

## **DEVELOPMENT OF PUBIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN KENYA: PERSPECTIVE OF KNLS**

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### **Abstract**

*The paper discusses the historical background, present status and future perspective of public library system in Kenya, research and application of ICTs. It also analyses the relation between the government and KNLS in modalities of funding.*

*Currently there are over 30 public libraries in Kenya under the umbrella of KNLS of which all are funded and managed by the government through KNLS. Public libraries serve and focuses on users who are basically the public; raging from toddlers to senior citizens through inculcating library culture, accessing and using not only book-based services but also access information on websites, through the practical application of ICTs in information search. KNLS has been positioned by the government to implement planned library education for a firm foundation on national reading culture in the youth in Kenya. Further, the role of public libraries within this information age context is challenging from that of book-based information provider to that of internet service provider and so is the role of the librarian.*

**Keywords:** Kenya National Library Services, Public Libraries, Library legislation, Development of Public Libraries in Kenya.

### **Public Library system in Kenya:**

Libraries existed in Kenya before there were Kenya African librarians. The establishment of libraries in Kenya is very much linked to the coming of British colonial rule. After attaining its independence in 1964 from Britain, it was imperative on the part of it as democratic country to establish the service institutions like public libraries in order to strengthen the democratization of information and promote the social, cultural, historical, and scientific and technical knowledge in the public at large. The growth and development of public library system in Kenya can reasonably be examined and studied by categorizing it broadly into three groups in accordance with general periods: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods.

- i) Ancient and medieval period
- ii) Before independence
- iii) After independence

#### **Ancient and medieval period:**

There is no record of a library having existed in this period. The only existing one is thought to have been in Kilwa on the East African coast. However, the philosophy of Islam did not encourage reading, as this was thought to be the preserve of a small literate ruling class.

Also the history and culture of the communities of those times were communicated and passed to future generations by oral tradition and the arts. Therefore, libraries would not have played any specific role in the society.

**Before independence:**

European Missionaries were the first people to set up a library. Through Christian missionary society (CMS) Mission set up a small mission library in Free Town near Mombasa in 1887.

The other early library stemmed from the construction of the Kenya- Uganda Railway. In 1902, Mr Jeevanjee, who had been the main supplier of materials towards the construction of the railway, decided to invest in the first ever newspaper, the East African Standard. The newspaper company started a new library, which also stocked reference books and manuscripts. In 1903, a group of Asian philanthropists set up the Mombasa Public Library and Free Reading Room. It was paid for by public subscription. Later on, the library was named the Seif Bin Salim Public Library and Free Reading Room. As a result of the socio-economic and political conditions of the time, materials bought for the library reflected a bias in favor of Indian clientele only (IFLA, 1999).

During this colonial period, the colonial government felt the need for information, which could help in finding out how the colony could be financially self-sufficient. There was a need to use some Africans in governing and so they had to educate them. On one hand they wanted to control the amount of education so that Africans did not have the ability to confront the colonial government. The colonial government did not support creation of public libraries. On the other hand, Africans realized that their development lay in a European type of education and that also needed access to information.

In 1902 the High Court of Kenya was established in Mombasa. Then known as the Supreme Court, it moved its headquarters to Nairobi in 1905. It had a rich collection of reading materials on law. In 1935 a new building was completed in Nairobi which to date houses a big library that serves the judges, magistrates and advocates of the High Court. The Kenya Legislative council sat for the first time in 1907 and its library was established then.

The Kenya National Assembly Library was established in 1910 to meet the information needs of the members of the legislative council as it was then known with the use of lay language in law, Administration and Studies of Parliament and also to store recorded parliamentary proceedings (Kenya, 1910).

The National Museum Library was set-up in 1910. This was initially established by a society known as the East African Natural History Society, which was involved in the study of flora and fauna and set up the library as part of their activities. Public subscription libraries emerged later, and were mainly established by philanthropists or groups of people mainly for use by the European and Asian communities. The first among these was the MacMillan Memorial Library, which was started in 1931 from funds provided by Lady MacMillan. This was in memory of her husband, Sir Northrup MacMillan and was for use by the European community only. This library was taken over by the Nairobi City Council in 1962 and is now the headquarters of the Nairobi City Library Service.

From the foregoing, it is clear that no library had been set up by the 1940s to serve African communities. However as from 1945, many Africans who had gone to fight in the Second World War came back and with them they brought some reading and writing skills. Political agitation and the spirit of nationalism had been awakened, and more Africans were sent to mission schools and, as happened later to independent schools.

In 1945, Mrs. Elizabeth Huxley was appointed to inquire into the needs of the East Africans in popular literature and make proposals as to how these needs could be met. Following her report which advised that the government should control the provision of literature to then considerable Africans reading public, that resulted the setting of East African Literature Bureau (EALB) in 1948, with Charles Richard as director and George Annexley as the bureau librarian. EALB was under the East African High

Commission and was to provide a public library services. The Bureau started with publishing of books in local languages, and establishing library services. The same year the British Council established its offices in Nairobi and took the responsibility of inaugurating library services in East Africa, with the view of handing them over to the individual countries. The library service for Africans was operated through the provision of book boxes and the introduction of a postal lending service to 40 centers. The Bureau had a publishing division, which was meant to encourage African authorship by publishing indigenous literature.

