

CHAPTER 6

A PUBLIC LIBRARY-BASED VARIANT OF THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY LIBRARY MODEL FOR RURAL, TRIBAL AREAS IN SOUTH AFRICA

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, factors identified in Chapter Three as being crucial to the establishment of a school-community library, were assessed within the context of South African circumstances. It was conclusively established that, in terms of these factors, the successful implementation of the school-community model, as found in the selected overseas countries, would not easily be accomplished in South Africa. This would especially be the case in the remote rural, disadvantaged areas of South Africa where school and public libraries are almost non-existent.

To substantiate the main findings of this study - that local circumstances appear to be the decisive factor in deciding which variant of the school-community library model should be established in a community - it was argued that many variants of the model would be suitable to South African circumstances, depending on the LIS infrastructure, and on the socio-economic conditions of each particular community. It follows, therefore, that, for a rural, disadvantaged community, a school-community library model, specifically adapted to local circumstances, would be ideal.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to answer the following questions:

What are the characteristics of a South African community living in a rural, tribal area?

Why should a variant of the school-community library model be considered for communities in the rural, tribal areas in South Africa?

What characteristics would a variant of the school-community library model, adapted to conditions in the rural, tribal areas in South Africa, display? What would be its

advantages, and what conditions are needed to implement successfully this variant of the model in these areas?

To clarify these questions, a variant of the school-community model, that is the public library-based school-community library, will be investigated and described, within the context of a particular rural, tribal community. Firstly, a rural, tribal community in Mpumalanga will be described. Secondly, the rationale for investigating this variant of the school-community library model for rural, tribal communities, displaying similar characteristics to the one in Mpumalanga, will be given. Thereafter, the characteristics of the variant of the model will be described within the context of this specific rural, tribal community. Then the perceived advantages of this particular variant of the school-community model for implementation in the rural, tribal areas in South Africa will be given, as well as the conditions needed for its successful implementation.

6.2 A community in a rural, tribal area in Mpumalanga

To concretise the, thus far conceptual implementation of a variant of the school-community library model in a typically rural, tribal community, a particular community in the Mpumalanga Province will now be described. This community has been chosen because it possesses some of those distinctive characteristics which have been identified in Chapter Three as essential to a successful implementation of the model.

Statistical information about the community was obtained from the Human Sciences Research Council. The data were extracted from the Census 1996 of Statistics S.A., the *School Register of Needs Survey*, 1996, and the *South African School Library Survey 1999*.

Additional information was obtained from published sources and internal documents of the Mpumalanga Library & Information Service and from primary sources within the community. Unstructured interviews were also conducted with Donald Ramatsetse, the person in charge of the community-initiated library at Maphotla, with Francois

Hendrikz, the Head of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library & Information Service, and with Kimbulani (Sam) Ndawo, Head of the Mpumalanga Educational Library and Information Services.

6.2.1 General background

The community described lives in a rural village called Maphotla, officially known as Wolwekraal, located in the Mdotjana District in Mpumalanga. In the previous political dispensation, this area formed part of KwaNdebele, one of the former Self-governing Territories. In Chapter Four, paragraph 4.2.4, it was shown that in 1994, KwaNdebele had only eighteen school libraries in secondary schools (out of 120) and sixteen functional school libraries (out of 171) in primary schools.

As a result of one man's initiative, this community has attracted the interest of the provincial library authorities and it will soon acquire a new community library building. Donald Ramatsetse (Village's ... 1998:3; To dream ... 1998:3), a security guard at the medical campus of the University of Pretoria, became interested in books and libraries while he monitored students coming out of the medical library carrying books. After founding the Maphotla Art and Cultural Association in his village, he and his association started planning for a community library.

6.2.2 Geographical factors

The village of Maphotla is situated ninety-seven kilometres from Pretoria along a tarred road (A map of the area is attached as **Appendix I**). It is located in a rural, tribal area. The nearest big centre, