

#### **4.3.4 Orange Free State Provincial Library Service**

The Orange Free State Provincial Library Service was established in 1950. The Executive Committee of the Orange Free State Provincial Council approved a set of library regulations to administer the library system, but no ordinance was deemed necessary (Shillinglaw 1988:271). The Provincial Service was divided into three regions, namely Bloemfontein, Bethlehem and Kroonstad.

In 1994, the Service provided public library services through 149 service points, consisting of 121 public libraries and twenty-eight library depots (Free State Province 1994:6). However, the Botshabelo area, an African township about fifty kilometres from Bloemfontein, covering an area of 7139 hectares and with approximately 220,000 people in 1992 (Township ... 1993:7-8), did not have a single public library in 1994. A library depot was, however, established early in 1995 and another library depot and a public library were reportedly in the process of being established (Lentoe 1995:10,13).

#### **4.3.5 Public library services in the former TBVC States**

Before the independence of the TBVC states, public libraries within these areas were served by their respective provincial library services. In 1975, about a year before the first homeland's independence, the Library Services Branch of the former Department of National Education was approached to assist with proposals for the development of library services in Transkei after its independence (Frylinck 1983a:21).

A comprehensive report on the library situation in the Transkei, with recommendations for future development, was compiled and accepted by the Transkei government. That section of the report, dealing with recommendations for future development of the library services in Transkei in 1976, formed the basis for a general plan, titled Recommended Library structure for library services in Homelands, covering the development of library services in all the homelands. These recommendations were submitted to the Co-ordinating Committee for Library Services to Non-Whites, who approved the proposed structure after minor changes (Frylinck 1983a:22). Figure 4.2 illustrates the proposed centralised organisational structure for library services in the

homelands, which was approved by most of the homelands as the basis for the future development of their national library services.

The Library Services Branch of the former Department of National Education was charged to assist homeland library development according to the “Vink-Frylinck-Van Niekerk model”, as the model came to be known (Roets 1990:4).

The provincial library services gradually scaled down their services to the independent states. In 1977, the TPLS closed its service points in Bophuthatswana (See Table 4-9) and, in 1979, those in Venda, the year of its independence (See Table 4-9). By that time, the library depots in Venda had already shrunk to three in active use - those at Lwenzhe, Tshivhase and Senthumule High Schools (Bristow 1985:55).

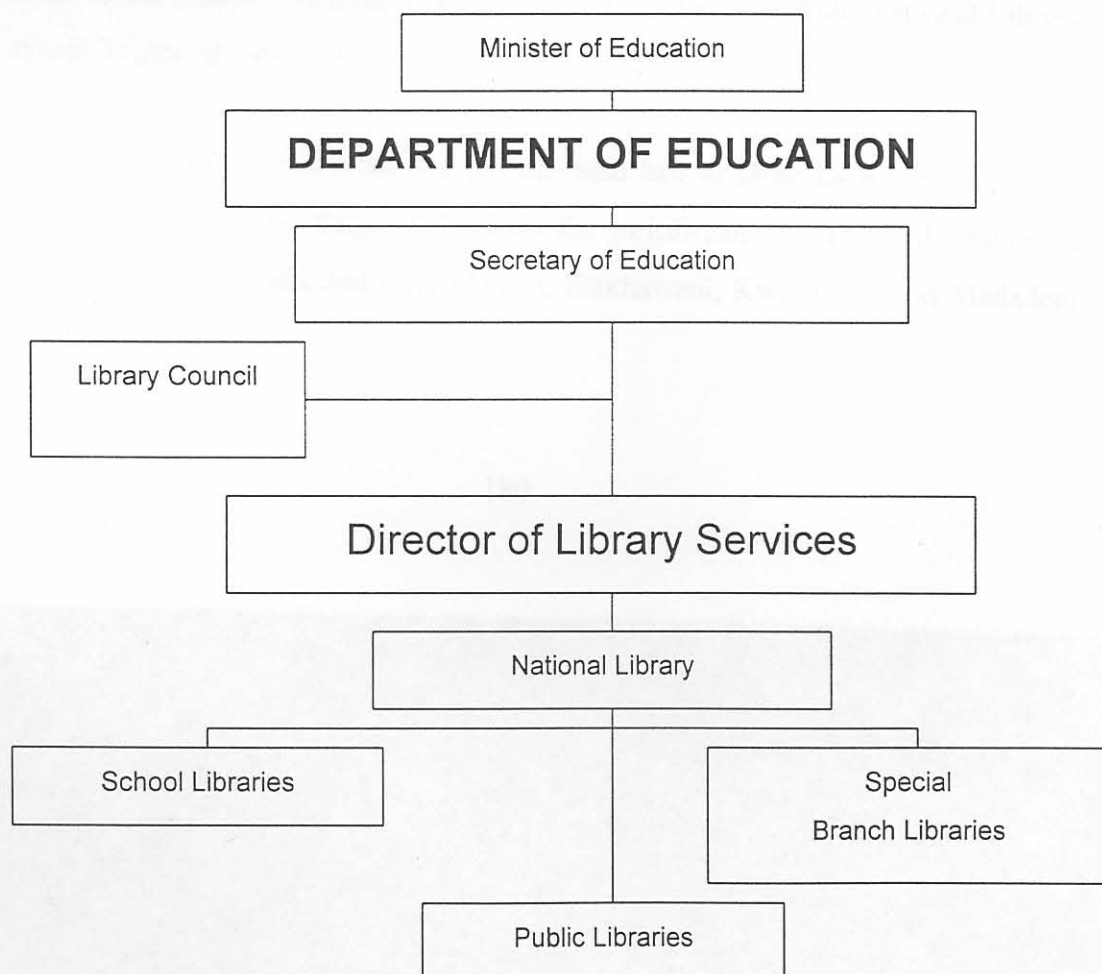


Figure 4.2 Recommended centralised organisational structure for LIS in the homelands (Frylinck 1983a:32)

Before independence in 1970, similar services were rendered by the Cape Provincial Library Service (CPLS) to thirty public libraries in the Transkei and Ciskei (Swiegelaar 1991:43). Since the early sixties, membership of public libraries in the Transkei had, however, decreased steadily, which in many cases led to the withdrawal of services and stock by the CPLS. This led to the closure of twenty libraries in the Transkei between 1968 and 1983 (Töttemeyer 1985:61,64). By 1990, public libraries had been reduced to three in the Ciskei and six in the Transkei (Swiegelaar 1991:43) to the detriment of the developing communities in these areas. Nassimbeni (1991b:46), for example, reported in 1990 that Mdantsane, in the Ciskei, covering an area of 4,700 hectares with a population of 500,000 had not a single library.

From the foregoing it is clear that the state of public library services in the former TBVC states was far from satisfactory. Although the proposals for library development had been accepted by all the national states, “the resulting services often failed to thrive as their propagators (had) intended” (Frylinck 1983b:35).

#### **4.3.6 Public library services in the former Self-governing Territories**

Library services in the former Self-governing Territories had also been structured along the lines of the “Vink-Frylinck-Van Niekerk model”, according to which the national libraries were responsible for the delivery of public library services.

As in the case of the National States, the provincial library services gradually withdrew from the Self-governing Territories after independence. In 1983, the TPLS closed its service points in Lebowa (See Table 4-9). In 1994, there were three public libraries affiliated to the Lebowa National Library and none to the Gazankulu National Library (Northern Transvaal 1994:10).