**According to Hockey (1960)** 'The governments of East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) are spending increasingly large sum of money on programs of educational and community development at all levels, and it only by the provision of well- organized library services, freely available to all, which can expand and develop for the individual the interests and skills acquired in the class, the group or the workshop, that the true ends of all this endeavor can be achieved'. Training of staff to run the centers was also included, this appeared to be an insoluble problem, as governments of East Africa were naturally reluctant to undertake any considerable program of training until they were assured that the people emerging can be absorbed into suitable posts, and unable to accept the fact that the development of services will inevitably outstrip the trained staff available. The inadequacy of the activities of the Bureau led and the setting up of separate national library systems for each of the East African countries. The secretary of State (UK) through the British Council had set Advisory Committee for each of the East Africa countries. Each Advisory Committees had recommended the establishment of Central Library Service, which will be responsible for the administration of a library services in each country, at the same time integrate all the existing public library services and eventually be responsible for the whole country. This was a perfectly sound policy and keeping with accepted, library practice which recognizes that only a sufficiently large unit can provide and organize efficiently the many and varied services expected of a modern library or information

system. During that time in East Africa there was no public library services in the accepted sense of the term; all the existing services were limited either by the terms of reference under which they were established or by the fact that they were forced to charge subscriptions to augment the inadequate funds available to them. They could not provide trained staff or a wide range of books, both of which were essential in any library service in East Africa at that time. However, many of these libraries were offering excellent work within their limitations; unfortunately they had no future as isolated units. (Hockey, 1960)

Provision of a centrally controlled public library system was part of the decolonization strategy. It would encourage the ideas of democracy and responsible citizenship and at the same time give the state monopoly on the supply and control of information. Dr C. Hill, in announcing the new measures to the House of Commons in 1959, did not hide the fact that the new policy to aid the development of public libraries in a number of colonial territories was not wholly altruistic. The purpose of the measure was 'to increase the flow of British books and periodicals abroad'

**(UK, 1959).**

The British council's role in the development of national library services was as an implementer rather than initiator. In the words of (Coombs, 1988) he stated that it may be true that the British Council 'has laid the foundations, at least in part, of many library systems in the developing world'. However, this has always been at the behest of the British government, who provided the funds and other stipulated types of development to be carried out. Unlike some more fortunate experts, British Council Libraries Organizers were expected to follow up their reports with assistance in their implementation and efforts to set up the proposed services, which had been going on during the past two years against the background of rapid political and economic changes during that time. The library organizer was housed in the literature Bureau's offices in Kenya, and had been given full

authority by the Director to cooperate with the library staff in any reorganization of the library services which might have been considered necessary at that period. A library school with the limited aim of providing elementary training was set up in Makerere university college, Uganda in 1963, with British Council and UNESCO aid, under the direction of Mr. Knud Larsen a UNESCO officer.

In other related literature on this research topic (**Roche, 1987**) states that 'it was through the council's public library development scheme that the British council Librarian, Sidney Hockey, was posted to Kenya as library adviser. However, his terms of reference were clearly stipulated by British government'.

UNESCO is noted for supporting the idea of library planning and national public library systems during the colonial and post colonial period; during the colonial period UNESCO held seminars and conferences in 1950s and 1960s in Enugu, (Nigeria), Dakar, (Senegal) and Kampala (Uganda) were very crucial in popularizing this idea in Africa countries including Kenya. However, the inception of the idea owed much to the British government. The approach of British government towards public libraries systems in various countries was therefore both supported by UNESCO and in line with their approach.

The Kenya National Archives Library was established in 1946 and was then known as the Chief Native Commissioner's Library. The EALA of this time represented European rather than African views. In 1961 there was only one African member. Until independence, EALA acted almost as a branch of the British Library Association (BLA) and was colonial in its outlook (**Kenya, 2010**).

### **After independence**

An understanding of the historical dimension in this research work was considered important. The Researcher couldn't ignore the legacies of the past. Capabilities and requirements were always

considered against the perspective of circumstances and institutions inherited from the past. Everything worked within an inherited framework, which was more difficult to change than it might appear. An in-depth analysis of the origins of national library services went this way in enabling researcher to understand the subsequent history of public libraries in Kenya and East Africa as a whole, and provided a base on which realistic suggestions for improvement and change could be adopted.

UNESCO believed libraries to be good things but this belief stemmed from the influence of western thinking .The formulation of UNESCO's library program relied much on the active role played by British and American Librarians. Although the desirability of shaping public libraries to the national needs of each country was recognized, there was little experience or library knowledge on how to do it. Therefore national advisory committee, a central planning, state grants and state supervision of all the public libraries was formulated in this favored approach. So is Kenya National Library Services was therefore a creation of the departing colonial state. It had less of home grown – the Kenya community (Kenya, 2009).

