AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF GOVERNMENT MINISTERIAL LIBRARIES IN MASERU, LESOTHO

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 2004

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the contents of this thesis are my own work and have not been presented, in their entirety, nor in part, to any other university for degree purposes.

Manthati M. Keta   Signed........   Date...10 AUGUST 2004

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Mampheletso Anacletta, and my late father, Serabele Solomon Michael.

ABSTRACT

The present study explores the status of government ministerial libraries in Maseru, Lesotho, with the purpose of discovering the factors which affect the growth and development of these libraries.

To provide a wider context within which to view this study literature dealing with government libraries was examined. Nineteen government ministerial libraries were chosen as a population for the study. However, only fourteen ministerial libraries were eventually surveyed. Twenty library workers were interviewed using a structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The collected information was analysed manually.

The study established that there are very few laws and regulations that govern the existence of libraries in Lesotho. The responses showed that even though there are government ministerial policies they do not accommodate libraries. The majority of these libraries do not get support from the government for library material and therefore they depend only on donations which are not adequate, most of the time, for the needs of the users. The responses also revealed that the majority of government libraries do not function in the way that fully-fledged libraries do. The library workers revealed that the educational standards of library workers in Lesotho are not satisfactory at all.

Among the staff of government libraries that were interviewed only five had a university degree, two had a university diploma and two had university certificates. It was found that some of the library services had not performed well because of one-man libraries and a lack of qualified staff. The responses from the interviews established that government ministerial libraries in Lesotho are static; they do not grow and develop largely out of a lack of recognition, a lack of interest and a lack of support from the government.

Recommendations are based on the findings of the study with the hope that they will provide a basis for properly equipped and adequately staffed library services in all ministries in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I thank my Heavenly Father who is, and has always been, with me, throughout my entire life. Thank you, Father.

My special thanks go to my supervisors, Mrs Fiona Bell and Mr Patrick Maxwell, whose untiring guidance and advice carried me through my study.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the head of the Department, Professor Christine Stilwell, the staff of the Department, Dr Patrick Ngulube and Mr Athol Leach, for their advice and Mrs Darlene Holtz, for her administrative assistance.

My grateful thanks go to the staff of the main library of the Pietermaritzburg campus, especially Mrs Jenny Aitchison and Mrs Renee Damonse.

My thanks also go to Lefuma Sejane and Rose Makoae, for typing my work.

I would also like to thank Mr Richard Bell for editing my work.

My special gratitude also goes to my family, my husband Calvin, my daughter Nthati, her husband Cliff and the new addition to the Keta clan, Naledi Ewere. Thank you for the support and encouragement you gave me throughout my studies.

I would not be doing justice to this study if I did not thank the government of Lesotho for sponsoring me.

Molimo U boloke Lesotho Le Basotho!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASLIB	Association for Information Management
CAS	Current Awareness Service
CD	Compact Disc
COSC	Cambridge Overseas Senior Certificate
GILS	Government Information Locator Service
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILL	Inter-Library Loans
JC	Junior Certificate
LASA	Lesotho Agricultural Sector Agency
LDTC	Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
LENA	Lesotho News Agency
LIPAM	Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management
LLA	Lesotho Library Association
NHTC	National Health Training College
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Libraries are places that store information. They are sources of knowledge and inspiration for many users. People use information in libraries for different reasons. Sindane (1994:4) believes that libraries, being sources of information, could improve their environment by making basic information more easily available and accessible. They do not need to list all the services they offer, nor offer all the services possible, but it is important to make the available services as accessible and user-friendly as possible.

According to Silungwe (1996:180), "information in libraries is a life-giving force for efficient and effective performance in all service sectors, without which both the individual and the service are at immediate disadvantage". This being the case, there is a need for a properly managed library of some kind in every service sector, in order to assist people to perform their daily duties effectively and efficiently.

Government libraries are very similar to "special libraries" and have an important role to play. In order to best serve the residents of a state or a country, elected public officials and their staff must have current and historical information to use in making decisions, crafting laws and setting policies. Government libraries should provide knowledgeable staff, accurate resources and helpful support, to enable their staff and the public to do their job effectively (Bolt 2002). They need to meet the information needs of their user groups in order to help them work more efficiently, be it for research, decision-making or background information for various tasks and duties. Their ultimate aim is to improve and enhance the efficiency of the civil service, by encouraging better performance of the officials by providing easy and efficient access to information (Morgenstern 1993:164). A government librarian needs to be like the special librarian, "who monitors a river of information, identifies and selects key data that decision-makers should see, then channels it to the right people – before it becomes necessary to ask" (Esrey, quoted by Bender in Feather and Sturges 2003:616).

This study is concerned with the status of government ministerial libraries in Lesotho. It aims to investigate their aims and objectives, the role they play, their staffing, materials, users and services offered.

This section will provide an understanding of, and a context for, the study.

1.1.1 LESOTHO

Lesotho is a small mountainous kingdom surrounded by South Africa. "Lesotho is situated at the highest part of the Drakensberg escarpment and is 30,355 sq km (11,720 miles) in extent" (Griffin in *Africa South of the Sahara* 2004:94). "The economy of this country has been engineered by the textile industry, which not only spearheaded most of the job creation in the mountain kingdom but also contributed to the greatest proportion of the country's revenue" (van Buren in *Africa South of the Sahara* 2004:588). Agriculture is the primary occupation for the majority of the Basotho and "accounts for about one-fifth of export earnings; its contribution for GDP fluctuated with change in yields caused by soil erosion, the prevalence of poor agricultural practices and impact of drought and other adverse conditions" (van Buren in *Africa South of the Sahara* 2004:588). Lesotho's population is 2,062,000 (excluding workers in South Africa) (Hutcheson in *Africa South of the Sahara* 2004:584). Lesotho was a British Protectorate before gaining independence in October 1966. It is now a constitutional monarchy, ruled by the king, and has a government of national unity, with the prime minister the cabinet, the senate, the national assembly and the ministries. Since independence political turmoil has exacerbated economic difficulties and hampered development in Lesotho. This has affected all sectors, including the development of libraries.

1.1.2 LIBRARIES IN AFRICA

There seems to be a plague crippling the flow of information in African countries, including Lesotho. There are problems that hinder the flow of information in African countries, both nationally and regionally. These include the "absence, in most cases, of a national information policy and the policy-making organs, scarcity of human material and financial resources, use of outdated information processing, storage and dissemination methods and, lastly, low priority given to (or exclusion of) information systems and services in national development perspectives and plans" (Inganji in Lundu and Mbewe 1993:27). The problems of African countries are also prevalent in Lesotho. It is probably a combination of all these problems which seem to be denying the country an enabling environment for the formulation and implementation of policies, especially a relevant national information policy to protect libraries in general.

1.1.2.1 LIBRARIES IN LESOTHO

Libraries in Lesotho have suffered tremendous setbacks in terms of development. There is a "lack of legal backing and written official policies as terms of reference by which they may be supported structurally and financially" (Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa 2002:60). This, together with the absence of a national information policy, hampers the growth and development of

libraries in Lesotho. For instance, the situation with regard to public libraries is not positive, as the plans to establish them by the year 2000, using the *Sixth Five-Year Development Plan 1995-1999*, did not materialise (Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa 2002:60). Unfortunately, Lesotho also "has no Legal Deposit Law nor National Research Council" (Kukubo in Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa 2002:60) and it appears as if Lesotho "is not in full control of its research, research results and information products..." (Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa 2002:60).

Library professionals in Lesotho have expressed the need for the law to enforce a number of crucial information services. The Lesotho Library Association (LLA), as a body of professionals, has really helped its members, as well as library workers inside the country. The Association has fought very hard in order that library workers be sent for training, but it seems that the government is not prepared to do so, because the majority of library workers working in government libraries, and even managing some information institutions, are either para-professionals or have no training in the library field. The Association has also hosted some in-service workshops for library workers who do not have qualifications in the information field.

In spite of all this, the Association does not appear to command enough influence, because there is still no recognition of libraries and information centres throughout the country. It is not surprising, then, that, so many years after the establishment of the Lesotho National Library, it is only now that the first draft of the National Library Act will be recommended for enactment by parliament. It was during the Annual General Meeting of the LLA, held on 27 July 2002, that Mohai pointed out that the LLA had just completed the first draft of this Act (Mohai, 2002).

1.1.2.2 GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES IN LESOTHO

According to Ridinger (in Kent 1983:259) government libraries in Lesotho were first established during 1975/1976. These libraries were originally collections in various ministries. The first libraries to be established were the Central Planning Library and that of the Ministry of Information. At that time they were known as government agency libraries. Contrary to the dates mentioned above, the researcher discovered during her interviews that the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM) Library was established in 1966 and the Agricultural Information Services Library in 1967. Subsequent to this, in 1978, the Ministry of Agriculture established the library known as the Lesotho Agricultural Sector Analysis (LASA). This facility was combined with other collections of ministerial, project, consultancy and international material. The Ministry of Agriculture also maintained other collections such as the Lesotho Agricultural College Library, Agricultural Information

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Services, Agricultural Research Library, Soil Conservation Library and Crops and Livestock Library.

Government libraries fall into three groups: national libraries, research stations and libraries under ministries and departments (Prytherch 2000:237). The present study will focus on government libraries under the ministries. It should be noted that these libraries in Lesotho are often referred to as special libraries, because most of the materials in an individual library are about, or related to, that particular ministry. In addition, government libraries house publications that have information reflecting the activities of the government, the economy of the country, its enterprises, policies and research. These libraries are expected to collect, organise and disseminate information in an effective way, to enable the execution of government functions. In spite of being ministerial libraries serving civil service personnel, these libraries also have users who are not in the civil service. These include students, researchers and the public.

The government of Lesotho has nineteen ministries which all have libraries. Within these ministries there are departments which may also have libraries. This study will focus on government ministerial libraries in the capital city, Maseru. The information on these ministries has been accessed through the Lesotho government's official website <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls> As the history of Lesotho government libraries goes as far back as 1966, it is surprising that so little has been published on libraries in Lesotho. One would think that perhaps throughout the years, people have taken libraries too much for granted.

According to Lebotsa (1980:45), government libraries have collections of books and other materials, but their problem is lack of good and experienced management. She mentions that to be in charge of a collection of library materials in a government or departmental library is not considered different from any other clerical chores by government officials. This is because most government ministries expect no skill from anyone looking after the library. A need for a qualified person for cataloguing and classifying, to facilitate easy retrieval of information by users, is not felt necessary by the government. Yet, such a person could do very useful work by bringing relevant information to the decision-makers as and when needed. Government libraries were established for the purpose of serving specific groups of users whose interests generally relate to the needs of the ministry they serve (Thabisi 1983:3). However, it seems that policy-makers act as if they do not find anything valuable from information, so they neglect libraries. It is depressing to note that, generally speaking, government officials, although they appreciate the importance of information, are oblivious to the contributions libraries can make for them to be successful in their work. Consequently, the need for libraries to help them to achieve their objectives efficiently has never come into their minds; most of

them believe that they can do without libraries. This ignorance of the importance of libraries in the civil service needs to be addressed.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

No ministry or government department can function efficiently without access to adequate library and information services. Planners, researchers, subject specialists, decision-makers and workers need information on a daily basis. It is therefore desirable that users have access to information, in the shortest time possible. The decision-makers in government ministries in Lesotho seem to show and continue to show little enthusiasm for libraries. These are the people whose support, financially and administratively, is vital for the management, growth and success of government libraries.

Information in government libraries is legislative, administrative or statistical in nature, but also has a bearing on most subject fields. This information supports decision-making, improvement of productivity, research, the generation of new ideas and the advancement of development. Information enables one to consider other viewpoints, to obtain a more complete picture of the problem, improve insight into what others are doing and avoid duplication of costly materials (Cillie 1994). It is therefore very important that libraries should be able to disseminate adequate information, efficiently and effectively.

Government libraries in Lesotho seem to be static, neither expanding nor developing in terms of their collections, accommodation, effectiveness and management. Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa (2002:58) believes that availability of professional staff is one of the crucial factors to be considered in describing the context and the information situation. There is lack of government recognition and interest in libraries. This goes hand in hand with the absence of government policies concerning libraries. Lack of recording and implementation of clear policies and no national information policy are serious weaknesses. Government libraries lack legal backing to support them financially and structurally (Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa 2002:60).

Given the above, the problem which this research attempts to address is the status of government ministerial libraries in Lesotho and to assess the adequacy of their information-provision.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the aims and objectives of government libraries in Lesotho.
- To assess the policies and regulations underpinning government libraries in Lesotho.
- To investigate the role played by the government concerning these libraries.

• To determine the education level and qualifications of library workers in government libraries.

• To establish the type of users and patterns of usage of government libraries in Lesotho.

• To investigate the nature of materials housed in government libraries and the organisation of these materials.

• To investigate the method of acquisition of materials.

• To make recommendations for best practices in the management of government libraries.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• What are the aims and objectives of government libraries in Lesotho?

• What are the policies and regulations underpinning these libraries?

• What is the role played by the government in terms of these libraries?

• What is the level of education and qualifications of library workers in government libraries?

• What are the types of users and patterns of usage in government libraries in Lesotho?

• What is the nature of the materials housed in government libraries and how are they organised?

• What method of acquisition is used for acquiring materials?

• What recommendations can be made for best practices in the management of government libraries?

1.5 JUSTIFICATION

No survey or evaluation of government libraries in Lesotho has been done before. This underscores the importance of the present study. The study will assist in the development and implementation of policies and regulations concerning government libraries in Lesotho and southern Africa. Since there is limited literature regarding government libraries in Lesotho, this study could be used as a basis for research by others in the future. The present researcher has worked in government libraries for many years and has observed that there are a multitude of problems that need to be addressed.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Even though the national library and libraries of research stations fall under government libraries, the study will focus only on government libraries under government ministries in Lesotho. There were 19 government ministries that were identified for the survey, but the

researcher finally surveyed the libraries of 14 ministries. This is because the protocol made it difficult for her to survey some of the ministries, such as the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In order to get access to these two ministries a special permit was needed, two weeks prior to the interviews. This was too late for the researcher to accommodate, due to time restrictions. It was a situation which was not anticipated. The researcher had some problems also with other three libraries. One library was not being used because the librarian had gone for a three week course while the librarian of another library was absent for a one-year certificate training course. During her absence the library was opened by the Director's secretary, only when staff members needed particular information from the library. Lastly the researcher was not able to interview the librarian of the last library because the librarian was always out or attending meetings. This again reflects the problem of a one-man library because if the librarian is not available for some reason the library closes. The researcher interviewed library workers, and not users and government officials in the ministries, as it was beyond the scope of the study and it would have made the study too large for a coursework Masters thesis.

As so few of Lesotho's libraries are computerized or even have a computer, it was decided to limit the discussion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the use of which are widespread in libraries internationally. In the context of Lesotho's library development in 2004 it did not seem relevant or appropriate.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.7.1 LIBRARY: A library is a collection of books and other library materials systematically arranged and kept for reading, study and consultation (Prytherch 2000:440).

Government libraries are often regarded as a type of special library and in this regard a definition of "special library" is appropriate.

1.7.2 SPECIAL LIBRARY: ASLIB (in Halm 1978) defines a special library as a "departmental facility responsible for the acquisition, indexing and distribution (dissemination) of recorded knowledge directly concerned with the work of a specialized organization or a special group of users". A special library can also be defined as an information facility designed to provide access to specialised information and placed within range of and addressed to meet the needs of a special clientele. Wasserman in (Halm 1978) believes that "the objectives of the special library and the development of a strategy to accomplish these objectives are determined by the objectives and the purpose of the parental organization, which established the library". He points out that the collection will reflect the interests of the entire government ministry and may be highly specialised or very general in content, depending on the nature of the ministry.

In general, then, libraries may be specialised by field of subject covered, geographic origin or location of materials and customers, or by type of service provided, in accordance with the requirements of its users.

1.7.3 GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES: Government libraries are libraries that are maintained out of government funds. These libraries fall into three groups, namely national, departmental and research libraries (Prytherch 2000:327). Government libraries are those adminis and financed by the government. Their primary purpose is to serve the state at government level. These libraries at the national level are set up in various ministries and departments to serve administrative and development functions of the government departmental libraries (Jain 1998). The present study will focus only on government libraries that fall under the ministries.