The Natal Provincial Library Service (NPLS) also had to close its library depots in KwaZulu, as this area no longer fell within the jurisdiction of the Natal Provincial Administration. Areas affected were Umlazi, Esikhaweni, KwaMashu and Madadeni (Gray 1994:5).

### 4.3.7 Community resource centres

In the early 1980s, South Africa saw the emergence of community resource centres (CRCs) in response to specific needs of communities and, sometimes, because the traditional public library did not offer what was perceived as a meaningful service (Daniels 1994:34).

*“Popular perception identified public libraries as preserves of the ‘privileged’, the ‘competent’ and the ‘educated’ ... and therefore unable or unwilling to re-align their philosophy to render services and provide resources designed to empower the oppressed and the dispossessed. As an instrument of “own Affairs” the public library was perceived to be pursuing separatist and divisive cultural policies which did not accommodate the aspirations of the majority of people.”*  
(Nassimbeni 1991a:11).

Resource centres distanced themselves from public libraries by “branding” them with various accusations:

- Their neutral and apolitical approach;
- Eurocentric material selected for an educated, literate and elite community;
- A rigid bureaucratic approach (e.g. hours of service and lending rules);
- Collaborators with apartheid legislation (Karlsson 1992:8-9).

According to Karlsson (1992:3), the community resource centres emerged as a result of the interaction between the societal conditions of the 1980s (characterised by violence, repression, censorship and resistance), and the progressive non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which were researching the state and its activities, the community, development issues, social problems and solutions in South Africa. The underlying principles governing resource centres were appropriateness of structure, content and methodology (Daniels 1994:34). There was a recognition that the ability to utilise information depended on its availability and accessibility, and on a realisation that information needed to become an effective tool, enabling people to change their disadvantage status (Dreyer [1991]:105). As initiative and creativity were the hallmarks of the community resource centres of the early 1980s, it resulted in a strong sense of ownership (Daniels 1994:35; Nassimbeni 1991a:12).

Community resource centres were geographically located within residential areas and serviced the needs of their communities and local organisations. They aimed to empower local communities and mass organisations, through the provision of skills and knowledge, and by using this to transform their social conditions. Resource centre workers functioned as facilitators in promoting self-reliance. Being in touch with the changing needs of their constituencies enabled such workers to develop appropriate information services, which provided useful resources in the most effective ways (Karelse 1991a:14). Their work, however, extended beyond the mere provision of relevant resources to oppressed groups and mass-based organisations, and, therefore, entailed an approach to information work which differed entirely from the traditionally passive methods of resource provision employed in public libraries (Karelse 1991b:4).

The *Directory of South African resource centres* in 1992 listed 103 established resource centres. Most resource centres provided an information service to urban user communities, only twenty-three resource centres were located in townships and thirteen resource centres served rural communities exclusively, while many had some form of outreach service to rural areas (Karlsson & Booij 1993:27). Resource centres did not constitute a homogeneous group. Besides community resource centres, there were also independent centres, such as the Cape Town Trade Union Library, and centres aligned to an organisation providing additional services, for example the International Labour Research and Information Group Resource Centre (Karelse 1991a:14).

#### **4.4 Political and organisational structures since 1994**

Following the General Election on 27 April 1994, a new constitutional dispensation came into being in South Africa. In terms of the *Constitution of the RSA, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993)*, the Republic of South Africa was divided into nine provinces, Northern Province (formerly Northern Transvaal), Mpumalanga (formerly Eastern Transvaal), North West, Gauteng (formerly the PWV region of the “old” Transvaal Province), Free State (formerly Orange Free State), KwaZulu/Natal, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Western Cape. Fig. 4.3 illustrates the division of South Africa according to the nine provinces.

In terms of the *Amendment Act, 1994 (Act No. 2, 1994)*, Schedule 6, Cultural affairs and Education at all levels (excluding university and technikon education), were defined as being within the domain of the legislative competences of the provinces (South Africa 1994:15). This meant that the new system of education now became a single national authority, largely organised and managed, in the main, on the basis of nine provincial sub-systems.

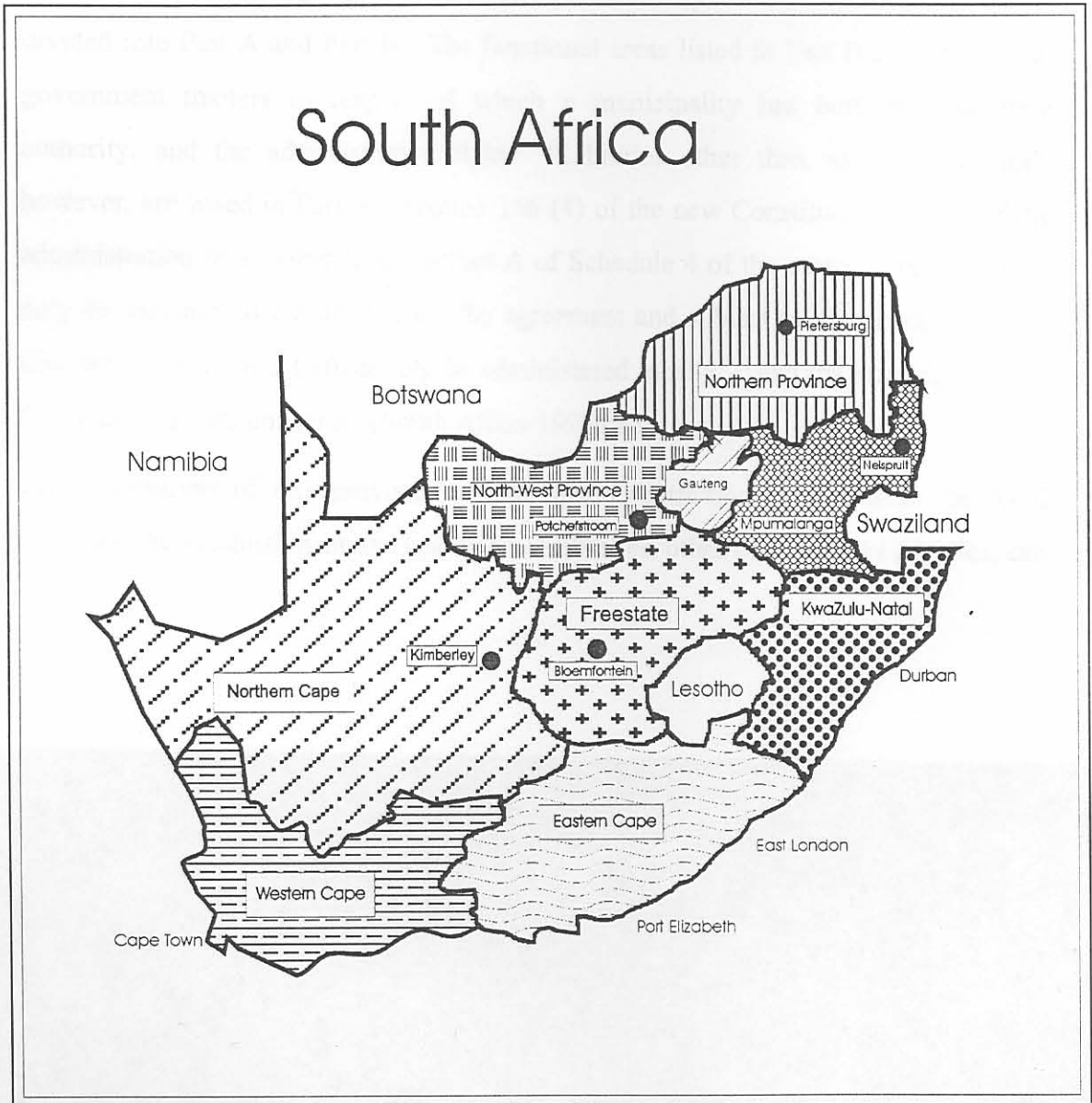


Figure 4.3 New provinces for South Africa as defined in the Constitution of the RSA, 1993 (South Africa. Department of National Education 1993:15 (adapted))

This provision has been upheld in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)* (hereafter “the new Constitution”). In schedule 4, “Education at all levels, excluding tertiary education”, is listed as a concurrent national and provincial legislative competence (South Africa 1996a:117).

