment to the Constitution Act 2001 as consisting of one hundred and twenty elected members. This clause substitutes section 56 of the Constitution (1993: 57), which stipulated the number of members of National Assembly as eighty. To show briefly as to how the number one hundred and twenty came about, it is now proper to point out that during the 2001 national elections, a new model termed “mixed member proportional electoral system” was first introduced in Lesotho to enable opposition parties which did not get parliamentary seats to be represented in parliament. This system was enacted as law under section 3(1) of the fourth amendment to the Constitution Act 2001, which states that:

The members of the National Assembly shall be elected in terms of a mixed member proportional electoral system that –

- a) is prescribed by legislation;
- b) is based on a national common voters roll; and
- c) provides for the constitution of the National Assembly as follows –
 - i) eighty members to be elected in respect of each of the constituencies contemplated by section 67(1); and
 - ii) forty members to be elected to forty seats in accordance with the principle of proportional representation applied in respect of the National Assembly as a whole. (Lesotho Government Gazette, 2001: 179-180).

The life span of the Lesotho parliament is normally five years, hence after every five years fresh elections are held and new MPs and government are elected into power. However, it also happens that at times the same people and party may be re-elected

into power. This happened in Lesotho when the party, Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) won national elections in 1998 and became a government. It also happened in the 2002 national elections that the same LCD won all the constituencies but one, and so remained in power.

v) Members of Parliament

In the case of Lesotho, a member of parliament (MP) refers to both a constituency representative who represents his/her constituents in parliament and a Senator. MPs from both the Senate and the National Assembly therefore form the Parliament. At present there are 120 MPs in the National Assembly, with the majority being of the ruling party (LCD) which has secured 78 of the 120 seats, followed by the main opposition party - Basotho National Party (BNP) which has 21 seats. Below is a table showing all the parties that contested the 2002 national elections and the number of each party's seats in parliament.

Party	Number of votes	Percentage votes	Number of seats
Basutoland African Congress (BAC)	16 095	2.9 %	3
Basutoland Congress Party (BCP)	14 584	2.7%	3
Basotho National Party (BNP)	124 234	22.4%	21
Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)	304 316	54.8%	77
Lesotho Peoples' Congress (LPC)	32 046	5.8%	5
National Independent Party (NIP)	30 346	5.5%	5
National Progressive Party (NPP)	3 985	0.7%	1
Lesotho Workers' Party (LWP)	7 788	1.4%	1
Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP)	6 890	1.2%	1
Popular Front for Democracy (PFD)	6 330	1.1%	1
Totals	554 386	98.6%	118

*Notes:

Party vote: 80 constituencies

Constituency vote: 78 constituencies (plus 2 failed elections)

Source: SADC Parliamentary Forum Election Observation Mission Report (2002: 27).

However, it is worth noting that the bye-elections of one of the failed elections mentioned above were held for one Motete Constituency and once again LCD won with 78.7% of the vote (Lesotho Government Website, 2003). This therefore resulted in LCD having 79 parliamentary seats out of 80 while LPC secured only one seat.

For the purpose of this study, the terms “MPs” and “parliamentarians” will be used interchangeably.

1.6. Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the topic under study. It highlighted the rationale of this study showing why the study was done in terms of the statement of the problem, the objectives and research questions of the study. Some background information of the location of the study area in terms of the parliament of Lesotho and Lesotho as a country has also been given. The definitions of some key terms appearing in the study title have also been provided in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Information needs and information-seeking behaviour reviewed

2.1. Introduction

This chapter lays the conceptual foundation of this research. A study of the related literature helped the researcher learn about what other researchers have done so that the successes can be adopted while failures can be avoided. It was through reading other people's research that the researcher was able to select the research topic, formulate research questions and objectives as well as design data collection instruments.

This chapter attempts to give an overview of the key concepts framing this research. These concepts are the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of users especially as they relate to the Members of Parliament. The literature review has been carried out also to find out how the findings of the current study will confirm or differ from what has been revealed by previous researches.

2.2. Information needs

Many writers on user studies admit that the concept of "information need" has been difficult to define. Such writers include Wilson (1995) and Crawford (1978).

Crawford (1978: 62) argues that:

There appears to be a consensus that "information need" is a difficult concept to define, to isolate, and especially to measure. It involves a cognitive process which may operate on different levels of consciousness and hence may not be clear even to the inquirer himself. If a user could specify what is needed under defined conditions, his problem might be well on its way toward solution. As such, the defining of a "need" is an important part of the creative process.

According to the above quotation, it is clear that it is not always easy, especially for librarians to establish what users' information needs are because they (users) may not even know what it is that they want. Wilson (1995) advises that the task of establishing users' needs may be easier if librarians understand the nature of organisations they work in, if they acknowledge that the organisations themselves have needs for information, and finally if they understand that personal needs emerge out of the different roles different people have within organisations (Wilson, 1995).

Chen and Herson (1982: 5) define an information need as the state when individuals realise that they require knowledge to deal with the situation as they see fit, or to address a particular phenomenon which might be to make a decision, answer a question, locate a fact, solve a problem or understand something. For instance, a student trying to write an academic project can realise that s/he needs information regarding his/her topic of study in order to be able to complete the task of writing an assignment. An MP can also realise the need of information when s/he needs to participate in the debates in parliament, or to make a decision whether to vote for or against a certain motion and in many other matters that might require his/her input.

2.2.1. Why and how to study users' information needs

It requires the organisation and specifically librarians a lot of effort and other resources to establish users' information needs. Why is this task necessary? If users' information needs can be identified, it becomes easier to design effective information systems which closely match those needs (Crawford, 1978: 63; Wilson, 1995). However, this statement clashes with the earlier argument which acknowledges that "... information need is a difficult concept to define, to isolate and especially to measure" (Crawford, 1978: 62). Englefield (1993: xiii) advises that it is a duty of the staff concerned with library and information services in legislative libraries, to see

that the services they provide are in line with the MPs' information needs especially those that they require when they are faced with their legislative work. Englefield's argument goes further to suggest that standard methodologies can be used to establish information needs and such methodologies are:

- Questionnaires
- Personal interviews which involve probing into exactly what users need
- Critical incident techniques
- Records of use or observation of behaviour (Crawford, 1978: 63; Wilson, 1995).
- Surveys and company records (Wilson, 1995).

While Wilson (1995) agrees that the above methods should be used in establishing users' information needs, he also advocates that "walking the organisation" is another effective way that librarians can use to find out what their users' information needs are. This can be done by talking to people within the organisation in an effort to discover and understand the nature of their work. Wilson (1995) criticises librarians, because even though this strategy can be a successful one in establishing users' needs, the former do not practise it thinking that they would be seen to be wasting time. Moreover, on the same method of "walking the organisation", Wilson (1995) argues that it is through this method that librarians or information workers become "well-informed-citizens" of the organisation, hence effective information intermediaries between other people and information sources and also amongst the people themselves. He also points out the need for the librarians to understand the nature of the organisations within which they are operating so that they can also understand users' information needs based on the understanding of what information a specific organisation needs. Getting out and talking to the users is the best way of discovering and learning about the actual users' needs. Mchombu (2000b: 77) also argues that talking to MPs is one way of establishing their information use behaviour since it is

through this method that one could hear things that cannot be fitted into the questionnaire.

Chen and Herson (1982) also argue that information needs cannot be merely understood as mere questions that are asked by users, rather, they must be placed in their context, that is, it must be established as to what the question is, who is asking the question, why is the question being asked and how often. In this way full information about the information need will be gathered hence closer contact with the person requesting the information is required so that the query can be fully understood therefore maximising the chances of giving back an appropriate answer.

2.2.2. Possible ways of establishing MPs' information needs

Professional workshops, conferences and seminars play a very important part where professional members meet, share and discuss their experiences which in turn can be used to improve service delivery in organisations.

While questionnaires have been extensively recommended in the literature as one of the many ways of establishing users' information needs, Gabriel (2000: 69) points out that in his experience questionnaires had not proven useful in that regard because MPs do not take time to complete those questionnaires. He therefore recommended the following as more practical ways in the parliamentary library setting.

1. *Information literacy programmes* whereby MPs can be educated on how they can realise their research and information needs and how to use the information they are provided with to answer their needs.
2. *Customising information* to make it accessible to different kinds of MPs as some of them are learned and therefore can easily find their way in recognising their information needs and being able to identify relevant sources to locate the

required information and use it successfully. However, there are still some MPs who are not that learned hence are not able even to realise their information needs let alone know how to deal with them. It is therefore essential to talk with individual MPs and determine exactly what they require, for what purpose and the time when that information is required. Whittle (2000: 72) suggests direct contact with members so that both the researcher and the inquirer can be on the same level of understanding about what information is needed.

3. *Providing pro-active information and research service* based on the parliament programmes as to what business is likely to come at what time to enable the library service to gear its resources towards the peaks of different types of need is also required. For example, appropriate background papers, research papers and briefing papers can be prepared in advance so that when a particular Bill comes before the house, the necessary information can be disseminated to the MPs. This practice is already in place, for example, in the United Kingdom (Whittle, 2000: 71) and Namibia (Namhila, 2000: 74).

Pro-active information service in the parliamentary library setting is basically about librarians providing information which they think will be needed even before users come for it. For instance, accessing and downloading speeches made by other politicians elsewhere for MPs. This is a popular method in the Lesotho parliament. In this way, the library staff is also able to keep track of what a particular MP is interested in regarding any particular issue. This method works well in marketing the library service as well as projecting a good name for the library to encourage those who are already using the library as well as attracting non-users of the library.

Tanfield (1995) suggests the use of *committees of members* which represent MPs' interests as consumers in determining the provision of information services to

parliament and *satisfaction surveys* which can be conducted periodically to establish the level of satisfaction MPs have for the library and information service. Through these surveys, users can be further questioned about particular services and even proposed new ones. *Feedback forms attached to written reports and monitoring of complaints and suggestions* can also provide useful information for the library management to review their services towards maintaining good practices and improvements.

2.3. Information-seeking behaviour – conceptual review

According to Wilson (2000: 249), information-seeking behaviour, information searching behaviour and information use behaviour are subcategories of information behaviour which is defined by Pettigrew, Fidel and Bruce (2001: 44) as “the study of how people need, seek, give and use information in different contexts, including the workplace and everyday living”. Metoyer-Duran (1993: 127) further argues that “information-seeking behaviour describes how individuals go about fulfilling a need to know.” It can be further argued that the information-seeking behaviour are characteristics that users portray when searching for or seeking information.

According to Chen and Herson (1982: 9) the information seeking behaviour is portrayed when a user recognises a need for information. Once one finds oneself in this situation, one will either approach a formal information system such as the library or other secondary information-providing agencies or seek information from other people. The importance of relying on other people to get the needed information has been identified in the past research by such authors as Niebuhr and Gericke (2002).

It is further argued that in an effort to satisfy their information needs by approaching one or many of the available information providers, users may be inhibited from getting the required information. These information providers are categorised as interpersonal providers which may be one's self, co-workers, friends and family. The second type is institutional providers which include amongst others, professional people, agencies, institutions, associations and mass media (television, radio and print). Professional people have been regarded as institutional and not as interpersonal providers because they represent institutions hence are not on their own (Chen and Herson, 1982: 19). Chen and Herson identify the following as possible barriers to information access:

- a) Societal barriers are those which impede the availability of the resources necessary to satisfy needs within the social system. For example, where there are no public libraries for the public to access information.
- b) Institutional barriers are likely to be present when the institutional provider is unable or is not willing to deliver the needed information to a certain type of seeker. For instance such cases may come up where special libraries such as the library of parliament may be forced by its policies not to give access to certain information regarded as confidential to the public or media.
- c) Physical barriers occur when the individual is unable to make contact with the appropriate information providers due to some physical consideration such as the inappropriate setting of the information provider for certain seekers.
- d) Psychological barriers arise when the individual fails to perceive his/her needs as informational in nature, obtain needed information from appropriate providers or accept the possibility that the information problem can be solved for psychological reasons.
- e) Intellectual barriers are evident when the individual lacks the necessary training and expertise to acquire information (Chen and Herson, 1982: 19).

2.3.1. Information providers and possible barriers in practice

According to research, interpersonal providers of information are widely used by information seekers such as in the study of managers' information needs by Mintzberg (as cited in Wilson, 1986) and Butcher (as cited in Shokane, 2002: 40). The managers in the study indicated that they extensively use other people as information providers because there is a two-way communication and immediacy of interaction. Information seekers are also likely to start their information search by using interpersonal providers who may also conveniently refer them to other appropriate institutional providers.

In the study of information needs of women in the informal sector in Uganda, Ikoja-Odongo (2002) found that the studied women relied mostly on interpersonal providers such as their own experiences, contacting people who know, listening and talking to people like friends, relatives, and so on. Furthermore, their constraints in accessing information were mainly that they did not know where to get information or that there was no specific place to get the required information or else that people with information did not release it easily.

From these findings, it can be deduced that the information seeking ways of seekers are affected by amongst others, the environment they live in/operate from. Moreover, it is possible for different types of barriers to be present in one setting all at once. For instance, in the case of the women in the informal sector business, they were faced with institutional barriers where they did not get access to information because people with information were not willing to release it. Secondly they were also faced with intellectual barriers where they failed to get access to the required information because they were illiterate and also because the information was available in the language that they did not know (Ikoja-Odongo, 2002: 46-48). This scenario has also

been identified with the members of parliament, especially in poor African countries where the illiteracy levels are high (Aiyepku, 1982: 204). The same inhibiting factors also formed part of the findings of Huyer (1997), Qunta (1987) and Ngimwa, Ocholla and Ojiambo (1997) (as cited in Ikoja-Odongo (2002: 49)).

Other variables which affect information seeking have been identified as income, age and education by Chen and Herson (1982). Research has shown that, the young, wealthy and educated users were the ones likely to make extensive searches and enjoyed access to information while the poor, elderly or uneducated could not.

Wilson (1995) proposes a different view of information-seeking behaviour. Up to now the discussion of this paper is assuming that once an individual recognises the need for information, such an individual will do something about that situation by approaching the information provider. However, Wilson (1995) argues that even if the information need exists, that does not mean that the person who needs information will take any action to find that information. Perhaps that is why some people will not even go to the library and search for information even though they have that need. Wilson (1995) therefore argues that sometimes people fail to seek information even when they need it because “all kinds of barriers to action exist: from simple inertia on the part of the individual to formal organizational barriers to the free flow of information”. Some of these barriers have already been dealt with in the previous sections above.

2.4. Related research studies

Although not much research has been done pertaining to the information needs of the members of parliament world-wide, the following are but some related researches which have been done in other parts of the world both in Africa and abroad with

regard to the study. The following are some of the related studies that were carried out in various legislatures in some countries: Thapisa (1996) in Botswana, Serema (1999) in the UK, Alemna & Skouby (2000) in Ghana, Kimbunga (1987) in Tanzania, Freidin (1993) in Israel, Lewayo (1986) in Malawi, Ronai and Bryant (1992) in Hungary, Mostert and Ocholla (2005) in South Africa. These studies aimed at surveying and establishing the information requirements and needs of the members of parliament in their respective parliaments.

Thapisa (1996: 204) acknowledges that a lot has been written on the role and function of parliamentary libraries but that there is only a little on the information needs of parliamentarians in Africa. Wilson (2000) similarly argues that earlier researches had solely concentrated on how users use and search information systems, but that their needs have been totally ignored. In the paper written by Thapisa (1998) for the 12th Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Librarians, it was opined that,

... the Parliamentary Library Section's workshop that took place at the 62nd IFLA General Conference in Beijing, China (25 – 31st August, 1996) did not address the information needs of the parliamentarians. Instead, they deliberated on: the history of the library; setting of the library organisation; staffing the parliamentary library, library collections and other resources, services and products; regional and global co-operation among parliamentary libraries, developments in automation and important developments in the library. The information needs of the recipients of all of these elaborate services were not mentioned or discussed (1998: 274).

It seems that even in current years, the librarians' professional meetings are failing to address the important issue of MPs' information needs because there is not much literature on the topic. Thapisa (1998: 274) further argues that since there is little known of the MPs' information needs, it is necessary that librarians' goal for 21st century should be geared towards research on information needs of the

parliamentarians, perhaps in an effort to serve the parliament better as well as promoting the image of librarianship image especially in parliament.

Amongst many other studies which were done on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour, Marcella and Baxter (1999) did a study on the above with a sample of the population in the United Kingdom (UK) using a survey method with self-administered questionnaires. Unlike earlier studies which were criticised for ignoring the opinions of the users, this study tried to investigate the actual needs of the users. Wilson (1999: 250) raised several reasons that have led to poor formulation of users' information needs in the past as:

- “Inappropriate quantitative research methods which were used to study human behaviour.
- Researchers in the field of information science had ignored allied work in other related areas hence failed to get theoretical models of human behaviour that might have been offered by such related areas.
- General models of human behaviour have only emerged and attracted attention in the past ten to fifteen years”(Wilson, 1999: 250).

The research methodology of the current study was therefore informed by the study described above especially when it comes to the choice of data collection instrument. Both the questionnaires and interviews were used because they enable respondents to say their views as they are.

2.5. MPs' information needs and information-seeking behaviour: research findings

In the report of studies carried out by Thapisa (1996) on *Legislative information needs of indigenous parliamentarians in Botswana* and Serema (1999) on *Matching MPs' information needs and information services in the House of Commons* respectively, it

was found that MPs' information needs in both countries were difficult to establish because they were many and therefore varied. However, it has been further noted that most MPs under study in the House of Commons and in Ghana's legislature indicated having the need for information on parliamentary matters. These findings were represented by 60.5% by House of Commons respondents and 68% of the respondents from Ghana (Serema, 1999; Alemna and Skouby, 2000).

Aiyepoku (1982: 204) argues that it is assumed that policy-makers in less developed countries especially in Africa generally lack a positive functional perception of information in policy analysis as compared to their counterparts in the industrialised countries. The reasons given for this are: a) departments of information in most African countries provide access to information which is marked by propaganda, b) high illiteracy rates in these countries result in the majority of the population regarding information as nothing but a luxury, and c) most policy-makers in Africa do not have a habit of regular use of libraries and reading for their official functions (Aiyepoku, 1982: 204).

However, based on the findings of studies carried out in Ghana by Alemna and Skouby (2000) and in Botswana by Thapisa (1996), the situation did not reflect what Aiyepoku (1982: 204) was describing. It was rather found that the MPs were not satisfied with the parliamentary services because the libraries lacked current materials, while in some cases the library was reported to lack certain required materials. For instance, in Thapisa (1996: 211) one MP was quoted as saying "they collect donations which are not relevant. We need the proceedings of the African Advisory Council, the history of the Tswana tribes, and the decisions that led to the Independence of Botswana, and how they finally decided on the establishment of the House of Chiefs. We also need treaties in the library. The history of the Customs Union is not available

here.” Given this response therefore, it shows that not all African policy-makers lack perception of information as was argued by Aiyepku (1982) earlier. The problem in the case reported by Thapisa lies with the inadequacy of legislative library services, which do not match the information needs of the MPs. Moreover, some respondents (41%) in Alemna and Skouby’s study still indicated having used other libraries if they could not find what they wanted in the parliamentary library.

The situation reported by Serema (1999) in the House of Commons in the UK reflected a totally different response as regards the adequacy of the parliamentary library with respect to MPs’ needs. She noted that the library was highly rated as a useful tool in addressing MPs’ information needs given its speedy delivery, accuracy and helpfulness (Serema, 1999). It is generally acknowledged that the library services in the developed world are well-developed and maintained, and hence prove useful to their patrons as opposed to libraries in the least-developed countries which are not well-supported financially, and do not have up-to-date collections, qualified personnel and good service.

As far as information-seeking behaviour is concerned, different behaviours have been noted among MPs user groups. For instance, the respondents in Thapisa’s study (1996) indicated heavy reliance on personal contacts when looking for information. In the Alemna and Skouby’s study, newspapers and reports were the most heavily used sources (2000), while in Serema’s study the library was the most frequently used source (1999).

Generally, research has shown that due to lack of time to search for information themselves, MPs need information which has been repackaged for them, such as, summaries, reports and interpretations. While to some MPs the problem of low

education might hinder their ability to search and access relevant information for their needs (Thapisa, 1996: 215), this might not be so in other cases such as in the study of Alemna and Skouby (2000), whose findings indicated that all the MPs in Ghana had qualifications beyond the elementary school education. However, irrespective of their educational standards, due to heavy workloads, MPs need the assistance of parliamentary libraries through their different units such as research divisions and others for simple presentation of information which is easy to understand and use. It is further argued that such information should be readily available on request or even before hand (Bannenberg, 1975: 210).

2.6. Research studies on other user groups

A large number of studies on users' information needs and their information seeking behaviour has been carried out across various professions and user groups. To name but a few which have been carried out in Africa, Fidzani (1998) studied the information needs and information seeking behaviour of graduates at the University of Botswana; Ikoja-Odongo (2002) studied the information needs of women in the informal sector of Uganda; Niebuhr and Gericke (2002) looked into the information needs of managers; Kemoni (2002) studied the utilisation of archival information by researchers in Kenya; Shokane (2003) studied the use of business information by small and medium-sized enterprises in Acornhoek, South Africa and Ikoja-Odongo and Ocholla (2003) studied the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of artisan fisher folk of Uganda.

The search for and information use differ according to different user groups. For instance, user groups such as journalists, researchers and students may be comfortable searching for information themselves but may occasionally ask for librarians' assistance. That is why information literacy is an essential component especially in

academic libraries where librarians need to teach students life-long learning skills which would enable them to independently recognise and refine their information needs, find their needed information, evaluate and use the information they need throughout their lifetime (Watson, 1998: 394).

The MPs on the other hand do not have the interest of searching for information themselves even when they have the support of user-friendly systems. They rather rely heavily on the librarians' assistance because they (MPs) are often too busy to search for themselves (Mchombu, 2000a: 64). However, it may be true that some MPs may be hindered to use information systems at their disposal profitably because their experience and educational standard is limited. This situation may be brought about by the fact that in most African countries where the literacy levels are still low, it is not unusual to find that many MPs are not able to read, write or understand the English language which in most cases is their second or third language, and most of the information at their disposal is written in English language only.

Gabriel (2000: 69-70) is of the view that information literacy is required to teach MPs understand what their research needs are and how best they can use the research and information provided. He further argues that information products need to be marketed and lessons on how to use them provided by parliament library staff.

Research studies show that user groups in different libraries, be it academic, special or public libraries need access to accurate information in a timely manner to satisfy a particular information need. However, MPs as a special user group require more than that since they need information delivered to them in a ready to consume format, they do not necessarily need instruction on how to search for information, as is the case with the public or academic library users. MPs on the other hand require helpers in

terms of librarians and researchers to access and provide them with information to answer the problem at hand.

At the time of writing this report, no significant literature had been found on the research done on information needs and information-seeking behaviour of MPs at the parliament of Lesotho. However, it is worth mentioning that there is a report which was compiled by Dermot Englefield in March 1995 which was based on the status of the parliamentary library of Lesotho after his short visit in Lesotho during the same period. A detailed overview of this report is given in the next section.

2.7. Summary of Dermot Englefield report on assessing the situation of Lesotho Library of Parliament as at March 1995.

2.7.1. Purpose of the visit

Mr Englefield came to visit Lesotho at the invitation of the then Director of the British Council, Lesotho. It was during this visit then that Mr Englefield was able to assess the situation of information services available for Members of Parliament.

2.7.2. Findings

His findings showed that the Lesotho National Assembly was very similar to that of the House of Commons in terms of the atmosphere and style regarding the members' humour, directness and outspokenness in interrogating and calling on ministers to be accountable to parliament. However, the MPs were found to be doing this job with inadequate sources of information from the parliament. During informal interviews with the visitor, the MPs strongly indicated their need for better parliamentary services.

2.7.3. Problems

Some of the problems that were identified in the library were that the collection was too irrelevant and out of date to be of much help to the MPs. Secondly, it was found that current affairs information sources such as the newspapers and relevant periodicals were lacking and that there were incomplete records of the Lesotho parliament. Finally there was little useful material on important subjects to the development of Lesotho such as the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), Southern African Development Association (SADC) and the European Union Lome Conventions.

2.7.4. Recommendations

Based on the above scenario therefore, recommendations were made that the management of both houses should set up an Information Committee which would oversee all matters relating to information for MPs. It was recommended that this committee be made up of both MPs and Senators who would report directly to the National Assembly annually before the estimates for parliament are discussed. The committee was meant to deal with such issues relating to the numbering, arrangement and publishing of parliamentary debates, including their indexing, research service, the parliamentary library, the proposed vote office and finally the introduction of computers and other information technology. Unfortunately the committee has not been established.

Englefield was also of the opinion that the appointment at Parliamentary Assistant Librarian level at that time was a wise decision but also suggested that the position of a Parliamentary Librarian with someone with initiative, drive and ability to network was required urgently.

The then Assistant Librarian has been promoted to the position of Senior Librarian and there has been additional staff of Assistant Librarian and Desk Assistant. However, the position of Parliamentary Librarian has not been filled to date.

However, the parliament of Lesotho is currently engaged in the reforms process whose purpose is to review the parliament's practice and procedure, committee system and conditions of service for MPs and staff of parliament. The committee spearheading the process has been set up and perhaps the Information Committee will eventually be established and the library staff complemented.

2.7.5. Library's terms of reference

Further recommendations were made specifically in regard to the parliament library's terms of reference. It was suggested that such terms of reference should include the following:

- a) Preparing and sustaining the national archive of parliament's own publications and work.
- b) Offering an information service to members of both houses and to parliamentary officials.
- c) Offering a lending service to members of its own materials (excluding reference and legal materials and publications of parliament, the government and foreign official materials).
- d) Offering a lending service to members of materials borrowed from other libraries or from abroad, unless materials are lent on the understanding that they should be read in the parliament library itself.
- e) A limited photocopying service of the library's own materials.
- f) Assembling a collection of Government departmental material arranged under departments.

- g) Assembling a collection of official statistics, in particular, those of Lesotho.
- h) Collecting materials, both monographs and pamphlets on Lesotho in particular as well as those on Southern Africa in general.
- i) Acquiring periodicals in particular, on Lesotho, Southern Africa and the Commonwealth.
- j) Drawing up an appropriate budget for materials for the library
- k) Ensuring that the parliamentary library can play a proper role in all cooperative moves within Lesotho library work. This is to ensure that the more developed areas of information work such as those used in the National University of Lesotho can through professional cooperation help most importantly the users of information, namely the parliament.

The first, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth terms of reference have been achieved to date even though not fully due to problem of library space which is too small hence not able to accommodate a lot of information material that the library is supposed to have. However if any of the information sources mentioned in these terms of references are required by members, library staff borrow them on their behalf from other institutions, both inside and outside the country. However, what is critical here is the time it takes for the required information to finally get to the member as sometimes information takes long to arrive. So, the element of delivering information timeously to members becomes compromised.

The second, third, fourth and fifth terms of reference have also been achieved and Members come in high numbers to make use of and borrow library materials. There is also Internet connectivity in the library which makes it easier for staff to search, access and download information which is not available in-house for members. If necessary, library staff offers a photocopying service for members at no cost.

However, there is a need for a separate photocopier for library use because currently there is only one photocopier for the whole department of National Assembly. The Senate also has only one photocopier. At times it becomes difficult to have the service when the copier is out of order or due to heavy work load from various sections especially when photocopying documents for all members.

As far as the tenth term of reference is concerned, the library is still not getting adequate budget given the growing prices of books and other information sources. There is also the need for budget to acquire computerized catalogue to enhance record keeping of information sources as well as speedy search and retrieval of library's collection. This is urgently required because members do not have time to search for information.

The last term of reference has also been achieved since there is a strong professional cooperation between the parliamentary library and the university library. This therefore makes it easy for information sharing between the two institutions, hence the library staff is always able to borrow and get information from the university library for members if required.

2.8. Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the literature review in an effort to reflect on conceptual review surrounding the theme of the study which is based on the information needs and the information seeking behaviour of the special user group – the MPs. The literature relating to information needs and information seeking behaviour of user groups in other professions as well as the past studies regarding MPs' information needs and their information seeking behaviour has been incorporated in an effort to better understand this study as well as providing a comparative analysis.

The next chapter looks at the role and functioning of legislative libraries as the primary information service for MPs and parliamentary staff.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 3

Legislative libraries

3.1. Introduction

Members of parliament are entrusted to make decisions, policies and approve national budgets of their governments. In order to do their job effectively, they need to have current and accurate information at their disposal. Legislative or parliament libraries are therefore there to assist MPs with their day-to-day information needs so that they in turn are able to perform their parliamentary work properly. The aspects of parliamentary libraries that form this chapter have been adapted from the guidelines for legislative libraries given by Englefield (1993), a former librarian in the House of Commons, United Kingdom.

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of what parliament libraries are and their role in parliament as a whole, especially in parliamentarians' work.

3.2. Library functions

The library of parliament in all the world parliaments plays a very important role within the legislature in terms of supporting the MPs, their staff and parliament staff with information needed for their parliamentary work.

The library basically acquires and stores information in all its formats for use by the MPs and other bona fide users. The library may act as a clearing house of information for the public about the legislature's work in terms of its past activities as well as the current ones. These may consist of the following:

- a) Regular bulletins on the legislature's work both past and proposed
- b) Summaries of its work each session, year or other longer period

- c) Short fact sheets on different aspects of its work
- d) A service of information by telephone and letter
- e) Guides, especially to its documentation if there is a responsibility for archives.
- f) If the legislature requires, it might even include a form of Education Service for young people.

The above information may be available in print format. Of late in the information age almost all of the above information is available on many of parliament libraries' websites. Introduction of computers and electronic management of information in parliament libraries has affected the performance in a very positive way. For instance, through parliaments' websites, people who are geographically dispersed can easily access information about other parliaments more easily and faster provided there is an Internet connection. However this does not mean that they are only available electronically, they may also be still available in print formats to enable those who do not have access to the Internet to gain access to such information. For example the library of parliament of South Africa and United Kingdom have such information about their legislatures both electronically and in print format. Ntunja and Gabriel (1999) summed up the benefits of a parliamentary information service in South Africa as follows:

- A non-partisan approach to research enables all views on a particular topic to be encapsulated into one document or response. This empowers Members with more information, a broader and better understanding of the topic and thereby influence the quality of debate. At Committee level, such information assists in building consensus.
- Provides broader, more critical analyses of subjects since papers are not prepared along party political arguments.

- Provides a broad base of information encompassing all views/options that may be used by all Members and party researchers to strengthen their arguments and influence policy along party lines.
- Provides a reliable alternative source of information to that of the executive. Enhances the oversight function of Members and Committees and promotes transparency and democracy.
- Ensures equal access to core information or resources. Empowers Members to participate more fully and confidently in debates.
- Provides technical assistance/expertise. Complicated issues are explained without the additional complications of any political party bias or policy.
- Provides objective assistance in Private Members' Bills.
- Provides objective assistance in Committee generated Bills.
- Provides an objective source of information to the institutional structures of Parliament.
- Provides an institutional memory, which is vital for continuity as political climates and Members of Parliament change.
- Raises the standards of research and information provision on a global perspective through links with international Parliamentary research and information structures.
- Develops an African example of good Parliamentary Research and Information Services that may serve as a skilled resource for information and training for other SADC parliaments.
- Fosters a wider spectrum of public input.
- Facilitates a wider network of information source.

The Library of Parliament of Lesotho does some of the above functions even though it is to a lesser extent due to overall scarcity of resources as compared to the South African parliament.

3.3. Library services

As has been mentioned earlier, the role of the library of parliament is to support the information needs of MPs and staff. This section looks at the services that should be provided by parliamentary libraries. The following are specific services that are provided by parliament or legislative libraries.

3.3.1. Reference service

This service is aimed at responding to the MPs' queries. It is also the duty of the parliament library to provide public information services where members of the public are informed and educated about the legislature and its work. However in some legislatures, the library is closed to public access and is entirely for the use by the MPs only. This is done to give priority to the MPs since the resources are always limited. Since MPs require accurate information timeously, it would not be proper for an MP not to have access to the information s/he needs because a member from the public has the book or report required by the MP. However, in order to explain the restriction in this service, brochures about the legislature and its services are sometimes prepared and given out to the public even though it is a demanding service in terms of printing charges and stationery especially for small legislatures with small budgets. Lately, with the advent of information technology, the Internet and websites, some parliaments have even made their information available on their websites. Information about parliaments is therefore available electronically on the web and in print format through brochures.

3.3.2. Current information awareness

This service is also referred to as "selective dissemination of information" (SDI) service. As the term suggests, this service is supposed to be highly selective to benefit MPs who are always busy with legislative duties hence do not have enough time to

read. It entails providing MPs with references to the latest periodical and articles, important news features from the press, reports and documents matching MPs interests. This service also requires that the MPs' profiles are known by the librarians so that information can be provided in accordance with the changing user information needs.

3.3.3. Research

In some advanced legislatures, this service is a separate department from the library. In small legislatures this service is provided by the library but not to the fullest extent due to limited resources both in terms of staff and materials. However, this problem can be successfully curbed through interlibrary cooperation which enables legislative libraries to borrow from other research or special libraries and the national libraries the materials they do not have in-house for members. This interlibrary cooperation is important in terms of cutting costs, providing best service with limited resources and avoiding duplication. Staff exchange which promotes capacity can also be considered in this regard to enable sharing and learning of experiences and skills by the legislative libraries' staff.

According to the Parliamentary reference guide (n.d:7),

Research involves summarizing, analysing and evaluating information, usually from a diversity of information sources. In contrast to information, research involves the analysis, interpretation and processing of raw information, a task usually performed by persons with a research background. Such individuals, possessing the ability to process information into easily readable and understandable formats, prepare briefs, memos and reports to Members and Committees, based on submitted research requests. Examples of research requests include: summaries of proposed legislation, and comparative analysis of policies from multiple jurisdictions.

The above quotation clearly states the difference between what the library does and what the research department does since parliament librarians at times get confused as to what role they should play in research. In the parliament library setting, the librarian's duty is to organise information and make it accessible whenever the researcher needs to compile any of the requests from the MPs. The librarians may provide reference services to the MPs while the researchers have to provide more thorough and detailed reports, briefs or papers. It is also essential that researchers are specialists in different fields so that they can handle various MPs' requests appropriately given their expertise in different fields such as politics, economics, information technology, sociology and so on.

Researchers also make use of evaluation forms in order to get feedback from the MPs indicating whether their information requests were satisfied or not. In this way, if the request was not properly dealt with, it can be done again provided it is still within the time limit that the MP needs to use it.

3.3.4. Member education

This service refers to the orientation of the MPs so that they can be familiar with the organization, rules or procedures and services of the legislatures. This service is very beneficial especially for new MPs. In some legislatures it is conducted by departments other than the library, while in others it is conducted by the library together with other legislature departments. If it is run by the library, the latter can take the opportunity to introduce and educate MPs about the library and its services so as to maximize its use.

3.3.5. Audiovisual services

Audiovisuals help the MPs a lot in learning about other legislatures or keeping up with what they might have missed on television or on radio in terms of some

important speeches or interviews. Due to the nature and demands of their work, MPs may not always have time to watch or listen to the news. So, videos may be useful to catch up with some of the missed important issues. Although video services are only found in large legislatures, the former equally plays an important role in smaller legislatures where some of their MPs may not be comfortable using some traditional services of the library such as reading. So, in this case watching or listening to news often becomes informative.

3.4. Library collection

In his presentation at the 9th APLESA Conference, Rugambwa (2003) outlined the following objectives as they relate to the acquisition of library stock in libraries in general.

- a) The library should own and make available such books, periodicals and other information resources as are required by the potential users in the performance of their individual research work;
- b) The library should own and make available such books and other materials as are related to the research programs of the parent institution;
- c) The library should own and make available those parts of the past and present graphic records of those cultures and people whose experience is related in any way to the educational and research programmes of the institution; and
- d) The library should own all materials relating to the history, development and character of the institution.

Even though parliamentary libraries are different in some respects from other libraries, be it national or public libraries, they too should meet the above objectives when they acquire their stock. However, since parliamentary libraries are special due to the kind of clientele they serve, they are supposed to be very selective in their

collection development. They only acquire stock which closely reflects the work of the parliament and that of the MPs. So the acquisition revolves around such subject areas as Politics, Law, Economics and so forth. This therefore means that fiction and academic textbooks do not form part of what ought to be acquired. Since the MPs need to be highly knowledgeable in different areas of life, information available in different sources needs to be acquired so that they do not lag behind when issues of national importance are being discussed. So, they need to have access to newspapers both local, national and international, journal articles, books relevant to their parliament work, audio and videotapes of burning issues, speeches and interviews.

3.5. Information technology in parliamentary libraries

The role of and the importance of information and communication tools in the operations of democratic parliaments today needs to be emphasised. Introduction and use of computers and other information technology tools have brought some favourable results in helping parliament librarians better address MPs' information needs. Speedy retrieval of information even from remote sources is one of the many benefits which have been brought by information technology revolution in parliament libraries.

In order to function effectively, parliaments need to have access to information about what is happening locally, internationally and globally. Moreover, since in most parliaments, the members of parliament have been elected and entrusted to make laws for their nations, the people who elected them are also entitled to have access to information about what is happening in parliament. This kind of information can now be easily accessed and disseminated whenever it is required through information technology networks and tools such as through parliaments and governments

intranets, extranets, websites, faxes, electronic mails and so on. In his presentation at the 12th Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference in New Guinea, Mallikaryunaiah (1994: 106) pointed out that global exchange of information and resource sharing through networks amongst world parliaments and other international institutions is necessary to curb the problems of scarce resources faced by libraries in delivering their services. There are problems such as shortage of space, financial resources and staff and all these make it impossible for one library to have in its collection all kinds of information that might be required by users (Mallikarjunaiah, 1994: 106-107; Tanfield, 1995: 54; Englefield, 1993: 91).