1.8 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 contains the background to the study, the research problem, research objectives and research questions. The chapter includes the justification, the scope and the limitations of the study, as well as the definitions of key terms.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Melville and Goddard (1996:17), Creswell (1994:21), Neuman (1997:101) and Leedy (1997:7), the literature review assists the researcher to discover what earlier researchers have written. It also alerts the researcher to the results of studies that are related to the study being reported. The literature review attempts to identify, to locate and to synthesize completed research reports, articles, books and other materials about the specific problems of a research topic (Busha and Harter 1980:77). The present study concerns government ministerial libraries in Lesotho. Owing to the lack of literature on this subject in Lesotho, the researcher found it appropriate to look into the literature concerning government libraries elsewhere.

2.2 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

In Europe, the value of government and departmental libraries as valuable agencies for information retrieval was realized and exploited at an early stage. This type of government library was known as a council, because it was used by the state to assist in the administration of a government. "This type of library was by its nature more akin to the concept of special libraries, in the sense that the libraries were often specialised by subject, according to particular government departments and were restricted in their use to government officials" (Musiker 1970:53).

Government libraries were known as national special libraries in Britain. These libraries were established to give quick, on-the-spot service to government officials, because national libraries were not adequate to meet their needs. "Public use of national special libraries, as they were known, was limited owing to the confidential nature of some items in the collection, or because public use would interfere with the use of the library by government personnel, for whom it was established" (Chandler 1965:114).

According to Burkett (1968:2), in the Netherlands government libraries operated as public institutions, in the same way as university libraries. To give an example, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, like the university libraries and industrial libraries, lent its materials to the public. Government libraries in the Netherlands collaborated with other special libraries in the maintenance of union catalogues. In the Netherlands a very large proportion of material contained in government libraries and other libraries was accessible to all those interested.

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Burkett (1968:3) further mentions that "government libraries and their related departments held the most significant collection in the country on their subject specialization"; in this way they were able to assist researchers with adequate information when they were dissatisfied with the resources elsewhere.

Government libraries under ministries should reveal the responsibilities and roles played by these ministries. Burkett (1972:v) believes that the objectives of these ministries should be clearly stipulated. Subject areas covered are also of potential value, since they offer direction to potential information sources. Government ministries under which these libraries fall are often a source of information for enquirers who are uncertain of where to start. "A major goal of a government library has been and continues to be providing information for immediate and utilitarian purposes and because of the nature of government libraries information must often be provided in anticipation of the need for it. In addition, quick response to an identified need for information is their basic goal" (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:3).

The activity of a government library, as Ashworth (1979:10) points out, should be to collect and index materials relating to the history of its parent organization, because the library can deal with this category of information more effectively and comprehensively than could any external agency. Very often, organizations or ministries overlook this important function and fail to give anyone responsibility for it, so material is quickly and irretrievably lost. "In government libraries the emphasis is placed not on the nature of the document handled but on the information they contain. Thus when considering methods of indexing and retrieval of information, a government library will be less concerned with the subject of a document than with its message" (Ashworth 1979:12). Government libraries differ from conventional libraries because of a close association between the library staff and the users of the service, who are united in a common purpose. Ashworth (1979:14) believes that "the output of a government library is not measurable by the number of loans or enquiries dealt with, the number of abstracts which appear each year in its alerting services, or the number of copies of its publications distributed". He emphasises his point by stating that such statistics will only be an indicator, and an unreliable one, of the first steps in the information process. "What really matters is the resultant gain when the ministry or organisation puts the information obtained by its library to use. This is the true measure of achievement" (Ashworth 1979:14).

Although general libraries have peak periods, for instance lunchtimes and Saturdays, when larger than usual numbers of the public converge on them, government libraries are likely to be less prone to these incidents. These libraries will inevitably be subject to varying tempo, with occasional times of exceedingly rapid work-pace, and high pressure, in a manner which is not always predictable. Such a situation is not associated with numbers of users, but with

the importance of the demand (Ashworth 1979:14). For this reason, government libraries should try to provide the information immediately, as and when the need arises.

The objective of government libraries in Namibia, as stated by Morgenstern (1993:164), should be to meet the information needs of their user groups in order to help them to work more efficiently, be it for research, decision-making or background information for various tasks and duties. The ultimate aim would be to improve and enhance the efficiency of the civil service, by encouraging better performance of the officials. To meet this aim, access to information should be easy and efficient, thus providing the right information to the right person at the right time (Morgenstern 1993:164).

In Namibia, the Ministry of Education recruits for all government libraries under all the ministries, and the rationale behind this arrangement is to achieve co-ordination, co-operation and standardization of the services in the government libraries. In this way Namibian government libraries are really one large library with decentralized service points, which serve a specific user community with very specialized needs on very specialized subjects (Morgenstern 1993:159).

According to Hadebe (1989:4), government libraries in Zimbabwe are also known as special libraries and are mainly under central government departments and tertiary colleges. These libraries serve only officials of the state or institutions of which they are part. But lack of co-ordination in government libraries in Zimbabwe makes it even more difficult for them to function well, as they also have limited resources.

Mwacalimba (1993:52) points out that, in Zambia, "government libraries should meet the information needs of the personnel who run government machinery, but lack of appreciation by some senior civil servants hampered the provision of libraries as sources of accurate and appropriate information needed for decision-making". It is for this reason that the bulk of Zambia's government libraries are under-funded and not run by qualified staff and their utility value seems doubtful. He says Zambia has been slow in moving towards putting legislation in place.

2.3 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE SUPPORT OF LIBRARIES

Agha (in Mohamed 1988:69) indicated that the value of a government library service, as with many services, is never realized until one has the opportunity to use them; until then, one looks upon them with indifference, acknowledging their existence but blissfully unaware of the benefits that might be derived from them. He maintains that "government libraries and all other libraries should be regarded as a link in the total communication process in society, in addition

to this the establishment of libraries in general is evidence of social maturity" (Agha in Mohamed 1988:69).

Government should support its libraries with adequate accommodation, professional and non-professional staff (Agha in Mohamed 1988:71). Government support for libraries should include appropriate funds that should be allocated for the purchase, processing, storage and utilization of government library materials. "The effects of under-provision to government libraries can be far-reaching, leading to the demise of these libraries. Further, cramped quarters given to libraries are not only unattractive but prevent planned layouts designed to encourage further use" (Agha in Mohamed 1988:71).

Agha (in Mohamed 1988:72) emphasizes that "a government's role in relation to libraries is allocation of funds for the purchase of library material; this allocation should allow for new editions and the building up of existing strong collections. Lack of such provision will make the library useless, having disastrous effects on its use." The influence of decision-makers as managers of ministries under which these libraries fall can be critically important, because no government library will be able to obtain best results unless its management believes in it and is willing to give adequate support (Ashworth 1979:17). This means that the support that the government gives the library must be not only financial, but also "conceptual and there must be a willingness to accord to the librarian or library worker a status which brings him/her into relationship with his clients and colleagues on equal terms" (Ashworth 1979:17). He points out that the "library worker must have access at a high level to knowledge of his or her employer's policy, present interests and future development, for, without this, his/her library will be working wastefully in the dark".

2.4 GOVERNMENT POLICY

According to Ranson (in Nassimbeni 2001:25), "policies are required to express an organization's intended goals and values and as a yardstick to evaluate current performance; policies have a distinctive and formal purpose for organizations and governments: to codify and publicise the values which are to inform future practices and thus encapsulate prescription for reform ... policies are oriented to change and action providing public intent of transforming practice, according to ideal values".

Menou (in Khalid 2001:1) views Ranson's definition of policy in a similar way, by stating that policy is:
   • An image of the desired state of affairs, is a goal or set of goals which are to be achieved or pursued.
   • The specific means by which the realization of the goals is to be brought about.

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• The assessment of responsibilities for implementing the means.

• A set of rules or guidelines regulating the implementation of the means.

Menou (in Nassimbeni 2001:25) defines the concept of policy on three levels as:

• *De facto* policy: a policy which may be observed by actions and practices of key players.

• Formalised policy: this is a documented policy published and/or made available by various groups.

• *De jure* policy: policy enacted through legislation.

According to Braman (2001:2), to formulate policies in accordance with the above mentioned definitions requires "conceptual frameworks, institutional structures, policy-making processes, policy tools, implementation procedures and approaches to evaluation". She feels that it is a belief that policy making in Africa as in other developing countries, is determined by the situations unique to the country. Mchombu and Miti, cited by Mukangara (2000:82), believe in the importance of policies as reflected in the International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) report of 1989, which states amongst other things that:

(1) "It has become the practice for government to allocate resources on the basis of principles and directions laid down by policies. Policies are therefore tantamount to declaration by governments of the intent to take development action.

(2) Policies in government improve the chances for locating accountability, defining institutional responsibilities and spearheading change."

They stress that "without policies, government cannot hope to stimulate an integrated approach to information provision, or to motivate co-ordination among existing information agencies and the effective creation and use of professional capabilities".

2.4.1 NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY

Montvilof (in Mukangara 2000:21) defined a national information policy as "a set of principles built on a framework of given legal instruments to guide and co-ordinate the collection, organization, recording and dissemination of information in the country".

According to Dalton (in Mukangara 2000:21), national information policy is "guidelines that co-ordinate the production flow and availability of information in all sectors of the nation", meaning that scientific, technological, economic, social, legal and political sectors are included. Mohamed (1988:1) contends that there are benefits that can be enjoyed from a clearly stated national information policy that will:

• "Hasten the development of the infrastructure appropriate for library and information services.

• Bring about great recognition of the importance of and support for library and information services among policy-makers.

• Lead to an earlier acceptance of information as a national resource that might contribute to increased productivity in research and development.

• Bring forward the application of modern technology to the management of the information resource."

Totemeyer (1993:8) states that the most important factor determining the state of information service infrastructure in a country is the legislation of the country. She stresses that the absence of an information service act, legal deposit, copyright legislation and the application of strict censorship laws are barriers inhibiting the flow of information. Akhtar (in Mukangara 2000:83) feels that the "general lack of appreciation of the role of information, the almost non-existent national information policies and the current inadequate financial resources allocation to information systems and network development have severely deterred the use of information to solve Africa's socio-economic problem".

In the present study, the question is raised as to whether there are policies formulated and implemented which include government libraries in Lesotho. The absence or lack of policies seem to be a hindrance to the growth and development of information centres and libraries. Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa (2002:61) maintained that Lesotho had no clear policies that could support the growth of information centres and libraries.

2.5 GOVERNMENT LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

According to Ferguson and Mobley (1984:33), a government library is established because of the information needs of the ministry. The collection of materials that can be found in government libraries usually includes books, which encompass monographs and reference materials. The collection may also include "periodicals which are publications issued at regular intervals, they include journals and magazines, which refer to the whole category of publications that play an important part of a government library resource" (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:37). They also claim that "over the years of a title's publication a continuous record of advancement in a field is furnished, forming a basic body of literature". That is why, in many libraries, a far greater portion of the budget is spent on subscriptions and back files rather than on the books. "Documents, as another category of government library collection, are the output of government bodies such as foreign, international, state or local. These government publications through the years provide in print some of the most reliable,

comprehensive, documented textual and statistical records of the life of the nation" (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:39).

ICTs have revolutionized the library environment and have had an important influence on government libraries in all spheres, from the catalogue to the retrieval of information. According to Mpotokwane (2002:1) the drive towards globalisation of ICTs which involves computer hardware and software, radio and television receivers, broadcasting and telecommunications equipment and networking, and multimedia systems has created new technologies, products and services. Mpotokwane (2002:1) further believes that ICTs if properly harnessed can play an important role in the development of the continent. She further points out that the use of ICTs in general, and the computer, and the Internet in particular, enable library resources all over the world to be accessed rapidly.

2.5.1 ACQUISITION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Government libraries have to use standard library procedures when they are in the process of acquiring books and other materials for their collections. The library has to go through the same purchasing procedures as other sections in the same ministry. This might hinder the library from acquiring materials speedily, because of many steps that the ordering section would take in the purchasing process. The library is more familiar with the sources for obtaining printed materials than other sectors of the ministry. For this reason, Ferguson and Mobley (1984:47) recommend that "it would be appropriate to appoint the library as a purchasing section for all printed materials in the ministry". This would benefit the ministry, because it would see the process as a means of control, efficiency and avoidance of wasteful duplication.

Ferguson and Mobley (1984:49) believe that government libraries should always use a complete bibliographic identification during acquisition of materials, to facilitate correctly ordered materials and quick delivery. Acquiring non-traditional materials, which generally make a large part of collection in government libraries' collection, can be dealt with individually. Ferguson and Mobley (1984:48) state that books and journals may be purchased directly from their publishers or the transactions may be handled through a third party. Books can also be ordered through a foreign agent or an importer, rather than directly from the publishers. This method of purchasing, through an importer, could eliminate the problem of foreign exchange and make use of the agents' knowledge of sources (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:49).

Periodicals, which are publications issued at regular intervals, include journals and magazines. These are an important part of a government library collection, because they contain recent

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information. The acquisition of periodicals, government documents, newspapers and pamphlets is sometimes more difficult but, as already stated, they are of great importance to most government library collections (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:16).

Other publications to be acquired are professional and business publications, which are released to members of an association only. "To acquire this material the ministry or department has to be a member of that particular association. If the ministry or library are not members, the publications can still be acquired, but at a higher price. The most important publication of an association is its journal and the proceedings of its conferences" (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:50). Acquisition of government documents frequently gives a library worker a problem of identification of the issuing sources and the limited printing of some publications. Any needed item can always be requested directly from the issuing agency.

2.5.1.1 REPORTS

Technical reports play a significant role in many government library collections. Aufdenkamp *et al.* (1975:17) assume that the value of technical reports is due largely to the timeliness of the technical information they contain and their value decreases very quickly as new developments occur. As a result, libraries are advised to select the reports that are pertinent to their own needs and to make them known as soon as they are acquired, with copies being supplied as fast as possible.

Reports are issued by numerous agencies and organizations and a government is often a major publisher. Because of a variety of issuing organizations, there should be a common method of organizing reports, even though this is very difficult. The best thing to do is to index the reports and physically file or shelve them, using an accession number created by the library (Ferguson and Mobley 1984). Another approach will be to use published indices, for instance "Government Reports Announcements", as the access point in which the indices give the accession numbers for filing (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:71). Besides this, reports can be filed according to the issuing agency's number. In a collection where there are few reports they can be catalogued like books or placed in information files by subject. Here the type of approach used will depend on how well the reports are indexed by external source, how many reports are received and from how many issuing sources, as well as the needs of the library users.

2.5.1.1.1 MINISTERIAL RECORDS AND REPORTS

Research records, ministry circulars and reports are an important category. Special handling of the reports depends on the type and character of the records for which the library takes responsibility. They may well form a special unit, which needs to be carefully indexed, and

which is nearly always subject to security controls. Indexing of internal ministerial reports is a fairly common responsibility of a government library (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:71).

2.5.1.2 AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

Audio-visual materials may be catalogued as books with a reference to the file number or location, rather than a call number. They can be stored in special cabinets, which regulate the climate and keep dust out (Ferguson and Mobley 1984). However, with the widespread use of climatically controlled offices and cassette-type materials, a shelf storage-system can be used to store this type of material.

2.5.1.3 EPHEMERA

Ephemera is the term given to unbound materials such as newspaper clippings, pamphlets and various sorts of small publications; Ferguson and Mobley (1984:67). These materials can be invariably classified by subject and placed in an information file. The elimination of out-of-date items should not be forgotten.

2.5.2 ORGANISATION OF MATERIALS

Every library needs to organize its collection and this procedure will depend on the size of the library, the format of the materials in that library and the use of the materials in that library. In the same way, government libraries organize their collections. The rationale for the organization of materials in any library is for ease of location and retrieval of information as quickly and accurately as possible.

"Classification and cataloguing is the commonly used method in libraries. Although the whole process is referred to as cataloguing it actually entails two distinct processes" (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:60). They define cataloguing as bibliographic listing by author, title and subject, or a combination, while classification entails assigning each work to a specific class. As a result, a unique call number is decided upon, meaning that the number given to that particular book cannot be given to another book.

There are three types of classification schemes that can be used in libraries. The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme can be used very profitably in small and medium sized collections, but is not very accommodating when used in large or specialized collections (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:62). The second scheme is the Library of Congress Classification Scheme, which is adequate for use in large libraries because of its detailed coverage. This classification is based on an alphanumeric scheme. The third classification scheme, according

to Ferguson and Mobley (1984:62) is known as the Universal Decimal Classification. These are the widely-known, traditional classification schemes that are used mostly for organising library collections. Ferguson and Mobley (1984:62) recommend that a special classification scheme be used in government libraries.

Jain (1998:121) states that "classification and cataloguing of government publications is very important. Some libraries evolved their own schemes of classification for these publications, as at present there is no classification scheme which is suitable. The cataloguing part is very important for these publications. It has been seen that the names of the Ministries and Departments undergo frequent changes and bifurcated either with the change of government or with the change of Head of the government within the party in power." He goes on to say that these frequent changes create difficulties for the library workers working in government libraries and it is only the skill and competence of the cataloguer that provides relevant cross-references in the library catalogue for retrieving the publications from the shelves.