In the new democratic dispensation, specific statutory provision has been made for the provision of library and information services. In the new Constitution, schedule 5A deals with the functional areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence, stating that “libraries other than national libraries” are a provincial responsibility. Each province is, therefore, in terms of the new Constitution, responsible for developing the legislative framework within which library and information services are provided in the province.

Until the local government elections, scheduled for December 2000, the system of local government has been transitional, governed by interim legislation, such as the *Local Government Transition Act, 1993*. In terms of the transitional arrangements, municipalities are authorised to provide library services until the local elections of 2000 have taken place (Bouwer 1999:7).

In the new Constitution, a distinction is drawn between functional areas of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence (Schedule 4) and functional areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence (Schedule 5). Both Schedules 4 and 5 are divided into Part A and Part B. The functional areas listed in Part B constitute local government matters in respect of which a municipality has both the executive authority, and the administrative right. “Libraries other than national libraries”, however, are listed in Part A. Section 156 (4) of the new Constitution states that the administration of a matter listed in Part A of Schedule 4 of the new Constitution may only be assigned to a municipality “by agreement and subject to any conditions ... if that matter would most effectively be administered locally ... and the municipality has the capacity to administer it” (South Africa 1996a:65).

The implication of this provision in the new Constitution is that, after the local elections, the establishment and operation of libraries, other than national libraries, can

only be assigned to a municipality, by agreement between the province and the local authority, and only if the municipality has the capacity to administer this responsibility. The *Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)*, complies with this position as set out in the new Constitution (section 83). After the local government elections (2000), a municipality will, therefore, as a result, only be able to provide library services in accordance with the provisions of the new Constitution (Bouwer 199:8). This provision will have far-reaching implications for the provision of public library services, as will be indicated in Chapter Five.

#### **4.4.1 School library services**

School library services have been under tremendous strain since the restructuring of education. The education infrastructure varies considerably from province to province. In 1996, the Department of Education, as part of its commitment to equity in education provision, and to the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching, awarded a tender for the surveying of educational institutions. The object of this survey was to locate every educational institution in the country and inventory its physical facilities. The result, the *School Register of Needs Survey (SRN)*, was to establish a comprehensive database of every school in the country as a planning tool for the optimal use of facilities, for the allocation of resources, and for the addressing of historical backlogs of physical facilities. Table 4-11 shows the number of education institutions according to province, while Table 4-12 shows the percentage of primary and secondary schools with media centres in every province according to this survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1997:5).

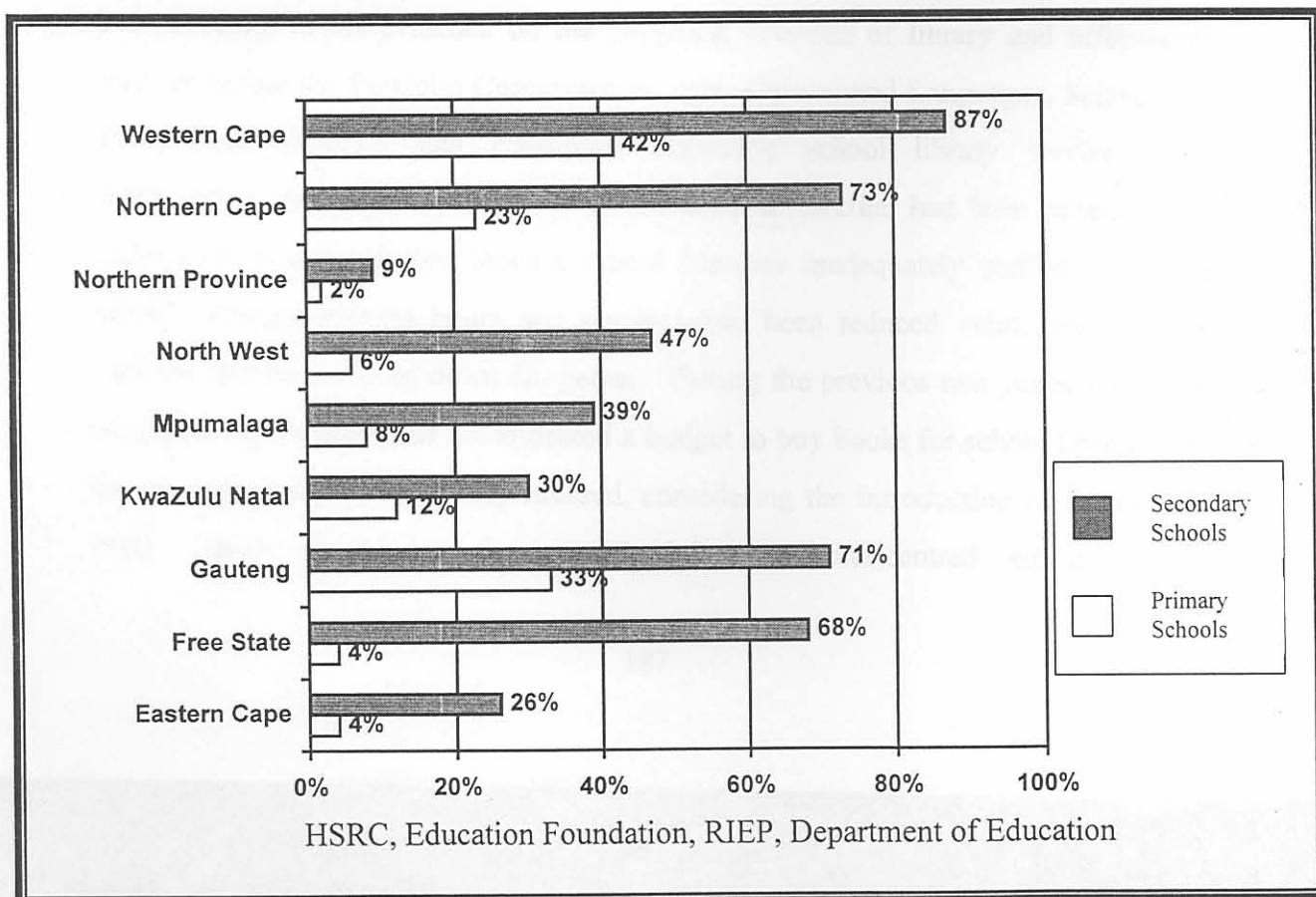
It was found that KwaZulu-Natal had the most schools, followed by the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province. The SRN also indicated that nationally, 69,9 per cent of the schools were primary, 19,6 per cent were secondary schools, 9,4 per cent were combined (primary and secondary) schools, and one per cent were special schools. Most of the schools (84,1 per cent) in the Free State were found to be primary schools, of which a large number were small farm schools (South Africa. Department of Education 1997:5).