Embracing information technology in parliament libraries' operations also plays an important role in assisting parliamentary librarians fulfil the members' special requirements through ensuring that they provide up-to-date and accurate information to MPs speedily.

Instead of relying on the traditional means of information transfer such as the telephone, telex facilities, telegram or diplomatic bags as was the case in the House of Commons library in the 1970s (Menhennet, 1973: 481) with the click of the mouse on the Internet, the required information can be accessed and downloaded if it is not available in-house. Englefield (1993: 91) argues that in the past it was rather expensive to maintain computer-based operations, however, with recent advances in information technology, the purchase costs of computers have dropped hence it has become easier even for those libraries which could not afford buying computers to acquire them now. While buying does not remain the only option especially for needy parliaments, rapid developments in the information technology market continuously force consumers to keep up-to-date with the latest technology hence for those who can

afford to purchase advanced equipment periodically, they can always donate what they do not need to the needy.

According to Tanfield (1995: 56) the computers are also used successfully in Westminster research service to analyse information about use of services. There is a method used through a computerised ENQUIRIES database whereby research service staff get such information as to which member uses which part of service. With this knowledge, the research staff may be able to assess their service in an effort to improve where necessary in order to give MPs the best service they require. Amongst its other advantages, Tanfield (1995: 57) argues that,

Westminster's ENQUIRIES database allows for the calculation of elapsed time between an enquiry being placed and its completion so that performance indicators can be monitored.

Chen and Herson (1982: 111) also argue that,

The advent of computers and other electronic instrumentation has expanded the scope of what is possible for us to accomplish in getting specific information to those who need it. Advances such as interactive cable television and videodisc could produce a wide range of new information transfer and retrieval systems which would allow specialised user groups to tap a wide array of sources.

What has been advocated in the above quotation about two decades ago is actually happening in organisations as of now all over the world. Computers have therefore transformed ways of doing things much faster than it was about two decades ago. The available information systems today have made it easy for people to search for and locate information. The online systems and services have further simplified the librarians' job through carrying some special features of enabling online searches, numerical data retrieval, cataloguing, document delivery, fact retrieval, referrals (both of users to database resources and users to people, places or organisations best able to tell them what they want to know), news, announcements, reference services and so forth (Chen and Herson, 1982: 111).

The essential point is that “speed, currency, relevance and accuracy are the hallmarks of Member needs...” (Englefield, 1993: 25) that call for a well-equipped library service and a well-qualified library staff to assist and support MPs’ information needs and demands.

3.6. Library staff

Due to the high calibre of MPs as decision makers, they should have at their disposal a highly qualified support staff in order that they too perform their parliamentary work well. It is however argued that the standard or calibre of legislative library staff is somehow determined by the MPs’ use of the library (Englefield, 1993: 24). That is, if they use the library for leisure or for not so detailed research or queries, there is no need to have a very highly qualified staff since the latter will only be assuming the custodian role. On the other hand, if the library is manned by a highly qualified staff, MPs tend to expect more from such staff hence tend to come to the library quite often requiring extensive service and if their demands are satisfied they tend to have confidence in such staff hence the library use rate also increases (Englefield, 1993: 25).

It should also be borne in mind that it is very important that the MPs are adequately made aware of the library service because if they do not know what the library can do for them, they will not see its importance hence will not use it as expected. So, initial orientation programmes at the beginning of each new parliament, aggressive marketing strategies of library services and continuous user education are required to bring to the awareness of MPs the existence and importance of library service in their parliamentary work. This therefore follows that the fewer the number of library users, the less the funding for library services and appointment of competent and adequate staff to provide library services. This therefore tends to be a vicious circle because if

there are no competent staffs to man the library the number of library users also decreases so does the importance of such a library service.

Once the required staff has been recruited it also remains important that such staff should be continuously trained so that it can maintain the good service to the MPs. The most important factor is to give these staff attractive incentives so that they continuously deliver good service. Secondly, the staff's skills should also be sharpened from time to time by way of attachments to other legislatures, attendance at both regional and international workshops, seminars and conferences so that they keep abreast with what is going around in other countries through information-sharing and networking with other colleagues. Caution should be taken though that for an attachment programme to yield positive results on the beneficiary side, the beneficiary should be attached at the institution of the same level as his/hers lest he/she finds the experience at the host institution overwhelming, and hence prove less useful for his/her own institution. For instance, it might not always be appropriate for a librarian from a less developed country to be attached at the library in a developing country where almost everything is done at a higher level, which might be confusing instead of beneficial. However, it could be cost effective for someone from the developed country to visit and assist in a less developed country legislature.

Still on the issue of training, the Parliamentary Reference Guide (n.d:22) advocates that parliamentary staff who are interested in going for further formal education, maybe in higher-learning institutions seeking advanced diplomas and degrees should be afforded that opportunity maybe on a part-time basis. This part-time arrangement affords staff to study while working at the same time.

3.7. The role of the parliamentary library in parliamentarians' work

As has been stated earlier in the introduction, the work of MPs is highly demanding and requires that MPs must have a sound base of information in order to fulfil their role as parliamentarians. An MP is faced with the following as his/her daily job: representing constituents' concerns in parliament in terms of supporting or opposing the policies of the government, debating in parliament through proposing legislation, questioning ministers, debating in matters of public importance and serving as members of parliamentary committees, making speeches, involvement in discussions, negotiations or representation (Gurure, 1985: 11). In order to be able to carry out these tasks, MPs should be well informed. The library of parliament should indeed play a positive role in supporting the work of MPs through:

- Providing them with speedy, accurate and timely information.
- Briefing them very clearly by simplifying technical and statistical information.
- Maintaining current awareness service and collating information in advance of enquiries (Bannenberg, 1975; Gurure, 1985; Englefield, 1993; Thapisa, 1996).

Another important role of parliamentary libraries, especially in Africa, has been realised as providing unbiased, impartial and confidential information in relation to particular individual MPs' information needs. Parliamentary libraries are seen to be more useful here since most legislators in developing countries rely on executive departments for information. The problem with the information that legislators get from such departments is that it is often biased in favour of government hence cannot prove fruitful for facts or objectivity (Gurure, 1985: 13).

Gurure (1985: 14) further advises that in order to ensure that the parliament library service continuously meets its users' needs, it should be evaluated periodically

through using questionnaires to get users' views, personal assessment or individual members and getting the views of members of library committee during meetings.

Finally, since most parliamentary libraries especially those of small legislatures in developing countries often lack adequate resources in terms of finance, up-to-date collections and manpower, it is difficult for them to satisfy their users' information needs. In order to curb this problem, amongst others, the formation of regional associations can prove really useful in terms of resource sharing in terms of collections and staff. In this way, such libraries can be able to help one another with resources and avoid duplication hence minimise costs. The users can therefore be served more effectively and the level of dissatisfaction about the library services can be reduced. One such association, known as the Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) was established in 1994. There are more of other regional and international associations as APLESA, for example, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) is one of the biggest in the library sphere. There is even a special section on parliamentary libraries within IFLA to enable parliamentary librarians meet, share and discuss issues that relate specifically to parliament libraries.

3.8. Chapter summary

This chapter has given an overview of a parliament library which according to the literature is the major source of providing information service to the MPs, the staff of parliament and MPs' staff. The services, duties and responsibilities of the parliament library and its staff have also been highlighted.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the Lesotho MPs' information needs and their information seeking behaviour. According to the literature, social research studies are categorised into the following main types: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. According to Neuman (1997: 19) social researchers do research to "explore a new topic, describe a social phenomenon or explain why something occurs". So, it is really important for one to show clearly for what purpose one is doing research so as to design the research appropriately choosing research methods that will enable the researcher to achieve his/her goal of doing research. This study fits well into both the exploratory and descriptive categories since it is trying to explore what information MPs in Lesotho seek, what sources they use to find information and what they use that information for. In order to carry out this successfully, the researcher explored various data-gathering techniques and the survey method was finally chosen as the most appropriate for this study. This is because of the nature of surveys which are used by researchers to explain or explore the beliefs, opinions, behaviour and characteristics of the respondents (Neuman, 1997: 228). Both questionnaires and interviews were used to gather data.

Moreover, apart from the fact that other researchers who have undertaken a similar study used questionnaires and interviews to collect data, Neuman (1997: 231) also advocates that these two data-collection techniques are used in survey research to gather data from the respondents. These methods have therefore been used for this particular study to collect data. The literature survey has also been explored mainly to find out what other people who have written on the subject say, their methods of data

collection, their findings and any problems that might have been encountered so that if possible such problems can be avoided in this particular study. Furthermore, the literature survey has been used to inform the study theoretically and conceptually.

4.2. Description of the study area and target population

The study was conducted in Lesotho at the parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho. This site was chosen because the researcher is a Lesotho national who also happens to be an employee of the library of Lesotho parliament. So, it was believed that this research will assist the library staff in redesigning the parliament library service in a way that closely reflects the MPs' needs in an effort to assist the latter to maximise their use of the service at the same time getting the best service. An efficient library service will enable parliament as the parent body to achieve its aims and objectives. If found necessary the redesign task could be done based on the findings of the research and on the respondents' opinions and expectations.

MPs and Senators formed the target population of this research since they are the primary users of the library of parliament. Some of the staff of both houses were also asked to give their opinions in the questionnaire since they were believed to be the people who work closely with the MPs. These people can advise on what their needs are and how the library can best meet these needs.

As has been mentioned earlier, there are 120 MPs who form the lower house also known as the National Assembly and 33 Senators who constitute the upper house or Senate. The questionnaires were administered to all MPs and Senators since they are already a small number. This was done to increase response rate since it was already anticipated that not all of them would have time to fill in the questionnaires due to

their busy schedules. In a similar study done in Botswana by Thapisa (1996: 208), only 11 questionnaires were completed and returned hence only 27.5% response rate was achieved as he had only used 40 MPs as his sample.

4.3. Research design

4.3.1. Questionnaire design

In an effort to avoid the situation where respondents are compelled to throw away the questionnaires due to improper lay-out, the following elements as suggested by Babbie & Mouton (2001: 239) were taken into consideration when drawing the questionnaire.

First, a letter requesting permission to conduct the study was written and submitted to both Clerks of the National Assembly and the Senate (See Appendix A). The letter introduced the researcher and outlined the topic of the study, the aim of the research as well as the benefits that will be reaped after the study has been completed. This was to encourage and motivate the Clerks who could also positively influence the MPs to support the study and provide the required information. Secondly, the questionnaire (See Appendix C) also had a cover letter, which introduced the researcher and outlined the topic of the study as well as the aim of the study. Details about the date and the place when and where questionnaires needed to be returned when completed were also provided.

The questionnaire consisted of seven pages and it was made up of both the open-ended and closed-ended questions and it was well laid out and uncluttered. No two questions were put in one line as this could cause respondents to miss some of the questions. Furthermore, if respondents are afforded generous space on the

questionnaire, they are encouraged to write as much as they need without forcing them to write a lot on a tiny space or even abbreviate some of the words that might even be difficult for the researcher to read.

The open-ended questions required respondents to provide answers in their own words while the closed-ended questions had been pre-selected by the researcher and required respondents to tick the options that closely reflect their opinions. The instructions on how to answer questions had also been clearly laid out as a guide to enable respondents answer questions correctly. Both types of questions have been used at the same time realising that they both carry their own advantages and disadvantages. Open-ended questions are difficult to analyse but at the same time they enable respondents to express themselves more fully as opposed to the close-ended questions, which restrict respondents to tick from the provided alternatives. It is possible that respondents might not understand the questions or they might tick wrong answers thinking that they are actually right. However, the latter are easy to analyse hence save the researcher a lot of time and effort (Haralambos and Holborn, 1991: 732-733).

4.3.2. Interviews

Given the fact that no one data collection method is free from disadvantages, even though the questionnaire was chosen to collect data for this study, interviews were also considered to elicit more rich data that may not have been captured in the questionnaires. Other studies which were done previously on user needs had also incorporated interviews in their data collection techniques. Moreover, interviews were used in this study to enable the researcher to probe further into respondents' answers to get more information. After going through all the completed questionnaires, the

researcher felt that responses to questions 11, 12, 13, 18 and 21 needed more clarity and decided to make up a follow interview on them.

4.4. Research methodology

4.4.1. Pilot study

Prior to drawing the final questionnaire, the researcher first conducted a pilot study between June and July 2002 by administering a pilot questionnaire (See Appendix B) to five MPs and three Senators at the parliament of Lesotho. This was done to determine the clarity of the questionnaire as well as determining whether the actual study would be successful amongst the group of MPs at the parliament of Lesotho. The Director of Information Services at the library of parliament in Cape Town, South Africa and the Senior Librarian of the library of parliament in Lesotho were also approached and asked to comment on the questionnaire and its design before it was administered to the MPs. Their critical review of the draft questionnaire helped the researcher in designing the final questionnaire.

The questions in the pilot questionnaire were open meaning that respondents were not restricted in giving only the applicable answers based on the pre-selected options. They were then able to give answers in their own words therefore helping the researcher to formulate options to choose from for the final questionnaire based on what the respondents said in the pilot questionnaire.

4.4.2. Description of the research instrument and data-collection techniques

Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Two copies of questionnaires were prepared. One was for the MPs and Senators and the other questionnaire was designed for staff of both houses (See Appendix D). In the

MPs/Senators questionnaire, the willing respondents were asked to supply their names and contact details at the end so that the researcher could later contact them and arrange an interview with them so that they could further discuss issues raised in the questionnaire. In this way the researcher wanted to maximise validity of data supplied by respondents since they would have willingly agreed to participate in the interview. To get the most suitable time for the interviews, they were given the opportunity to state the most suitable time for them to be interviewed.

4.4.3. How was data collected?

4.4.3.1. Administering questionnaires

Prior to giving out questionnaires, the researcher had sat together with the chambers' ushers explaining the structure of the questionnaire and how it was supposed to be completed. In this way, these assistants were enabled to assist respondents complete the questionnaires according to instructions as well as clarifying any questions. Haralambos and Holborn (1991: 728) suggest this form, which is referred to as "structured questionnaire" is advantageous because respondents are directed in filling in their questionnaires properly. Validity of the data may also be enhanced in this way. Haralambos and Holborn (1991: 733) argue that one of the contributing factors to reduced validity of data might be because the respondents were not able to give full and accurate information which might be because they did not understand the questions. They further argue that the validity and reliability of responses may be affected because "respondents may lie, may forget or they may lack the information required" (Haralambos and Holborn, 1991: 738).

The questionnaires were administered to 153 MPs, meaning 120 representatives of the National Assembly and 33 Senators by the researcher and some staff assistants (ushers) over a period of one week in September 2002 to reach them all since not all

of them used to turn up for the parliament proceedings in one day. So, questionnaires were given out on different days until all the respondents were covered. Questionnaires were administered to the MPs and Senators when they were still in the chambers. This facilitated administering questionnaires to a large group of people at the same time. However, the problem of bias might have come up because even though they were asked to answer questions on their own, respondents were discussing questions amongst themselves hence this is likely to influence their answers. One advantage of this method though is that it increases return rate and is also less expensive since one does not deal with individual respondents but with a group (Haralambos and Holborn, 1991: 729).

The response rate was not satisfactory because out of 153 questionnaires (that is, 120 for the representatives and 33 for senators) that were distributed, only 20 (13%) were returned. In February 2003, the researcher approached the Speaker of the National Assembly and the President of Senate and appealed to them to assist by passing a special announcement in the chambers urging the MPs to realise the importance of the study and giving it a serious thought through co-operation and completing the questionnaires. The researcher also wrote memos to the Clerks of both houses to request permission to re-administer questionnaires to the MPs (See Appendix E). The two presiding officers did what the researcher had requested and the researcher once more distributed questionnaires to all the MPs. Even though the respondents were given a week to complete and return the questionnaires, a large number of 51 questionnaires were returned the same day while the rest were returned on different days but within the same week the respondents were requested to return them.

Return boxes clearly marked "Questionnaire Returns" were put at convenient places for MPs to easily return the questionnaires immediately after they had completed

them. Such places were identified by the researcher as the MPs' cafeteria where MPs usually have their meals, the Secretaries' office which is usually visited by MPs for their daily requirements, the Accounts' office where MPs regularly go to collect their daily sitting allowances and the Library. Some respondents also returned their completed questionnaires to the ushers who in turn deposited them in the return boxes provided.

Initially, 105 questionnaires were returned, however, after the researcher had gone through each of them to check whether they were properly completed, it was found that five of the questionnaires were not completed at all. This therefore left the total of properly completed questionnaires to 100. This brought the final response rate to 65%.

Questionnaires were also given to a few selected staff members of both houses (See Appendix D) who deal with MPs on a daily basis especially on information issues. Such support staff included the presiding officers namely, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Deputy Speaker of National Assembly, Clerk of National Assembly, Assistant Deputy Clerk of National Assembly, Hansard Editor, two Committee Clerks and the Senior Librarian. In the Senate, the questionnaires were administered to the President of Senate, the Clerk of Senate, Assistant Deputy Clerk, the Hansard Editor and two interpreters since there are no committees in this house hence no committee clerks. The questionnaires for staff were delivered to their offices by the researcher over one day. The respondents were also encouraged to fill in the questionnaires on the same day and return them to the researcher. However, only a few of them managed to do that. Even though 14 questionnaires were distributed, only 10 were returned.

4.4.3.2. Conducting interviews

After all the questionnaires had been collected during the same month of February 2003, the researcher checked them to ensure that they were properly completed. The list of those who had volunteered to be interviewed was compiled and they were then contacted by phone by the researcher to arrange interviews. The respondents with whom the researcher managed to secure interviews were five in number. As indicated earlier, the interviews were based on selected questions which required clarity from the respondents. Those were questions 10, 11, 12, 13, 18 and 21 from the questionnaire.

After the researcher realised that it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews due to tight schedules of the MPs, telephone interviewing was opted for. The interviews were done over three consecutive days with two interviewees on each day and the fifth MP was interviewed on the third day. These were carried out in the evenings during off peak hours when the call rates were cheaper and when it was most convenient for interviewees who by then had some time to spare from parliamentary work. The interviewer would start by introducing herself and the purpose of the call as well as verifying whether the person answering the phone is the MP sought for interview. The respondents' answers were recorded by the researcher during the interview and no tape recording was done. After having recorded all the interviews the responses were manually coded and analysed and this was an easy task since the interviewees and interview questions were few in number.

At the end of each interview, the researcher thanked the interviewees for the information and for having availed themselves for the interview.

4.5. Limitations of the study

Like any other researches that were carried out before, this study also had a few limitations. The first limitation to this study is the fact that it was carried out with only a selected group of people – the MPs and some of the staff members of the parliament of Lesotho only.

Secondly, the use of questionnaires as a tool of data collection also has some of its pitfalls, and there is a possibility that some respondents did not complete the questionnaires themselves. For example, a colleague or a child might have completed a questionnaire on an MP's behalf. This then would affect the validity of some responses. Furthermore, it is also possible that some respondents did not interpret the questions in the same way as the researcher.