Cooper (2002) states that the "policy of government libraries in the UK is to catalogue anything which provides information to government officials and to the staff. These are a variety of materials such as videos, CDs and posters and include non-book material because their catalogue system kept pace with change." She stated that although they still keep a paper copy on the shelves for their archival collection, they have an electronic catalogue which enables them to hyperlink to websites and electronic documents. She points out that they are involved with government ministries and departments in pan-government initiatives, led by the Office of the e-Envoy for the improvement of knowledge management and knowledge networks.

In the UK the catalogue is made available to staff on their intranet. There is also a committee of ministerial or departmental librarians, which is developing an electronic library for government. It is an information resource which includes a directory of government librarians, frequently asked questions, the subject content of collections and referenced websites, which might one day also act as a gateway to their local government catalogues (Cooper 2002).

2.6 INFORMATION SERVICES

According to Jewel, from the California State Library (in Bolt 2002), there are several factors that emerge as critical for providing a successful service to government officials and their staff:

• "Focus on customer service, providing quality individual service in a timely and accurate manner. This involves listening to the client to understand what he/she wants and then providing it.

• Saving time for government workers by providing them with what they want, when they want it, and meeting their deadlines, not the library's schedule.

    • Utilizing the skills of librarians to organize information for easy access and successful use.

    • Being a doorway to useful information that is easy to find.

    • Providing training on the use of resources, if that is what the client wants, or just providing the answer, if that is what the client wants.

    • Librarians willing to outreach and make contact.

    • Find out what people are interested in before they need it.

    • Good marketing to help state agency staff remember that library staff can help them.

    • Needed information available through the state library.

    • Negotiate tough issues with other state agencies.

    • Quality service all the way."

Jain (1998:122) states that in India the major service of government libraries is of an intensive reference kind, which most of the time is concerned with questions that require searching. Sometimes librarians have to access information from government publications such as census reports, gazetteers, annual reports and budget papers. The process was complicated and cumbersome because government officers were not very conversant with the government publications. Most of the time they depended solely on library workers to supply them with whatever information they wanted.

Jain (1998:124) says that almost all of the ministerial libraries in India provide bibliographical information and documentation. They also make a list of new additions under classified headings, which would be mailed to other libraries. In this way all users are well informed about the newly acquired materials and the areas of specialization of each library. Many government libraries offer the following services:

    • Current Awareness Services (CAS).
    • Selective Dissemination of Information Services (SDI).
    • Retrospective Bibliographies.
    • Indexing and Abstracting Service.
    • Current Content Service.
    • Article Alert Services.
    • Press Clipping Services.

Looking at the list of these services, one believes that government libraries in India try all possible ways to inform their users about the information available to them.

In the Colorado State Library, Bolt (2002) points out that many state agencies provide information services to a wide range of clients, including state government; these services tend to be traditional types of information resources, such as state catalogues, local library catalogues, state publications through a depository programme, sometimes organized by subject as a Government Information Locator Service (GILS), Federal documents, local and state newspapers, magazines, digitised images, usually historical, and Legislative History Commercial database subscription, with passwords for government officials and staff.

There are different types of information resources in government libraries, which go beyond traditional information resources. For instance, in Montana, they have a Montana Natural Resource Information System as a clearing house for information on Montana's native species and habitats. This system can be accessed from the website. In addition, the state library has received authorization to be the central Geographic Information System (GIS) agency, gathering, organizing and making available all information on GIS for all state agencies (Bolt 2002). She points out that Alaska has a special website for services to state government and some of their databases include one on current topics arranged in general subject areas, such as public and personnel management, education, environment and natural resources, social issues, health law and political science.

In California's information resource, there is a database called Studies in the News. This database provides the state government with a digest of recent studies carried out in the United States. Other countries that address issues being considered by the California government are included in the database. These studies allow State government staff and officials to be aware of the most recent research on any topic (Bolt 2002).

2.7 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

Computers, as part of Information Communication Technology, are used in most libraries, including government libraries. Chisenga (in Mpotokwane 2002:18) states that "ICT came into being as a result of the digital merger between the computer technology, telecommunication technologies and other media communication technologies". It comprises computers, Internet, Intranet, extranet, photocopiers, fax, telephones, networking, smart cards, television and radio. The significance of ICT in government libraries is to facilitate access to information and communication in everyday life. Norris (2000:51) observes the importance of ICT in government libraries as providing a value-added approach to information resources, which are vital in libraries and in government libraries. Brittin (1992:3) asserts that use of "computers have led to integration of internal and external sources of information, spear-headed by the library". She stresses that computers in libraries, including government libraries, provide access to a wider range of information sources than is possible from a manual system. For example,

an online search is quicker and provides access to a multi-range of databases and primary and secondary materials, which libraries would have stocked. An example of these databases is a computerised catalogue, which offers more access points than a manual catalogue. It improves existing services and it makes ordering of library materials simpler than in manual systems, because follow-up can easily be done. It can keep track of issued books, books on loan, the due dates and overdues through the use of OPAC.

Although the use of ICTs is not widespread in government libraries in Lesotho, there are a few that use ICTs in the form of computers and Internet. Also identified as the use of technology in these libraries is the telephone, which seems to be used by every library.

2.8 USERS OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Most government ministerial libraries have well-defined groups of users, whose needs and interests can be catered for because they are well known. Brittin (1992:6) states that users can be civil servants, members of professional bodies, scientists, researchers or even students. She points out that in most cases these categories of users can be quantified. The library knows who the target groups are that it should be serving and what the priorities are.

According to White (1984:59), some users do not know what benefits can be acquired from the library, but it is the duty of the library worker to tell the user the benefits that they can get from the library, either individually or in a group. When users ask for assistance in the library, they do not explain all the details of the needed information. For example, they might not know the exact citation or write it down. But the library worker is supposed to have the ability to work with that fragmented information and sometimes misleading clues. Some users, however, prefer to do their own literature search through the shelves.

Researchers in government libraries are the most clearly identified group of users. White (1984:29) contended that it would be "appropriate to broaden the users and include others besides researchers, such as users who ultimately have the power to determine finances and priorities, because it is these other individuals in large part who ultimately have the power to determine expenditure levels and priorities".

Researchers, unlike many other government library users, rely heavily on literature and other information sources. "They come to the library already knowing what they need as already trained library users directly from their academic posts or after completion of advanced degrees" (White 1984:30). White says that that these kinds of users can cause problems, because the expectation they bring is usually the kind of passive self-service relationship that they have come to know in the educational environment. "Sometimes government libraries

might not have material in their collection that other potential users might find adequate for their needs, because most of the collection is usually tailored to the ministries' interests or according to what the ministry is concerned with" (White 1984:33). White points out that other users from accounting, personnel and administration need information that differs from what might be found in the collection, even though it is already adequate for the researchers and they also have different information-gathering habits and different end-uses.

A potential user in government libraries (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:59) is anyone whose job performance depends on keeping up with new developments reported in print, avoiding duplication of research effort and expenditure, or making use of others' experience in planning work and improving organizational performance. These people may be researchers and scientists, or creative personnel in various combinations. In other words, users are those who have a regular need for published information, those for whom the library will scan periodicals, select new books, find information and perform literature searches (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:60). Users have been "indoctrinated in their passage through the educational system to believe that the use of a library is a self-service process. They believe that they will be criticized if they are unable to pass this 'test', then the results will be individuals who are unable to find what they need and are not willing to admit their need for professional help" (White 1984:57). White believes that good reference library workers are taught to be alert to such instances and to approach such individuals to create the clear impression that the responsibility for a successful service connection is not the users' but the library's.

The library workers must determine the extent or the amount of information the user desires. "The user ordinarily does not wish to be inundated with information, when a simple statistic or a review article is really what they want" (Ferguson & Mobley 1984:74). Even though the reference interview proceeds in the same manner as in any other library situation, the first requirement in answering a reference question, for a government library worker is to have a clear understanding of the question itself and what will constitute a satisfactory answer. "Although a government library worker has an advantage in a common base with the user, this does not delineate the question. Users do not always verbalize their needs correctly or useably. One must always determine what, why, when and how much is desired" (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:73).

Many library users do not know how to use the library properly and are unable to access journals, which have a wealth of current information. Ashworth (1979:82) feels "government library workers should be alert so that when recognising this kind of ignorance in users they should be able to assist. In fact, users should be given some less formal training. They should be introduced to the government library and its systems, then to the relevant sources of information in the relevant subject." Ashworth states that it is obvious that while the training

of users is desirable in all other libraries, in government libraries it is mandatory. He claims that the new canon of government library worker is to stop the user from wasting time.

The opinion of Ashworth (1979:11) is that users of government libraries should be kept informed of new developments in their own fields of interest. All materials coming into the library, including secondary publications, should be scanned for their information of potential value to the individual user, whose "profiles" of interests will be known to the library staff. As a result of this activity they will receive a current awareness, or alerting, service in the form of a bulletin of news, abstracts and additions to the library; or the information may be made known, if it is of sufficient importance, by an immediate notification.

2.9 ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Information can have an impact on the development of the country if that information is readily accessible and available. Information in government libraries is of importance not only to civil servants but also to other sectors. Libraries should be aware of the importance of information generated by the public service to industry and the private sector. This information should be freely available, because if not, and there is no adequate access to it, the impact that the use of it could have on all sections of the economy could be seriously reduced.

Ayob and Chiong (in Mohamed 1988:23) believe that there are many documents in Malaysia that are not accessible to people because of the barriers made by the government, semi-government bodies and ministries, through their legislation. Library legislation usually only spells out the responsibilities of directors, boards and councils, but rarely discusses the right of citizens to access of information. Ayob and Chiong (in Mohamed 1988:23) state that, in Malaysia, the Archives Act forbids a public officer from making available any public record for reference or research, except in the course of official duties. This provision applies to all federal and state department information.

Tiamiyu (1993:190) believes that governments in Africa should stop categorising information as being secret and censoring it, because this hinders its access to the public. Governments and organizations are always sensitive and over-protective of their data. As a result, efforts are wasted on this issue, rather than being used for the improvement of accessibility of information. Information in government libraries should be free and accessible and there should be no hindrance by any government censorship (Tiamiyu 1993:191).

Lor (1995:3) believes that "government publications in libraries should be free because they provide information on almost any topic". They contain authoritative or important information about the country and the nation, the nature and scope of which would be beyond the means

of individual non-governmental organisations or commercial firms to emulate. They are current and are relatively inexpensive, even though they tend to be under-utilised and their information value undervalued, due to factors such as insufficient stocks, haphazard distribution and inadequate bibliographic control. Lor (1995:3) encouraged government libraries to work together with the ministries under which they fall and select what information is important and adequate for the benefit of the community these libraries serve. These publications should be available to the people, because they are for, as well as about, the people.

According to Cillie (1994:2), government libraries play an important role in the dissemination of information from government publications, which contain information that reflects the economy of the country, as well as its enterprises, policies and research. Adequate access to reliable and relevant information for all library users is very important. Officials on all levels of government, as well as organisations and the private information sector must utilize information. The utilisation of information promotes productivity, informed decision-making and the creative solution of problems. It expands knowledge and viewpoints and broadens insight and perspective. It helps to build on existing knowledge and to ascertain what succeeded or failed elsewhere; and it plays a critical role in education in a democratic society, where it can help develop critical abilities and independent thought. Cillie (1995:7) felt that library workers should be aware of the problems that hinder the effective provision of this information, as they have an overall view of official publishing.

Library workers are in a unique position to suggest improvements in the handling, classification and arrangement of government publications. Government publications need special care as they differ from other types of publications, in the way that information is produced, acquired, processed, stored and used. This calls for librarians and government officials to unite and cooperate to address the problem to access to information by the public.

2.10 STAFFING IN MINISTERIAL LIBRARIES

The size of the library and the scope of services determine the number of professionals needed and the type of skills they should possess (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:105). The professional positions of library staff call for a variety of skills, many of which fall within the spectrum of traditional library skills. If the library is to produce a satisfactory information service, reference capabilities are all-important. Reference work cannot, however, be conducted efficiently without adequate personnel and without the backup of efficiently organized sources of material (Ferguson and Mobley 1984:106). Government libraries need people with skills to perform the activities and provide services in the library. The technical library skills of classifying, cataloguing and indexing are the basis for creating and maintaining a workable library system. Ferguson and Mobley (1984:107) refer to the situation where there are many titles used to

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designate professional positions in different government libraries. Most of the skills needed in other libraries are also required in government libraries, but a government library is often distinguished by its relatively strong orientation of interests and its more intensive promotion of information services (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:38).

A professional library worker in a government library should have qualifications in the specialized field of his/her ministry. He/she should also have the desire to keep abreast of new developments across a broad spectrum of interests. The ideal library worker with his/her qualifications and related library experience will be able to gauge accurately, plan correctly, analyse shrewdly and acquire and organize library materials and services for the organization's optimum advantage (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:40).

According to Osman and Baba (in Mohamed 1988:81) librarians organize information by undertaking tasks such as indexing, abstracting, cataloguing, classifying and compiling bibliographies. But their tasks have usually not gone beyond organising information. Information was organised but never transferred. In order to transfer information it needs to be selected, acquired, organized, analysed, evaluated, synthesized or consolidated and then finally disseminated. To participate in information transfer library workers need to be educated and trained in those skills. "For those who have skills, to develop them; for those who do not have the skills to acquire them" (Osman & Baba in Mohamed 1988:82). They felt that it is useless to expect library workers to acquire and develop information-handling skills without providing facilities for that purpose, meaning that there must be educational programmes that can guarantee their professional performance as information specialists.

In any library there are clerical or house keeping chores that are always numerous and ever-present. There is a rule of thumb which says that the minimum staff to operate an efficient library consists of one professional and one clerk (Ferguson & Mobley 1984:106). In a one-man situation, most of the professional staff's time is spent on clerical jobs and little information service is being offered.

The recruitment of library workers in Namibia is done through the Ministry of Education (Morgenstern 1993:163). This is done to achieve co-ordination, co-operation and standardization of the services in the government libraries. Government libraries in Namibia are small and are staffed by one person in each library; sometimes that person is employed on a part-time basis. The critical staff shortage, especially the shortage of suitable, qualified and able human resources, makes it impossible to place a qualified person in charge of every library, let alone to give a full-time person to every mini-library. He mentions that the personnel usually are assistant staff with no qualifications in library and information science. Services rendered to users are unsatisfactory and lack initiative and quality.

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According to Thabisi (1983:2) the recruitment of the whole civil service personnel in Lesotho is done by the public service, meaning that all librarians, including government librarians, are recruited in this manner. The majority of them are recruited as library assistants or clerical assistants for the national library, where they usually find their way into the government libraries.

2.10.1 DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OF LIBRARY WORKERS

According to Bolt (2002), of the Colorado State Library, in order to best serve the residents of a state or a country, elected public officials and their staff must have current and historical information to use in making decisions, crafting laws and setting policies. In the absence of this information, decisions are made in a vacuum and can result in bad policies, harmful laws, wasted resources and a misdirection of energy and effort. These government activities can be fulfilled only if government libraries disseminate adequate information through adequately educated and skilled staff.

According to Jewell in Bolt (2002), the characteristics essential to successfully serving state government include:

- Traditional library skills and training
- Ability to listen and respond to spoken and unspoken needs
- Ability to go beyond traditional library services
- A leader and a team player
- An attitude of public service
- Ability to communicate
- Willingness to learn
- Content specialists and generalists
- Technology skills
- Ability to train others.

Government libraries need trained staff, who possess all the usual library skills. The key skill that is needed in government library workers is of listening, which goes beyond the reference interview. This means listening to needs unexpressed in a reference question, but relating to a state agency's broader needs. Raisin (2002) believes that the first step that library workers should take for planning for their future is to be clear about the ministry that they serve and where it is going. This means that library workers should know all about their parent body and their position in connection with their work. Raisin feels that, constitutionally, government departments are part of the executive arm of the government. This arm is responsible for the administration of national affairs determining policy and introducing and, in many cases,

implementing any legislation necessary to give effect to government policy. In carrying out these functions, they gather data and information in vast quantities. Raisin (2002) states that this is important because it offers library workers many opportunities to become central to the work of their departments, but it also gives them a customer base that should have strong information-handling skills. According to Jewel (in Bolt 2002), they always recruit the staff with the need of the state in mind. They need staff with creative minds to respond to what the government and the staff require.

