A Glance on Manpower in Public Library System in Kenya

Henry D S Kinya
Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi, Kenya
E-mail: hhkinya5@gmail.com
(Received on 03 May 2011 and accepted on 27 May 2011)

Abstract

Every public library in the community is unique and different in one way or the other by the community needs and services required by those it services, it should be reflected in distribution of manpower, also posting of the staff of the same job description and qualification is duplication of services and resources. Without diversifying and prioritizing services, duplication can deny users fundamental professional library information services like provision of subject analysis, statistical information and users' guidance. In assisting information users to access and use not only online information services but also access other websites services the role of public libraries within the information age context is changing from that of information provider to that of service provider and so is the roles of librarians; changing its old-age manual operations of print to print service to that of library networking to facilitate information sharing services and activities fundamentally requires the new dimension of trained manpower in ICT. In this paper manpower development, distribution and qualification in public libraries in Kenya has been discussed.

Keywords: *Public Libraries, Public Library Manpower Development*

1. PREAMBLE

Productive contribution and the development of democracy depend on acceptable education as well as on free and unlimited access to thought, culture and information. As per UNESCO public library manifesto (UNESCO, 1994), the public library, the local gateway to information make available a basic condition for lifelong knowledge, sovereign decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

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

Public libraries represent an indispensable link in the scientific system chain, a crucial role link in the development and maintenance of wide range and intensity of knowledge modernization and ideas in society and at individual level.

2. PROPOSED RESEARCH

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

Henry D S Kinya

and the expression of his imagination are made freely available to all'.

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

2.1 Public Library System

It is the communication of ideas and information for any type of users for their inseparable utilization in the promotion of democratic development of education to raise their economy as a result of sincere participation. Mostly it takes a pyramidal structure in nature with, state central libraries, district central libraries and village libraries [1].

2.2 Kenya National Library Services (KNLS)

The Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) Board [2] is a national corporation established by an Act of Parliament, Cap 225 of the Laws of Kenya in 1965 the Board commenced its mandated functions in 1967.

Board is empowered to develop public library services in Kenya to fill the vacuum that existed before and soon after independence regarding the provision of public library services hence bridge the level of literacy [3]. The headquarters library in Nairobi opened its doors to the public in 1969. Currently, the Board is responsible for managing eight libraries in eight provinces and over 32 libraries spread throughout the country at district level.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

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

1. To evaluate the performance of manpower in public library system in Kenya;

2. To suggest best policy on manpower development in public library system in Kenya.

4. HYPOTHESES

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

1. Cultural and social situation of the country has its impact on public library system;

2. Public libraries in Kenya are economically disadvantaged;

3. Manpower development in public libraries in Kenya is in the developing stage.

5. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Scope of the study was limited to the manpower development in public library system in Kenya e.g. KNLS.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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

7. DATA ANALYSIS

Attempt was made to collect data on manpower in KNLS 32(100%) libraries which is presented in Table 1.

The Table 1 shows total manpower distribution in KNLS 32(100%) libraries. It can be noted that the provincial libraries have a range of 5.00% - 16.51% manpower while district libraries have a range of 0.70% - 4.88%. Further it was noted that out of the total 860 KNLS manpower women were 40% of the total staff while men were 60%. The researcher attempted to response on the professional distribution which was not disclosed by the librarians in charge, due to personal reasons, this necessitated to get information from KNLS Director who gave information as presented in Table 2. The gender imbalance in KNLS is due to the cultural and social factor.