The third limitation is in regards to the collection of questionnaires as most of the respondents failed to return their completed questionnaires in time. The first batch of completed questionnaires was expected in September 2002, however during that time only a few were returned. This was followed by an unexpected adjournment of parliament 'sine die' in September 2002. 'Sine die' is a Latin term, which is defined by Electric Law Library as "The final adjournment of a legislative session without adjourning to a specific time or date.... Usually used to connote the final adjournment of a session of Congress or State Legislature" (Electric Law Library, n.d). This unexpected adjournment followed the declaration of famine in Lesotho due to poor agricultural harvests. So, the MPs had to go back to their respective constituencies to see what could be done in that disturbing situation. A new batch of questionnaires had to be distributed again in December 2002.

Out of the 105 returned questionnaires, five were left blank and the owners could not be traced, as the questionnaires were anonymous to ensure confidentiality. The blank questionnaires had to be discarded. Some of the MPs and Senators declined to take part in the study because they said they had never used the parliament library before and they had no reasons for non-use of the library. They therefore said they were not in a position to fill in the questionnaire.

4.6. Chapter summary

The chapter gave a detailed discussion of the methodology that was employed for this study. It drew attention to both the advantages and the disadvantages of the data collection instrument used, specifically highlighting its suitability for this particular study. The main aim of this chapter has been to give a detailed illustration of how this study was undertaken, how data was collected, with what data collection instruments and why such instruments were chosen and used. The chapter ends with the section on problems that the researcher encountered during data collection process.

Chapter 5

Findings of the survey and interpretations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results as they have been portrayed from the respondents through the questionnaires and follow-up interviews. The results are presented in the order that they appear in the questionnaire. Graphs and tables have been used to illustrate the results. Follow-up interviews were conducted by the researcher based on a selection of questions from the questionnaire which it was thought were not clearly answered. Microsoft Excel was used to analyse data and also to draw graphs and tables. Responses from the interview questions were recorded by the researcher and after all interviews had been conducted, the researcher grouped similar responses and tallied them. Since there were only five interviewees with only six questions, the analysis was done manually and the findings were incorporated and discussed together with related questionnaire questions in this chapter.

5.2. Response to the questionnaire

The questionnaires were administered and distributed to 153 MPs consisting of 120 representatives from the National Assembly and 33 Senators. Out of the 153, 105 questionnaires were returned, of which five were discarded because they were not completed. This therefore left the total number of returned completed questionnaires to 100, with the response rate of 65%. Ten staff members responded to the questionnaire. However, their responses were more or less similar to the MPs' responses, as a result the former's results were left out in the analysis of data since the researcher was more interested in the MPs' responses since the study was based on them.

Table 5.1 (See Page 61) shows the distribution of respondents' status and their gender. This table combines the results for both question one and question three. According to the table, out of 100 respondents, most of the respondents (77%) were male while the remaining 23% were female. These results are not surprising since the parliament of Lesotho is dominated by men with few women; female representation in parliament is 11.7% in the lower house (National Assembly) and 36.4% in the upper house (Senate). However, as compared to the previous parliaments, these numbers have increased dramatically probably because of the new electoral model that was used in the 2002 national elections which required political parties to have a certain percentage of female representation in parliament. Thus there is 7% increase of female representation in the National Assembly, while in the Senate there is 14% increase of the same.

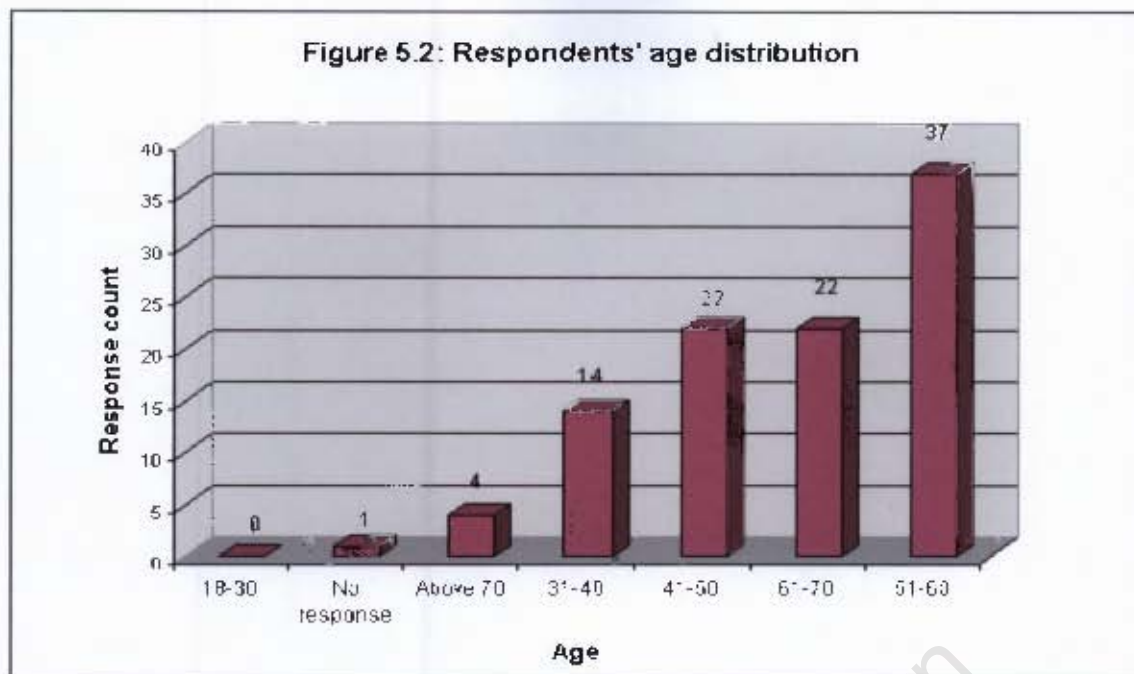
Furthermore, of the 100 respondents, most (80%) were Members of the National Assembly while only 20% were Senators. This difference is explained by the fact that in the Lesotho parliament the number of representatives of the National Assembly is about four times that of the Senators. This is due to the fact that the 80 MPs in the National Assembly represent 80 constituencies while 40 MPs came into parliament through the proportional representation which gave the parties which did not get parliamentary seats during the elections the opportunity to have representation in parliament. As for the Senators, they occupy only 33 seats which are made up of 22 principal chiefs and 11 others who are nominated by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister. The seats of the 22 principal chiefs are for life while the other 11 are reconsidered each time national elections are held. If a Principal Chief dies or becomes too ill to fulfil his parliamentary duties, his heir if above the age of 21 takes the seat and if the heir for some reasons cannot fill that gap, the wife of the

deceased/ill Senator automatically becomes the Senator. The National Assembly members are also elected after every five years when national elections are held.

Table 5.1: Distribution of respondents' status by gender

STATUS			
GENDER	Member of National Assembly	Senator	TOTAL
Female	12 (52%)	11 (48%)	23
Male	68 (88%)	9 (12%)	77
TOTAL	80	20	100

Figure 5.2 (See Page 62) illustrates the distribution of respondents' age. It shows that none of the MPs fall in the 18-30 age category. The largest number of respondents fall in the 51-60 age group (37%), followed by those who fall in 41-50 and 61-70 age groups at 22% each. Those who fall in the 31-40 age group constitute 14% and those aged above 70 constitutes only 4%. Only one of the respondents did not indicate his/her age group. According to the information depicted by these results, it shows that the largest proportion of MPs in the Lesotho parliament is in their 50s and 60s while only a few are in their 30s and above 70.



Question four asked the respondents to state the length of their service as MPs. The results show that most respondents (52%) have been in parliament for a period of less than one year. Those who have been in parliament for more than one year constitute only 48%. This could be explained by the fact that in both 1997 and 2001, there were some party splits within the currently ruling party. Some of the members of LCD which is currently the ruling party joined the newly formed party by the name of Lesotho Peoples Congress (LPC). Thus, a lot of new members representing LCD which is the party with the majority seats in parliament became MPs. Furthermore, there have also been new members in parliament following the deaths of some MPs.

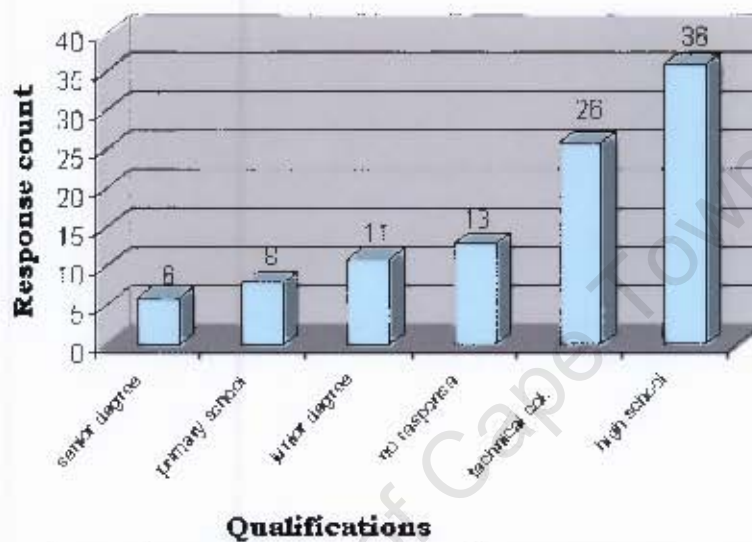
It is believed that education and experience plays an influential role on how MPs search and use information. According to Mchombu (2000b: 77), MPs who have a high level of education and who have been in parliament for some time tend to know what they want in terms of information and where to find it. So, as the results show, most (52%) respondents indicated that they were still new in parliament hence might need to be guided on how to search and where to search for information. Even those

who have not acquired a tertiary education might also have a problem since some of them do not even know how the library works as most high schools do not have libraries. Librarians therefore need to know their users well so that they can always be readily available for those who need their assistance most. Experienced or MPs from developed worlds like in the UK like to find information themselves as perceived by Whittle (2000: 72) due to the fact that prior to becoming MPs, they had always been searching for information themselves in their previous employment, therefore had brought along that culture to parliament. This is not the case in some African countries where reading is regarded as leisure, or MPs find themselves unable to search for and access information which might be available in English which in most cases is their second or even third language (Gabriel, 2000: 69).

Question five sought information about the respondents' highest educational qualification. Figure 5.3 (See Page 64) shows the educational background of respondents in terms of qualifications categorized in five groups, viz primary school certificate, high school certificate, technical college certificate, university junior degree and university senior degree. According to the figure, the largest proportion of the respondents (36%) has been through a high school, having either completed it or dropped out. The respondents here had indicated having done either Form A, B, C, D, E or Cambridge O-Level School Certificate (COSC). This certificate is awarded to pupils in Lesotho high schools who have successfully passed the highest level of high school which is Form E. The next highest cited category (26%) is that of the technical college and respondents who fall in this category indicated either having a diploma or a certificate in a particular subject/field. The fields indicated at this level comprised Education (Primary Teachers' Certificate), Social Work, Human Resource Management, International Relations and Theology/Religion. Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents indicated having a university junior degree in areas such as

Education, Economics, Law, and Agriculture, while 6% possessed university senior degree such as Masters, Doctorate in Education, natural sciences, and Law. Thirteen percent (13%) of the respondents did not indicate their qualifications and 8% said their highest qualification is primary school certificate.

Figure 5.3: Respondents' education qualifications



5.3. MPs' information needs

Questions seven and 19 sought out information pertaining to what the respondents said were their information needs.

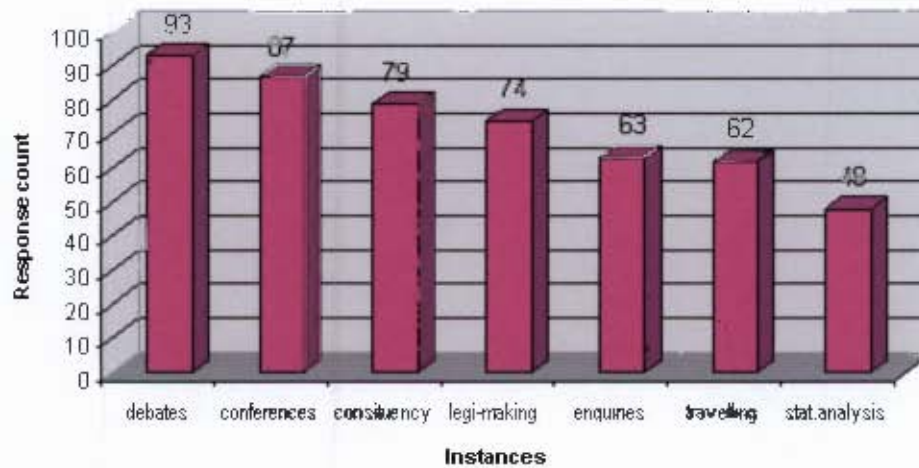
Question seven asked respondents to state instances when they require information. Figure 5.5 (See Page 66) illustrates their responses. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to tick one or more options depending on which ones suited them as far as their requirements for information are concerned. According to Figure 5.5 (See Page 66), out of the eight provided options, most respondents (93%) indicated that they require information when they are preparing for parliamentary speeches and debates. The second highest (87%) was when they are preparing for conferences and workshops. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents indicated

their need for information when preparing speeches for constituency and official gatherings. The next highest number (74%) of respondents indicated that they need information when they are planning or making legislation decisions. Sixty-three percent (63%) indicated that they require information when preparing answers for enquiries from the constituents. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the respondents indicated their need for information when involved in parliamentary committees' activities and when preparing to visit other countries. Only 49% said they require information when doing statistics or data analysis. A few (6%) indicated that they require information for other reasons besides the ones which were provided in the questionnaire, for example, respondents said they required information for personal development or to keep up-to-date with the current events.

Similarly to the findings of other studies on MPs' information needs, such as to name but a few, Thapisa (1996) in Botswana, Martell (1994) and Serema (1999) in the House of Commons, the Lesotho MPs likewise require information for various reasons. For instance, when they are involved or are preparing for parliamentary speeches and debates, when they are preparing to go for conferences, when they are preparing speeches for constituency gatherings, when preparing for legislation-making or answering constituency enquiries. This therefore calls for the parliamentary library to be proactive and well equipped with the necessary information sources to answer the mentioned information requirements. Being proactive in legislative information services is seen as important by Gabriel when he argues that,

We use the experience that we have to determine through the parliamentary cycles what are the types of information requests that are going to come up. Look at your parliamentary programmes, how much of legislation are committees going to deal with at which times of the year and be pro-active in terms of concentrating your resources and your efforts and your time to address the peaks of the different types of needs. And there are cycles, Parliaments work on cycles and we can design our information. The needs tend to be cyclical around the programmes of Parliament. We are talking about not only a reactive service but more so, in our experience, a pro-active service (Gabriel, 2000: 71).

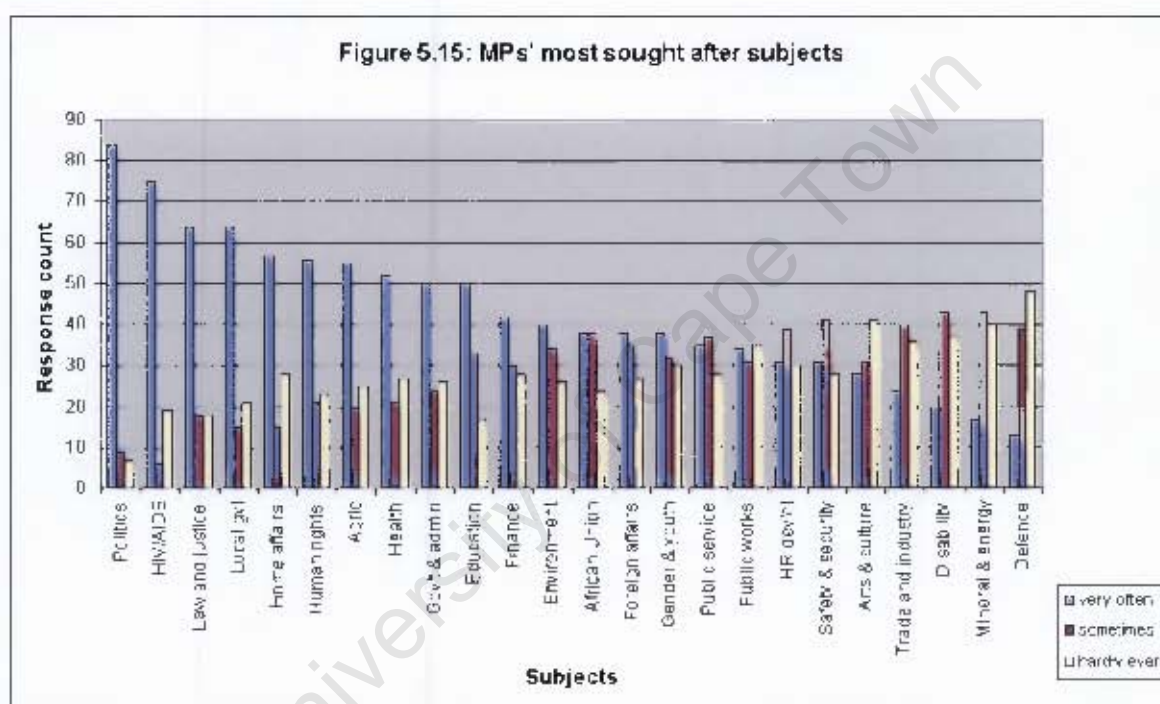
Figure 5.5: Instances when MPs require information



Question 19 sought to find out which subjects respondents often require information about. Figure 5.15 (See Page 67) presents the responses. The most popular subjects which were cited by the respondents were politics with 84% of the respondents, HIV/AIDS (75%), law and justice and local government (64%) each, home affairs (57%), human rights (56%), agriculture (55%), health (52%) and education (50%). Those subjects which received fewer votes were African Union, foreign affairs, gender and youth affairs (38%), public service (35%), public works (34%), human resource development and safety and security (31%) each, arts and culture (28%), trade and industry (24%), disability (20%), mineral and energy affairs (17%), and defence (13%).

Seemingly, the most frequently sought after subjects were Politics, followed by HIV/AIDS; Law and Justice; Local Government; Home Affairs; Human Rights; Agriculture; Health; Government and Administration; and Education. These were followed to a less extent by Finance; Environment; African Union; Foreign Affairs; Gender and Youth; Public Works; Human Resource Development and Safety and Security. Other subjects respondents were interested on were Arts and Culture; Trade

and Industry; Disability; Minerals and Energy and Defence. Except for politics which is a popular subject in parliaments and HIV/AIDS which is on everyone's lips nowadays due to its pandemic status, some subjects could have been chosen because they were the ones that the respondents were interested in at the time of completing the questionnaire. This also shows that MPs' information needs vary depending on what is being discussed in parliament at the time. If the study was to be carried out again perhaps the pattern on the subjects MPs require most would be different.