According to Nielson in Bolt (2002), some new government library employees bring knowledge and experience, while others come with neither of these. To make it easier for the newly recruited, they are teamed up with experienced ones so that they can learn from them. This in-service training takes about six months or a year, depending on how fast the newly recruited staff learn. This type of training enables the new library workers to learn not only resources but also style of service and alternative responses (Nielson in Bolt 2002).

Nielson and Schneider in Bolt (2002) stress that library workers in government libraries should be willing to learn and ask for help from those who are experienced, such as subject librarians. Training for library staff who serve the state government varies, for instance, in addition to requiring a Masters degree in Library Science, staff are usually sent to conferences, workshops and training programmes where they can acquire new skills. Library workers are expected to keep up-to-date with Web products and search engines and generally approach their job with a commitment to maintaining their skills levels (Schneider in Bolt 2002).

Library workers and users of government libraries should work together in their search for information. For the sake of saving time, as Ranganathan's canon of librarianship says, government library workers will take over from the user a number of tasks, which would be the users', in a more conventional library (Ashworth 1979:10). Librarians should have a profile of users so that they can be kept informed of new developments in the users' own fields of interest. They should also receive current awareness or an alerting service, in the form of bulletins or news abstracts and additions to the library. This kind of dissemination enables government library users to scan selected items and it also gives them the freedom and time to browse or carry out more serious research in the time they save (Ashworth 1979:10).

According to Osman and Baba (in Mohamed 1988:86), "library workers in government libraries should be aware of their potential as active and dynamic information personnel who understand their functions and roles in the realm of information work". When one considers that government library collections form one of the country's richest sources of information, it is all the more important to assess the role that librarians play in the management and transfer

of information. It is crucial that library and information service personnel perform their tasks effectively, to ensure that their library collections are well-used.

Osman and Baba (in Mohamed 1988:84) believe that to be effective library workers in government libraries should "develop specialized communication skills, both manually and technologically, to assist them in the organisation and dissemination of information. Organization is the librarian's forte, that is the organisation of documents, not the organisation of information. Therefore to make libraries effective information-providing centres, library workers should exploit their resources and apply their organizational skills for the purpose of communicating information to the users" (Osman and Baba in Mohamed 1988:84). Librarians should be able to evaluate information, resources, services performance and user needs. This is vital to the success of the library or information service.

Osman and Baba in Mohamed (1988:88) state that librarians in government libraries should always "endeavour to provide accurate and relevant information without distortion and without resorting to bias or prejudice". Library workers should ensure that clients seeking opinions or comments are, at all times, provided with materials from all viewpoints. In addition, Osman and Baba (1988:89) point out that within constraints of resource equipment and working conditions, the librarian should "endeavour to maintain the highest level of competence in professional practice and to maintain this level by keeping abreast of professional developments".

Esray (in Feather and Sturges 2003:616) asserts that government library workers are the ones to "monitor a river of information, identify and select key data that decision-makers should see and channel it to the right people". Library workers should become more proactive and be more involved in the vision, values and goals of their patrons and organizations for which they work (Esray in Feather and Sturges 2003:617). They should also anticipate their information needs and meet their personal and professional objectives. The librarians should learn to add value to information and they should not just collect information and pass it on. They should evaluate available sources and arrange material to increase its ease of use (Esray in Feather and Sturges 2003:617).

Ashworth (1979:9) believes that "the role of a library worker in a government library is to build up a balanced collection of material comprehensive to the main interest of the organization she serves and tapering to a careful selection of reference works and textbooks to cover marginal but important interests". She must also collect the relevant report material from her own and other organizations with related interests. This can only be achieved through education and skills.

Government library workers should capitalise on necessary routines by the addition of helpful devices. These should offer a bonus to users such as a bulletin (Ashworth 1979:11). Ashworth mentions that government library workers should engage in literature searching for retrospective published information, on behalf of users. It is more efficient for library staff to do this because they are trained to know sources of information and to handle them efficiently. They develop skills in the process by constantly practising these skills.

Ashworth (1979:17) believes that the staff of a government library and its clients must be seen as collaborators in the process of finding and exploiting information, to further the objectives of the ministry to which they belong. He believes that all contribute directly or indirectly to the successful outcome of the purpose for which the library exists. The library worker must have access at a high level to knowledge of her employer's policy, present interests and future development, for without this her departments will be working wastefully in the dark (Ashworth 1979:18).

White (1984:33) concurs with Ashworth (1979:18) that it is essential for government library workers to take an inventory of the purposes and objectives of the programmes of the ministry or organization being served, in order to develop the list of activities that should be undertaken to support the ministerial mission. It is equally important to determine what should be undertaken, because inappropriate service misdirects attention and resources from activities of greater importance.

According to Raisin (2002), UK government library workers need professional skills and techniques that will enable them to assess the current and the future needs of user communities. She points out that "as library collections shift from being large volumes of low-priced items (books) to a few very expensive electronic sources available on the desktop of everyone in the ministry, librarians need strong analytical skills to identify needs, and develop clearly thought out evaluation criteria to develop their skill for use in monitoring usage". To be able to achieve these, librarians should also have an understanding of customer business, including the role information plays in the decision-making process. They should also know how different user groups exploit information.

Raisin (2002) believes that library workers should be more willing, at all levels, to use a range of techniques to gather information on user needs. "The reference interview, plus a 'feel' for what is borrowed, will not be enough. They will need to balance different techniques and learn from other services, for example they should learn by benchmarking. They need both qualitative and quantitative information. Some users may require a special exercise, others may be incorporated into normal working procedures, for instance feedback may need to be routine for research enquiries." The present study tries to find out what the qualifications of

government library workers in Lesotho are, what services they offer and what resources they have at their disposal to assist them in providing government library users with adequate information.

2.11 CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Co-operation is the reciprocally beneficial sharing of resources developed or pre-existing by two or more libraries (Thabisi 1983:1), in other words, it is the working together of libraries with the purpose of achieving a common end. According to Ashworth (1979:27), government libraries interchange non-confidential information and materials and the sharing of techniques. Thus, government libraries have their own area of speciality in which they try to be comprehensive; but they also have to have access to information on other topics outside their field. This is achieved by calling for aid from colleagues in other libraries, on a reciprocity basis.

Government libraries, according to White (1984:113), are small in size and have limitations to their collections. Because of the uniqueness of some of their problems they had to find ways of solving their problems together. This led to library workers undertaking cooperative activities designed to deal with very direct and specific problems. They engage in union lists, subject heading lists, catalogues and other helpful tools. In addition, cooperation among colleagues enables them to rely on a number of sources for support and services from outside and within the parent organization.

Silva (1970:29) believes that library cooperation is needed in government libraries and other libraries because even if some of these libraries are well equipped, they cannot afford to supply all their information requirements from their own resources. Library cooperation is needed because it brings with it exchange of materials and information, which libraries cannot provide with their limited financial resources. Government libraries tend to be consulted frequently and their information should be adequate and available at all times, when needed.

Government library staff cannot be experts in all fields in which users may require information. They cannot provide all information needed by the users. In this case one of the functions of a library worker is to know outside sources that can be of help to him or her in locating authoritative information on an unfamiliar subject. The assistance may be in the form of an interlibrary loan, photocopy of article, using other library information sources and telephones (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975).

Thabisi (1983:2) stated that the prevailing economic constraints in Lesotho, coupled with the current information explosion caused by the growth rate of published and unpublished

documents in the country and with rising publication prices, libraries and other information systems should no longer adhere to the principle of self sufficiency. Thabisi (1983:3) also concurs with Silva (1970:29) that co-operation is needed in libraries because it helps libraries and other information centres in the country to pool their resources within the limits of feasibility, in order to achieve comprehensiveness and eliminate unnecessary duplication. In other words, one library will know what materials other libraries have acquired and avoid acquiring the same materials.

The relevance of this in the present study is co-operation among government libraries in Lesotho, for the purpose of exchanging library materials and being able to borrow from other libraries. Inter-library loans can augment a library collection in government libraries, because characteristically they have a limited subject area and are bound to need other materials from time to time. Examples are materials outside their subject field, materials needed only occasionally, and materials which cannot be purchased, or materials which are not practical to purchase.

"Government libraries are borrowers rather than lenders because their collections are small and include proprietary documents not listed in bibliographic tools. They also rarely have multiple copies and they feel a responsibility to keep heavily demanded material available for their own sake" (White 1984:114).

2.12 SUMMARY

Chapter 2 was concerned with a review of the literature to give a context and background to government libraries in general. The policies which guide and support the existence of government libraries and other information centres were discussed. The chapter described government libraries elsewhere, in terms of the support they receive from government. The organization of library materials was dealt with, in terms of classification, cataloguing and shelf arrangement in government libraries. Finally, the advantages of co-operation among government libraries were given.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 outlines the research design, research method, population and data collection instruments and analysis of the data.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Durrheim (1999:2), a "research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research". The research design is a plan that links all the processes that one encounters in the research project. Similarly, Leedy (1997:93) states that the research design is a "visualization of data and the problems associated with the employment of the data in the entire research project". He points out that "research design is the common sense and clear thinking necessary for the management of the entire research endeavour". In other words, the research design means clear thinking during each and every step one takes in the process of research.

3.1.1 RESEARCH METHOD

The method chosen for the present study was a descriptive survey. According to Robson (1993:127), descriptive surveys are carried out for descriptive purposes and can provide information about distribution of a wide range of peoples' characteristics and relationships between such characteristics. The descriptive survey, according to Fink (1995:14), is the method of collecting information from people about their feelings, plans and education. In this way, the present researcher chose the descriptive survey, so that she was able to collect data from the respondents on what they feel about the situation that prevails in government libraries in Lesotho.

The purposes of the descriptive survey, defined by Powell (1991:56), are to "describe characteristics of the population being studied, estimate the proportion in the population, make specific predictions and test relationships". He stresses that this method is used to gather contemporary data but does not allow the researcher to manipulate the independent variables. It is thus considered to be less rigorous. Powell (1991:57) emphasizes that even though a descriptive survey seems to be less rigorous than experimental research it can be "strong in testing relationships between variables". Babbie (1995:230) agrees that survey research is the most frequently used research design in the social sciences. It enables the analysis of large data sets by the computer. The descriptive survey can assist in the collection of original data for describing a population too large to observe directly. According to Busha and Harter

(1980:78), the descriptive survey makes it possible to collect data on the opinions, knowledge, attitudes and values of the respondents. This means that the present researcher was able to gather data on the knowledge and opinions of respondents. The descriptive method also enabled the researcher to describe what she found and saw in government libraries in Lesotho.

3.1.2 ADVANTAGES OF SURVEY RESEARCH

Advantages of the survey research method are flexibility and broadness of scope. It can be applied to many populations and it can focus on a wide range of topics. Its information can be used for many purposes. According to Busha and Harter (1980:79), good surveys can be much more costly, but when one considers the amount of information obtained in the course of normal surveys, they are not uneconomical. In addition to this, Robson (1993:129) attests that the survey research method provides a relatively simple and straightforward approach to the study of attitudes, values and motives of the respondents.

3.1.3 DISADVANTAGES OF SURVEY RESEARCH

The survey research method has some limitations, too. Powell (1991:53) states that "it provides less control of the research environment and is therefore not considered to be capable of establishing causal relationships; it is also considered to be less rigorous than the experimental". The survey method is also very demanding of personnel, time and other resources.

3.2 POPULATION

Busha and Harter (1980:56) maintain that "population" can mean any set of persons or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic, for example all staff of government libraries in Lesotho. They point out that population depends on the size of the group or objects about which the researcher plans to make inferences, meaning that the population can be a large group or a small group.

There were nineteen government ministerial libraries, all situated in Maseru. The present study covered only fourteen ministries, as the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs could not be surveyed because of security restrictions. The other three ministries could not be surveyed because of the non-availability of the library workers. There was no necessity to draw a sample, as all the staff members of government libraries were interviewed. The population of the study consisted of library workers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Employment and Labour, Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation, Ministry of

Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Home Affairs and Public Safety, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Co-operatives and Marketing. The information regarding ministries was accessed from the government of Lesotho website.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The researcher decided to use the interview with a structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument. This was done because of the small population, the fact that all libraries were easily accessible in Maseru and the fact that it would guarantee a high response rate.

3.3.1 INTERVIEWS

Interviews are verbal interactions between the researcher, or the interviewer acting on his behalf, and one or more respondents. They are either conducted face-to-face or by telephone. Interviews differ from conversation, in the sense that they are directed to a greater or lesser extent by the researcher towards obtaining information of relevance to the research in hand and they are needed to clarify concepts, questions and instructions (Stone and Harris 1984:1).

The researcher used interviews for collecting data because they were suitable for a small population and they were conducted with one respondent at a time. According to Busha and Harter (1980:77), interviews collect first-hand data. This was adequate for the present study because the researcher was able to collect first-hand data from respondents who were working in government libraries, people who had knowledge and experience of what has been happening in government libraries and people who were able to relate their opinions with the anticipation of their library's future.

The researcher opted for interviews as she believed that, because of the verbal communication between her and the respondents, interviews would enable her to collect more complete data. Interviews are known to "elicit significantly more complete answers" (Busha and Harter 1980:78). The researcher used the interviews because they allowed her to clarify questions that were not clear or those that were not understood by the respondents. Neuman (1997:253) points out that during interviews the researcher can probe. The researcher was able to observe library collections after completion of the interviews. This was an added bonus.

3.3.1.1 STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

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There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. In the structured interviews the response categories are pre-determined, the order of questions is fixed and each and every question must be asked (Stone and Harris 1984:7). Unstructured interviews are conducted without a pre-designed schedule and respondents are free to use language that is suitable for them. They are not forced to answer according to the researcher's ideas. Semi-structured interviews, according to Stone and Harris (1984:9), are elusive because of many variations on the theme. There are two types of semi-structured interviews. For instance, an interview that may be used with a check-list of topics to be covered is called an interview guide. Another alternative is an interview that allows the respondent to answer on his own terms from the pre-determined questions. This is sometimes called a standardised, open-ended interview.

In the present study, the researcher used structured interviews with both closed and open questions, to make it easier for her to probe where necessary and also to let respondents be free to elaborate. The researcher did not choose unstructured interviews because there is no control of the conversation in the unstructured interviews. Respondents may talk on and on and might even talk about things in which the researcher is not interested, because of unrestricted conversation. Matters that are of interest to the researcher may not arise in the unstructured interview. In the unstructured interviews the analysis of the data is difficult because of the amount of material gathered and the fact that there is no consistency of topic coverage and ways of expressing similar ideas (Stone and Harris 1984:9).

3.3.1.1.1 ADVANTAGES OF STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In a structured interview the questions and the response categories are determined in advance. The order of questions is also fixed and every question must be asked. Structured interviews are easier and quicker for the respondents to answer and any problems or the wording of questions, will be consistent throughout. Responses to questions can be compared and aggregated. Monsen (1992:115) believes that with structured interviews "data is simple and easy to analyse and also responses are in standard categories and are easier to code and analyse and they are usually relevant to the questions, as defined by the intent of the research".

3.3.1.1.2 DISADVANTAGES OF STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

According to Monsen (1992:116), structured interviews can "suggest ideas that the respondents would not otherwise have and respondents with no opinion of their own or knowledge can answer anyway". Stone and Harris (1984:7) believe that the disadvantage of a structured interview is that the questions and responses cannot be adapted if they seem inappropriate. Information, which does not fit into the predetermined categories, is lost. They

believe that respondents may have to distort their real views in order to choose a category. Interviews can also be very time-consuming and expensive.

3. 4 PRE-TESTING

Powell (1991:100) says that pre-testing enables the researcher to identify items from the interview schedule that might not be understood by the respondents. It assists the researcher by giving her the opportunity to correct questions that were poorly constructed. It enables the researcher to see whether there are ambiguous questions or missing questions. The researcher pre-tested her interview schedule by interviewing four librarians in four government libraries in Pietermaritzburg. The pre-testing resulted in some questions being clarified and two being reworded. The schedule was corrected and adapted for interviews in Maseru, Lesotho, where the researcher conducted her interviews.

3.5 CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Conducting interviews depended on the availability of the respondents in the libraries. The researcher conducted her interviews from 9-17 October 2003. Because of the familiarity of the researcher with the librarians and library workers, she did not make appointments, but visited the libraries randomly and requested librarians to spare a short time for interviews. The researcher began interviewing the librarians who were in the city centre first, where most of the government offices are clustered. Even though the researcher was familiar with the library workers, she had to produce a letter of credentials, so that a senior official visiting the library at that time would know about the visitor conducting interviews during working hours. The researcher did not have a tape recorder, but she noted the responses down in a book. Librarians were eager to be interviewed. Those who were busy with a library user (which was not often) and who could not be interviewed immediately were interviewed at a later date, usually the following day.