#### **Jomo Kenyatta book foundation:**

A pioneer publishing house formed in 1966 and was given the name from the founding father of Kenya. Its main objective is to publish and print quality selected text books for approved primary and secondary curriculum. The foundation has no much link with the public library system – that is KNLS, but the selected text books to schools and tertiary institution get high preference in the KNLS selection list and are part of their stock. It is under the ministry of education for publisher of different books met the criteria for selection they recommend them to Kenya institute of Education hence they are incorporated in the schools' curriculum.



### **Public Library legislation in Kenya:**

The bulk of public libraries is organized and run by the Kenya National Library Services, which was established by an Act of Parliament 1967. To: Promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries. Carry out and encourage research in the development of library and related services among others.

There were, of course, libraries of a public nature already existing in Kenya prior to KNLS, these had begun during the earliest days of British rule and had grown up separately around different racial and religious communities; the major ones had been given local and central government support. A library service for Africans, run through the East African Literature Bureau (EALB), was one of the last on the scene, approved in 1950. Opinions differ as to the connection between KNLS and the earlier libraries. One view is that “Kenya National Library Service is the direct product of East African Literature Bureau and East African Library Association” (Musisi, 1985). It was then the East African Library Association (EALA) which urged in 1958 the replacement of EALB with statutory library boards in each of the three countries of East Africa (Kenya Uganda and Tanzania). Thus Kenyans had already made plans, in anticipation of the British decision in 1959, to make grants for the development of national library services. Another view is that “before independence, public library development in Kenya was fragmented and often undertaken to the benefit of the privileged few” and that KNLS “was started from scratch.”(Wambugu, 1978) This view is supported by a second scholar who argues that EALB foundered through lack of support and “the development of a modern public library service in Kenya ... can be said to have started in 1959” with the offer of aid from the British Government; that “the sixties can therefore be said to be the beginning of librarianship—as we know it today in Kenya.”(Ngang’a, 1982 & Rosenberg, 1997)

The Act proposals for the establishment of a Public Library Service in Kenya, was prepared for the Advisory Committee which was formed by the government shortly before independence, were preceded by extracts from the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto to which has been widely used as a definitive statement in the nature of a public service.

The Kenya National Library Service Board (KNLSB) is a typical example of those Africa public library services set up at the time of independence. Kenya gained independence in 1963; KNLSB was passed in 1965 after the Act was gazette. In 1967 the Board commenced its functions under the Act of Parliament; Cap 225 of the Laws of Kenya KNLSB is a state corporation. It is interesting to note that there was two years lapse from the date of Act gazette 1965 to the date of KNLSB started its operation 1967.

Board was empowered to develop public library services in Kenya to fill the vacuum that existed before and soon after independence regarding the provision of public library services hence bridge the level of literacy. The ultimate answer for library service provision was and is in the hands of KNSL.

The headquarters library in Nairobi opened its doors to the public in 1969. Currently, the Board is responsible for managing over 30 libraries spread throughout the country. They are categorized into County, District, and community libraries with a total collection of over 1,000,000 volumes of books and 159,000 volumes of journals. The bulk of public libraries is organized and run by the Kenya National Library Services, which was established by an Act of Parliament as state above. (KNLS, 2012).

As a public library service, the KNLS provides services that include lending services, postal lending, reference services, services to schools and other institutions, for informal training, institutional advisory services and mobile library service. The National Library Services carries out

the duties and responsibilities of a national library. With a Kenya National Reference and Bibliographic Department which serves as the national library and provides a range of services including legal deposit, compiles Kenya National bibliography -which is a listing of Kenyan materials published in every year at the same time provides Kenya Periodicals Index. Its mandatory, every publisher in Kenya should deposit two copies of every title published with the director of the KNLS, within 14 days of publishing the title at their own cost, this is under the current legal deposit Act **(Kenya, 1987)**.

The national bibliography therefore is an authoritative, regular, comprehensive, and standardized record of Kenya's publishing output and foreign publications of interest to Kenya and provides information of practical nature. It is a very useful tool for selection and acquisition of materials by information and library centers in Kenya and other parts of the world. Kenya National Bibliography is the source of most statistical information regarding Kenyan publication output supplied to international agencies and programs such as the International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA), Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and the Universal Availability of Publications (UAP), programs. It is also a cataloguing tool that provides a model catalogue entry that may be directly copied by libraries and other information systems in the country. There are many challenges that face the public library system in Kenya as any developing nation in its provision of library service to its citizen.

According to **(Odini, 2000)** Besides problems of funds for purchasing, inadequate professional human resources, poor physical infrastructure, inadequate use of information technology and lack of co-ordination and interlibrary co-operation and above all the absence of a national policy on the collection and distribution of information hinder the optimal functioning of libraries in Kenya irrespective of size and type. So much so, "apart from some special libraries in research organizations, most Kenyan libraries have been based on "print" resources as opposed to other

media. In spite of the fact that there has been movement towards multimedia including electronic and Internet sources, this development is slow.' (Agalo, 1998).

**Provisions under KNLS Act, 1967:**

- Mission
- Functions of KNLS
- Structure of KNLS
- Authority
- KNLSB
- Director of KNLS

**KNLS Mission:**

To lead in knowledge management by adopting best technologies and provide access to information materials for a sustained reading culture to facilitate Kenyan's participation in national development.

**Functions performed by Kenya National Library Services:**

- i. To establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop the national and public libraries services in Kenya;
- ii. To Plan and co-ordinate library documentation and related services, advice the

Government, local authorities and other public bodies on all matters relating to library documentation and related services;

iii. Provide library education, training in principles, procedures, and techniques of librarianship and improve library standards, by providing documentation, related services, sponsor, and facilities for conferences and encourage research in library related fields;

iv. Participate and assist in the campaign for eradication of illiteracy, by stimulating the public interest in books and to promote reading for information and enjoyment among Kenyans;

v. Acquire books produced in and outside Kenya and such other materials and services of knowledge necessary for a comprehensive library services;

ix. Publish the National Bibliography of Kenya and to provide bibliographic and reference services. It is the national agent for the International Standard Book Number, ISBN and International Standard Serial Number, ISSN thus assigns the ISBN &ISSN numbers to Kenyan publishers respectively;

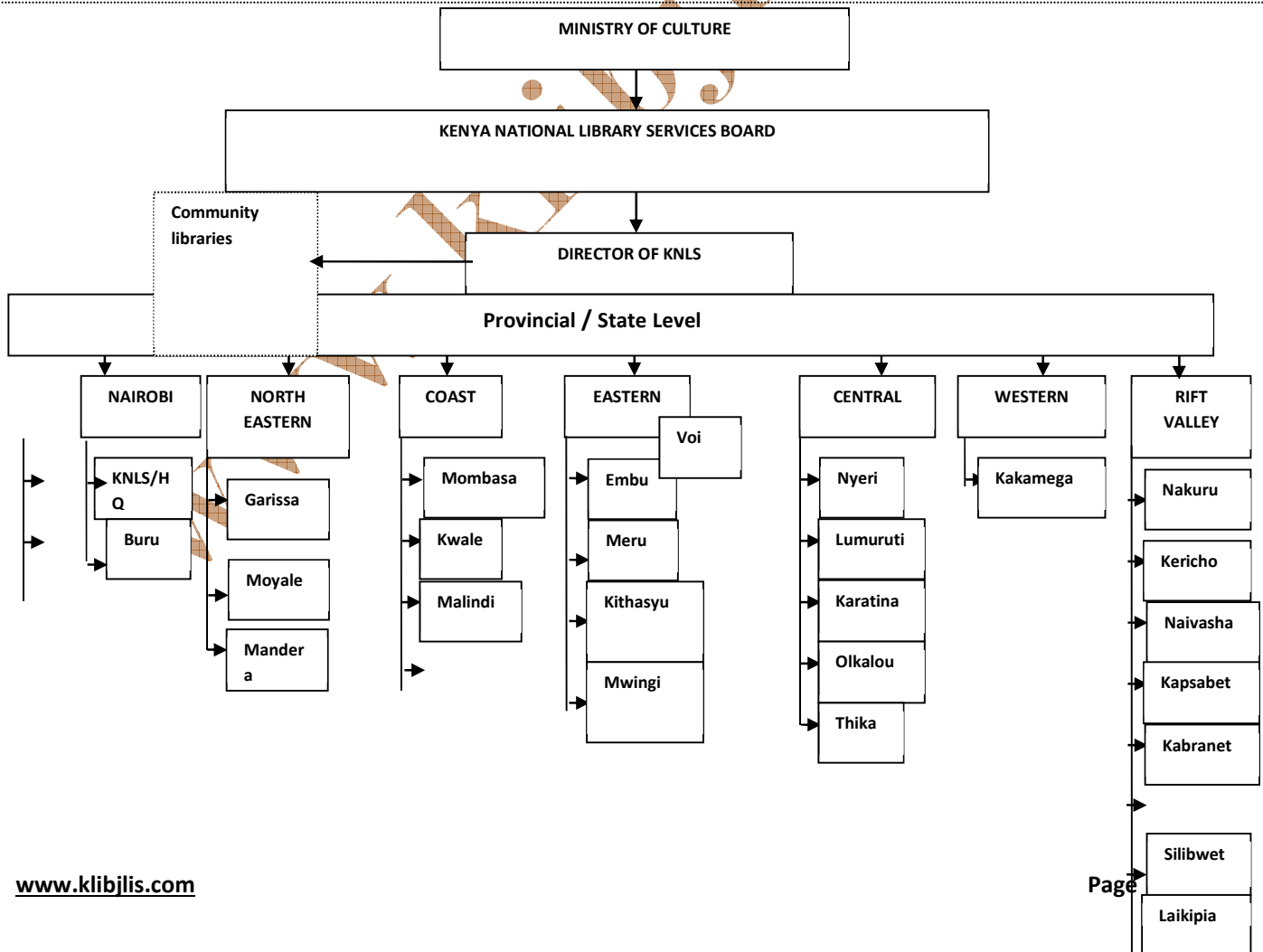
vi. KNLS is a depository library for World Bank publications and hosts a special collection of UN publications. All World Bank reports and bulletins totaling to over four thousand (4,000) documents form the core of the collection;