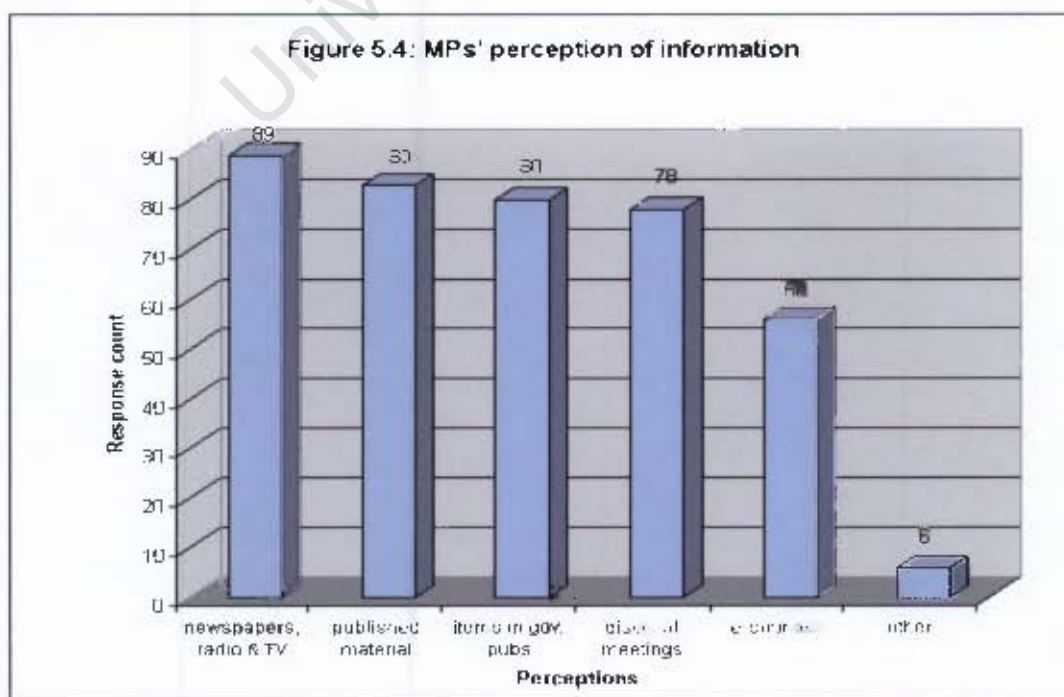
5.4. MPs' understanding of information

The question which explored this topic is question six. The respondents were asked to identify what they perceived as sources of information to determine their perception of information. According to Figure 5.4 (See Page 68), most respondents (89%) said they perceive information as all items in newspapers, radio and television. The next highest number (83%) said information is all published material, this was followed by 80% who said information is all items in government publications and 78% said information is all discussions at meetings. Only 56% said they view electronic sources

as information. Other items which were regarded as information were gossip, information from the community, parliamentary debates and private conversations. These were suggested by 6% of the respondents.

As indicated in Figure 5.4 it shows that the Lesotho MPs do understand what information is and maybe this is so because most of them have been through a considerable level of education as indicated in Figure 5.3 on page 63. This therefore refutes Aiyepuku's argument that policy-makers in less developed countries do not see the importance of information especially in policy analysis because amongst others, they are illiterate (Aiyepuku, 1982, 204). However, some of the respondents did indicate that they would like to read more of information written in Sesotho than English because English is their second language even though they still understand it.

However, when it comes to electronic sources, some of the respondents did not consider the former as information probably because they have not been exposed to the use of computers, especially for information retrieval, hence CD-ROMs and other electronic databases and books are still unknown to them.



5.5. MPs' information-seeking behaviour

A number of questions were asked to find out what the Lesotho MPs' information seeking behaviour was. The questions in point were question eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, and eighteen. These questions looked at the places MPs go to in search of information, the names of periodicals MPs are interested in and how they actually search for information.

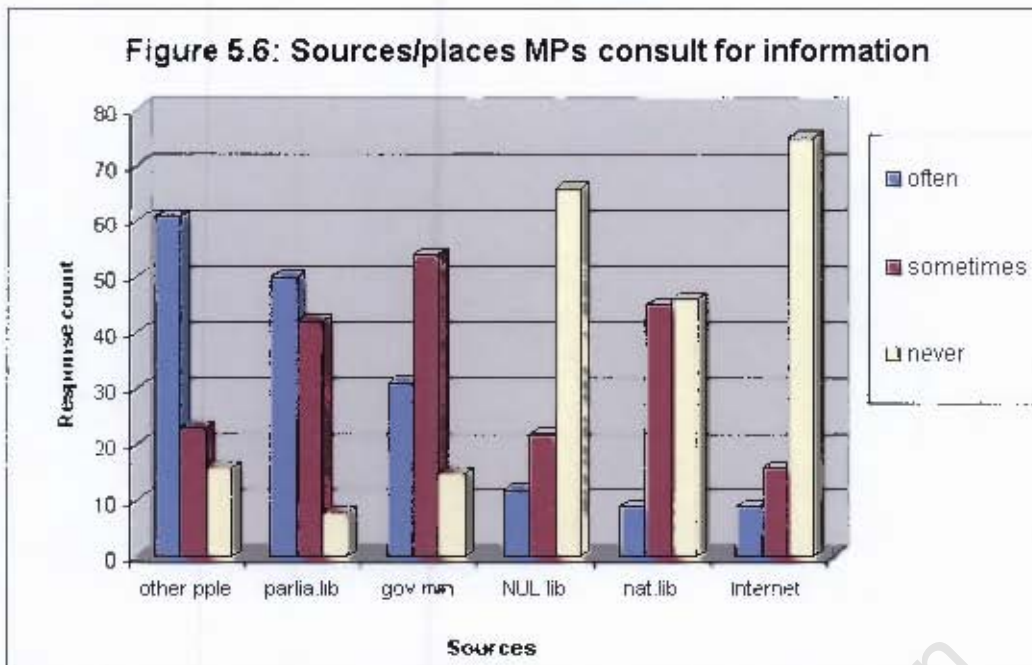
Figure 5.6 (See Page 71) illustrates the responses to question eight, which asked respondents where they often go in search of information. The respondents were asked to tick the appropriate options pertaining to how often they use a particular information source. Consulting other people was the most frequently consulted source at 61%, followed by the parliament library at 50%. The government ministries came third at 31% followed by the NUL (National University of Lesotho) library at 12%. Only a few (8%) indicated never using the parliament library to get information. Nine percent of the respondents indicated that they often go to the national library and the Internet. Six percent (6%) also indicated using other sources other than the ones which were provided in the questionnaire. Most respondents (75%) indicated never searching the Internet to get information while 66% indicated that they never use NUL library.

Consulting other people when in need of information was the most frequently consulted source used by MPs. Even in other studies such as Mintzberg (as cited in Wilson 1986), Butcher (as cited in Shokane 2002) and Thapisa (1996), this method has been found to be the most used source. It is through other people that consumers of information are directed to various information sources such as certain libraries, certain books or journals and lately certain websites. Mintzberg reported that managers conveniently use interpersonal contacts most because they enable a two-

way interaction hence allowing both the information seeker and the information provider to understand each other well. This method proves to be popular amongst MPs because of the work load they have which leaves them with not enough time to spend hours searching for information in the library. Thapisa (1996: 279) also argues that,

Face-to-face discussions are prized because they provide instant feedback on sincerity, attitude, emotions and involvement. In politics it is often advisable to seek other people's opinions on certain matters.

The Lesotho MPs also indicated heavy reliance on the parliament librarian who directs them to appropriate information sources for their various information needs. The NUL Library, National Library and the Internet were least used probably due to their physical locations (for NUL Library and the National Library). For the Internet, the reason why it is least used is because MPs do not have their own individual access as there is only one Internet connection in the library which is only used by library staff to search, access and retrieve information for MPs upon request. Only one MP indicated having his own computer with Internet connection at home, while three said they sometimes access the Internet at Internet Cafes. Furthermore, the library staff always request other libraries including the NUL Library and the National Library for information sought by MPs if it is not available in-house. This could be another reason why most MPs do not always consult the said libraries for information.

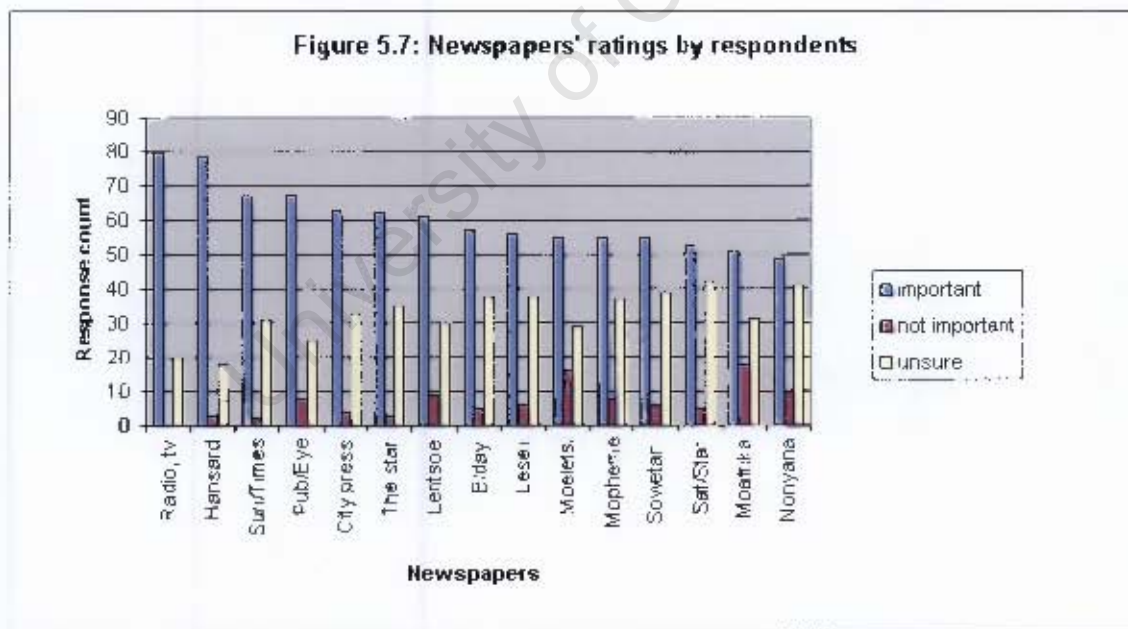


Question nine asked the respondents whether they regard information in the newspapers as important in their work. All the respondents (100%) indicated that they do regard information in the newspapers as important in their work.

Question 10 asked respondents to rate the newspapers which are mostly readily available in Lesotho in terms of their importance. The listed newspapers were both national as well as South African newspapers. As Figure 5.7 (See Page 72) shows, radio and television were regarded as important by most respondents (80%) followed by the Hansard (79%), Sunday Times and Public Eye (67%), City Press (63%), The Star (62%), Lentsoe la Basotho (61%), Business Day (57%), Leselinyana (56%), Moeletsi oa Basotho, Mopheme and Sowetan (55%), Saturday Star (53%), Moafrika (51%) and Nonyana (49%). Other newspapers which were regarded as important were Mololi (50%) and Mail and Guardian (60%).

Most respondents (80%) said that radio and television are most important because they get a lot of information on different topics from these media. They also rank

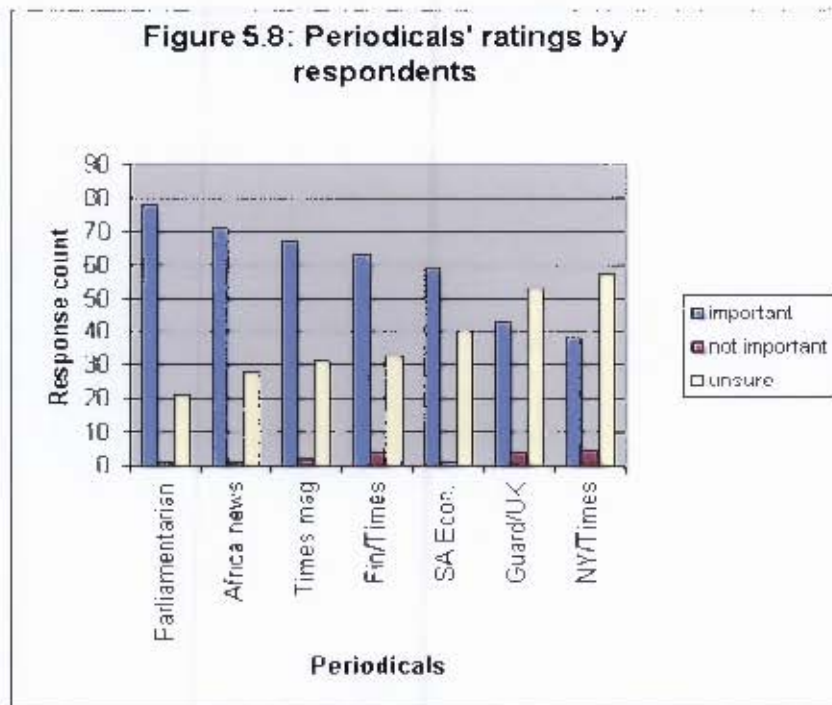
Hansard highly because they normally want to read what had been said during the debates. In Botswana as reported by Thapisa (1996) only 8% of the respondents read the Hansard. With the newspapers, some which are regarded as important is because the library subscribes to them and they are always available to the MPs to read. Some newspapers which are not available in the library but are regarded as important calls for the library management to consider subscribing to them since MPs seem to have interest in them. Such newspapers are as follows: Public Eye, City Press, Mopheme, Sowetan, Moafrika, Nonyana, Mololi and Mail and Guardian. The results also show that the Lesotho MPs seem to have interest in knowing about their local affairs as well as South African affairs. Probably this is due to the fact that Lesotho is entirely surrounded by South Africa hence the latter is likely to be influenced politically, socially and economically by the former.



Question 11 asked the respondents to rate the listed periodicals according to their importance under the following categories “important”, “not important” and “unsure”. It should be noted that the listed periodicals except for the Parliamentarian are not currently subscribed to by the parliament library, the aim of specifying them was to

find out whether the MPs would have an interest in them since they are international materials and contain important information of use to Lesotho politicians. According to Figure 5.8 (See Page 74) under the “important” category, the following are the results starting with the one which gained most scores: Parliamentarian (78%), Africa News (71%), Time magazine (67%), Financial Times (63%), South African Economist (59%), Guardian UK (43%), and New York Times (38%). Under the “not important” category, the one with most votes was the New York Times at 5%, followed by Guardian UK and Financial Times (4%), Time magazine (2%) and only 1% regarded Africa News, South African Economist and Parliamentarian as not important. Under the “unsure” category, New York Times received most votes (57%), followed by Guardian UK (53%), South African Economist (40%), Financial Times (33%), Times magazine (31%) and Parliamentarian received the least votes at 21%.

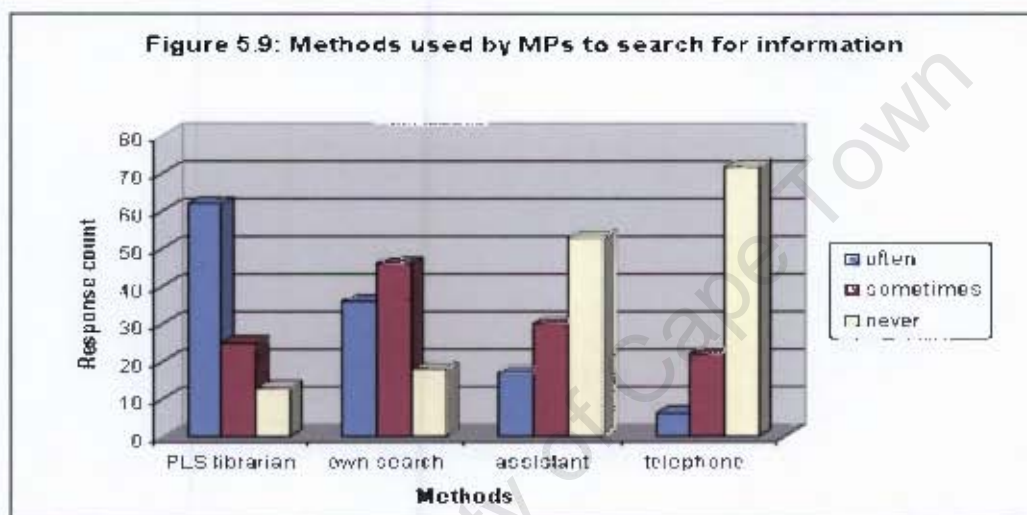
Similarly to the previous question, MPs rated the Parliamentarian highly because they have access to it since Lesotho Parliament is a member of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) which entitles all MPs to this publication. Although the library does not subscribe to the rest of the listed publications, the MPs indicated their desire to have access to those publications hence strongly appealed to the library to consider including them in its periodicals collection. As with their response to the newspapers, the respondents indicated that they think periodicals dealing with issues from other countries such as Africa News, Time Magazine, Guardian UK and New York Times can prove useful to them as they will be updated about the current affairs happening globally. Some MPs even indicated that they had seen this kind of periodicals in the libraries of other legislatures which they had visited.



Question 12 asked the respondents to indicate how they search for information based on the frequencies "often", "sometimes" and "never". According to Figure 5.9 (See Page 75), the most popular method respondents use when they need information is to ask the PLS (Parliament Library Service) librarian (62%), followed by 36% who do their own personal searches in the library. Telephone enquiries directed to the parliament library and personal assistant searches are least used since only 6% indicated using the former whilst the latter is only often used by 17%.

As was the case with their responses when asked as to what sources they frequently use to get information, MPs really seemed to be keen on asking other people first rather than searching for information themselves except for some who indicated that they usually search for themselves or ask other people to find information for them. This kind of information-seeking behaviour was also observed amongst the Tswana MPs according to Thapisa's study which was carried out in 1996. This therefore qualifies the fact that MPs are always too busy to do their own searches, they even prefer to get only what they want at that particular time as opposed to receiving bulk

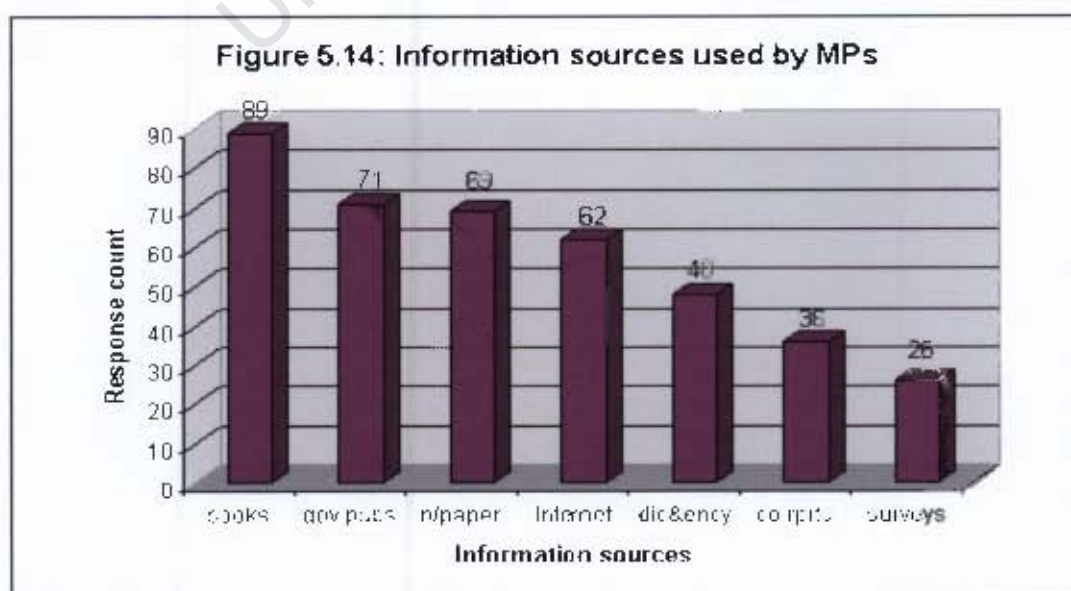
of information in a form of books, they rather want to be directed to a specific chapter in a book which will answer their need. This method of getting information has also been observed in other user groups such as managers and it is believed to be useful since it allows more interaction between the user and the information provider, therefore enabling the user to define his/her problem clearly as well as enabling the information provider to refer the user to other appropriate information providers if the former is unable to help (Butcher as cited in Shokane, 2002: 40).