3.6 LIMITATIONS

The government of Lesotho has nineteen ministries with libraries. Initially, the present author intended to interview nineteen librarians from the nineteen government ministerial libraries, but only fourteen ministries were surveyed. The fourteen ministries had libraries plus six libraries from the departments within these ministries that also have libraries. There was no necessity to draw a sample as it was a very small population of library workers. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence could not be surveyed, for security reasons. Permission had to be sought two to three weeks before the researcher was allowed to do the survey in these libraries. For this reason the researcher decided not to use them, because of the limited time

that she had. The problem of the other three libraries was the non-availability of the library workers. One library worker was on leave and there was no-one to replace her and as a result the library had been closed. Another library was closed because the library worker had gone on a two-week training course. The third was at a meeting. This was very odd, because every time the researcher visited the library the worker was out. This was a sign that it was not adequate for libraries to have only one staff member, because during her absence the services were closed. Another limitation is that of gender. In Lesotho, men are not inclined to become librarians, because they believe that it is a women's field and is not suitable for men. During the interviews the researcher interviewed nineteen female library workers and one male. One might assume that this may be a reason why libraries do not get much recognition and support, because most of the top officials in government ministries are men.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

According to Fox (in Seaman 1987:336), quantitative and qualitative data can be analysed manually. In the present study, data was analysed manually. Firstly, the written responses were counted and then similar ones were grouped together according to themes. These were then quantified. Results were presented in the form of tables, because tables depict the relationships among data. Some other findings that did not need tables were presented in the text.

3.8 SUMMARY

Chapter 3 described how the objectives of the study were met through the chosen methodology and the data collection instrument. The descriptive survey was deemed the appropriate method for the present study. The population, data collection instrument and the analysis of the data were discussed.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Chapter 4 deals with the presentation of the findings of the survey. The researcher surveyed fourteen ministries, instead of the nineteen originally planned. Within the fourteen ministries, there were six departments that also have libraries. The purpose of the study was to explore the status of government ministerial libraries in Maseru, Lesotho, to try to determine their problems and propose recommendations for their improvement.

The objectives of the study were:

- To investigate the aims and objectives of government libraries in Lesotho.
- To assess the policies and regulations underpinning government libraries in Lesotho
- To investigate the role played by the government concerning these libraries.
- To determine the educational level and qualifications of library workers in government libraries.
- To establish the type of users and patterns of usage of government libraries in Lesotho.
- To investigate the nature of materials housed in government libraries and the organisation of these materials.
- To investigate the method of acquisition of materials.
- To make recommendations for best practices in the management of government libraries.

4.1 SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

Section A of the interview schedule deals with the introduction of government libraries under the different ministries, their year of establishment, their objectives and policies and the government's role concerning these libraries. The aims and objectives of these libraries and their acquisition of materials are described and, lastly, the opening hours of government ministerial libraries are indicated.

TABLE 1

The year of establishment of government libraries

Date of Establishment	N=20 Number of libraries	%
1966	1	5
1967	1	5
1976	1	5
1977	1	5
1986	1	5
1989	2	10
1990	2	10
1991	1	5
1994	1	5
1995	4	20
1996	5	25
Total	20	100

Table 1 gives details of the different years in which these libraries were established. Ridinger (in Kent 1983:259) estimated that Lesotho government libraries were first established in 1975/76, but library workers provided 1966 as the year of the establishment of some of the government libraries. These were the Agricultural Information Services Library, which was established in 1966, and the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM) Library which was established in 1967.

4 .2 GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND THEIR LIBRARIES

The following six ministries had two libraries each:

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
The Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology
The Ministry of Education and Training
The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
The Ministry of Natural Resources
The Ministry of Trade and Industry, Co-operatives and Marketing.

The remaining eight ministries had one library each.

4.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE MINISTRIES

The question dealing with the objectives was asked with the hope that libraries were perhaps included in the objectives of the ministries, but there was no indication of libraries in any of the ministries' objectives. Only seven (35%) of the library workers were able to provide the objectives of their ministries. Two library workers mentioned dissemination of information through radio and television as their ministry's main objective, while another two (10%) library workers mentioned that their ministry's main objective was policy development. One (5%) library worker mentioned law reinforcement as her ministry's objective, while another library worker mentioned co-ordination of the environment as an objective of his ministry. The remaining library worker who was able to provide her ministry's objectives said that it was to strengthen public service management. It should be noted that the seven (35%) of the library workers who were able to provide the researcher with answers had to look into the reports of their ministries to provide an answer. In addition, they were library workers who were qualified in library and information science. The feelings of the remaining library workers are reflected in this comment: "the objectives of our ministries were supposed to be written down and copies distributed to every section in the ministry, especially the library, because that's the first place people go for information about the ministry, but we have not received any reassuring response from the responsible section until now".

The question seeking information on ministerial policies was asked with the hope of discovering whether government ministries have included libraries in their polices, but it was found that only four (20%) library workers were able to provide answers on the policies of their ministries. Libraries were not included in any of these.

4.2.2 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF MINISTERIAL LIBRARIES

Question 5 asked about the role of the government regarding administration and support of the library. This question was answered by nine (45%) library workers. They stated that the government supported them in a way, because it assisted them in the purchase of library materials like books, though not enough to cater for their users' needs. Eleven (55%) government libraries, (more than half) depended solely on donations. Library workers complained that their libraries were neglected by the government and the donations that they received in most cases were irrelevant to the needs of their users. According to one library worker, "we don't get any support from the government; the libraries are neglected in terms of books and other materials. There is no formal training; those who go for formal training, when they come back there is no incentive salary-wise; what bothers us most is that other sections do not suffer like our section." During the interviews the researcher observed that some of the shelves were filled with torn and old books which needed weeding. From the

knowledge and experience of the researcher, library workers had fought this battle for years, to no avail. Consequently, the government had lost most of its qualified library staff to the private sector and other institutions.

4.2.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

This question sought to discover the aims and objectives of government libraries in Lesotho and whether the objectives of these libraries were based on the objectives of their ministries. It was surprising to discover that only four (20%) library workers provided their libraries' aims and objectives as being based on the objectives of their ministries, while six (30%) of the library workers provided objectives that were not based on those of their ministries. The remaining ten (50%) did not have objectives, but when the researcher probed, they answered that their libraries disseminate information and that was all they could say. The researcher was a little disturbed about how a library can function without aims and objectives. It showed that library workers did not have any direction concerning why they were there and what they were doing.

TABLE 2

Acquisition of library materials

Method of Acquisition	N=20 Number of libraries	%
Donations/exchange	11	55
Budget	9	45
Total	20	100

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of libraries with different methods of acquisition in government libraries. From the 11 (55%) government libraries that depended on donations, seven (35%) were also engaged in exchange activities. According to them, the agreement was that government libraries should receive materials such as publications, books and periodicals. Some of these came from within the country, while others came from institutions overseas. In turn, the government libraries should have sent their annual reports and publications that were produced from within the country to these libraries, but they were unable to honour the agreement because of financial problems. Even the nine (45%) libraries that had a budget still received some donations, but on a relatively small scale.

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4.3 OPENING/CLOSING TIME OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Government ministerial libraries in Lesotho have adopted the system of government working hours and they open their libraries at 08:30 and close at 16:30 like all other government offices. In addition, government libraries in Lesotho are not open on holidays and weekends.

4.4 SECTION B: LIBRARY MATERIALS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Section B is concerned with the different types of library material that government libraries hold. It mentions problems of theft in government libraries. Percentages of materials regularly loaned and arrangement and policies of arrangement of materials are also mentioned.

TABLE 3

Types of book and non-book materials in government libraries

Type of materials	No.=20	%
Books	18	90%
Reports	18	90%
Periodicals	18	90%
Documents	18	90%
Newspapers	12	60%
Reference books	9	45%
Audio cassettes	3	15%
Video tapes	3	15%
CDs	2	10%
Total *	101	

* Multiple responses given

Table 3 reflects different types of materials in different libraries (book and non-book). All government libraries had books in their collections, except two libraries that fall under the Ministry of Communication and Technology. Their collections were only audio-visual

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materials: records, video-tapes and CDs. Some libraries had just a few books, while others had a reasonable collection, especially the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM), the National Health Training College (N.H.T.C.) and National Environment libraries. The majority of government libraries had reports of some sort or other: reports on projects, reports from other ministries, reports that are being generated by the ministry and even reports from international organizations and reports from the SADC Region.

These libraries also had some periodicals, but this type of material according to library workers was not adequate for the users, because most of the copies were very old and irrelevant. Even in those libraries that had a budget, there were just a few copies of periodicals subscribed to and some internationally acquired. Twelve (60%) of government libraries had newspapers. When the researcher asked why some of the libraries had no newspapers, library workers replied that they had financial problems. Nine (45%) government libraries had reference materials such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias, most of which were donations but were still suitable and used. Just a few government libraries had non-book materials such as audio-cassettes, video tapes and CDs. Three (15%) government libraries had audio-cassettes, another three (15%) had video-tapes. Only two (10%) had CDs. Surprisingly, libraries that had non-book materials were unable to use the materials because they had no equipment to use them with, except Radio Lesotho and Lesotho News Agency Libraries (LENA), under the Ministry of Communication and Technology that specialised in non-book materials.

4.4.1 PROBLEMS OF THEFT AND/OR VANDALISM

Only six (30%) government libraries complained of theft, while the rest of the surveyed population did not have problems of this kind. When the researcher probed, they answered that most of their libraries were too small and respondents were able to see everything that happens within their libraries. Besides this, they took the precaution of searching the bags of users when they left the library.

4.4.2 LIBRARY LOANS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Government libraries were asked whether they lent out their materials. The responses from government library workers revealed that 18 (90%) government libraries loaned books to users. Two (10%) government library workers mentioned that they had experienced a terrible theft problem and were still devising some means of controlling the loss they had suffered. The service of book loans had stopped for a while. The other two (10%) were the non-book material libraries that dealt with users in their ministries only.

TABLE 4

**Percentage of library stock that regularly goes out on loan
from different libraries**

N=20 Libraries	Books	Reports	Periodicals
5	10%	10%	5%
2	50%	5%	10%
2	25%	6%	6%
5	60%	4%	2%
4	2%	2%	3%
2	0%	0%	0%

Table 4 shows the number of libraries, with their different categories of material that regularly go out on loan. A number of different libraries reflected in the Table lend out quite a number of books, while the percentage became smaller and smaller when it came to reports and periodicals. The reason that the researcher was given by the library workers was that those libraries with many books were able to lend their users more books, while they had only few periodicals and journals and this was why they were able to lend only a few.

4.5 ORGANIZATION OF MATERIALS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The question regarding the classification used in government libraries revealed that 17 (85%) libraries used the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme to organise their materials. One (5%) government library used the Library of Congress Classification Scheme and two (10%) used the Universal Decimal Classification Scheme. Some of the library workers mentioned that their predecessors used various schemes, but they had started converting the previous schemes to the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme. When the researcher probed, library workers mentioned that they were taught to use the DDC in their in-service training, which meant that they were not conversant with other schemes.

4.5.1 ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIALS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

This question provided information relating to the arrangement of materials and shelving policies in government libraries. The majority, that is 17 (85%) of the respondents, stated that they had arranged their materials by subject, while one (5%) library worker claimed that she has used UDC and the last two (10%) had arranged materials alphabetically by programmes on the shelves because they were the non-book libraries which had video-tapes and cassettes.

Examples of this are the speeches of cabinet Ministers, speeches of the Prime Minister and the speeches of His Majesty, the King. Even though all library workers had mentioned the arrangement of materials in their libraries, when the researcher went around to have a look she found that there were piles and piles of materials lying on the floor in some of the libraries.

4.6 SECTION C: LIBRARY SERVICES

Section C concerns the types of catalogues used in government libraries, their form and accessibility to users. It also discusses whether government libraries use inter-library loans and whether government libraries are more borrowers than lenders.

4.6.1 CATALOGUES IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Responses to question on library catalogues revealed that only 9 (45%) government libraries have catalogues of different types, while 11 (55%) have no catalogues at all. The researcher found this strange and depressing, because catalogues reflect what the library has. If there is no catalogue it will be very difficult for the users of the library to know what the library holds and to locate whatever it holds. When the researcher asked the reason why they did not have catalogues, most of the library workers that had no catalogues did not give reasonable responses. Of the nine (45%) government libraries which have catalogues, four (20%) have card catalogues, while five (25%) government libraries have computerized catalogues. All the libraries that have catalogues (45%) allow the public access to them.

4.6.2 INTER-LIBRARY LOANS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The library workers' responses to the question of inter-library loans were that government libraries in Lesotho do not offer this service in a satisfactory way. Only five (25%) government libraries offered inter-library loan services, while the majority did not. Two (10%) government libraries that offered inter-library loans in their libraries claimed that they lend more than they borrow. Conversely, three (15%) government libraries that offered the services of inter-library loans claimed that they borrow more than they lend. This showed that, on the whole, it was a very small number of government libraries that offered this kind of service. It was surprising to find that such a small percentage of government libraries used inter-library loans because it is known that government libraries are small and because of this they do not have enough material to cover all the requirements of the library. Government libraries use inter-library loans to augment their materials.

4.6.3 REFERENCE SERVICES IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Library workers replied that reference services are being offered in government libraries and they all answer queries over the desk. It seemed that all library workers interviewed were answering queries via the phone, even though some complained that it was a difficult task and tiresome, because they had no direct telephone lines and they depend on extension telephones for their daily work. A literature search reference service was offered by 13 (65%) of the government libraries. This was very encouraging because most of the libraries using this service were libraries with qualified staff. The rest did not respond positively, as most of them were library workers with no formal training. It was very interesting and encouraging to find that 13 (65%) government libraries were also offering a current awareness reference service, even though the study again found that it was used in libraries with qualified library workers mostly. The question about computer and Internet access in government libraries revealed that only seven (35%) government libraries have computers and the Internet, which are reserved for use by the staff only. It should also be noted that libraries that have computers and the Internet are the libraries that have qualified staff.

4.7 SECTION D: STAFFING

Section D examines library staff, their positions in the library, their official titles and their educational achievements.

4.7.1 NUMBER OF STAFF MEMBERS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The survey showed that 11 (55%) government libraries had one member of staff each, seven (35%) government libraries had two members of staff each, and two (10%) government libraries had four members of staff each. This indicates that in the twenty (100%) government libraries surveyed there were only 33 library workers altogether. Even though all the staff in government libraries was 33 because of the limited time the researcher interviewed 20 only who were the heads of the libraries. It was very disturbing, because among the 11 (55%) government libraries that had one member of staff each, most of them were responsible for the library but with no formal qualifications in the library field. Once more it reflects a shortage of qualified staff.

For the question that requested information on unfilled positions in government libraries the study discovered that, at the time of the survey, 18 (90%) government libraries had no vacant positions, except two (10%), which had one unfilled position each. One vacant position was in the Agricultural Research Library, where the incumbent had moved to another ministry for a higher position and another vacant post was in the LIPAM library. It was not filled because of financial problems.

TABLE 5

The number and official titles of library workers

Official titles	Library workers	N=20
Library Assistants	21	8
Assistant Librarians	7	7
Librarians	5	5
Total	33	20

This question required information on official titles of library workers in government libraries. The official title of a library worker with no formal training in library work is a Library Assistant, while the title of those with a university diploma and a certificate is an Assistant Librarian. In Lesotho, the official title of a library worker with a university degree is a Librarian.

TABLE 6

Qualifications of library workers in government libraries

QUALIFICATION	Lib. workers	N=20	%
Junior Certificate	3	2	9
Cambridge Overseas School Certificate	18	6	55
Certificates in Library Studies	3	3	9
Diploma in Library Studies	4	4	12
Degree in Library Studies	5	5	15
Total	33	20	100

Table 6 reflects the qualifications of library workers in government libraries. The certificates, diplomas and degrees are university qualifications, while the rest of the government library workers have no library qualifications.

4.7.2 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The emphasis in the second part of this section is on staff training, in-service training, conferences, workshops and seminars.

4.7.2.1 IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Library workers in government libraries responded to the question regarding the opportunities for, and levels of, in-service training, by pointing out that they attended workshops, conferences and seminars, as part of in-service training. This training was done to equip library workers with knowledge and skills in order to cope with library work, especially those library workers who had not had formal training. In spite of workshops, conferences and seminars that they attended, government library workers complained that after training they were unable to apply the knowledge and skills that they had acquired because of a lack of library facilities. Those who went for formal training, which does not happen often, also complained that after training there was no incentive of any kind. With poor salaries and inadequate library facilities the situation seems to be worse than ever.