vii. Maintains rare books collection composed of old and rare publications that are no longer in print. The collection has about six hundred (600) documents. These materials are available on request and are strictly for reference within the library;

viii. Subscribes to a variety of journals both locally and internationally. Subscriptions for the entire network are done centrally. So far, the library has a collection of over 58,882 copies including current and back issues of various periodicals;

- ix. Hosts a collection non-conventional document in forms of microfilms and microfiches of important national records preserved for posterity. With limited or controlled access to them, but they can be made available on request for strict use within the library;
- x. Collects and facilitates the use of government publications of different types such as District Development Plans, Session Papers, the Kenya Gazette, Laws of Kenya, and the Constitution of Kenya;
- xi. KNLS through its National Library Services carries out the duties and responsibilities of a national library and it's a legal national depository ( KNLS,2009).

Fig: 3.9 KNLS Organ-gram



### **Structure Details:**

The above chart shows the exciting structure in Kenya on the public library system. It is a very important entity underlying public library system in Kenya through KNLS. It is the administrative machinery or operative unit which carries out the objectives of public library service in Kenya. Organization and structure is with the provision of KNLS system, for the effective implementation of its provisions and, therefore, the extent to which its objectives could be achieved and assessed. 'If the structure is well-knit and effective the attainment of its objectives could not prove difficult. A potentially weak library structure with no or inadequate linkages render the library law ineffective and futile. For its functions, linkages and accountability together with its composition lies with the structure' (Ekbote, 1987).

Kenya National Library Service saw its beginnings in the era of Africa's political independence. KNLS is direct creation of the departing colonial state. It is a part of the state structures left behind by the British. Kenya is typical nation with same system of countries which were under the colonial power of Britain.

The national library services has currently a network of over 30 district libraries and some community-based libraries spread out in different parts of the country with a total collection of over 1,000,000 volumes of books and 159,000 volumes of journals. The KNLS is currently under the ministry of culture with board of directors appointed by the minister for a period of 3 years. The Director of KNLS is the secretary of the board at the same time a member. With the government, industrialization vision 2030, it is now providing financial and technical assistance in establishing public libraries in almost all districts in the country.

As a public library service, KNLS provides services that include lending services, postal lending, reference services, services to schools and other institutions, informal training, institutional advisory services and mobile library service as stated above (KNLS, 2012).

The national library services has currently a network which has over 30 county, district and community-based libraries in different parts of the country, the following are some but not all Public Libraries under KNLS:

Awendo	Mandera
Buruburu	Meru
Eldoret	Mombasa
Embu	Mwingi
Garissa	Nairobi
Kabarnet	Naivasha
Kakamega	Nakuru
Kapsabet	Nyeri
Karatina	Nyilima
Kericho	Olkalou
Kilifi	Rumuruti
Kisii	Silibwet
Kisumu	Thika
Kithasyu	Ukwala
Kwale	Voi
Laikipia	Wajir

#### **Authority of KNLS:**

The statutory obligation to provide library service remains with the minister of culture who is the national library authority, charged with the duty of implementing the KNLS Act. It is the responsibility and duty of the minister to superintend and promote the improvement of library service, provided by the library Act. It's the minister statutory duty also to establish, equip, and administer a national library system through KNLSB. The Act empowers the minister to constitute the KNLSB.



### **Kenya National Library Services Board:**

The constitution of this body is partly by nomination and partly by election from different sections of the community concerned with public library service throughout the country as it's provided in the Act.

To advise the government, the minister through the Act provides that the Board will be constituted with 19 members, to advise the government on all matters concerning with the administration of the Act, to promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries in Kenya .Also to coordinate library documentation and related services and advise the government about library education and training. Permanent secretary of ministry of Culture & Heritage will have alternative representative on behalf of the ministry. The same representation will be application to the ministry of education, finance, planning, counties with one member each, Nairobi University, Kenya library Association, Nairobi city council and two nominated members by the minister. The Board may in its discretion invite any person who is not a member of the Board to attend a meeting or meetings of the Board, but such person shall have no power to vote at such meetings, and within the opinion of the Board she/he is an expert in one area Board may be looking for expertise opinion. The chairman of the Board will be an elected person from the non-official members of the Board for a period of 3 years. The Director of KNLS is the secretary to the Board. Board members shall be paid out of the funds thereof such expenses as the minister may from time to time determine.