Table 4—11 Total number of schools per province (South Africa. Department of Education 1997:5)

<i>Eastern Cape</i>	5 958
<i>Free State</i>	2 953
<i>Gauteng</i>	2 431
<i>KwaZulu-Natal</i>	5 426
<i>Mpumalanga</i>	1 982
<i>Northern Province</i>	4 275
<i>Northern Cape</i>	531
<i>North West</i>	2 424
<i>Western Cape</i>	1 884

Table 4—12 Percentage of primary and secondary schools with media centres (South Africa. Department of Education 1997: Figure 16)



The lowest percentage of secondary schools with media centres was found in the Northern Province (nine per cent), in the Eastern Cape (twenty-six per cent) and in KwaZulu-Natal (thirty per cent) (South Africa. Department of Education 1997:8). The SRN was followed by the *South African School Library Survey 1999*, aimed at locating the geographical position of all school libraries in South Africa, so as to provide the national education department, the provincial education departments and the other role-players with a set of data to assist in decision-making about and the planning of school library services according to needs (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:2).

The total number of schools with a library or a library collection/box service was found to be 9,537 out of 22,556 schools, which represents 42,28 per cent of all schools in the country (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:iii). The provinces with the highest percentage of schools with either a library or a library collection/box were the Western Cape (69,2 per cent), the Northern Cape (67,9 per cent) and Gauteng (66,5 per cent). The province with the lowest percentage of schools with either a library or a library collection/box was the Eastern Cape (26,7 per cent). This, in effect, means that 70 per cent of the schools in the Eastern Cape do not have any library service. The proportion of schools without any library service in five of the other provinces was found to be approximately 60 per cent (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:iii).

Lor (1998:7), in his evidence on the declining situation of library and information services before the Portfolio Committee on Arts, Culture and Languages, Science and Technology, reported that conditions regarding school library services were deteriorating, and that in many schools the teacher-librarian had been retrenched or reallocated to other duties, leaving school libraries inadequately staffed. In some school libraries opening hours and services had been reduced, while some school libraries had been closed down altogether. During the previous two years, provincial education departments had not allocated a budget to buy books for school libraries. In his memorandum, Lor (1998:8) stressed, considering the introduction of *Curriculum 2005*, which emphasises resource-based and learner-centred education, the

deterioration of school libraries and media centres posed a grave threat to the successful implementation of this curriculum.

The deterioration of school libraries impacts negatively also on the delivery of public library services

*With the collapse or near collapse of school library services most public libraries serve as "school libraries" in the afternoons. In most instances public libraries do not receive any support i.e. financially or materially from the educational sector to assist them in providing services to their students. Co-ordination between the public libraries and educational authorities is also lacking in most instances (Hendrikz 1998:5).*

#### **4.4.2 Public library services**

Public library services in the various provinces have been affected differently by the restructuring of LIS. The infrastructure of public libraries, which the new provinces had inherited, varied from province to province. Table 4-13 compares the public library infrastructure of the nine provinces before the restructuring of the provincial library services. From this comparison it is clear that the Western Cape Province had inherited the best developed infrastructure comprising 290 public libraries with almost 26 per cent of the inhabitants being members of a public library, while the Northern Province (the former Northern Transvaal) had inherited the weakest infrastructure with ninety-three public libraries and 1,2 per cent inhabitant-members. The North West Province, with eighty-six libraries and 3,2 per cent inhabitant-members, and Mpumalanga (the former Eastern Transvaal) with 132 libraries and 4,3 per cent of the inhabitants as members of a public library were also at the bottom of the list.

The weak public library infrastructures in these provinces have been the result of the amalgamation of the former national states (Venda in the Northern Province and Bophuthatswana in the North West Province), and the former Self-governing Territories (Lebowa and Gazankulu in the Northern Province and KaNgwana and KwaNdebele in Mpumalanga), with the respective former Transvaal areas to form the new provinces. As indicated in paragraphs 4.3.5 and 4.3.6, these former homelands had experienced an enormous backlog with respect to public library services.

Table 4—13 Comparative library statistics: Republic of South Africa (Wehmeyer 1995:18)

<i>Province</i>	<i>Inhabitants</i>	<i>Libra-ries</i>	<i>Inhabitants per Library</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Circulation per Inhabitant</i>	<i>Member-ship</i>	<i>Mem. as % of Popula-tion</i>
<i>Western Cape</i>	3 665 523	290	12 640	19 601 422	5,3	941 388	25,7
<i>Eastern Cape</i>	6 620 018	146	45 343	6 556 678	1,0	339 042	5,1
<i>Northern Cape</i>	773 250	117	6 609	3 020 350	3,9	115 243	14,9
<i>Kwazulu/ Natal</i>	8 549 000	237	36 072	12 252 445	1,4	716 981	8,4
<i>Orange Free State</i>	2 804 600	148	18 950	5 164 835	1,8	310 124	11,1
<i>Gauteng</i>	6 847 000	263	26 034	19 751 271	2,9	846 887	12,4
<i>Northern Transvaal</i>	5 120 600	93	55 060	1 696 253	0,3	59 989	1,2
<i>Eastern Transvaal</i>	2 838 500	132	21 504	2 945 291	1,0	121 966	4,3
<i>North-West</i>	3 506 800	86	40 777	2 992 421	0,9	112 166	3,2
<i>Total</i>	40 725 291	1 512	26 935	73 980 966	1,8	3 563 786	8,8

Libraries include depots but exclude other service points such as old age homes

The same problems have been experienced in the Eastern Cape Province where the former Ciskei and Transkei only had eight libraries serving a population of more than four million people. This resulted in the new province having 146 libraries with 5,1 per cent of the inhabitants being members of a public library after amalgamation, as against 138 libraries and 16,9 per cent of the inhabitants as members of a public library, in the Eastern Cape region of the “old” Cape Province (Wehmeyer 1995:18-19).

This situation has put the delivery of public library services by the newly established provincial LIS under tremendous strain. This has especially been the case in some provinces, such as the Northern Cape which inherited a good regional library infrastructure but no central organisational structure (Van der Merwe 1995:13). Provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province have had to establish fully-fledged provincial library services from scratch. Libraries affiliated to these provincial LIS also varied in terms of level of development, management style, library operation, infrastructure and users (Hendrikz 1998:2).

In addition, the provision of public library services was no longer subject to ideological factors, but had to be based on the information needs of the community at large, irrespective of race. Therefore, not only the newly established provincial LIS, but also the established provincial LIS such as the Western Cape, the Free State and Gauteng, were faced with addressing extensive backlogs in providing public library services, geared to the needs of the previously disadvantaged communities.

The new provinces have been officially operational from 1 July 1994. Since 1 April 1995, the library functions have been gradually taken over from the previous provincial library services, after personnel and head office assets had been divided among the relevant provinces. One of the main problems encountered by the provincial LIS was the “administrative shoving around” of the LIS function in the provinces. This created confusion, which has impacted negatively on planning, on service delivery and on general progress (Hendrikz 1998:2). A survey, undertaken by Leach (1998:4) in 1998 - to ascertain and provide an overview of the post-1994 situation, regarding the public library sector in South Africa from the perspectives of the people involved in that sector- determined that four provincial LIS fell under the Department of Education, and five under departments, with either a Culture or Arts component, such as the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts & Culture.

The amalgamation and restructuring of the provincial LIS has been accompanied by “an alarming deterioration of library services in many parts of South Africa”, as reported by Lor (1998:7). In his memorandum, he put it to the Portfolio Committee that the evidence which had been collected by the Transitional Executive Committee of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) indicated that libraries were seen as a soft target by the government, and that they were disproportionately penalised in comparison with other services. He emphasised that it was tragically ironic that, at a time when the country was most in need of libraries for national development, there was a serious decline in library services (Lor 1998:11).

According to a *status quo* report on public libraries presented to the annual LIASA conference held from 15-17 November 1998 in Bloemfontein, the main impact of the

amalgamation and restructuring of provincial LIS was evident in the area of staff shortages, which affected service delivery adversely (Hendrikz 1998:2). It was also staff shortages that severely hampered the successful launching of the newly established provincial LIS (Leach 1998:5). Other factors which thwarted the effective management of public libraries by provincial LIS were the absence of a suitably established LIS management and personnel infrastructure, and the lack of proper LIS legislation, and municipal ordinances and by-laws to cope with the new demands. These factors hampered functions such as planning, the formulation of policies and standards, and the continuity of services (Hendrikz 1998:2).

The general trend in public library funding was that budgets were either static or declining (Hansen 1999:12; Hendrikz 1998:2) which had, *inter alia*, the following negative implications (Hendrikz 1998:3; Leach 1998:6):

- very few new appointments could be made;
- the delivery of services was badly affected, especially to marginalised areas;
- the purchase of new library and information material was diminishing which, in turn, resulted in dated and irrelevant material;
- the maintenance and sustainability of projects and services were jeopardised;
- accessibility to libraries was negatively affected, because opening hours were reduced or libraries were closed down completely;
- an inability to provide adequately for the crucial expansion of services into unserved areas. In many cases, no new libraries were being built in the townships and rural areas, and those building projects which had been planned, could not be implemented;
- the inability to provide provincial (statutory) subsidies to the (independent) municipal libraries;
- the networking plans for schools were not realised;
- less training, and fewer professional and monitoring visits by staff could be undertaken;
- inadequate and insufficient information technology;

- lack of research; and
- an inability to effect meaningful transformation.

#### 4.4.3 Socio-economic and developmental determinants

The socio-economic conditions also vary from province to province. A comparison of socio-economic conditions by province undertaken by the South African Institute of Race Relations (2000:2-5) showed that:

- In 1998, Gauteng contributed the most to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the country (42,0 per cent), while the Northern Cape contributed the least (1,8 per cent), followed by the Northern Province (5,3 per cent). This should, however, be seen relative to the population figures of 8,067,059 for Gauteng compared to that of 874,788 for the Northern Cape, and of 5,400,868 for the Northern Province in 2000;
- The population density was found to be the lowest in the Northern Cape (two persons per square kilometre), followed by the Free State (twenty-two persons per square kilometre) and the highest was in Gauteng (474 persons per square kilometre);
- The greatest degree of urbanisation (2000) was in Gauteng (98,1 per cent) and the least in the Northern Province (12 per cent);
- The annual population growth between 1996-2000 was highest in Gauteng (2,4 per cent), followed by the Northern Province (2,3 per cent) and Mpumalanga (2,3 per cent), while the lowest was in the Northern Cape (1,0 per cent);
- The unemployment rate in 1999 was highest in KwaZulu/Natal (34 per cent), followed by the Northern Province (30 per cent) and was lowest in the Western Cape (14 per cent).

The 1996 census results (South African Institute of Race Relations 1999:112) showed that 7,6 million people or thirty-six of the population aged twenty years and older in South Africa were illiterate. Illiteracy is defined as fewer than seven years of formal schooling. Table 4-14 illustrates the illiteracy rates in each province.

In planning for school and public library services, and in considering possible alternative models for library and information services, serious cognisance will have to be taken of socio-economic determinants (Shillinglaw 1990).

Table 4—14 Population aged 20 and older who are illiterate : 1996 (South African Institute of Race Relations 1999:112)

<i>Province</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Proportion of total provincial population</i>
<i>Eastern Cape</i>	530 977	722 294	1 253 271	42%
<i>Free State</i>	277 042	287 183	564 224	39%
<i>Gauteng</i>	500 080	435 701	935 781	21%
<i>KwaZulu-Natal</i>	685 658	1 019 145	1 704 803	41%
<i>Mpumalanga</i>	279 291	342 261	621 554	45%
<i>North West</i>	381 456	385 984	767 440	43%
<i>Northern Cape</i>	92 853	99 408	192 263	43%
<i>Northern Province</i>	365 012	658 862	1 023 873	49%
<i>Western Cape</i>	260 935	254 458	515 394	22%
<i>South Africa</i>	3 373 305	4 205 297	7 578 602	36%

Regional and local development programmes also need to be taken into account. In the new political dispensation, local authorities have embarked on a process of urban and rural reconstruction, in order to redress the social disparities which existed as a result of past apartheid planning practices. This is being undertaken in terms of the *Development Facilitation Act (Act No. 67 of 1995)* (DFA) (South Africa 1995), which requires that each local authority formulate a set of Land Development Objectives (LDOs) for its area of jurisdiction, within the guidelines set out by the Principles of the Act, which have to be submitted to the provincial government for approval. The LDOs provide a means of developing a strategic framework for development in the particular area. The DFA also requires municipalities to develop objectives for service delivery, i.e. the services which a municipality will provide, as well as the standards of service, and the level at which they will be provided (South Africa. Ministry for Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development 1998:29).



In addition, the *Local Government Transition Act, 1993 (Second Amendment Act)*, requires municipalities to produce Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). The aim of the IDPs is to empower municipalities to prioritise and focus their activities and resources strategically (South Africa. Ministry for Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development 1998:28). In the planning for library services, it has become crucial that libraries think and act more smartly than ever before to compete with basic services (Van Niekerk, Wallis, & Morrison 1998:41). Library professionals must involve themselves in the annual formulation of the IDPs, and public librarians need to make submissions, pertinent to their community's needs, to the IDPs.

## **4.5 Factors affecting the role of public and school libraries**

### **4.5.1 Under-utilisation of public libraries**

The mere provision of public library services to the previously disadvantaged communities will, however, not guarantee that use will be made of these services. Various factors have, to date, adversely affected the utilisation of public libraries by these communities, and cognisance will have to be taken of these factors when planning for library services. These factors can be summarised as follows:

- Because the adult population is mainly illiterate or semi-literate, there is little incentive to use the public library (Raseroka 1997:2; Töttemeyer 1985:62). The dominance of an oral tradition among the African population negates the use of traditional public libraries (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:101);
- There is an absence of a reading culture (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:101) and there is very little interest in reading for any purpose except for formal education and its related activities (Raseroka 1997:2). Reading, particularly for pleasure, does not play a significant role in the daily activities of previously disadvantaged communities (Frylinck 1983b:36). These communities are unlikely, in the foreseeable future, to use libraries as recreational facilities (Bekker & Lategan 1988:70).