The responses from library workers revealed that they were released for workshops and seminars twice or three times a year as part of the in-service training, depending on the budget and whether or not the government paid for the training. Regarding the question of the sponsor for the in-service training, library workers revealed that the government paid for their training.

4.8 SECTION E: LIBRARY USERS

Section E is about users, individuals who use the library, their reasons for using the library and users who would benefit if they had access to government libraries.

4.8.1 USERS OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Responses to the question concerning categories of users indicated that in all government libraries there were government officials who use the libraries, although in some libraries there was a very small number of them. Government libraries also had students, researchers and a very small number of members of the public as users.

4.8.2 CATEGORIES OF USERS WHO USE GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES MOST

The questions of category of users who use government libraries most and the reason for using the library were merged. The majority of answers to these questions were that most users of government libraries were researchers and students. When the researcher asked about other users, the respondents showed that researchers and students frequent the library more often than other users. As reasons for using the library, nine (45%) library workers revealed that users use the library to collect information for assignments, while three (15%) indicated that users use libraries for reading. Two (10%) library workers said that libraries were used for studying. The remaining six (30%) library workers replied that libraries were used for research.

4.8.3 CATEGORIES OF USERS WHO MIGHT BENEFIT IF THEY HAD ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

To the question dealing with categories of users who would benefit more if they were given access to government libraries, all library workers agreed that the public in general would benefit. This was because the public usually had to ask permission to use these libraries. In addition, these libraries have collections of different subjects in different disciplines, which will assist the public in a variety of subjects.

4.8.4 PERIODS WHICH WERE BUSIER THAN OTHER PERIODS

Library workers were asked if there were periods when there were more users than other periods. The responses from 12 (60%) library workers indicated that the period of influx of users was when the students were preparing for their examinations and when there were projects coming up. At this time, much work is done and researchers visit libraries frequently. The remaining 8 (40%) said that in their libraries there was not much difference. Perhaps this was because some libraries did not have a large population of students as users.

4.9 SECTION F: LIBRARY EQUIPMENT IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Of all the interviewed library workers, nine (45%) said that they have tables and chairs for users in their libraries. Eleven (55%) gave a negative answer for tables and chairs for users, but for staff only. All library workers said that they had telephones in their libraries, but for staff only. The faxes that were available were for the use of the whole ministry and not for library users. There were eight (40%) government library workers who pointed out that they have photocopiers that are used by the staff and the users. The rest of government library workers said they had no photocopiers. Government libraries that have library equipment for staff and the users are those that have a budget and also have qualified staff.

[The next page contains Table 7]

Table 7 Table showing accumulated results of survey of government libraries

Govt Lib	Budget	Staff	JC	COSC	Univ Cert	Univ Dip	Univ Deg	Cat	Dona-tions	Books	Ref books	Reports	Period-ical	Newsp	Non book	Exoh	ILL	Lit Search	Comps/ Internet	Photo-copier	Tables/ Chairs
A	X	2	X	X			X	Eleo		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	X	2				X	X	Eleo		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
C	X	2			X		X	Eleo		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
D	X	2		X	X		X	Eleo		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
E	X	1			X			Eleo		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
F	X	4		XX		X	X	Card		X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X
G	X	1		X				Card		X	X	X	X					X			X
H	X	2		X											X						
I	X	4	X	XXX											X						
J		2		X		X		Card	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
K		1			X			Card	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
L		2		X		X			X	X		X	X	X		X		X			
M		1		X					X	X		X	X			X		X			
N		1		X					X	X		X	X	X		X		X			
O		1		X					X	X		X	X	X		X					
P		1		X					X	X		X	X	X		X					
Q		1	X						X	X		X	X	X		X			X		
R		1		X					X	X		X	X	X		X					
S		1		X					X	X		X	X	X							
T		1		X					X	X		X									

4.10 ACCUMULATED SURVEY RESULTS

Table 7 reflects the assets and activities of the government libraries surveyed. The libraries are arranged in descending order, with the most advantaged at the top of the table and the most disadvantaged at the bottom. The accumulation of almost all of the survey results allowed the researcher to compare and correlate these and observe certain trends. The most important observation is that out of the twenty libraries surveyed the nine libraries which have a budget employ staff with the highest qualifications. Seven of these libraries employ more than one member of staff. Only nine libraries of the total surveyed have a catalogue and seven are from this so-called "budget" group. The five libraries which have electronic catalogues and computer and Internet facilities also fall within this group.

As reflected in Table 7, the majority of government libraries do not have a budget. They depend on donations and lack qualified staff. These libraries do not have the bare essentials of government libraries, such as catalogues, photocopiers, tables and chairs. They do not offer any reference services such as literature searching or inter-library loans.

The libraries which receive an annual budget appear to be those with the most qualified staff, the most assets, the most comprehensive range of materials and those which offer more services to the user. The implications of this will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

4.11 SUMMARY

The analysis of the findings of the study appear in this chapter. The problem which this study attempted to address is the status of government ministerial libraries in Lesotho and to assess the adequacy of their information-provision. The majority of government library workers had no formal training and there were no policies and laws supporting these libraries. The objectives of the study were revisited and the findings of the study revealed that in Lesotho there are no policies and laws that govern the establishment of government libraries. Most of government libraries have no funding for acquisition of materials. Some libraries were not able to deliver some services adequately because of a lack of qualified staff. Among the users of government libraries, members of the public are few in numbers, because they do not have easy access to government libraries. Most government libraries do not have library equipment for their users' needs. In general, the study revealed that there is a lack of support from the government.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the survey of government libraries in Lesotho. Aspects covered by the interview schedule included introduction, library material, services, staffing, users and equipment.

The purpose of the study was to explore government ministerial libraries in Lesotho. The findings of the study will be discussed in the order of, and in response to, the research objectives as listed in chapter one and the previous chapter.

The findings of the study established that there were no government policies and laws in Lesotho that supported government libraries. Some of the government library workers complained that a little support that they receive from the government was inadequate and consequently, they were unable to meet the requirements of their libraries. The library workers also revealed that many government libraries depend on donations, which were not adequate in most cases. The majority of responses from library workers pointed out that government libraries do not get recognition, assistance or support from the government. As a result, most of them tend to stagnate and there is little or no growth and development.

5.2 AIMS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

In question one the names of different ministries that government libraries fall under were listed. These enabled the researcher to differentiate between them and prevented the confusion the researcher would have encountered when she discovered that some ministries had two libraries. The study revealed that government libraries were established in 1966, contrary to Ridinger's (in Kent 1983:259) assumptions that government libraries in Lesotho were established in 1975/76. The study revealed that the first library to be established was the library of the Agricultural Information Services. This library was established in 1966. The LIPAM library was established in 1967. As expected, libraries that were established in the 1990s were more developed in terms of technology than libraries that were established in the 1960s.

5.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE MINISTRIES

The survey revealed that only 35% of library workers responded positively to the question of the objectives of the ministries. White (1984:24) believed that it is essential for a library worker in a government library to know what her/his ministry's goals are and to plan ways to develop and support them. If the remaining 65% of library workers did not know the objectives of their ministries, then they could not support their ministries effectively. This reveals that there is a problem which needs to be solved. Library workers should know the objectives of their ministries, because these objectives provide the guidelines that point the libraries in the right direction. Burkett (1972:v) felt that the objectives of ministries under which government libraries fall should be clearly stipulated and made known to these libraries.

5.2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The responses of the survey established that 50% of government libraries had objectives. Of this 50%, only 20% had aims and objectives that were based on those of their ministries, while 30% had objectives which were not based on the objectives of their ministries. The other 50% of library workers responded by saying that libraries disseminate information. The major goal of government libraries, as stated by Aufdenkamp *et al.* (1975:3), is to provide information for immediate and utilitarian purposes. Ashworth (1979:10) believed that an additional role for government libraries is to collect and index all historical documents of the ministries under which they fall. The fact that library workers did not know the aims and objectives of their libraries was an indication that these libraries had no direction concerning why they were established, what they were doing and where they were going. The researcher was surprised, because no library can function without aims and objectives. Morgenstern (1993:164) and Mwacalimba (1993:52) agree that the main objective of a government library should be to meet the information needs of the personnel, whose duty it is to ensure that the activities of the government are carried out. White (1984:25) points out that government libraries exist to support and enhance the mission of the ministry under which they fall. In other words, government libraries have been established to assist government officials with information in order to perform the duties of the government effectively and efficiently. If Lesotho government libraries do not have aims and objectives, as half the responses revealed, how do they support and enhance the mission of the ministry under which they fall? This makes one wonder whether government libraries really fulfil what they were established for or are they simply walls with a few books inside, which are not adequate for users?

5.2.3 POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES REGARDING GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The present study revealed that only 20% of library workers responded to the question on policies of the ministries but libraries were not included in these policies. The rest appeared not

to know anything about the policies. Library workers who responded to this question had no instant answer, but had to ponder and then look for the right answer from the reports and annual reports of the ministry. This was an indication that, although policies were written in reports, they were not implemented and the workers in the ministry knew nothing about them. To the researcher's amazement, the policies that were mentioned by four library workers did not include libraries.

Ranson (in Nassimbeni 2001:25) states that policies are required to express an organization's intended goals and values and are a yardstick for evaluating current performance. If the policies of the ministry were not known by the library, which was another part of the whole body of the ministry, surely the body could not function well? Dalton (in Mukangara 2000:2) believes that policies are guidelines that co-ordinate the production flow and availability of information in all sectors of the nation. In other words, policies guide the flow of information, even in ministries including libraries. In this way it is essential that libraries, as part of the ministry, should be included in the policies of the ministry. It was stated by Ferguson and Mobley (1984:99) that in order to plan services accurately, the library worker needs to be informed about what his ministry is working on and what its trends and policies are.

The fact that libraries and information centres were not included in ministerial policies was an indication of a lack of recognition of libraries. "As policies in government improve the chances for locating accountability, then without them government cannot stimulate an integrated approach to information provision or to motivate coordination among existing information agencies and the effective creation and use of professional capabilities" (Mchombu and Miti in Mukangara 2000:82). Mohamed (1988:I) stated that there are certain benefits that can result from the clearly stated national policy which will:

- "Bring great recognition of the importance of and the support for library and information services.
- Hasten the development of the infrastructure appropriate for library and information services.
- Lead to an earlier acceptance of information as a national resource that might contribute to increased productivity in research and development.
- Then lastly bring forward the application of modern technology to the management of information resource."

5.2.4 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR MINISTERIAL LIBRARIES

In response to a question concerning the support of the government for libraries, 35% of the government library workers said that the government assisted in the purchase of library

materials like books, but most of them complained that what they got was not enough to cater for all their users' needs. Some government library workers, within the 35% that claimed the support of their government, had a really sizeable share of funds for library materials while others were given very small amounts. Amazingly, when asked what the reason was for such disparity between them, the researcher discovered that the two libraries that had a high percentage of financial assistance were institutional libraries. Libraries such as the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration (LIPAM) claimed that 60% of the materials in their library is acquired through government funds. The National Health Training College (NHTC) stated that 50% of their material was acquired with government financial assistance. Another library with a high percentage of assistance was the National Environment Library, which was aided by projects within the ministry. A large proportion of government libraries (65%) did not get any financial assistance from the government and depended solely on donations.

Government should support libraries with adequate accommodation, because congested space in a library discourages adequate use of the library (Agha in Mohamed 1988:69). Agha states that government should also provide libraries with sufficient professional and non-professional staff because under-staffed libraries result in a backlog and in services that are not performed effectively. Ashworth (1979:17) assumes that the growth of libraries and the best results that they can attain are due to the support of their ministries and departments and their belief in them. The government should give the library the support in all its endeavours. This means that the library workers should be put on the same footing with other employees (Ashworth 1979:17). From the survey responses and the experience of the researcher, who has worked for many years in government libraries, the lamentations of library workers have been present for years and there has never been anyone to hear their plea. It is discouraging to note that such a depressing situation still exists.

The consequences of this are the lower status of the majority of government libraries, because nobody seems to have an interest in them. Burkett (1972:v) feels that government libraries should know what responsibilities the government has in regard to their growth and development. Libraries should be regarded as an important link in the communication process in society and their establishment is evidence of social maturity (Agha in Mohamed 1988:71). The present findings show that government libraries were not given priority in Lesotho if the top officials were the ones who do not see the importance of information. It is very disappointing, because it is people in the higher ranks of the government, the decision-makers, the planners and the government administrators, who need adequate information for their daily government activities. Totemeyer and Stander (1991:1) emphasised that libraries and access to adequate information are vital to the survival of the ministries. Libraries should be given top priority.

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5.3 LIBRARY MATERIALS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The survey showed that almost all government libraries have books, even though in some libraries there is only a small collection. The majority of these libraries depend solely on donations, which in many cases are irrelevant to the users. Radio Lesotho and LENA libraries' collections include CDs, videotapes, videocassettes, records and tapes. These two libraries fall under the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology and do not depend solely on donations, as many of the government libraries do.

The survey showed that 90% of libraries had reports, periodicals and documents, but that they differ in strength and content from library to library. Sixty percent of government libraries had newspapers and 40% had no newspapers. It was not acceptable that eight government libraries did not have newspapers, as Totemeyer and Stander (1991:10) contend that besides having current information, newspapers are a way of attracting daily visitors. Only 45% of government libraries had reference books. Libraries should have reference books to assist users in their search for information. Libraries should also have videos and CDs, for the benefit of their users. CDs can store much information which, in many cases, is not found in books. Government libraries lag behind in this field, because the survey showed that only 15% of libraries had both videotapes and videocassettes; 15% had audiocassettes and 10% had CDs, audiotapes and videos. Audiovisual materials are important in libraries because many reports and catalogues are issued in CD format. Conference records can be in tape format. These are some of the materials that should be found in adequately stocked government libraries. Most of the government libraries in Lesotho do not have this type of material in their collection.

According to Ferguson and Mobley (1984), periodicals are part of government library resources. They include magazines and journals. These are very important scholarly publications, because their information is more up to date. They are materials that are usually issued at regular intervals and are expected to be published indefinitely. Ferguson and Mobley (1984:37) claim that over the years of a title's publication a continuous record of advancement in a field is furnished, forming a basic body of literature, which will be adequate for users in that particular field. They state that this part of a government library collection is so important that in some libraries a large portion of their budget is spent on subscription to the back files rather than on books. This is not the case in Lesotho government libraries, with their limited budgets, which enables them to purchase only a few periodicals, let alone the back files.

5.3.1 ACQUISITION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Acquisition serves as a bridge between the publisher and the library in the process of information dissemination. It focuses on the form of publication and its accessibility.

Acquisition embodies all areas that include buying and borrowing, regardless of format. A library worker should set up a planned policy of acquiring materials, but before that he/she has to check existing materials for the sake of efficiency and economy (Aufdenkamp *et. al.* 1975:3).

The survey showed that 55% of government libraries acquire books through donations, with no assistance from the government. It also established that, within that 55%, 35% exchange materials within and outside the country, although their mode of exchange is rather peculiar. They receive materials from other countries, even from overseas, but do not send out their own materials for exchange, because of financial constraints.

These libraries were supposed to send what they produced from within the country; for instance they were supposed to send their annual reports, quarterly and monthly pamphlets which they produce in their ministry and about their ministries, their circulars and other reports in their ministry. Libraries (45%) which acquired their materials through a budget complained that their budgets did not meet their requirements.

Agha (in Mohamed 1988:71) has indicated that "appropriate funds should be allocated for the purchase and processing of library material as the effects of under-provision to libraries can result in their closure". Ferguson and Mobley (1984:47) recommended that when the minister needs to acquire materials the library should be appointed as the purchasing section for the ministry, because it is more familiar with printed material. Books should be purchased through an importer, because this will eliminate the problem of foreign exchange and make use of the agent's knowledge. From the experience of the researcher, that kind of method for purchasing materials is not applied in government libraries in Lesotho. Library workers simply visit the bookshop and purchase whatever materials they need. Sometimes they visit bookshops in neighbouring countries to purchase library materials. Acquisition of the reports is rather difficult most of the time, because they have no bibliographic details to identify the issuing source and they have limited printed publications. Aufdenkamp *et al.* (1975:17) assert that this type of material is essential in the collection of government libraries and should be acquired in spite of the obstacles that are encountered during their acquisition.

The fact that the government does not assist most of the government libraries financially in the acquisition of library materials hinders their improvement and growth. Financial constraints do not only hinder the growth of libraries, but users avoid inquiring about any information in libraries that have irrelevant materials. Library workers become redundant in libraries that have no users. Libraries that are not functioning well because of inadequate materials end up with no users at all.