Question 18 sought to find what sources of information respondents use to get information. Respondents were given the opportunity to tick as many options as applicable to them. According to Figure 5.14 (See Page 76), the most popular sources were books which were cited by 89% of the respondents, government publications came second with votes from 71% of the respondents, newspapers came third at 69% of the votes and the Internet came fourth with 62% of the respondents' votes. The least popular information sources were surveys which were cited by only 26% of the respondents, followed by company reports which received 36% of the respondents' votes, while dictionaries and encyclopaedias received 48% of the respondents' votes. Three percent (3%) of the respondents indicated other sources besides the ones listed.

Those other sources were journals, Readers' Digest, United Nations (UN) research reports and the Hansard.

Unlike the findings from other parliaments such as in Botswana where books are least read as indicated in Thapisa's study, MPs in Lesotho seem to rely more on books to get information than any other media. MPs from other legislatures such as Botswana showed less interest in reading books as they were thought to be outdated as compared to newspapers. When probed further why they prefer to read books, some respondents indicated that it is convenient to borrow books from the library and take them away where they are able to read them at their leisure as compared to other information materials such as newspapers which can only be read in the library. However newspapers are also frequently read as they keep MPs abreast with current affairs both nationally and internationally. Respondents also indicated that they also read newspapers to gain general knowledge in all other spheres of life. Respondents also shown keen interest in government publications such as Auditor-General Reports so that they are informed about what the government ministries are doing, since their other duty is to act as watchdogs of the government.



5.6. Parliamentary library service (PLS)

This section was addressed by 14 questions namely: question 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28. The section is further broken down into sub sections namely: MPs' awareness of PLS, MPs' usage of PLS, MPs' views about PLS, MPs' views about PLS staff and their recommendations for improving PLS.

5.6.1 MPs' awareness of PLS

Question 13 asked respondents whether they were aware of the parliament library service. According to the results, 99% of the respondents said they were aware of the parliament library service while only 1% said they were not aware of it.

It is not surprising that most respondents (99%) indicated that they are aware of the parliament library service since the library is conveniently located within the parliament building where MPs attend their debates and get most of their services such as sitting allowances from the accounts section as well as human resource expertise from human resources' section. They also get orientation upon each opening of parliament which is given by Heads of all sections of parliament support staff such as Human Resources section, Accounts section, Hansard section, the Table and the Library. However, they seem to require continuous education on library use and what the library can do for them because some indicated that they sometimes had information needs which they did not know that the library can help them with. When probed further as to what kind of information needs those were, some respondents said they did not know that the staff of library of parliament could borrow some information materials from other libraries on their behalf if such information could not be found in-house.

5.6.2. MPs' usage of PLS

Question 14 asked respondents to indicate the frequencies out of the listed ones of their use of the parliament library. According to Figure 5.10 (See Page 79), most respondents (41%) said they use it weekly, 17% indicated that they use the library daily, 16% said they use it monthly, 11% said they use it fortnightly, 8% said they never use the library while 7% said they use the parliament library whenever there is the need to do so.

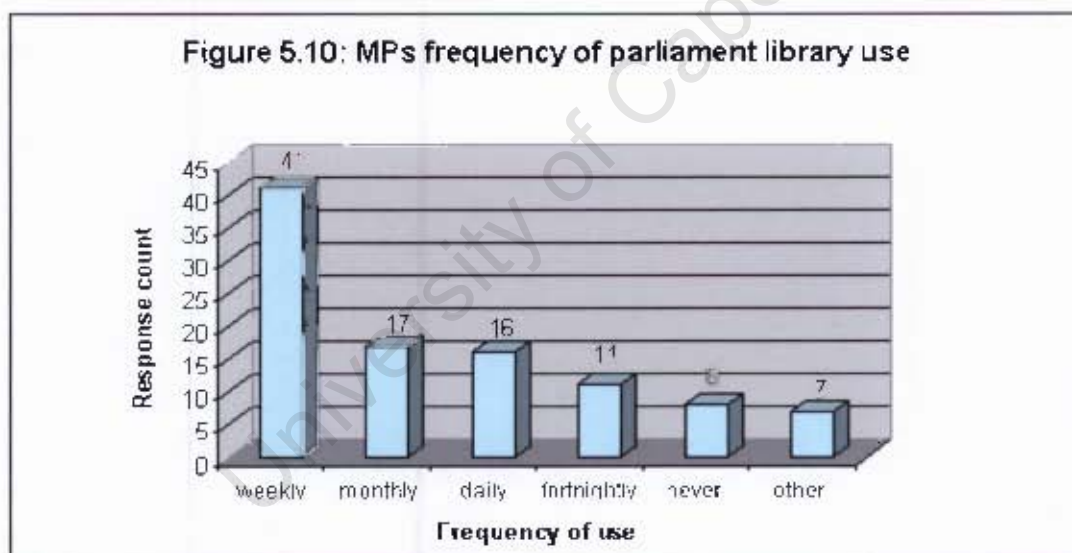
Since 41% of the respondents indicated that they use the parliament library at least weekly, this number could have been higher if the MPs had enough time at their disposal to use the library. Most of those who come weekly do so to borrow or return library books while those who come daily and fortnightly probably do so to read the newspapers. Most respondents (75%) also realised the importance of the parliament library in satisfying their information needs. Only a few (5%) did not see the importance of the library as it failed to satisfy their needs. Some of the instances when MPs would not be satisfied with the library service would be when they needed something from the library and it was not available but would only be available when it was no more needed. This shows the importance of providing information timeously when it is needed because if it comes late, it is no more regarded as useful. Gabriel (2000: 70) argues that it is important to ask an MP as to when s/he would require information so that information is not provided later than it has been required. He argues that,

Information which is required five minutes too late is useless, it is too late. If it is five minutes after the member has stood up in the Assembly to debate on a Bill, the information is useless (Gabriel, 2000: 70).

Those who indicated that they do not use the library said that they do not do so because of the time factor. They are always under pressure to do other parliamentary duties hence do not have the time to go to the library. Others said that the library

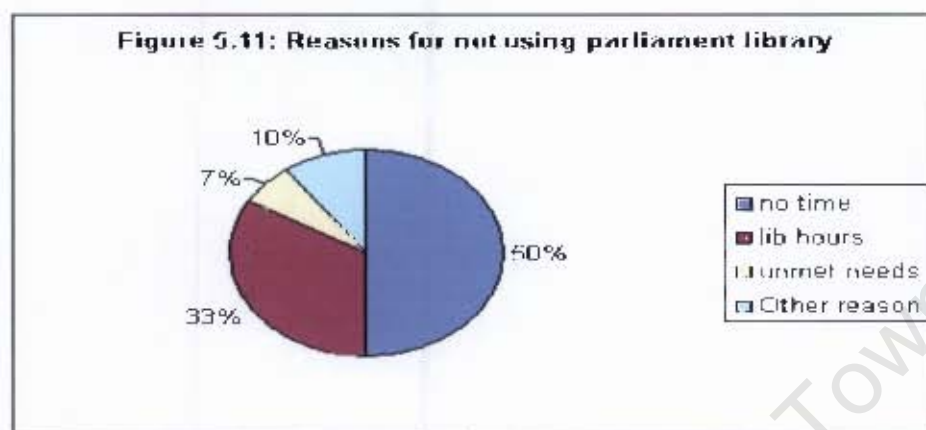
opening hours are inconvenient for them as the library is opened at the time when the parliament is in session, while others pointed out that they once used the library but it does not meet their needs.

Those who still find the time to use the library indicated that they use it mostly to get current information mainly through reading newspapers and asking the library staff to retrieve information for them from the Internet. MPs also use the parliament library to do research and borrow library books. Frequently used information sources are books, government publications, newspapers and the Internet. Dictionaries, encyclopaedias, corporate reports and surveys are still used but to a lesser extent as compared to the first four sources mentioned above.



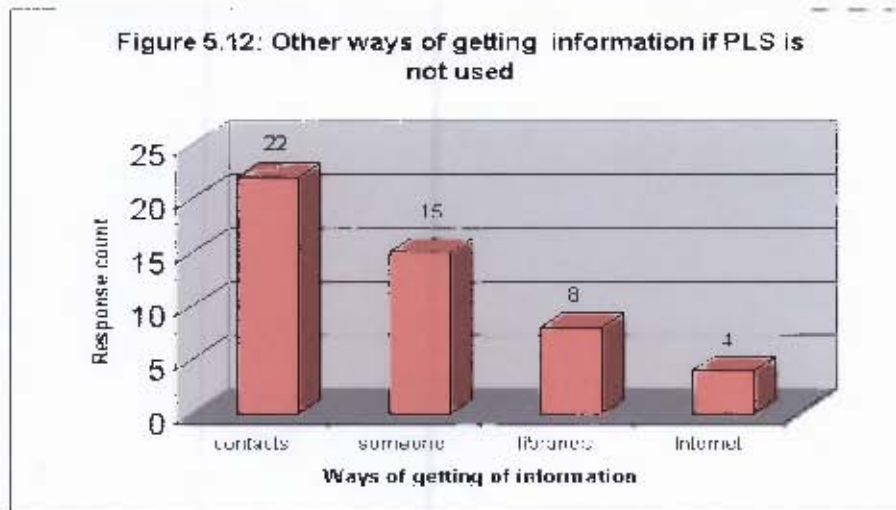
Question 15 asked the respondents who ticked “never” in question number 14 to indicate their reasons for not using the parliament library service. Some of the respondents who ticked other frequencies except for “never” still answered this question because they said that even though they use the library, they are sometimes faced with the problems listed under question number 15. Only 30 respondents answered this question. According to the results as illustrated in Figure 5.11, out of 30

respondents, 15 (50%) of them said they do not use the parliament library service because they do not have the time, 10 (33%) said it is because of inconvenient opening library hours, three (10%) indicated other reasons which were not disclosed while two (7%) said it is because the library does not meet their needs.

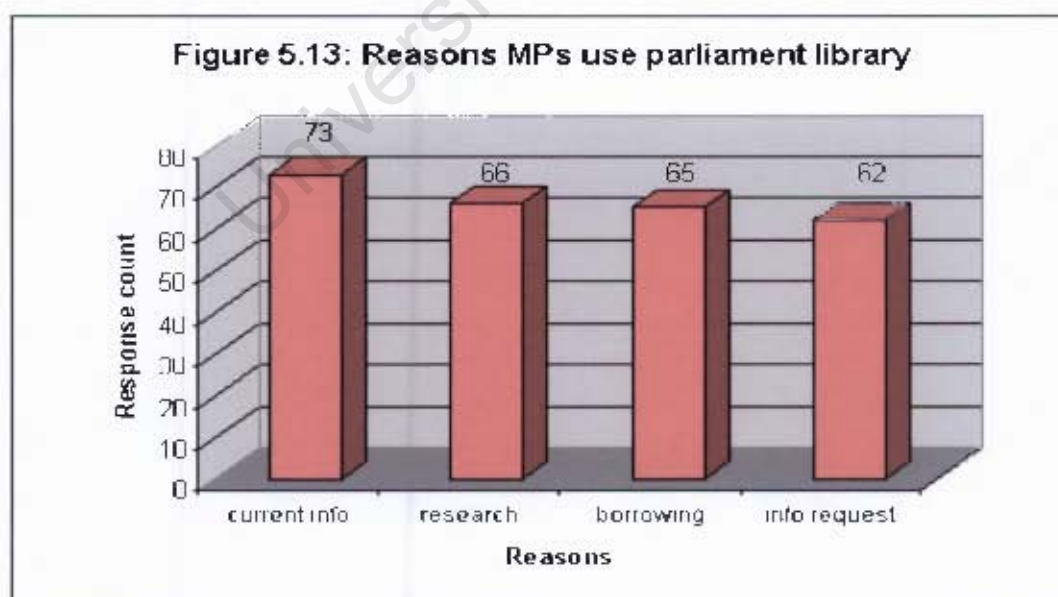


Question 16 further asked the respondents to say how they find information if they do not use the parliament library service. As Figure 5.12 (See Page 81) shows, only 49 respondents answered the question. Twenty-two (45%) of them said they use their own contacts, 15 (31%) said they use someone else to get information for them, eight (16%) said they use other libraries and four (8%) said they use the Internet.

The trend below as shown in Figure 5.12 also confirms that MPs use other people most to get information than other information providers such as libraries and the Internet. Other libraries used besides parliament libraries were the National Library, UN Library and Transformation Resource Centre.

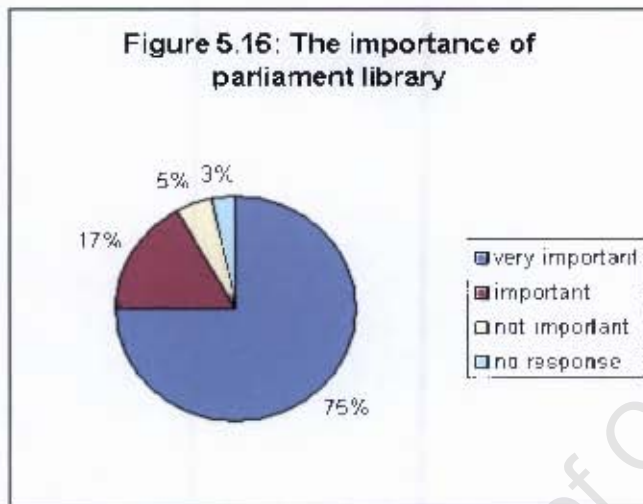


Question 17 asked the respondents what they use the parliament library for. The respondents were given the opportunity to tick more than one option if necessary. According to Figure 5.13 73% said they use it for current information such as newspaper reading, 66% said they use it for research on legislative matters, 65% said they use it for book borrowing while 62% said they use it for Internet information requests.



5.6.3. MPs' views about PLS

Question 20 sought the respondents' opinions on the level of importance they attach to the parliament library service in satisfying their information needs. According to Figure 5.16 most respondents (75%) said the parliament library service is very important, while 17% said it is important. Only 5% said it is not important and 3% did not respond to the question.



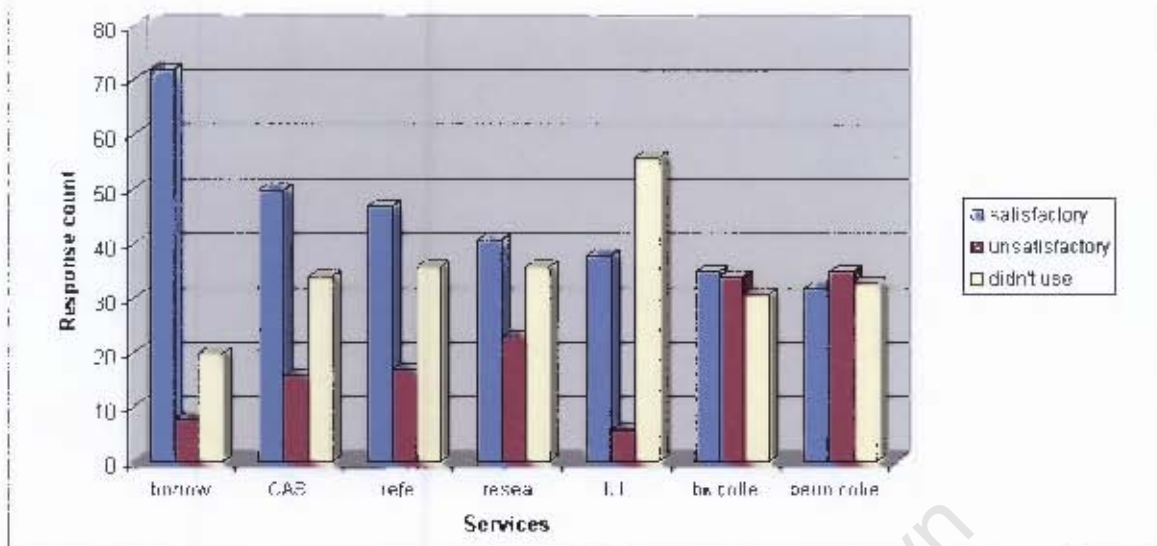
Question 21 asked the respondents to give their opinions about the parliament library services. As Figure 5.17 (See Page 84) shows, out of 80 respondents who used the book borrowing service, most (72 or 90%) were satisfied, while only 8 (10%) said they were not satisfied with the service. The next most heavily used service was the CAS (Current Awareness Service). Of the 66 respondents who used it, 50 (76%) were satisfied, while only 16 (24%) were not satisfied. Of the 64 who used the reference service, 47 (73%) were satisfied and 27% were not satisfied with the service. Sixty-four respondents indicated having used the research service and 64% said they were satisfied while 36% expressed dissatisfaction. Of the 44 respondents who used the Interlibrary Loan service (ILL), 38 (86%) were satisfied and 14% were not satisfied. The book collection was viewed as satisfactory by 51% while 49% showed

dissatisfaction. The periodicals collection was used by 67 respondents and was regarded as unsatisfactory by most respondents (52%), while only 48% were satisfied.

When probed further in the interview why they were not satisfied with some library services, the respondents indicated that they were not happy with the Current Awareness Service because the library does not subscribe to enough continental and international periodicals as indicated in Figure 5.7 (See Page 72) and Figure 5.8 (See Page 74) where they indicated their wish that such periodicals be added to the library's collection. This goes for reference materials as well where the respondents indicated that at times when they need some reference material such as the up-to-date dictionaries, encyclopaedia and various countries' facts books, they often did not get them as the library only has the outdated ones. As for research, they complained that the library does not have enough staff to deal with the required research services for MPs. In Lesotho, the library service is only manned by three personnel who are providing library service as well as limited research service due to their small number. This issue was also raised under Question 24 where 51% of the respondents indicated that the library is inadequately staffed.

There were also appeals that both the book collection and periodical collection be increased. However, it was found that some MPs require the library to purchase books in line with their personal interests such as those relating to their courses of study or their children's. In this case the library has to have a clear collection policy with guidelines clearly indicating what books can be bought and which ones can be excluded depending on the nature of the parliament work which shapes the information needs of the MPs.