The role of the Board, in this context deals with the type of support it provides to the development of libraries, policy development of libraries, and promotion of library and book culture. The Board has to provide both material and the political will, in solicitation to build the required infrastructure in the rural set up and influence the legislation system to provide with needs and requirements of the time in public libraries. Also the role of the Board is to place library service in the national agenda

for funding, planning and implementation to achieve national development. Further, the Board has to facilitate public library with community statistics and help to establish formal links with other organizations in the local community. Board is the main player for KNLS attainment of its set goals and objectives.

#### **Director of KNLS:**

The executive responsibility is entrusted to the Director of KNLS. Then, the functions are cleared in paving way for development of library service in the country. She/he should ensure proper utilization of the library funds and also manpower; submit annually report to the government on critical, progress in libraries development, findings from inspection and audit parties. The Director is full time head having the prescribed qualification, with a master's degree and above, charged with planning maintenance organization and development of public libraries and public library system. Day to day affairs of KNLS is charged with director, also he is the accounting officer, the library funding being entirely from the government grants, for the purpose of developing libraries and establishment of new branches throughout the country the Director is directly responsible in all financial matters of KNLS (KNLS, 2012).

#### **Current status of KNLS:**

The Act of 1967 CAP 225 which created KNLS is the one in use with many challenges and lacunas, from the funding system, appointment of the director , staff and lack of ICT policy in the Act by the time of enactment renders inefficiency in the service leading of KNLS. During the time of enactment community based libraries were not envisaged, but they are currently making bulk of KNLS public libraries.

Kenya is currently in the process of implementation on the new constitution by the end of the process the new law will address all the wanting sections of the KNLS Act. However, despite all the legal challenges KNLS is in ambitious and vigorous expanding phase of its public libraries network to the divisional and constituency level commonly referred as community libraries for better utilization of Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

#### **Interpretation of Public Library System in Kenya:**

##### **Public library movement:**

In Kenya movement for public system started over 50 before independence with the establishment of the first public library in 1887 in Free town near Mombasa in the coastal region of Kenya by the missionaries. However, many Kenyans who were taken for the Second World War came back after war well informed about their rights, using that knowledge through reading and writing they joined the independent struggle early 1950s through Mau Mau warriors, then later declaration of state of emergency in 1960 by the colonial government. Literacy raised thus the demand for public libraries were apparent.

##### **Kenya National library Service Board:**

The Kenya National Library Service Board (KNLSB) is the direct product of East African Literature Bureau (EALB) and East African Library Association (EALA). The Act proposing for the establishment of a Public Library Service in Kenya, was prepared for the Advisory Committee which was formed by the government shortly before independence in 1964, which were preceded by extracts from the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto to which has been widely used as a definitive statement in the nature of a public service.

The KNLSB is a typical example of those Africa public library services set up at the time of independence. Kenya gained independence in 1963; KNLSB was enacted in parliament in 1965 and the Act was gazette at the same year. In 1967 the Board commenced its functions under the Act of Parliament; Cap 225 of the constitution of Kenya KNLSB is a government corporation. It is interesting to note that there was two years lapse from the date of Act gazette 1965 to the date of KNLSB started its operation 1967.

The constitution of this body is partly by nomination and partly by election from different sections of the community concerned with public library service throughout the country as it is provided in the Act.

KNLSB is to advise the government in all matters related to library service and implementation of the Act in the country. The minister through the Act provides that the Board will be constituted with 19 members, to advise the government on all matters concerning with the administration of the Act, to promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries in Kenya .Also to coordinate library documentation and related services and advise the government about library education and training.

Board was empowered to develop public library services in Kenya to fill the void that existed before and soon after independence regarding the provision of public library services, hence bridge the level of literacy. The ultimate answer for library service provision was and is in the hands of KNLSB. The role of the Board, in this context deals with the type of support it provides to the development of libraries, policy development of libraries, and promotion of library and book culture. The Board has to provide both material and the political will, in solicitation to build the required infrastructure in the rural set up and influence the legislation system to provide with needs and requirements of the time in public libraries. Also the role of the Board is to place library service in

the national agenda for funding, planning and implementation to achieve national development. Further, the Board has to facilitate public library with community statistics and help to establish formal links with other organizations in the local community. Board is the main player for KNLS attainment of its set goals and objectives.

In Kenya the public library system is the national affair handled by KNLS which is the mandated authority to deal with all matters related to public libraries was formed in 1967.

#### **National Library:**

East Africa Literature Bureau (EALB) which was mandated to operate in East African; the three countries; Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania was formed in 1948 by the colonial government under the East African High Commission, to provide a public library service and to raise export of British books to its colonies. The Bureau started with publishing of books in local languages, and establishing library services. The same year the British Council established its offices in Nairobi and took the responsibility of inaugurating library services in East Africa, with the view of handing them over to the individual countries. The Commission appointed Mrs. Elizabeth Huxley to survey and prepares recommendations for a literature organization for the regions.

Her most important proposal, which later stimulated the planning for national library services, was that-' The bureau should develop a central library system to which existing and proposed small local libraries would be linked under the supervision of a trained librarian' (Were,1994).

The effect of this recommendation was the establishment of branches at Dar-Es-salaam in Tanzania, Kampala in Uganda and Nairobi- Kenya.