5.3.2 ORGANIZATION OF MATERIALS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The findings related to the classification, cataloguing and the shelving arrangements will be discussed in this section.

5.3.2.1 CLASSIFICATION

Classification is used for easy access to library materials. Government libraries use classification to organise their materials to enable users to access them in an easy and adequate manner from the shelves.

Regarding classification, it was discovered that the 85% of government libraries organized their materials according to DDC and the remaining 15% used other systems. Two libraries had used Library of Congress and another had used Universal Decimal Classification, but they were gradually all converting to DDC. As Ferguson and Mobley (1984:60) pointed out, these three classification systems are regarded as the most well-known, which the majority of libraries use for organising their collections. All government libraries were converting to DDC, because they wanted their library materials to be in a standard form, to facilitate easy exchange of library materials within libraries during inter-library loans and library co-operation. DDC is used in most libraries in Lesotho and South Africa.

Ferguson and Mobley (1984:62) recommend that, although there are these schemes, government libraries are free to invent their own systems, which are suitable for their collections. These schemes should be flexible, cheap and user-friendly. Most library workers in government libraries seek to use simple, inexpensive methods, where possible, yet they also need to develop detailed specialized subject organization scheme, when necessary (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:18). The majority of library workers responded that their materials were all organised and it was encouraging to find that at least some had tried their best to organize their library materials. However, the researcher observed to her amazement that in some libraries books were piled in boxes at the back of shelves and some were put on the shelves without being classified properly.

Most of the libraries whose collections were not properly arranged were those whose staff had had no formal training. Even though many had tried to catalogue their collections, the backlog that was found in some libraries had accumulated over the years because of a lack of trained staff. This was, again, an indication of government libraries lagging behind. In libraries with qualified library workers things were not so bad, with materials on the shelves being arranged by subject.

The organization of government library materials is very important in these libraries and in every library, because it facilitates easy retrieval of information by users. Totemeyer and Stander (1991:20) state that proper description, analysis and retrieval of information within sources requires properly trained staff. This indicates that library activities or services need staff that are trained in library work in order to operate them in an adequate manner. The researcher observed during her interviews that periodicals were not systematically arranged in most libraries. This was not acceptable, as Totemeyer and Stander (1991:18) believe that periodicals should be indexed, otherwise useful and important information in these periodicals stays hidden.

5.3.2.2 CATALOGUES

Responses to the question on catalogues revealed that 45% of government libraries had catalogues of different types. For example, 25% had computerized catalogues, 20% had card catalogues and 55% had no catalogues at all. The fact that 55% had no catalogues was discouraging, because catalogues co-ordinate the users with materials in the library and on the shelves. Users who are able to use catalogues felt free to look for information they need from catalogues.

Cooper (2002) points out that in the UK staff use an electronic catalogue, which enables them to retrieve material from the Intranet, even though they still have a paper copy which is reserved for archival purposes. This is a very adequate library service, which government libraries in Lesotho should borrow from government libraries in the UK. Libraries in Lesotho could also distribute copies of their catalogue to users, especially to those in the ministry, including senior officials. This may be another way of making them aware of the type of material the library has. Catalogues save the time of the user and the library worker, especially in a busy library and in a one-man library. As indicated by Totemeyer and Stander (1991:22), library workers can cope and understand well when they are taught author and title cataloguing, but subject cataloguing is the most difficult aspect to teach during in-service training. Maybe this was the reason why some government libraries did not have catalogues, especially those that had staff without formal training in library work. Catalogues assist a library worker during stocktaking, provided it is an up-to-date and comprehensive catalogue. The survey revealed that the 45% of government libraries which had catalogues, had catalogues which were accessible to the users.

5.4 LIBRARY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES

This section will be divided into two parts, for the sake of the discussion: the equipment followed by the service.

5.4.1 LIBRARY EQUIPMENT

The presence of basic library equipment can often be a very good indicator of the level of service provided by a library and the commitment of the ministry and its staff to the library.

5.4.1.1 TABLES AND CHAIRS

The survey revealed that 45% of libraries have tables and chairs for users. It was very encouraging to find that at least some government libraries have acquired tables and chairs for users. It is a step forward, because some users enjoy sitting and reading newspapers, while others like to browse and even to work on their books while sitting down comfortably. However, 55% of government libraries that had staff with no formal training had no tables and chairs for readers. It is disappointing to find such a great number of government libraries without tables and chairs for users. Library equipment should include tables and chairs and even carrels, if necessary, for the comfort of users (Aufdenkamp *et al.* 1975:54). They point out that facilities for users offer a considerable opportunity and will have much effect on the ease and amount of the use made of the library. There should be the same consideration on the part of the government towards all departments under the same ministry.

5.4.1.2 TELEPHONES AND FAX

The survey revealed that all government libraries have telephones in their libraries, but these are used only by the staff. They also said that the fax machines are in other offices and are for the benefit of the whole ministry.

5.4.1.3 PHOTOCOPIERS

The study revealed that only 40% of government libraries have photocopiers that were used by staff and users. A photocopier is an important library service and the fact that the majority (60%) of government libraries do not have photocopiers is not acceptable. This is also an indication that the government is not giving priority to libraries or to the requirements of libraries. As a result, libraries do not develop.

5.4.1.4 COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET

Information Communication Technology is widely used in most libraries, including government libraries. Chisenga (in Mpotokwane 2002:18) stated that ICT came into being as a result of the digital merger between computer technology, telecommunication technologies and other media

communication technologies. ICT's importance in government libraries is reflected in the access to information and communication in the daily duties of library workers.

The survey established that only 35% of government libraries had the Internet and 40% had computers which were restricted to staff use only. ICT is very important, as it facilitates access to information and communication in libraries, government libraries included. Norris (2001:51) observes the importance of ICT as providing a value-added approach to information resources which are vital to government libraries. Library workers are now able to manipulate computers and access different databases. This was not possible before the birth of ICT. The fact that such a small number of government libraries have computers and the Internet is very depressing.

ICT provides the best, quickest and easiest mode of information communication and retrieval today that can be identified in many developed libraries, although it is expensive. It is not surprising that the study reveals that the majority of government libraries in Lesotho do not use this technology. Brittin (1992:3) says that the use of computers, as one of the technologies under the umbrella of ICT has led to the "integration of internal and external sources of information earmarked by the library". She stresses that computers in libraries provide access to a wider range of information sources than is possible from a manual system, for example online searches are quicker. Computers also provide access to a multi-range of databases of primary (as well as secondary) material, which libraries would have stocked. An example of these databases is a computerised catalogue, which offers more access points than a manual catalogue.

Computers improve existing services and make the ordering of library materials simpler than a manual system, because follow-up can easily be done. By using computers, library workers can keep track of issued books and books on loan, their due dates and overdues, through OPAC. The argument of Sharif and Mahmood (2001:1) is that "what is most lacking in the wide spread of use of computers in libraries and information centres is neither the capability of computers nor the availability of software but the right person to engineer computer application in libraries". The researcher disagrees with this opinion, because she believes that computers should be acquired first. Thereafter, the right person should be able to implement computer strategies. The majority of government libraries in Lesotho have no computers. This is not because library workers are not computer literate but the problem is of funding to pay for computers.

5.4.2 LIBRARY SERVICES

5.4.2.1 LIBRARY LOANS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The survey revealed that 80% of government libraries lend books. This was very encouraging, as in spite of being government libraries, they were willing to disseminate information through lending.

5.4.2.1.1 THE PERCENTAGES OF MATERIALS THAT GO OUT REGULARLY ON LOAN IN DIFFERENT LIBRARIES

The present study revealed that nine government libraries had a high percentage of material that goes out on loan, daily. Among the nine, five had 60% of their material that went out on loan, while two of those had 50% of books that went out daily. The other two had 25% of books that went out daily on loan. The study revealed that the government libraries that had a high percentage of material going out daily were libraries that had a budget. Most of their users were students. The percentage was not very high in the lending of periodicals in government libraries. Maybe this was because periodicals are an expensive type of material that libraries could not afford to purchase, with their limited resources. Some government libraries have been established for many years, but are still very much in an embryonic stage when it comes to adequate, relevant and up-to-standard collections.

5.4.2.2 INTER-LIBRARY LOANS (ILL)

Inter-library loan is a transaction in which library materials, or copies of the materials, are made available by one library to another, upon request. It is one of the established methods of library co-operation. It includes borrowing and lending books between libraries, providing photocopies of articles from periodicals and permitting one patron from one library to use the other library. It may require an agreement among all libraries to lend books to each other and to provide photocopies of materials, when required. In such situations, a union catalogue of library holdings would be highly desirable as a location device and a central photographic service might be helpful, even though libraries far away from this central service might still own some copying equipment.

Responses regarding questions on inter-library loans showed that only 25% of libraries offered inter-library loan services. The survey established that 10% of these government libraries lend more than they borrow while 15% of the same group of government libraries claimed that they borrow more than they lend. It was surprising to find that the survey came up with such a small percentage of government libraries that participated in inter-library loans. It is known that these libraries are small and do not have enough material to cover all the requirements of the library. One would therefore believe that they would use inter-library loans more, because that would be another way to augment the materials in their collections.

Ferguson and Mobley (1984:52) indicated that "inter-library loan to augment a library collection occurs everywhere in the library world because there is no such a thing as an all-inclusive library. The borrowing privilege has always been vitally important to a government library. The government library characteristically has a small collection in a limited subject area and is bound to need other materials from time to time. Materials that government libraries need, for example, are materials outside their subject field, materials needed only occasionally and materials which cannot be purchased or those that are not practical to purchase."

In addition to this, White (1984:114) observed that government libraries are supposed to be more borrowers than lenders, because their collection includes unusual and proprietary documents not listed in bibliographic tools. They rarely have multiple copies and they feel a responsibility to keep materials in heavy demand available for their own users. Looking at all these reasons that compel government libraries to borrow, it is surprising to find that in Lesotho government libraries are not very engaged with inter-library loans.

5.4.2.3 REFERENCE SERVICES IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

All government library workers responded positively to the question on whether they answer reference queries over the desk. This was encouraging, because it showed that this was at least one service which was provided by all libraries. The survey also revealed that most of the government libraries answered queries over the phone, in spite of the problem of the absence of direct lines. The researcher observed that library workers had to be on good terms with their switchboard operators, or they might not get their messages at all.

Literature search services were offered by 65% of the government libraries. This was encouraging, even though this service was offered mainly in libraries with qualified staff. The fact that such high a percentage offered literature search services indicated that in these services library workers had begun to recognise the value of literature searching services and were trying hard to do their work. A few government libraries did not offer the services of a literature search and these were libraries with staff that had no library training and whose staff needed some training and guidance concerning these services.

Sixty-five percent of government libraries offered current awareness services. As with the literature search services, it was also offered only by libraries with staff that had formal training, while libraries with staff that had no formal training had difficulty in the provision of these services. Among the staff that had university degrees there were also paraprofessionals with university diplomas and university certificates, who were able to offer the literature search and current awareness services in government libraries. Ferguson and Mobley (1984:79) state that current awareness services encompass all the services a library initiates that are designed

to keep the organizations' staff abreast of professional literature and to update them with current news in their field. Literature search and current awareness are very important in government libraries, as well as all other services. Libraries should ensure effective use of their services by informing readers of resources, information searches, compilation of bibliographies and abstracting (Withers in Totemeyer and Stander 1991:14).

5.5 STAFFING, EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND QUALIFICATIONS OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARY WORKERS

The present study revealed that there was a total of 33 staff members in the 20 government libraries surveyed. A large number of government libraries (55%) had only one library worker, who, in most cases, was a person who had no formal training in the library field. The libraries with only one library worker closed their services in the event of leave or absence and it was not a satisfactory situation. Some government libraries (35%) had two library workers each and another 10% had four library workers each. This did not reflect a good situation in the staffing of government libraries. The majority needed training, as it was not appropriate for a library to be run with all staff that had no formal training in librarianship, let alone the head of the library. According to Withers (in Totemeyer and Stander 1991:22), a government library service should have at least one professional member of staff who is knowledgeable in the library field. According to the results of the present study, this is not the case in government libraries in Lesotho. White (1984:127) is of the same opinion. This author stresses that government libraries should have at least two members of staff, a professional and a clerk supporting him or her.

5.5.1 OFFICIAL TITLES OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARY WORKERS

Government library workers in Lesotho operate under various titles, such as librarian, assistant librarian and library assistant. It is evident that the official, designated titles are not linked to their qualifications. The titles were given to anyone working in the library. For an example, the "librarian" is a title of the head of the National University Library, but in government libraries the title was given to the head of a library with a degree in library and information studies. The title of "assistant librarian" is given to a person with a Master's degree in library and information science at the University library, but in the government libraries it is given to a library worker with a university diploma in library and information studies and a university certificate in library and information studies. The title of "library assistant" is given to a library worker with no qualifications in library work and no formal training. Five government libraries (25%) are run by qualified librarians with a university degree, while four government libraries (20%) are run by library workers with a diploma and certificate. The rest of the government libraries are run by the staff that have no formal training in librarianship but have a Cambridge

Overseas School Certificate (COSC) and a Junior Certificate (JC). The situation described by Lebotsa (1980:95), Thabisi (1983:3) and Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa (2002), who complained about the lack of formal training of most government library staff, is improving. At the time of the present study there are more library workers with university degrees and diplomas in library and information studies than there were.

5.5.2 STAFF DEVELOPMENT: CONTINUING EDUCATION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING

On the question of in-service training and continuing education, there were both negative and positive responses. The negative responses related to the formal and continuing education, which was not offered in a satisfactory manner, that is library workers were unable to attend training because of financial constraints. According to Ferguson and Mobley (1984:169), continuing education is very important because it enhances the professional capabilities of the individual library worker and helps to augment the already acquired certificate. Government should not only encourage but subsidize this training, as it is apt to be a crucial measure of a professional's contribution to his or her job. This is reflected in the fact that since the inception of these libraries there have been only 25% library workers with university degrees in government libraries which shows that not a great deal has improved. The movement of some qualified library workers to better positions in other institutions does not excuse the small number of qualified library workers in government libraries. This is an indication that there is no development in government libraries in Lesotho. Government libraries in Lesotho need a strong base of government information policy to uplift them by sending more people for training. The positive side is that those library workers who were not qualified were released for in-service training twice or even three times a year, provided there were funds. These workshops were financed by government without any complaints, which was a step forward. These workshops provided the basics to equip library workers with the skills and knowledge necessary for library work. However, they did not provide the much-needed resources with which to implement the training.

5.5.3 UNFILLED POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

The study revealed that only 10% of government libraries had unfilled positions, which causes concern, because government libraries need many positions, as they lack staff. The two libraries were the LIPAM, where the position was not filled because of financial problems, and the Agricultural Research Library, where the previous holder had left for a higher position in another ministry.

From the interviews conducted, the researcher learned that library workers moved from ministry to ministry because of positions that are not reviewed or upgraded, even after library workers had undergone formal training and had acquired higher qualifications. This situation might be aggravated by the movement of qualified staff to higher positions in other institutions. The main issue is that government does not give recognition to the qualifications of library workers and it does not check that they are secure in their positions. According to Ashworth (1979:83), it is very important that library workers should acquire training, it would be unprofitable for the relevant ministry if its staff worked below maximum efficiency because they did not know how best to avail themselves of all the library's services.

5.6 USERS AND CATEGORIES OF USERS WHO USE THE LIBRARY MOST

The questions of users and categories of users who use the library most were merged. The study revealed that categories of users included students, researchers, government officials and a small number of members of the public. The study established that researchers and students used the library more than other users. It was surprising to find that government officials who could benefit more from government libraries do not visit or use the library the way one would assume they would.

Government libraries were established because of the need of the ministry and for the benefit of the Civil Service community. Totemeyer and Stander (1991:1) concur that the administration, or even a ministry of government, cannot function well without access to adequate library and information materials. Researchers, subject specialists, planners, decision makers and workers, most of whom belong to the Civil Service need daily information, for the fulfilment of government activities.

If people who are in senior positions do not use the library, it is obvious they do not use it because they do not find anything important in it. In this case it will be difficult to convince such people in positions of authority about the importance and the requirements of the library.

5.6.1 THE MAIN REASONS FOR USING THE LIBRARY

According to the responses, 45% of library workers said that users use the library to collect information, while 15% believed that users used the library for reading. The study revealed that 10% of library workers pointed out that library users do bring their material and work in the library, while 30% claimed that it was used mainly for research. Government libraries can be used for many reasons, for an example they can be used for decision-making and planning. Some people bring their own material to use in the library, while other users use the library to

collect information from books, journals and other sources. Some use the library for browsing, reading the articles and newspapers and enjoying the tranquility of the library.