- As most reading is of a utilitarian nature, library holdings have been seen as generally irrelevant to specific community circumstances (Aguolu 1997:20; Bekker & Lategan 1988:69). Often, by concentrating on esoteric and irrelevant subjects, the sensed and expressed information needs of the people have not been addressed (Mgoqi 1995:30);
- Largely as a result of their discriminatory practices, public libraries have been perceived to be based on a principle of exclusiveness and not inclusiveness, thus reducing them to an elitist facility for a privileged few (Mgoqi 1995:30);
- There is a general ignorance as to what material and services are available in public libraries (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:101). Language differences, combined with an inability to verbalise the information needed, or to use the catalogue or to understand the concept of a classification system often pose additional problems. This is partly the result of no information literacy education in the schools (Hart 1998:36), which also leads to a lack of book appreciation and even to vandalism by some African learners (Workshop ... 1987:8);
- Irrespective of how well-stocked and developed a public library might have been, the service has been perceived as being passive. There is a need for people to be actively involved. They need to be advised, to be given the opportunity to ask questions, to ask for further explanation, and to see for themselves (Bekker & Lategan 1988:69);
- The physical inaccessibility of public libraries also poses a problem to most potential users. Public libraries are concentrated in white, metropolitan and suburban areas. A lack of adequate transport to, and the cost of reaching these centres is prohibitive to those who are aware of their existence and have a desire and keenness to make use of them (Mgoqi 1995:30);
- Another cause of dissatisfaction has been that public libraries have not supplied sufficient space in which to study (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:102);
- A shortage of material in indigenous African languages has also restricted the use of the public library (Workshop ... 1987:8);

- Since libraries have had such a low visibility in the educational and social environment of the previously disadvantaged communities, few learners have cultivated the library habit (Nassimbeni 1991b:47);
- There has also been a failure to inform people of library facilities. This has effectively limited their accessibility. People cannot make use of a facility if they do not know about it (Nassimbeni 1991b:47);
- Censorship, which was particularly repressive during the 1950s and 1960s, has impoverished South African libraries (Nassimbeni 1991b:48). The possibility of censorship in the selection of library material has had a negative effect on the utilisation of libraries. There has been a high degree of scepticism regarding the motives underlying any recommendation to read certain books. Book lists have been very critically regarded and books ‘approved’ by any government agency have been widely rejected (Bekker & Lategan 1988:70);
- Public libraries have been perceived to be ‘white’ institutions linked to local and regional authorities which were widely discredited in the African communities during the apartheid years (Bekker & Lategan 1988:69).

Some of the above impediments to the effective utilisation of public libraries by the disadvantaged communities are of a political nature, and are not generally relevant in the current political dispensation. There are already signs that the user base of many public libraries has changed with a shift towards student users of all communities (Leach 1998:13)

Some of these hindrances are, however, symptoms of underdevelopment (Frylinck 1983b:36) and are typical of the third world countries where public libraries are generally below standard (Töttemeyer 1985:62). This is especially the case in Africa’s developing countries.

#### **4.5.2 The impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

The phenomenon of globalisation has made it vitally important for South Africa to develop its ICT infrastructure, to improve the population’s capacity to utilise

information technology (IT) effectively for self-development, and to become part of the information society (South Africa. Ministry for Communication 2000:1). The following initiatives have relevance for public and school libraries:

#### **4.5.2.1 South African Bibliographic and Information Network (SABINET)**

SABINET Online provides the electronic infrastructure for the interlibrary loan scheme between libraries in South Africa. SABINET focuses on three different market segments: the academic institutions and library consortia; the government; and the commercial markets. The product range of SABINET Online includes: cataloguing and acquisitions support; interlending; MagNet (information retrieval with full-text document delivery); electronic publications; agency services (e.g. Dialog Corporation, OCLC); Training; Consultation; and Customised products (Vos & Theron 1998:7). Although few community and school libraries currently have access to SABINET, mainly as a result of financial constraints and the lack of ICT infrastructure, the potential for using the network by these libraries exists. This would contribute to the sharing of information resources between these institutions, especially on a regional basis.

#### **4.5.2.2 Library consortia**

Several library consortia have been formed in South Africa, such as the Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium (GAELIC), the Cape Library Consortium (CALICO), and the Free State Library Consortium (FRELICO), to foster regional collaboration. These consortia, incorporating several autonomous tertiary libraries, aim at building excellent library systems for resource-sharing and co-operative acquisition of resources, utilising technology, data networks, and the infrastructure of SABINET Online (Roos 1997:27). Although these consortia only link tertiary institutions, they are of importance to school and public libraries as they can be accessed via the Internet. An example of a local electronic network, involving a community library, is the Pretoria Information Network (Hansen 1999:15). Le Roux (1999:8) also makes mention of the existence of four Public Access Library Systems (PALS) consortia operating in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

### 4.5.2.3 Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCCs)

These centres are earmarked for a multitude of different purposes relating to activities in the community which they are supposed to serve (Berlyn 1998:2):

*"In practice, a Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC) enables communities to manage their own development by providing access to appropriate information, facilities, resources, training and services"* (Berlyn 1998:3).

The MPCCs are seen as potentially key delivery mechanisms for the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and community development projects, and for offering a wide range of services that communities can use for their own development. At the "Information Society and Development" conference in May 1996, the now President Mbeki identified MPCCs as one of the five "South African Information Society" pilot projects (Government Communication and Information System [1999]:3).

The contents of any MPCC would be determined by the relevant community and be subject to such constraints as funds and personnel. Some of the generic contents of an MPCC should, according to Berlyn (1998:6), ideally, be

- shared offices,
- telephone facilities,
- fax facilities,
- information kiosks,
- basic hygiene and domestic facilities,
- space for people and events,
- adequate seating,
- computers for basic use,
- printers for computers, and
- photocopiers for general use (where the users pay for the service).

Services offered by an MPCC would include (Berlyn 1998:7):

- Training,
- Information services,
- Advice,
- Counselling,

- Resource centre services, and
- Library services.

Odendaal (1997:18) is of the opinion that in many ways, a public library is ideally suited to form the core of an MPCC. The infrastructure and activities of a library could be used to support some of the services. Once the local community has become involved, needs determined, and funding secured, specific services could be gradually introduced.

The MPCC project is co-ordinated by the national Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). Several government departments are involved in the planning of MPCCs, including the Department of Communication, DACST, the Department of Health, the Department of Labour, the Department of Welfare; parastatals, such as the HSRC, CSIR, Telkom SA and Eskom; as well as various NGOs (Government Communication and Information System [1999]:4).

It is planned that the centres will be sited in the most suitable locations of the district council areas in all nine provinces. Forty-six potential MPCC facilities have been identified, that have agreed to be developed into the envisaged MPCCs that would meet the needs of the people in the areas involved (Government Communication and Information System [1999]:6)

#### **4.5.2.4 Telecentres**

Telecentres aim to meet "... the need for a practical and cost-effective way to bring the community of Africa into contact with itself ... and with the world" (South Africa. Department of Communication 2000:1). The body responsible for setting up telecentres is the Universal Service Agency (USA), a statutory body established in terms of the *Telecommunication Act, 1996* (South Africa. Department of Communication 2000:1). Donors such as UNESCO and the World Bank are all funding pilot centres in various countries, including in South Africa (South Africa. Department of Communication 2000:1).