In June 1959 the British Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster introduced to the House of

Commons a five-point program aiming at the increased export of British books to its colonies.

To achieve this plan the British Government intended to "assist, through the British Council, in the development of library systems in a number of colonial territories including the establishment of central libraries, regional branches, book vans and book-boxes". Following this statement, the colonial secretary sent a dispatch on September 1959 to the Governors of East Africa informing them of the colonial library development program. And in the absence of statutory library authorities or public systems it was proposed that the EALB be used as a springboard for library development because the Bureau was already running library service in East Africa.

The Governors requested the colonial government for a library development advisor for East Africa. Mr. S.W. Hockey then working as education officer in Sudan was appointed in early 1960 to work out a library development plan for the three territories. In December 1960 Mr. Hockey produced a report that recommended a national four-tier system comprising of the following:

- (1) Central headquarters for the whole system-responsible for selection, purchasing, processing and distribution to regional libraries.
- (2) Regional libraries to operate lending and reference services; supervising branch libraries within the region; operating mobile, book-box and postal library services.
- (3) District libraries to provide grassroots library services under the supervision of regional libraries, and
- (4) Postal library services for individuals in remote areas

**In addition Mr. Hockey made other two further, those recommendations that:**

'Each country should develop its own National Library Service, based on legislation which would establish a board to act as a controlling body whose functions would be to establish, equip and manage libraries (Hockey, 1960) ....and each territory should consider a centralized library service and each branch of the service should contain a children's library.

The Bureau was to provide books and professional assistance.

Every country was ordered by the colonial government to establish a national library in their respective countries through Hockey report of 1960. With the Hockey recommendations and the inadequacy of the activities of the Bureau led in setting up a separate national library system for each country, which is now the Kenya national library established in 1960 (Hockey, 1960).

**Public library Legislation:**

With the public library movement in Kenya which was over 50 yrs, and the existence of the EALB shortly before independence worked favorably for the independence of Kenya to immediately embark on its own legal and governance structure of Kenya public library system. East Africa Library Association (EALA) which was formed in 1956 worked as a pressure group towards the new Kenyan government by urging to replace EALB which was by then in charge of all library service in Kenya to have a statutory library Board backed by the constitution of Kenya by drafting a bill and enact it. Eventually the government formed Advisory Committee in 1964, which drafted a bill and was passed in parliament in 1965. KNLS came in to existence through the CAP 225 of the Act in the Kenyan constitution that created it, with most of the features which were imposed upon by the colonist by structure, it's the British one. With a few amendments on the Act still much is not elaborative on the exact formal way of funding apart from mentioning in the Act that KNLS will be

funded by the grants from the government. This has contributed to the poorly funding of KNLS and hence it has directly impacted the slow and unequal expansion of public libraries across the country.

**The Act has the following sections:**

- 1 Short title
- 2 Interpretations
- 3 Establishment of Board
- 4 Functions of Board
- 5 Report of Board
- 6 Appointment of Director and other staff
- 7 Funds for Board
- 8 Investments
- 9 Accounts and Audit
- 10 Execution of documents
- 11 Regulations

**Collection:**

The KNLS Act CAP 225 doesn't expressly state the collection for public libraries in the KNLS. However, in section 4 (b &j) state that to acquire books produced in and outside Kenya and such other materials and resources of knowledge necessary for a comprehensive national library also plan and co-ordinate library, documentation and related services in Kenya.

**County library Council:**

Kenya is under the unitary set of government, where all the County public libraries are under one national council KNLS. Further, the county central libraries are charged only with responsibility of



coordination county organs for the KNLS in the county level this mandate is limited within the main national structure of KNLS on administration and coordination only especially coordinating library services on the districts which are within their jurisdiction.

**Department of Public Libraries and Director:**

As per section 6 (1& 2) of KNLS CAP 225 stipulates the appointment of the Director of Kenya national library services, who shall be the chief executive of the Board and the secretary. Kenya being under the unitary structure of governance public library system is under one arm of national structure KNLS, the director is one and at the national level charged with all planning, superintend, development and control the KNLS. The director is also charged with the KNLS Act implementation with the following functions:

- i. To establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop the national and public libraries services in Kenya;
- ii. To Plan and co-ordinate library documentation and related services, advice the Government, local authorities and other public bodies on all matters relating to library documentation and related services;
- iii. Provide library education, training in principles, procedures, and techniques of librarianship and improve library standards, by providing documentation, related services, sponsor, and facilities for conferences and encourage research in library related fields;
- iv. Participate and assist in the campaign for eradication of illiteracy, by stimulating the public interest in books and to promote reading for information and enjoyment among Kenyans;
- v. To acquire books produced in and outside Kenya and such other materials and services of knowledge necessary for a comprehensive library services;
- vi. Publish the National Bibliography of Kenya and to provide bibliographic and reference services. It is the national agent for the International Standard Book Number, ISBN and International Standard Serial Number, ISSN thus assigns the ISBN &ISSN numbers to Kenyan publishers respectively;
- vii. Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may be conferred or imposed on him by the rules under the Act from time to time.