Figure 5.17: Opinions on parliament library services

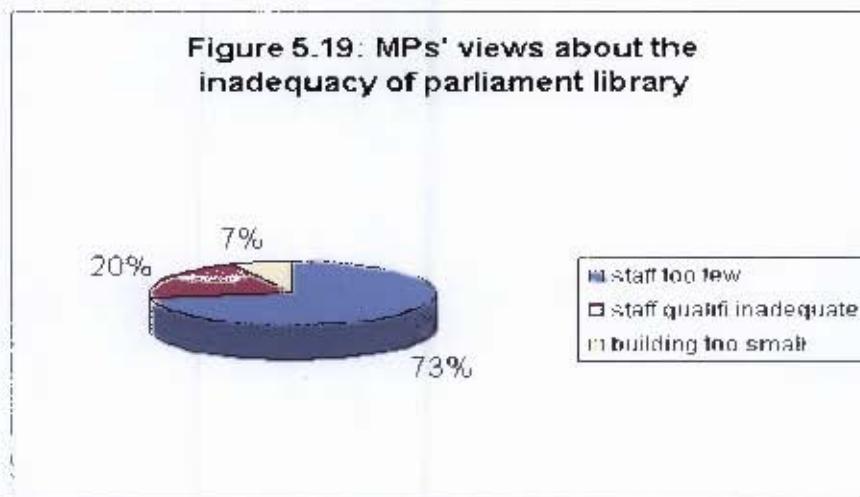


Question 23 sought the respondents' satisfaction with the parliament library service. Forty-six percent (46%) of the respondents were extremely satisfied, while 28% were just neutral and 14% were very dissatisfied.

Question 24 sought the respondents' opinions on how well staffed they think the parliament library is. According to the findings, 92 respondents answered this question and 47 (51%) of them thought the library is inadequately staffed while 45 (49%) said it is adequately staffed.

Question 25 asked respondents who had answered that the library is not adequately staffed in question 24 to state reasons for their answer. Only forty-four (44) respondents answered this question. According to Figure 5.19 (See Page 85), 32 of the respondents who comprised 73%, indicated that the staff is too few to serve the current large number of the MPs. Nine (20%) said the staff lack adequate professional qualifications to provide a professional service required by the MPs. Three (7%) said the library building is too small to accommodate the required number of staff. It is

worth mentioning that three of the respondents declined to answer this question even though they had indicated that the library is not well staffed in the previous question.

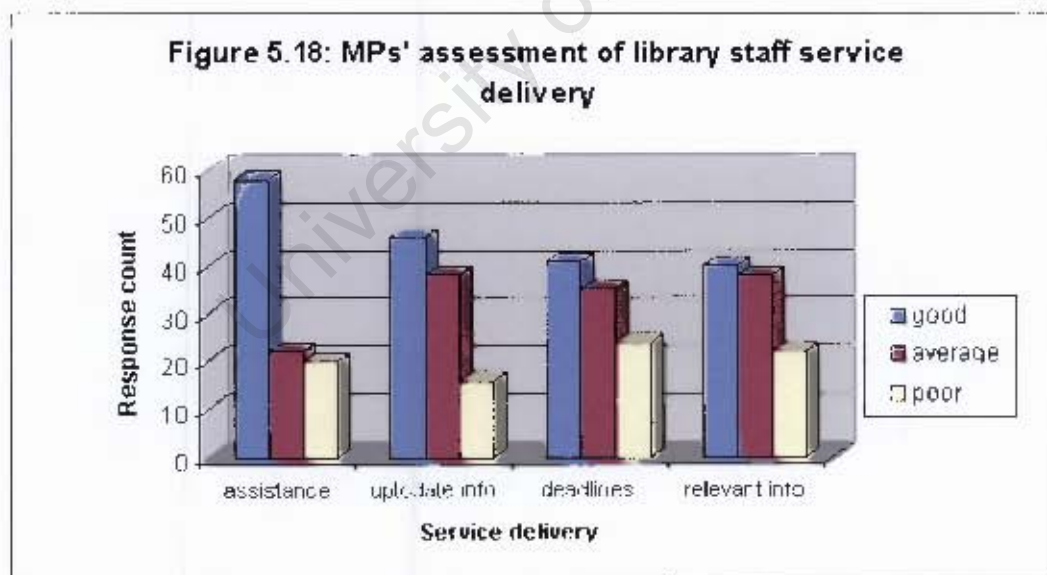


5.6.4. MPs' views about PLS staff

Question 22 asked the respondents to rate the parliament library staff based on the following categories: "good", "average", and "poor". According to Figure 5.18 (See Page 86), most respondents (58%) said the assistance provided by staff is good, 22% said it is average while only 20% said it is poor. On providing up-to-date information, 46% of the respondents said the service is good, 38% said it is average and 16% said it is poor. In meeting the deadlines, the parliament library staff was viewed as good by 41% while 35% said they are average and 24% said they are poor. On providing relevant information, the staff were rated as good by 40% while 38% thought staff does this at an average level and 22% said the staff output is poor in this regard.

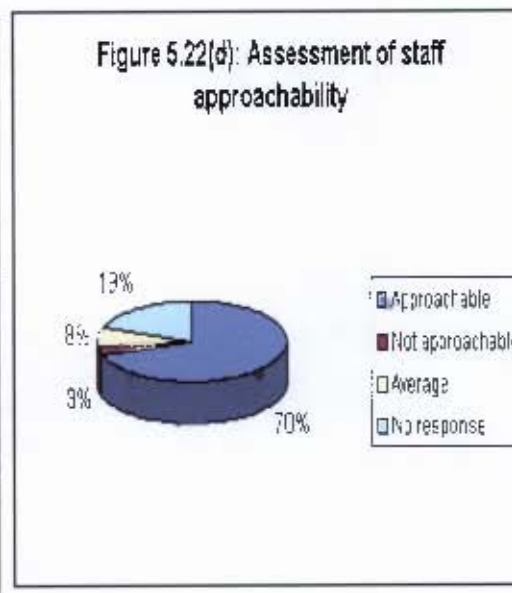
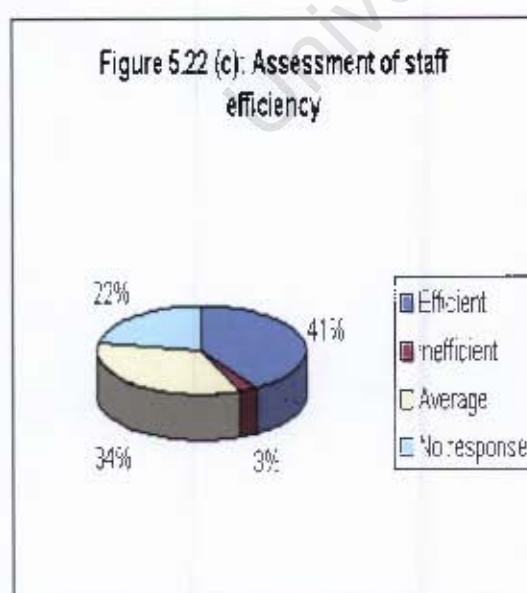
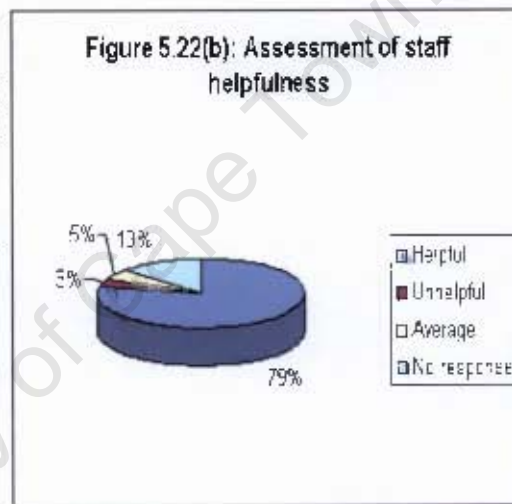
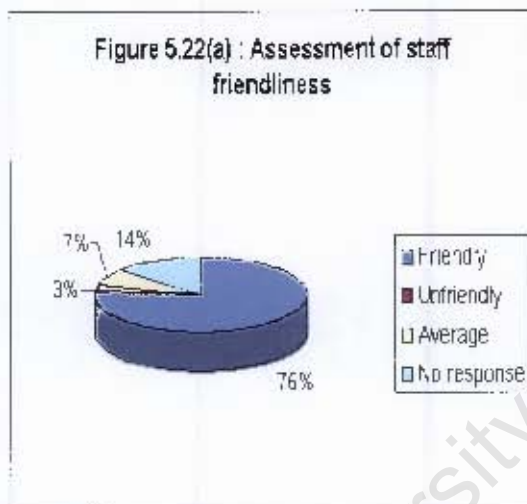
The picture depicted by Figure 5.18 on page 86 shows that much needs to be done to improve the library service delivery as the diagram shows that although MPs are satisfied with the assistance of library staff, the efficiency might not be that good. This therefore calls for the library to work towards improving the most important

elements that mark the parliament library's efficiency which are provision of relevant up-to-date information at the time when it is needed and not after. A different observation was made in the study which was carried out in the UK by Serema (1999) where it was found that MPs there regarded the library as a useful tool in addressing their information needs given its speedy delivery of services, accuracy of information it provides and its helpfulness in supporting the work of parliamentarians. Even though it has been argued earlier that the Lesotho Parliament Library needs to improve its service delivery, it is anticipated that it can only succeed if it has enough financial and qualified human resources to execute its operations. Therefore it is up to the parliament's management as a whole to fully support library operations through ensuring that the staff have all the necessary resources to efficiently carry out their duties. Library space should also be considered and extended to make it more comfortable for both staff and users.



Question 28 sought the respondents' opinions pertaining to the conduct of Parliament library staff in relation to the following attributes: "friendliness", "helpfulness", "efficiency" and "approachability". According to Figure 5.22(a) (See Page 87), most

respondents (76%) said the staff is friendly as opposed to only 3% who said the staff is unhelpful. Fourteen percent (14%) did not give their views to the question. Figure 5.22(b) shows that most respondents (79%) viewed the library staff as helpful, while only 3% said the staff is unfriendly. When asked about staff efficiency, as illustrated in Figure 5.22(c) only 41% of the respondents said the staff is efficient, 3% said the staff is inefficient and 34% said the staff efficiency is average. As shown in Figure 5.22(d) most respondents (70%) felt the staff is approachable while only 3% said the staff is not easy to approach.



5.6.5. Recommendations on improving PLS

In question 26, the respondents were asked to state new services which they would like to see in the parliament library. This question was answered by 36 respondents. As illustrated in Table 5.20 most respondents (24; 67%) were of the view that the library should provide direct Internet access and training for MPs. Fourteen percent (14%) felt that the library collection should be increased giving room for various other subjects which are currently not available as indicated in Table 5.21 (See Page 90). Introduction of audio-visual service and establishment of proper research service were suggested by 6% of the respondents each. The improvement and development of current awareness service, acquisition of all government gazettes of Lesotho were recommended by 3% each. One respondent (3%) said that he/she is satisfied with the current service.

Table 5.20: Respondents' suggestions on new services for the library

New services required	Response count	Percentage
Direct Internet access and training for MPs.	24	67%
Library collection should be increased.	5	14%
Introduce audio-visual service	2	6%
Establish research service in the library	2	6%
Current awareness service should be improved	1	3%
All government gazettes should be made available.	1	3%
I am satisfied with the current library service	1	3%
TOTAL	36	100%

Question 27 asked the respondents to suggest book titles or/and journal titles that they would like to see in the Parliament library. Table 5.21 (See Page 90) depicts the results.

It is strange that in the suggested titles list there are titles which are already in the library but some respondents felt that those should be added to the library collection. Those titles are Parliament practice and procedure, Parliamentarian and Business Day. This therefore shows that the library should increase its capacity in informing MPs about its services as well as new books in the library. It seems that there are some MPs who want to use the parliament library to meet extramural interests when they suggest topics such as Social Work and Shakespeare Literature. This clearly indicates that some MPs who are still pursuing their studies would like the library to buy books which are in line with the former's areas of study. This therefore calls for the library to have a clear written collection development policy which clearly shows the kind of books the library can have in its collection and those it cannot add to its collection. With this policy, it will be easy for library staff to say no to MPs' demands which do not fall within the scope of parliament library collection. It will also be easy for the library to know what donations to accept and which ones to give away to the National Library or school libraries.

Table 5.21: Suggested book titles/information sources

Book titles, newspaper and journal titles

1. Win elections by Henry Taylor
2. Obedience to law
3. Cry the beloved country
4. Parliamentary procedure and practice
5. Democracy and political tolerance by Jabu Pheko
6. Parliamentarian (N=2)
7. Africa must unite by Kwame Nkurumah
8. Rhodesian file by Kwame Nkurumah
9. Great leader of the people by Kil Lim Sung
10. Business Day
11. Economist
12. Prophets of honour

Topics

1. Gender mainstreaming
2. Fight against HIV/AIDS (N=3)
3. Development studies
4. Social work (N=2)
5. Science and technology
6. Globalisation
7. Parliament and politics
8. Politics of least developed countries
9. Literature by Shakespeare
10. Sesotho literature

Other information sources

1. More current survey reports
2. Statistical reports in different spheres such as health, education, agriculture and so on.
3. Encyclopaedia Britannica set (latest edition)
4. Large wall map of Africa

*If there is no other indication, this means that the titles/topics were suggested by one respondent.

The last question on the questionnaire, which is question 29, asked the respondents to add their comments and suggestions pertaining to their information needs. Twenty-four respondents (24%) responded to this question. After going through all the questionnaires, the researcher identified similar responses and grouped them together. The responses are listed below.

Suggestions/comments pertaining to the library service

- Suitable modern parliament library building which is spacious enough to accommodate maximum number of information seekers and resources is needed.
- Library resources should be properly and professionally organised for fast and easy retrieval.
- Library should remain open during weekends, public holidays and late at night since MPs do not often have the time to use the library when the parliament is in session.
- Lesotho parliament website is urgently needed to enhance communication and information sharing both nationally and internationally.
- Modernised computerised catalogue is needed to support storing and searching of library records.
- The library should put more effort into advertising its services as well as attracting non-users.
- Greater use of information technology tools should be embraced.

Suggestions/comments pertaining to the library staff

- Staff should be trained and attached to other parliaments to acquire the necessary skills.
- Working conditions of staff should be improved to compensate for long working hours so as to increase staff morale and efficiency.

5.7. Chapter summary

This chapter presented the findings and interpretations in terms of the results gathered from the respondents. Graphs and tables have been used to present data so that it becomes easy to read and understand. This was achieved through the use of Microsoft Excel computer programme.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Introduction

As has been indicated in the first chapter of this report, the aim of this study was to investigate the information needs and information seeking behaviour of the Members of Parliament (MPs) of Lesotho. In order to achieve this, questionnaires and interviews were used by the researcher to gather information from subjects under study who were Lesotho MPs. This chapter presents the conclusions and suggestions based on the findings of the study shown through questionnaire responses and follow-up interviews.

6.2. MPs' Understanding of Information

The MPs of the parliament of Lesotho do understand what information is and realise its importance since they have shown that they require and search for information to help them deal with their parliament work such as during debates, when preparing to attend conferences, workshops and seminars. They also indicated that they read newspapers and watch television to broaden their knowledge in general, and also to stay up to date with what is going on world wide.

6.3. MPs' Information Needs

Similar to other research findings, MPs of the parliament of Lesotho need information when dealing with various issues. As pointed out by Honourable Paul Rantau when responding to Thapisa's presentation at the Southern Africa Regional Information and Research Network for Members of Parliament Workshop to Explore Needs and Options in Harare in 1995, MPs need all kinds of information sources, be it research documents or news media. However, MPs should be able to get only what is relevant

to them out of the whole array of information. That is, information that will be helpful to MPs before they table their motions or questions before the house (Thapisa, 1996: 275). To this effect, the parliamentary library should be in the position to assist MPs with their information requirements accordingly. Not only those who come to the library to seek information should be helped, the library should take it upon itself to find out even the non users of the library, find out why they do not use the library and devise means of helping them out.

6.4. MPs' information-seeking behaviour

Similar to other studies such as the one carried in Botswana, in Lesotho, amongst other means of getting information, such as libraries, media and others, MPs also use personal contacts to get information. They talk to their fellow parliamentarians, they go to government ministries and ask civil servants and they also consult their constituents for information. Mchombu (2000a: 64) argues that people often find it convenient to use colleagues and other people as a source of information rather than spending a lot of time searching for information in printed materials. However, at times MPs seem to use personal contacts more than other information providers such as libraries. One explanation for this behaviour could be that MPs are at times faced with intellectual barriers as pointed out in Chapter 2, as some of the MPs might not approach the library service because it offers information which is written in English which the MP might not be able to understand. Furthermore at the Lesotho parliament specifically, MPs reported that they are often not able to use the parliament library as much as they would want to because of unsuitable opening hours. The parliament library is only open during the week at the same time the parliament is in session. This therefore leaves the MPs with little or no time to use it.

The lack of advanced information and communication technologies in Lesotho parliament makes it difficult for MPs to access library holdings remotely using the intranet or the Internet. MPs in the UK House of Commons for instance, do not necessarily need to go to the library to get information, they just log on to the library's site, access and download the required information. They are better able to do this because they have the required resources and skills to search and access information using their own laptops.

Moreover, Lesotho MPs unlike in other parliaments like House of Commons and South Africa do not have their own staff and researchers to get information for them. They find information themselves. Aiyepuku (1982: 204) argues that MPs especially in poor African countries are often not able to access the information they want because of illiteracy and also that information is often only available in English which is a second or a third language to some.

As has been said earlier, MPs require information which has been repackaged for them in the form of summaries, reports and interpretations because due to the nature of their job, they do not have time to search for information. However, this is not practised in the parliament of Lesotho probably due to the fact that there are only three personnel manning the library of which only two are professional librarians.

6.5. Information Sources that MPs Use to Get Information

Besides using personal contacts to get information, MPs also get information from the library of parliament. They read newspapers, request information from the Internet and borrow and read books. They read both local and international newspapers and periodicals. They have also shown keen interest in some newspapers, journals and

magazines that the library currently does not subscribe to. Such information sources are as follows:

Newspapers

City Press

Mail and Guardian

MoAfrika

Mololi

Mopheme

New York Times

Nonyana

Public Eye

Sowetan

Periodicals

Africa News

Financial Times

Guardian UK

South African Economist

Time Magazine

Other information sources were as they appear in Chapter Five under Figure 5.21 which consist of book titles, topics and other information materials such as different kinds of reports, encyclopaedias and maps. This therefore calls for the library of parliament to consider adding the above mentioned required information sources to its collection. Fortunately at the time of writing this report, plans were already under way

to acquire both a television set and the video machine to expand library information services.