Telecentres will provide one or more of the following services (United ... 2000:9):

- Access to telephones;
- Access to fax and e-mail facilities;
- Access to the Internet;
- Other information services;
- Other developmental support services to meet basic needs;
- Education in “Information Age” skills.

Models of telecentres are many and varied. At the one end of the spectrum there may be a simple telecentre - a cell phone owner selling user-time to people in small communities where access to telephones is limited or non-existent. At the other end of the spectrum there may be a telecentre with many phone lines, multi-media PCs, a high-volume black-and-white printer, a colour printer, a scanner, Internet access, a digital camera, a video camera, a TV, an overhead projector, a photocopier, a laminator, meeting rooms, and a video conferencing room (United ... 2000:9-10).

Telecentres can operate as individual businesses or as part of a franchise. They may be owned or operated by government departments, schools, community organisations and NGOs. Telecentres may be found within libraries, community centres, or even within a community radio station (United ... 2000:10-11).

#### **4.5.2.5 Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education (CETDE)**

The Centre for Education Technology and Distance Education is the only institution at a national level, which supplies electronic media to educational and training institutions and community development agencies. All institutions promoting education, training, and community development are eligible for membership (South Africa. Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education [1997]:3).

The following media can be borrowed from the centre (South Africa. Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education [1997]:3):

- videos, covering all school subjects, business, management, health, sport, careers, and many other disciplines;

- Computer programmes , covering school subjects and other disciplines;
- Compact discs with music applicable to the school curriculum;
- CD-Roms, covering school subjects, music and languages.

#### **4.5.2.6 Shoma Information Technology Centres**

The Shoma education model uses multi-media technology to meet the needs of educators who are faced with the challenge of implementing outcomes-based education (OBE) in schools. Shoma, in their educational programmes, make use of satellite TV, the Internet, and collaborative lesson planning, to assist educators to acquire new skills, and to embrace technology as a tool to enhance teaching and learning. Shoma operates a centre in every province, with an additional one in Gauteng. Each centre functions with twenty-four Pentium II computers, a television set, a digital satellite dish and decoder, a video recorder, and a network server. (Text 100 1998:2; Shoma Education Foundation [1999]:10).

#### **4.5.2.7 SchoolNet SA**

SchoolNet SA is an organisation which was established in November 1997, to assist all South Africans prepare for the information age. SchoolNet SA seeks to support educators and transform education in the areas of Internet connectivity and appropriate technology, content and curriculum development, human resource development, and capacity building. SchoolNet's objective is to assist in the development of a national educational network as the "knowledge backbone" of the country's information highway. SchoolNet co-ordinates the implementation of ICT resources and facilitates training in the use of these resources in all South African schools. SchoolNet also establishes meaningful partnerships with government departments, business and schools (SchoolNet SA [1997]:1). In 1999, South Africa had seven hundred schools with online facilities, while 2,500 schools had computers (kidzNews 1999:1).

#### **4.5.2.8 SCOPE Programme**

SCOPE is a co-operative enterprise between the Finnish and South African governments to support the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)



in teaching and learning (Mpumalanga Department of Education [2000]:1). The project is co-ordinated by the Department of Education and operates in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga. The project will run over four years with a total budget of approximately thirty-eight million rand and it aims to support thirteen pilot sites (computer centres) in each province, by providing the necessary electronic hardware (Mpumalanga Department of Education [2000]:2).

#### **4.5.2.9 Role of public and school libraries in utilising ICT**

Public libraries play an important role in empowering communities to utilise IT by providing access to electronic resources through their infrastructure of computer hardware, software, video and audio facilities and appropriate content. Many public libraries also provide facilities to the community for accessing the Internet.

A relatively low proportion of schools in South Africa uses computers for educational purposes. In only two provinces a significant number of libraries were found which implemented IT for library administration (South Africa. Department of Education & HSRC [2000]:v).

### ***4.6 Public and school library services in developing countries in Africa***

Library services in Africa, including public and school library services, are deteriorating (Aiyepetu & Komolafe 1998:63; Mambo 1998:67; Raseroka 1994:157; Töttemeyer 1992:4). There is a definite correlation between the high rate of illiteracy in Africa and the non-use and deterioration of libraries. Despite all literacy projects, illiteracy is on the increase on the continent (Töttemeyer 1992:6). According to 1988 Unesco figures, an average of 54 per cent of Africans could not read nor write (Kedem 1990:31). This is especially the case in rural and poor peri-urban areas (Raseroka 1997:2). In 1996, the adult literacy rate in Angola was 42 per cent, in Mozambique 40,1 per cent, and in Tanzania 67,8 per cent. As a result of the widespread illiteracy, relatively few people read newspapers. Radio and television are, therefore, becoming increasingly important as communication and educational media (Africa Institute 2000:Table 16);

The following factors contribute to this state of affairs:

- Economically, Africa is virtually in a state of collapse. Some African countries in 1989 spent as much as 60-70 per cent of their Gross National Product (GNP) to service their external debts. As a result, African States do not have enough human and financial resources to provide adequate schools, which would lead to a growth in literacy (Kedem 1990:33-34);
- Economic crises, increasing debt burdens, and subsequent remedial structural adjustment programmes, have necessitated significant budget cuts in the social sectors, and a marked deterioration in the living standards of the general population. Consequently, little priority has been given to adult literacy by governments or individuals (*The International ...* 1994:170);
- In some countries, notably Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda, economic expansion, in recent years, occurred from extremely low bases, and came after long periods of economic decline, as a result of war and instability (Africa Institute 2000:Table 24);
- To aggravate matters even further, economic growth, in many African countries, has not kept pace with population growth (Africa Institute 2000:Table 24).

According to Kedem (1990:34) these appalling economic circumstances, make it apparent why no serious and sustained steps are taken to tackle the problem of adult illiteracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Aiyepku & Komolafe (1998:63), in the *World Information Report 97/98*, published by UNESCO, state:

*"Public and school library services are in a state of decline throughout most of Africa because the largely external initiatives which established them have not been sustained by adequate indigenous funding, effective literacy campaigns and indigenous publishing in the local languages. ... Consequently, old, foreign books continue to feature prominently on the shelves of many an African public or school library, on the questionable premise that it is better to have something to read than nothing at all! It is difficult to escape the conclusion, therefore, that the development of public and school library services is still very low down the priority lists of most African governments."*

Raseroka (1997:2) is also of the opinion that the general public library system (PLS) in Africa is in a depressed state. She believes that the gradual deterioration of African economies, the fact that public libraries in Africa are part of centralised national library service systems having “multifaceted roles”, the shortage of trained LIS staff, and the setting of ambitious, yet unrealistic objectives all contribute to the declining services:

*“These (centralised national library service systems) combine national library roles with ... PLS systems provision and related coordination functions, which provide limited support and/or advisory services to schools and special libraries. This overarching service promises systematic developments of all aspects of library and information service. It, however, has inherent weaknesses: if the centre is weakened, whether through lack of human resources or poor strategies for delivery or inadequate financial support, the system as a whole, including the periphery, is likely to gradually disintegrate. Unfortunately the gradual deterioration of African economies accompanied by a thin layer of trained LIS human resources who are overstretched by ambitious, but unrealistic objectives, has eroded services over the last two decades.”*

The *status quo* regarding school libraries in other African countries appears to be in a similar state. Library collections, and facilities and services are insufficient, while existing services, whether sufficient or insufficient, are not fully utilised (Stander 1993a:1).