Table 1 Total Manpower

Name of Library	Number of Staff	Percentage
Nairobi	142	16.51
Buruburu	14	1.63
Mombasa	85	9.88
Kwale	12	1.40
Kilifi	15	1.74
Voi	18	2.10
Kisumu	45	5.23
Kisii	34	3.96
Ukwala	10	1.05
Nyilima	18	2.10
Awendo	8	0.93
Embu	48	5.88
Meru	13	1.51
Mwingi	21	2.44
Kithasyu	12	1.40
Nakuru	36	4.19
Eldoret	27	3.14
Kabarnet	16	1.86
Kericho	24	2.80
Silibwet	20	2.33
Kapsabet	14	1.63
Laikipia	21	2.44
Rumuruti	18	2.10
Nyeri	45	5.23
Thika	22	2.56
Naivasha	18	2.10
Karatina	15	1.74
Olkalou	10	1.05
Kakamega	43	5.00
Garissa	24	2.80
Wajir	6	0.70
Mandera	6	0.70
Total	860	100.00

An attempt was made to collect data on manpower i.e. designation, qualification and pay scale in KNLS 32(100%) libraries, which is presented in Table 2.

The Table 2 shows manpower presentation in KNLS in 32(100%) libraries. It can be noted that manpower in KNLS ranging from master degree and 12th class in the academic qualification. Further it was observed that manpower with a certificate to a master degree in library and information science in KNLS are 45.69% of the total manpower in KNLS, this representing 0.71% of total registered members, while those on the supporting staff are 54.31%. It can be observed that KNLS has over staffed on non-profession grades i.e. drivers, cleaners and clerks. The gap in the profession in KNLS has been attributed with lack of local institutions of higher learning offering the education in library and information science till 1990 when MOI University started the course. Most of the senior professionals are graduates from foreign countries. Also library science being a young profession in the country has not attracted many people to join it so is their pay scale it has not been fully recognized as a fully profession as lawyers and doctors.

On the refresher course offered to the KNLS staff it was observed from the librarian 32(100%), libraries confirmed to have received two refresher course in 2008; i.e. i) Performance contract ii) Supervisory skills, however, they stated that refresher course are done at the convenience of the management without prior consultation of the staff needs and knowledge gaps in the profession.

Table 2 Man Power in KNLS

Designation	No. of Posts	Qualification	Pay Scale(Ksh)
Director	1(0.12%)	MLISc (Master in Library & Information Sci)	450,000-550,000
Deputy Director	2(0.24%)	MLISc	150,000-200,000
Chief Librarian	1(0.12%)	MLISc	120,000-150,000
Principle Librarian	9(1.05%)	MlISc	90,000-120,000
Senior Librarian	14(1.63%)	MLISc	70,000-90,000
Librarian I	28(3.26%)	MLISc	60,000-70,000
Librarian II	36(4.19%)	MLISc /Bachelors/ Diploma in Library Sci.	50,000-60,000
IT Officer	15(1.74%)	Degree in Computer Sci.	50,000-60,000
Senior Library Assistant	126(14.65%)	Diploma in Library Sci./ Certificate	20,000-60,000
Library Assistant	178(20.69%)	Certificate in Library Sci.	10,000-20,000
Library Clerk	201(23.37%)	12th Class	10,000-20,000
Library Attendant	146(16.98%)	12th Class	7,000-10,000
Support Staff	103(11.98%)	12th	7,000-10,000
Total	860		

8. CONCLUSION

Manpower gender imbalance and professional storage be addressed from the policy level. KNLS has 860 total numbers of staff in the whole republic: of which 45% of these are professionals, being a national information service provider this picture (Table 1&2) is below recommended IFLA public library staffing, hence service provision is affected with this shortage. 40% of the total staff being ladies again this imbalance has impacted even the registered members of the library indirectly. Less on books and more on educated staff, far better results would be obtained and KNLS goals and objective will be realized. The available manpower with library technical skills should be transformed to be having better communication skills, managerial skills, training skills and facilitation skills. These skills are acute and specific in enhancing better services to the users of KNLS in this era of technology. Staff will further acquire information analysis skills, repackaging, consolidation, technical reporting and downloading both structured and unstructured information available through internet for users.

REFERENCES

[1] V.K. Iyer, Public Library System in India. New Delhi, Rajat Publication, 1999.

[2] KNLS(Kenya National Library Services), 2008, http://www.knls.org).

[3] The Kenya National Library Board Act (Cap225) / Republic of Kenya, Nairobi, Government Printer, 1986.