### **County central libraries:**

In Kenya there are state/provincial central libraries in all 8 capital cities of each province. However, under the unitary set of government the State central public libraries are under one national council KNLS. Further, these state central libraries are charged only as coordinating organs for the KNLS their mandate is limited within the main national structure of KNLS on administration and coordination only especially coordinating library services on the districts which are within their jurisdiction. They are headed by Principal librarians.

### **Outline of Public Libraries:**

Kenya, historically is less than 100 years by records, there are over 30 public libraries run by KNLS. The literacy level 73.6%, are among the factor that have contributed to such undersized number of public libraries in Kenya. Kenya has over 30 universities and over 100 colleges. The enactment of KNLS Act was a land mark in the development of public library system in Kenya though with less satisfaction since then. Kenya is a developing country with over 40 GDP billion dollars leaves many social amenities like public libraries with little if not non with economical powers; hence expansion is both negligible and un-proportional. With Kenya struggling with young technology village libraries are still mileage.

County central libraries: There are eight states/ provinces in Kenya all with state central library. However, under the unitary set of government the State public libraries are under one national council KNLS. Further, there are state central library which are charged only as coordinating organs for the KNLS their mandate is limited within the main national structure of KNLS on administration and coordination only especially coordinating library services on the districts which are within their jurisdiction . They are headed by Principal librarians.

District libraries: With over 200 districts in Kenya there are barely over 30 district libraries spread all over the country. They are just under the state/ provincial library, mandated to provide public library services to the district level and all areas within their jurisdiction. They are headed by the senior librarians.

Other libraries: There are either community or Constituency development fund library but they are public library all the staff and funds are from Government hence they are under KNLS in all manner and terms. They are less than 10 in Kenya, headed by senior library assistants.

### **Hierarchical pattern:**

Kenya sub division are the same in all organs of governance, this has been partly that both countries Kenya and India were British colonies. This pattern for some reason or the other has influenced the public libraries set up in Kenya. For in all the National Library there is a county central library and many district and community libraries. Currently the government through constituency development funds (CDF) it's working towards a projection for every constituency to build the public library in its part of the achievement 2030 vision economic plan.

### **Finance:**

#### **Section 7 (a-c) of KNLS Act states on funds and resources in very brief terms that;**

- a) Such sums as may, from time to time, be provided by parliament for the purposes of this Act;
- b) Any sums or property which may in any manner become payable to or vested in the board in respect of any matter incidental to the carrying out of its functions; and

c) Any sums or property which may be donated to the Board: provided that the Board shall not be obliged to accept a donation for a particular purpose unless it approves of the terms and conditions attached to such donation.

**Manpower:**

Section 6 (3) of KNLS Act states that; The Board may, from time to time, appoint on such terms and conditions as it may think fit such officers, clerks and servants as it may consider necessary for carrying out its functions under this Act. However, the personnel of this service will consist of such classes and categories of posts as the government may decide from time to time.

**Conclusion:**

As a public library service, the KNLS provides services that include lending services, postal lending, reference services, services to schools and other institutions, for informal training, institutional advisory services and mobile library service.

KNLS to develop a workable proposal and identify how private organization both local and international level can support public library in Kenya. Mostly in technical, financial and operational risks to hence information support services- through Public Private Partnership (PPP) also synonymously referred as P3; a concept which is increasingly becoming very popular in the western world in managing the public institutions through partnership. Through PPP & KNLS will undertake with one or more private companies and involve in a contract running of public library with an objective to provide the efficient service to the public. A typical PPP example for KNLS would be library building financed and constructed by a private company and then leased to KNLS Board for a particular period, here the private company will act as a landlord, providing house-keeping and other non information or library services while library provides library and information

services. PPP is best practice to be utilized by KNLS, for it will enforce library standards in building, utilize both potentials and experts of KNLS and the private Company then synergize them for maximizing the output and attainment of the KNLS goal. Hence impact the living standards of Kenyans through provision of information and expanding network and service delivery.

. Kenya to achieve its Vision 2030 it should implement the recommendation of UNESCO on public library manifesto of 1984 on 'ONE LIBRARY, FOR EVERY VILLAGE'. Kenya Library Association (KLA) says that the use of the library is a culture that needs to be developed in our youths through a well-planned library education program and curriculum thus KNLS would be used as a channel to implement this program. KNLS has a mandate to ensure that library use becomes a lifelong habit to all citizens. KNLS should further, enforce its function on advisory in curriculum development by making it a necessary requirement to the national curricula of primary and secondary schools to include library use education modules on mandatory basis. All schools must also have a qualified school librarian. KNLS Failing to provide this indispensable facility will work against the realizing objectives, goals and achievement of improvement of literacy and economy hence non attainment of vision 2030 Kenya. Public libraries through KNLS have remarkable role and contribution in the fulfillment and realization of vision 2030 through the pillars of; social, economical and governance.

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