5.6.2 CATEGORIES OF USERS WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM GAINING ACCESS TO THE LIBRARY

The study established from the library workers that members of the public would benefit if allowed to use government libraries. The library workers also believed that the public should be allowed to use a government library freely and not have to seek special permission to gain access to one.

The study showed that 60% of the library workers responded by stating that there were periods when there are more users than at other times. The periods of influx in government libraries were during preparation for examinations by students and when there were many projects that were launched by the government and private sectors in the country. At these times researchers use the library more than at other times. The remaining 40% of respondents pointed out that in their libraries there was no change in numbers of attendees, because they did not have students as users.

5.6.3 OPENING/CLOSING TIMES IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES

Responses showed that government libraries have adopted the policy of the Civil Service, opening at 08:30 and closing at 16:30, like all other government offices. In addition, these libraries are not open on holidays and weekends. Weekends are the times when most people are free to visit the library, especially workers and students who are always busy during the week. Libraries should open from 09:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. That at least would give workers enough time to visit the library.

5.6.4 PROBLEMS OF THEFT/VANDALISM

It was impressive to discover that a small minority of government libraries (30%) complained of the theft of library material, especially when they do not have security systems. Theft or vandalism of library material is well known in libraries, including government libraries. Therefore it was very surprising to discover that the majority of government libraries had no problems with theft and/or vandalism.

5.7 ACCUMULATED RESULTS

Out of the twenty government libraries surveyed there are nine that indicated that they are being supported with a budget by their ministries (see Table 7). It is significant that five of this group of nine libraries are those with staff with the highest qualification, a university degree. Seven of the group with a budget have two or more staff members, very often a professional and a para-professional. In total, nine libraries indicated that they had a catalogue (card or electronic) and eight of these libraries are staffed by individuals with a university diploma, certificate or degree. All five libraries with electronic catalogues are part of the "budget" group. The existence of a catalogue in a library is seen as essential. The fact that seven of the nine libraries with a budget have a catalogue is very telling.

If one considers the other physical assets of these libraries, six of the "budget group" have photocopiers and computers, with Internet connections for staff use, and seven libraries are furnished with tables and chairs for users.

All the libraries that have a budget seem to be the ones that are performing well in terms of the services offered. It is once again those libraries with more highly qualified staff which have the facilities to enable them to provide a more efficient service. Five libraries indicated that they provide an ILL service and thirteen libraries indicated that they provide a literature searching service. All the libraries included in the "budget" group are included in this number. Four of the libraries which indicated the existence of a literature searching service do not have a catalogue.

There are libraries which appear to be exceptions, such as the Library J and Library K (see Table 7) which have no budgets. They appear to be performing as well as the other nine libraries which have budgets. They have staff with a university diploma or certificate, they have card catalogues, a full range of types of material, computers and the Internet, photocopiers, tables and chairs and offer a literature searching service. The reason for the adequate provision in these libraries may relate to the qualities of the staff employed and they are able to keep up a good standard of service.

The majority of government libraries depicted in Table 7 do not have a budget. These libraries do not have the bare essentials of government libraries such as catalogues, photocopiers, tables and chairs. Besides depending on donations, they lack qualified staff and this results in poor service. They also do not offer any reference services such as literature searching or inter-library loans because of a lack of trained staff. These libraries frequently have one staff member only, who cannot perform all the library duties alone. It is not easy for a library to acquire, utilize and disseminate information when the library is under-staffed.

It is important to emphasize that the statistics gathered in the present study are limited to the responses gathered from library staff in these libraries. There is a possibility that some of their responses may be slightly inaccurate. For example, some library staff may indeed be unaware of budget allocations for their library. The fact that more senior ministry officials were not included in the study is a limitation. This was mentioned in Chapter 1. The researcher also knows of certain government libraries which do not have a formal, annual budget, but which are able to motivate for items, when needed, and these requests are granted.

The Table of accumulated results provided correlations which showed that the ministries which provide a budget for their libraries have the more well-equipped, more efficient libraries, with more highly qualified staff. They are able to employ two or more staff to a library. It appears to be a combination of qualified staff and budget which inevitably leads to more adequate facilities and the provision of a better service in these particular libraries.

These findings clearly demonstrate the vital role which government support plays in the provision of government library services. The disparities among government libraries covered by this study are an indication that the government has got to do something to close the gap by giving support to libraries that are lagging behind in terms of library materials, staff, staff training and library equipment.

5.8 SUMMARY

Chapter 5 discussed the findings of the study, which was carried out to explore government ministerial libraries in Maseru, with the intention of discovering the status of these libraries. The study's findings revealed that the majority of government ministerial libraries operated with inadequate, donated materials, which in most cases were not relevant to their needs. A minority of government libraries which received assistance from the government were provided with just a meagre budget, which did not meet the library's needs. Lack of qualified staff in government ministerial libraries resulted in inadequacy of library services. Most of these libraries were headed by unqualified staff in addition to their being one-man libraries. The findings of the study established that the objectives and policies in the government ministries did not accommodate these libraries. Besides this, the findings of the study pointed out that there was limited recognition or interest shown by the government towards government ministerial libraries. If a facility or service is not recognised it cannot be prioritised, in which case the facility or service cannot be supported with policies and resources (Ocholla 2000:35). The plight of government libraries includes lack of recognition, priority, policies and resources. From the findings of the study it is possible to conclude that a lack of interest, coupled with a lack of support and recognition from government towards government libraries, resulted in

the generally poor state that these libraries were in. Chapter 6 is concerned with conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 6 gives the summary of the findings and the conclusions and the recommendations of the present author. The purpose of the study was to explore government libraries in Maseru, Lesotho. Conclusions will be based on research questions and findings that the study revealed.

The research questions were:

- What are the aims and objectives of government libraries in Lesotho?
- What are the policies and regulations underpinning government libraries in Lesotho?
- What is the role played by the government in terms of these libraries?
- What is the level of education and qualification of library workers in government libraries?
- What are the types of users and patterns of usage in government libraries in Lesotho?
- What is the nature of the materials housed in government libraries and how are these organized?
- What method of acquisition is used for acquiring materials?
- What recommendations can be made for best practices in the management of government libraries?

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion reached regarding the aims and objectives of government libraries in Lesotho is that the majority did not have clear aims and objectives. The objectives of these libraries should have been based on the objectives of their ministries, but in most cases library staff did not know what these were and therefore could not implement them.

The findings regarding the policies underpinning these libraries revealed that there appear to be no clear, formal policies and laws from which libraries would be supported. An important contributory factor is that there is no national information policy in Lesotho and therefore no general legal infrastructure for the support of information services. The policies of many government ministries do not accommodate government libraries at all. As a result, libraries are excluded from most government plans.

As a result of a lack of policy in terms of government libraries, at all levels the government played a limited role in terms of library support. The majority of government libraries had no budget for the acquisition of library materials. These libraries depended solely on donations,

which, in most cases, were irrelevant to the needs of their users. The study revealed that government libraries acquired materials in exchange and the few government libraries that were assisted financially had a very limited budget, which was not enough for their requirements. Only three libraries claimed that they received a relatively high percentage of their budget from the government. For instance, the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM) library and the National Environment Services library received 60% of their budget requirements from the government, while the National Health Training College (NHTC) received 50% of their budget from the government. The library of the National Environment Services was also financed by projects within that ministry.

The study revealed that government does not give much support for government libraries in terms of recruitment and training of library staff.

The findings revealed that the majority of government libraries are one-man services. It was clear that the level of education was not adequate in the majority of government libraries, as, out of the 20 library staff interviewed, only five library workers had a university degree, four had a university diploma and two had university certificates. All these qualifications are in library and information studies. Most library workers in government libraries attend in-service training twice a year and the government finances all these workshops. Although library workers participate in in-service training, it was found that on returning to their libraries there are so few available resources that improvements could not be implemented. This resulted in a lack of motivation.

Another factor relates to formal, continuing education, as government was unable or unwilling to finance this and therefore unwilling to release staff for further education. The titles of library workers did not adequately reflect the various positions held. This was misleading and not standardized.

There were only two unfilled positions in government libraries at the time of the survey. From observation and the personal experience of the researcher, it appeared that little was done to attract staff to government library positions and salaries were not competitive. The possibility cannot be ignored that the gender issue affected the question of staffing and government support for libraries. Most government officials in the higher positions are men and library work is diminished in their eyes, as it is regarded as "women's work".

The users of government libraries include students, researchers, government officials and a very small percentage of members of the public. Among these users, students and researchers use the library most. The findings of the study revealed that library users use the library for different reasons, such as reading, research, and study and for serendipity. The findings of the

study showed that some government libraries had periods of heavy library use, when users came into their libraries, especially during student examinations and at the time of the booming of government projects. Other libraries do not experience much difference in the attendance of their users. Although the aim of government libraries should be to serve the officials of the Civil Service the study revealed that it was students and researchers who were the main users.

The findings of the study revealed that a few government libraries had equipment like tables and chairs for the use of their users, while the majority did not have this kind of equipment for their users. The telephones and fax in government libraries are for staff use only and the few libraries that have photocopiers are for both staff and users. Through the study it was discovered that very few government libraries had computers and the use of the Internet was not extended to library users.

In terms of the nature of the material it was found that government libraries had book and non-book materials in their collections. They had books reports, periodicals/journals and documents, although a few had newspapers and reference books. A few government libraries had non-book materials, in the form of audiocassettes, videotapes and CDs. Government libraries did lend materials to their users.

The study revealed that the majority of government libraries had no catalogues. Those that had catalogues were card and electronic catalogues. These catalogues were not only accessible to users, but were user-friendly. In terms of subject arrangement, most libraries used the Dewey Decimal Classification for classifying library materials and some libraries who did not use the Dewey Decimal Classification were planning to convert to this scheme.

Reference services were offered in government libraries, although in some libraries the staff did not have any formal training and not much exposure to this type of library service. It was established that only a few government libraries offered inter-library loans, but in a very limited way.

Based on the findings of the study it is possible to conclude that some of the government libraries in Lesotho have not developed to their full potential. This can, to a large extent, be attributed to lack of recognition, interest and support from the government. This results in the provision of insufficient resources in terms of staffing and materials and the inability of government libraries to provide an efficient and relevant service to their users.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Examining the results and conclusions of the study, the researcher has the following recommendations:

• Government should formulate policies that will include libraries, so that they will receive support through the formulation and implementation of these policies. Of utmost importance is the recommendation that a national information policy should be formulated and implemented, because it encompasses all libraries and information services. The government needs to formulate an information policy, because, as Mchombu and Mbiti (in Mukangara 2000:82) point out, without policies government cannot hope to stimulate an integrated approach to information provision, or to facilitate co-ordination among existing information agencies and the effective creation and use of professional capabilities.

• Government should support and give libraries recognition. It should also recruit and train people for library work, so as to enhance the quality of services, with trained and qualified library staff.

• Government ministries should be encouraged to include libraries in their annual budget. Donations should be accepted but library workers in government libraries should try to select materials that will be suitable for their users, because donated materials are often of little value and relevance to the user.

• As a result of their limited resources, government library workers should become more involved in resource sharing, for instance they should be more involved in library co-operation such as inter-library loans. The inter-library loan is a method of acquiring materials for users, to augment what is available in government libraries.

• Library workers should introduce ways of making government officials more aware of the materials and services they require to perform their roles more effectively.

• Government libraries should be more accessible to a wider range of users including the public as this will add more users.

• All government libraries should introduce, more widely, information technology such as computers, telephones and faxes. All government libraries should have photocopiers because photocopying is one of the essential actions in, and requirements of, a library. These services should be available to users.

• Government libraries should always issue monthly, quarterly and annual reports to their parent body, so that there is a record of what they are doing and what they have been

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doing during the entire year. Their long-term projection should always be given to their parent body as an indication of their work plan. All these might help to make the higher-ranking government officials more aware of the value and worth of this library service. Library workers should ensure that they are always included in the budget meetings and all ministerial meetings of senior or heads of departments, because this is where most of the ministerial plans, budget and estimates are discussed.

• The Library Association should strive hard to convince senior officials in the government that it is worthwhile to invest in the production and dissemination of information within Lesotho.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study explored government ministerial libraries in Lesotho. It was the first research to be conducted on government ministerial libraries in Lesotho. Future workers should look into the development of libraries, in general, in Lesotho.

Government policies and laws should accommodate libraries. National policy and a national information policy should be formulated and implemented, as this will bring about the recognition of the importance of, and provide support for, libraries and information services among policy-makers. Studies should be conducted on the training of library workers. In-service training should be continued and further formal training should be financed to enhance skills in library work.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL – PIETERMARITZBURG

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LIBRARIANS IN GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES IN MASERU, LESOTHO

I am a student at the University Natal, Pietermaritzburg doing a Masters Degree in Information Studies. As part of the course, I am doing a research project entitled "An Exploratory study of Government Ministerial Libraries in Maseru, Lesotho". The purpose of this interview is to collect information on Government Libraries in Lesotho.

I wish to ask you a few short questions, mindful of your busy schedule. All the information you provide will be kept in strict confidence.

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. When was this library established?

....

2. Under which Ministry does this library fall?

....

3. Could you please tell me the objectives of your Ministry?

....

....

4. What is the policy of your Ministry concerning the library?

....

....

5.   What role does the government play in regard to the administration and support of your library?

....

6.   What are the aims and objectives of your library?

....

7.   How do you acquire library materials? Through:

    • Budget   (   )
    • Exchange   (   )
    • Donations   (   )
    • Other ....

    Please elaborate e.g. what percentage for each category?

    ....

    ....

8.   What are the opening hours of your library?

....

SECTION B: MATERIALS

9.   What types of material does your collection consist of?

- Books ( )
- Reports ( )
- Periodicals/journals ( )
- Documents ( )
- Newspapers ( )
- Reference books ( )

Non-book materials:
- Audio Cassettes ( )
- Video Tapes ( )
- CDs ( )
- Other .... Please explain ....

10. Do you have a problem with theft and/or vandalism?

....

11. Do you loan materials?   Yes ( )   No ( )

12. If yes, what % of your library materials regularly go out on loan?

....

Organization of materials:

13. Are the materials systematically arranged? e.g. according to a classification scheme?
Please elaborate ....
....

14. What shelving policies/arrangement do you have?

....

SECTION C: LIBRARY SERVICES

15. Do you have a catalogue?

....

....

16. What form of catalogue do you have?

....

17. Is it easily accessible to the public? Please elaborate.

....

18. Do you make use of inter library loan (ILL)?   Yes ( )   No ( )

19. If yes, do you:
    • Lend more items than you borrow?
    • Borrow more items than you lend?

....

....

19. What sort of reference service do you provide? For example,
    • Reference queries answered over the desk
    • Reference queries answered via the telephone
    • Literature searches
    • Current awareness services

20. Do you have Internet access?   Yes ( )   No ( )

If yes, is it for staff and users? Please explain:

....

SECTION D: STAFFING

(a) Library workers:

21.   How many staff do you have in your library?

....

22.   Do you have any positions which are not filled?   Yes ( )   No ( )

       If yes, please elaborate:

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

23.   Can you please tell me the official titles of the staff in your library?

....

24.   What are their qualifications?

....

....

....

(b) Staff Development
In-Service training and continuing education

25.   Do you receive any form of staff development?

       • Workshop   ( )

- Conferences ( )
- Seminars ( )
- Training ( )
- Other. Please explain ....

26.   How often does this take place?

....

27.   Who pays for the staff development? Please give examples

....

SECTION E: USERS

28.   What categories of users do you have?

- Researchers ( )
- Government Officials ( )
- Students ( )
- Members of Public ( )
- Other. Please explain ....

29.   Which category uses the library the most?

....

30.   What is the main reason for people using the library?

....
....

31.   What other categories of users do you think would benefit from gaining access to your library?

....

....

....

32.   Are there periods when you get more users than at other times?
Yes ( )   No ( )

33.   If yes, when are these periods and why is there a sudden increase in user numbers?
....

SECTION F: EQUIPMENT

What type of library equipment do you have?

34. Tables   Yes ( )   No ( )

35. Chairs   Yes ( )   No ( )

36. Fax   Yes ( )   No ( )

37. Telephone   Yes ( )   No ( )

38. Photocopier   Yes ( )   No ( )

If yes, is the service for staff only, or is it for users as well?
....

....

39.   Computers?   Yes ( )   No ( )

If yes, are they only for staff use or are some reserved for users?
....

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