6.6. MPs' Perceptions and Use of the Parliament Library

MPs see the parliament library as important and useful especially in their parliamentary work. Even though the library staff is helpful, MPs argue that the number of staff should be increased as they are currently too few to effectively serve the large number of MPs. For instance, the New Zealand parliament has almost the same number of Lesotho National Assembly MPs. However, in New Zealand, there are two MPs to one staff member, while in Lesotho the number of MPs (National Assembly) to one staff member is fifty. Other problems which have been identified that need to be rectified to make the library much more effective in its service delivery are as follows: some information materials are not available when required, the library space is too small, library opening hours are not convenient for MPs' use of the library.

6.7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions that have been made above, the next section gives some of the suggestions and recommendations to enhance the efficiency of the library of parliament of the kingdom of Lesotho. The recommendations are as follows;

1. Research service should be established within library and information service so that MPs' information needs that need intensive and comprehensive searches can be appropriately dealt with by researchers with adequate and appropriate subject speciality and expertise in to name but a few, Economics, Politics, Law, and Statistics. The parliamentary researcher has already been

appointed and what needs to be done is to increase the number of researchers who can deal with specific subject areas. The library and research services are inseparable in parliament setting since MPs' information needs vary and at times require more than just locating a known information source but a thorough research which can take not just a few hours but even days.

2. Periodical user needs assessment is required to determine changing needs.
3. Staff members should be increased in sufficient numbers to effectively meet MPs' information needs. For instance, in New Zealand parliament, the number of MPs is equal to that of Lesotho Parliament National Assembly (120) and the library has over 50 staff members. The ratio is therefore 1:2 as opposed to Lesotho's which stands at 1:50 while in South Africa it is 1:9. Library staff should also be continuously trained formally by way of being exposed to short courses and attachments to other legislative libraries to develop their capacity in effectively dealing with user needs.
4. Library opening hours should be extended to go beyond 5:00 pm and during lunchtime, public holidays and weekends to enable MPs to use services even after parliament sittings. Findings have shown that MPs do not fully utilize the library services because they do not have time due to awkward opening hours.
5. More library stock should be acquired, especially journals and other periodicals dealing with politics, law and other parliamentary issues.
6. Library catalogue should be computerized for easy and faster access, searching and retrieval of material.

7. Library building should be extended to house the growing collection as well as making users comfortable when using the library.
8. Library committee should be established to work with library staff to control and reprimand those who abuse the service, such as making those who lose library books replace or pay them. This committee could also assist with library policy and library development. The committee is operating successfully in the House of Commons Library (House of Commons Information Office, 2000).
9. Continuous training for library staff and MPs especially in IT applications is required. Library staff could also be utilised to teach MPs and other parliament staff on IT applications once the former have been trained.
10. Each and every document distributed to the MPs should at least be made available in the library. This kind of information is important as it usually comes in a form of bills, regulations, statements made by Prime Minister or Ministers in the house and many other parliament-related documents.
11. Each and every gazette published by the Government Printer should be made available in the library.

It remains true that some of the above suggestions will require a lot of money to implement whereas some can be dealt with using the available resources. For instance, for recommendations 1, 3 and 4 additional staff would be required for their implementation. This therefore calls for the parliament management to request additional staffing for the library from the Public Service Commission which is the

one that deals with government personnel recruitment. Recommendation 2 does not require any financial resources to be implemented, it just requires an additional task from the current library staff. For recommendations 5, 6 and 9, the library staff will need to consider these requirements in the next budget allocation. For recommendation 7, the issue is already on the table for parliament management to make use of other available accommodation so that the library can be extended. For recommendations 10 and 11, team work and smooth communication lines between the Clerks of the two houses and the library need to be strengthened so that it can be accomplished. The Clerks as the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the two houses can see to it that the library gets and stores all the documents that the parliament receives.

6.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter finally draws conclusions and further outlines recommendations based on the findings of the study looking at the questions that the study wanted to answer. It concludes the study by showing specifically what the information needs of the MPs of the Lesotho parliament are as well as their information-seeking behaviour.

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**APPENDIX A: LETTERS TO THE CLERKS REQUESTING
PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES**

University of Crime Town

The University of Cape Town
Department of Information
& Library Science
Private Bag
Rondebosch
7701

22 May, 2002

The Clerk of National Assembly
Parliament Building
P.O. BOX 190
Maseru 100

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES TO MPs

I am a Masters student in Information and Library Science at the University of Cape Town. I am currently conducting a study on *Investigating information needs and information-seeking behaviour of the Members of Parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho*.

I kindly request your permission to administer questionnaires to honourable members as well as to a few selected parliament staff during the month of September 2002 in order to get data for my study. I believe the parliament of Lesotho as a whole will benefit from the findings of this study in an effort to improve the service delivery of the library of parliament in addressing MPs' information and research needs. Once completed, a copy of this research study will be made available in the library of parliament.

I trust you find this order sir.

Yours faithfully

Theresa Lithebe

**Cc: President of the Senate
Speaker of the National Assembly**

The University of Cape Town
Department of Information
& Library Science
Private Bag
Rondebosch
7701

22 May, 2002

Clerk of the Senate
Senate Offices
P.O. BOX 553
Maseru 100

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES TO MPs

I am a Masters student in Information and Library Science at the University of Cape Town. I am currently conducting a study on *Investigating information needs and information-seeking behaviour of the Members of Parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho*.

I kindly request your permission to administer questionnaires to honourable Senators as well as to a few selected Senate staff during the month of September 2002 in order to get data for my study. I believe the parliament of Lesotho as a whole will benefit from the findings of this study in an effort to improve the service delivery of the library of parliament in addressing MPs' information and research needs. Once completed, a copy of this research study will be made available in the library of parliament.

I trust you find this order sir.

Yours faithfully

Theresa Lithebe

**Cc: President of the Senate
Speaker of the National Assembly**

APPENDIX B: PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Cape Town

Pilot Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below as honestly as you can. The information you will provide will be used for nothing other than for the purpose of my academic studies in Information and Library Studies at the University of Cape Town. The information is needed for my study on investigating the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of the Members of Parliament of Lesotho. This information will be treated with all the confidentiality that it deserves. Please try to provide as much information as you can. You can even use the back of the page if you need more space. Thank you.

1. Your name and party you belong to.....
.....
2. Are you a member of the House of Representatives (National Assembly) or Senate?.....
3. For how long have you been a Member of the House?.....
4. What is your highest educational qualification?.....
5. What do you think constitute sources of information?
(please give as many sources as possible)

.....
.....
.....

6. When do you normally require information?
(please state as many instances as possible)

.....
.....
.....

7. Where do you normally go in search of information related to your work?
(please state as many places/sources as possible)

.....
.....
.....

8. Do you regard information found in newspapers important to your work? If yes what do you use that information for?.....

.....
.....

9. What newspapers do you read and find useful in your work?
(please state as many as possible)

.....
.....
.....

10. What periodicals do you read and find useful for your work?
(please state as many as possible)

.....
.....
.....

11. How do you usually search for information?.....

.....
.....

12. How often do you use the parliament library e.g daily, or monthly or fortnightly?

13. If you never used parliament library, why is that so?

.....
.....
.....

14. If you never use parliament library how do you get information to assist you in your work?.....

.....
.....

15. If you use the parliament library what do you use it for?.....

.....
.....

16. In which information sources do you usually find information you require?
(please list as many as possible).

.....
.....
.....

17. In what subject matters do you usually seek information?
(please list as many as possible).

.....
.....
.....

18. What is your opinion of the parliament library service in meeting your information and research needs?.....
.....
.....

19. What new services would you like to see in the parliament library?
.....
.....
.....

20. What specific book titles and journal titles do you want to see added in the parliament library?.....
.....
.....

21. Do you have any other comments in relation to this study?.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX C: MP'S QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Cape Town

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND LIBRARY
SCIENCE**

(Questionnaire for MPs/Senators)

Investigating information needs and information seeking behaviour of the Members of Parliament: the case of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Introduction

My name is Theresa Lithebe, a Masters student in Information and Library Science at the University of Cape Town. The questionnaire attached will be used for my research project on investigating Lesotho MPs' information needs and information seeking behaviour under the supervision of Professor Nassimbeni.

Please answer the questions that appear at the back of this page as frankly and honestly as you are able because the information you provide will be solely used towards improving the parliament library service for your information needs.

After completing the questionnaire, please hand it to the person who gave it to you or to the Library of Parliament on or before **Friday, 13th September 2002.**
December

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR DEDICATING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME TO ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

To answer the questions please use a tick (✓) in the box provided next to the option, which most closely reflects your opinion. You may tick more than one option for some questions.

1. Gender

- (a) Female
- (b) Male

2. Age

- (a) 18 to 30
- (b) 31 to 40
- (c) 41 to 50
- (d) 51 to 60
- (e) 61 to 70
- (f) Above 70

3. Are you a ...

- (a) Member of Parliament (MP)
- (b) Senator

4. Length of service as a Member of Parliament (MP) or Senator

- (a) Less than one year
- (b) More than one year

5. Highest educational qualification:

6. Which of the following in your opinion constitute sources of information?

(Please tick as many as you wish)

- (a) All published materials
- (b) All items in newspapers, radio and television
- (c) All items in government publications, circulars, reports and pamphlets
- (d) All discussions at meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops
- (e) Electronic resources (e.g. CD-ROMs, the Internet)
- (f) Any other (please specify) _____
-
-

7. When do you normally require information? (Please tick as many as you wish)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| (a) When preparing for parliament speeches, debates and questions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) When planning or making legislative decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) When preparing answers for enquiries from constituents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) When preparing speeches for constituency gatherings or other official gatherings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) When doing statistical or data analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (f) When involved in parliamentary committees' activities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (g) When preparing for conferences, workshops and seminars | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (h) When preparing to visit other countries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (i) Any other (please specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. Where do you go to in search of information related to your work? (Please choose one answer for each category)

- | | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Parliament Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) National Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Government ministries | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) National University of Lesotho Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) Consult other people (e.g. Lawyers, Teachers, fellow MPs) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (f) Search the Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (g) Any other (please specify) _____ | | | |

9. Do you regard information in newspapers important to your work?

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------|
| (a) Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. If yes how do you rate the following information sources in your work? (Please choose one answer from each of the following categories.)

- | | Important | Not important | Unsure |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Moeletsi oa Basotho | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Nonyana | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Moafrika | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Leselinyana | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) Lentsoe la Basotho | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (f) Public Eye | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (g) Mopheme | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (h) Hansard | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (i) The Star | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (j) Business Day | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (k) Sowetan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (l) Saturday Star | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (m) Sunday Times | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (n) City Press | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (o) Radio, Television | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (p) Any other (please specify) _____ | | | |

11. How important are the following in your work? (Please answer for each category)

	Important	Not important	Unsure
(a) Guardian UK	[]	[]	[]
(b) New York Times	[]	[]	[]
(c) Africa News	[]	[]	[]
(d) Times Magazine	[]	[]	[]
(e) South Africa Economist	[]	[]	[]
(f) Financial Times	[]	[]	[]
(g) Parliamentary	[]	[]	[]
(h) Other (please specify) _____			

12. How do you usually search for information? (Please answer for each category)

	Often	Sometimes	Never
(a) Ask parliament librarian	[]	[]	[]
(b) Personal search in the library	[]	[]	[]
(c) Personal assistant searches for you	[]	[]	[]
(d) Telephone enquiry to the Parliament Library	[]	[]	[]
(e) Other (please specify) _____			

13. Are you aware of the Parliament Library service?

- (a) Yes []
(b) No []

14. How often do you use the Parliament Library?

- (a) Daily []
(b) Weekly []
(c) Fortnightly []
(d) Monthly []
(e) Never []
(f) Any other frequency not specified above (Please specify) _____

15. If you answered "never" in question (14) above, what is your reason for not using the Parliament Library?

- (a) Do not have the time []
(b) Inconvenient opening library hours []
(c) Library does not meet my needs []
(d) Other reason (please specify) _____

16. If you do not use the Parliament Library service, how do you find information to assist you in your work?

- (a) Use own contacts []
(b) Use the Internet []
(c) Use someone to get information for you []
(d) Use other library/s (Please specify) _____
(e) Other (Please specify) _____

17. What do you use the Parliament Library for? **(Please tick as many as you wish)**

- (a) Book borrowing
- (b) Current information (e.g newspaper reading)
- (c) Internet information request
- (d) Research on legislative matters
- (e) Other (Please specify) _____

18. In what sources do you usually find information you require? **(Please tick as many as you wish)**

- (a) Books
- (b) Company reports
- (c) Government publications (for example, annual reports)
- (d) Dictionaries and encyclopedias
- (e) the Internet
- (f) Newspapers
- (g) Surveys
- (h) Other (Please specify) _____

19. On which subjects do you require information?

	Very often	Sometimes	Hardly ever
(a) African Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Arts and culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Defence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) Foreign Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(j) Gender and youth affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(k) Government and administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(l) Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(m) HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(n) Home affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(o) Human resource development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(p) Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(q) Law and justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(r) Local government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(s) Mineral and energy affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(t) Politics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(v) Public service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(u) Public works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(w) Safety and security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(x) Trade and industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(y) Other (Please specify) _____			

20. How important is the Parliament Library in satisfying your information needs?

- (a) Very important
- (b) Important
- (c) Not important

21. What is your opinion of the following Parliament Library services?

(Please choose one answer from each of the following categories)

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Did not use
(a) Book borrowing service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Reference service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Interlibrary loan service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Research service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Library book collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Library periodical collection (e.g. journals, newspapers, magazines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Current awareness service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Other (Please specify) _____			

22. How do you rate the services provided by the Parliament Library in:

	Good	Average	Poor
(a) Meeting the deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Providing up-to-date information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Assistance provided by Library staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Providing relevant information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Parliament Library service? (Please use a circle on the scale below)

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely satisfied

24. How well staffed do you think the Parliament Library is?

- (a) Adequately staffed
- (b) Inadequately staffed

25. If you answered (b) in question 24 above please give reasons for your answer. _____

26. What new services would you like to see in the Parliament Library? _____

27. What specific book titles or journal titles do you think need be added in the Parliament Library?

28. How do you find Parliament Library staff? (Please choose one answer from each of the following categories)

- | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| (a) Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unfriendly | <input type="checkbox"/> | Average | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unhelpful | <input type="checkbox"/> | Average | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Efficient | <input type="checkbox"/> | Inefficient | <input type="checkbox"/> | Average | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Approachable | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not approachable | <input type="checkbox"/> | Average | <input type="checkbox"/> |

29. Please add any other comments or suggestions. _____

If you would like to discuss some more issues concerning this study with me, please provide your name and contact details below:

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!

APPENDIX D: STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Cape Town

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND LIBRARY
SCIENCE**

(Questionnaire for Presiding Officers and staff)

**Investigating information needs and information seeking behaviour
of the Members of Parliament: the case of the Parliament of the
Kingdom of Lesotho.**

Introduction

My name is Theresa Lithebe, a Masters student in Information and Library Science at the University of Cape Town. The questionnaire attached will be used for my research project on investigating Lesotho MPs' information needs and information seeking behaviour under the supervision of Professor Nassimbeni.

Please answer the questions that appear at the back of this page as frankly and honestly as you are able because the information you provide will be solely used towards improving the parliament library service for effectively meeting MPs' information needs.

After completing the questionnaire, please hand it to the person who gave it to you or to the Library of Parliament on or before ~~Friday, 13th September 2002.~~

Monday, 03rd February 2003

**THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR DEDICATING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME TO
ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!**

To answer the questions please use a tick (✓) in the box provided next to the option, which most closely reflects your opinion. You may tick more than one option for some questions.

1. Are you a
- | | |
|--|-----|
| (a) Presiding officer in the Senate | [] |
| (b) Presiding officer in the National Assembly | [] |
| (c) Staff member in the Senate | [] |
| (d) Staff member in the National Assembly | [] |
2. When do you think the MPs/Senators require information? (Please tick as many as you wish)
- | | |
|--|-----|
| (a) When preparing for parliament speeches, debates and questions | [] |
| (b) When planning or making legislative decisions | [] |
| (c) When preparing answers for enquiries from constituents | [] |
| (d) When preparing speeches for constituency gatherings or other official gatherings | [] |
| (e) When doing statistical or data analysis | [] |
| (f) When involved in parliamentary committees' activities | [] |
| (g) When preparing for conferences, workshops and seminars | [] |
| (h) When preparing to visit other countries | [] |
| (i) Any other (please specify) _____ | [] |

3. Do you think information in newspapers is important in MPs/Senators' work?
- | | |
|---------|-----|
| (a) Yes | [] |
| (b) No | [] |

4. If yes how do you rate the following information sources in MPs/Senators' work?
(Please choose one answer from each of the following categories.)

	Important	Not important	Unsure
(a) Moeletsi oa Basotho	[]	[]	[]
(b) Nonyana	[]	[]	[]
(c) Moafrika	[]	[]	[]
(d) Leselinyana	[]	[]	[]
(e) Lentsoe la Basotho	[]	[]	[]
(f) Public Eye	[]	[]	[]
(g) Mopheme	[]	[]	[]
(h) Hansard	[]	[]	[]
(i) The Star	[]	[]	[]
(j) Business Day	[]	[]	[]
(k) Sowetan	[]	[]	[]
(l) Saturday Star	[]	[]	[]
(m) Sunday Times	[]	[]	[]
(n) City Press	[]	[]	[]
(o) Radio, Television	[]	[]	[]
(p) Any other (please specify) _____	[]	[]	[]

5. How important do you think the following are in MPs/Senators' work?

	Important	Not important	Unsure
(a) Guardian UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) New York Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Africa News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Times Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) South Africa Economist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Financial Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Parliamentarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Other (please specify) _____			

6. Which of the following information sources do you think are useful for MPs/Senator's needs? **(Please tick as many as you wish)**

(a) Books	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Company reports	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Government publications (for example, annual reports)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Dictionaries and encyclopedias	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Other (Please specify) _____	

7. On which subjects do you think MPs/Senators require information for their work?

	Very often	Sometimes	Hardly ever
(a) African Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Arts and culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Defence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) Foreign Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(j) Gender and youth affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(k) Government and administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(l) Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(m) HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(n) Home affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(o) Human resource development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(p) Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(q) Law and justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(r) Local government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(s) Mineral and energy affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(t) Politics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(v) Public service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(u) Public works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(w) Safety and security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(x) Trade and industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(y) Other (Please specify) _____			


**APPENDIX E: MEMOS TO THE CLERKS REQUESTING
PERMISSION TO RE-ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES**

University of Cape Town

MEMO

TO: Clerk to the Senate

FROM: Parliament Assistant Librarian



Theresa Lithebe

DATE: 28 January, 2003

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO RE-ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES TO HONOURABLE SENATORS

I humbly wish to announce my comeback from study leave hence have resumed my duties effectively from December 2002.

I further humbly request you to grant me permission to re-administer questionnaires to honorable Senators. During this past year I administered those questionnaires but unfortunately the response was not satisfactory, that is why I propose to administer them again as soon as the parliament re-opens. The information sought through the questionnaires will be highly useful for writing and completing my dissertation, which is not only a requirement for my studies but will also be used as a tool in the parliament library to effectively meet parliamentarians' information needs.

I have attached a copy of the questionnaire for your perusal.