In Namibia, for example, the position is far from satisfactory. At Namibian independence in March 1990, there were only twenty-seven public libraries in the country. In 1991, Töttemeyer (1991:51-52) reported that besides the Auala Elcin Library at Oniipa near Ondangwa, Ovamboland, run privately by a church, there were no public or community libraries north of Tsumeb, where the majority of the Namibian nation lives. At least 670,000 Namibian citizens were without any libraries in the vicinity of their homes (Töttemeyer 1991:51-52).

Only 22,7 per cent of all Namibian schools in 1990 had book collections of some sort (Töttemeyer & Stander 1990:37). Only the former white schools had proper media centres with an average of thirteen library books per pupil in 1990, which is higher than the recommended international ratio of twelve books per pupil. The average number of library books per pupil at all other Namibian schools was less than one (i.e. fractions of one) book per pupil (Töttemeyer & Stander 1990: 13).

Since independence the situation has deteriorated even further. The few well-equipped school media centres, inherited from the pre-independence period, have been deteriorating rapidly, since government funding and full-time library posts were drastically cut (Töttemeyer 1994:1-2). In 1994, Töttemeyer reported that no new school libraries or media centres had been established since independence (Töttemeyer 1994:6). More than six hundred mobile book cabinets for classrooms, containing two hundred fully processed books, had, however, been placed in a number of selected schools regarded as deprived, with the help of local and foreign aid agencies (Töttemeyer 1996:26).

The non-existence or slow development of school library systems in Africa can, according to Tawete (1995:31-32), be attributed to:

- The lack of funds. School libraries compete for funding with other vital services;
- Lack of trained school library personnel;
- Conflict between the oral tradition and the book culture with a resultant lack of identification with the role of school libraries in such an oral society;
- Lack of clear-cut policy direction for the development of school libraries
- Lack of officially approved standards and guidelines for school libraries;
- Lack of people who know how to use libraries or have a “felt need” for school libraries. Libraries, therefore, are considered a luxury;
- The textbook-oriented, chalk-and-talk educational system which is unreceptive to library programmes.

Töttemeyer (1992:6-8) and other writers attribute the non-use of public libraries in Africa to the following factors:

- The lack of suitable reading materials for the newly literate to support their newly acquired reading skill. As a result, many people, after undergoing adult literacy training, relapse back into illiteracy;

- A literate person is not necessarily a reader. In Zambia circulation statistics of public libraries were dropping, although schools in 1983 were producing a hundred thousand new literates per year (Töttemeyer 1992:6);
- A growing disillusionment with formal schooling in Africa, since even a high school certificate was found to be no guarantee for gaining employment and for upward economic mobility;
- The multiplicity of languages causes many Africans not having access to materials written in their own language (Wehmeyer 1991:3), e.g. the dearth of indigenous children's literature has minimised the use of the few libraries found in some townships in Zimbabwe (Craver 1985:37);
- The impetus to create libraries in Africa has been external and has emerged from a different (Anglo-American) context and for a different reason. According to Töttemeyer (1992:8) it seems that the dominant ethos of African society is at variance with the aims of libraries;
- Africa has a strong oral tradition (Wehmeyer 1991:3). Most Africans do not continue with reading once they have completed their formal education, as they derive more pleasure from the oral and performing arts - talking, singing, dancing and socialising - than from the rather private and individualistic reading of a book (Töttemeyer 1992:8).

In addition, although 75 per cent of Africa's population lives in rural areas, most of the public libraries are located in the urban areas, either in the national, regional or district capitals (Kedem 1990:34). A shortage of personnel, a lack of professional experience and an absence of government support aggravate the situation (Wehmeyer 1991:3).

#### **4.7 Summary**

The overview of the organisational structures, characteristics and operation of LIS in this chapter, has shown that school and public library services in South Africa have developed uniquely with separate organisational structures for the different population groups as created by apartheid policies. This has caused an unequal distribution of LIS

structures throughout the country, with a notable difference in the quality of service to the different communities.

The restructuring of LIS, after the new democratic dispensation, has caused a deterioration in school as well as in public library services, making it difficult to redress the inequalities of the past. It has also been found that many of the conditions impeding the rendering of school and public library services in Africa are also prevalent in South Africa. African librarians share the same problems, since all the library services in African countries are based on Anglo/American models.

The characteristics of the new democratic South African society suggest that these traditional models may no longer be relevant, and that innovative ideas, methods and approaches should be sought. In his paper delivered at the annual conference of the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) on 22 September 1997, Tyobeka, Chief Director: Policy and Liaison, Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, made the following statement in this regard (Tyobeka 1998:9):

*"In this new, bright day each of us must work towards a vision of a new and uniquely South African system of library and information services where libraries will proactively collaborate with other role-players in providing information services to all our communities. Partnerships will have to be forged, not only between libraries, but also between well-resourced libraries and developing library services, and between libraries and other organisations in communities."*

With the recent establishment of the non-racial provincial library services, a new era in the delivery of school and public libraries has dawned. A complete transformation is needed. This creates the challenge of new visions, new ideas, new formations, new structures, and new relationships as Daniels (1994:35) so aptly pointed out. It is imperative that these visions should target the needs of the community and should be locally driven.

One way of realising more cost-effective school and public library services is through closer co-operation between these sectors, and through the forging of closer partnerships. A method to initiate this could be by the establishment of combined

school-community libraries, as found in some overseas countries (Bawa 1993a:13; Bristow 1992b:79; Lor 1998:10; National Education Policy Investigation 1992:61; Stadler 1991:20; Tawete 1995;. Verbeek & Stilwell 1988:24). This would conform with current government recommendations, since one of the “school library models” proposed in the draft policy document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards*, is the “one community one library” model, based on the principle that school educators and learners should share the same library service with the general community (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:18-19).

However, as Chijioke (1989:182) pointed out, locally devised replacements (or variations) of existing models must be firmly rooted within the social needs and cultural patterns of the specific communities which they are to serve, and must be appropriate to the particular situation, if they are to achieve any success. Such models should also consider the possibilities of the information and communication technologies to enhance LIS delivery to these communities.

In the analysis of the overseas model of school-community libraries, it has emerged that the successful establishment of the school-community model was, to a large extent, determined by favourable local circumstances. In planning new library information services, it is thus necessary to listen much and talk little, as was suggested by Tyobeka (1998:10), in order to avoid models that would be unsuitable and unacceptable for the communities for whom they had been developed.

Any library model considered for South Africa should be orientated towards and focused upon the unique circumstances and requirements of the South African context and those of particular communities. No overseas model can simply be transplanted into South Africa and be expected to meet the population’s unique needs.

*“There is ... no ‘single’, definitive, descriptive or typical model. ... The community it serves, with its circumstances, resources and needs, will determine what model will service it.” (Van Zyl 1991:4).*

In the next chapter, the prerequisites for the successful establishment of school-community libraries, as identified in Chapter Three, will be assessed in terms of their relevance to South Africa. This will be done against the background of South African conditions, and by taking into account the problems being experienced in developing public and school library services in Africa, as discussed in this chapter.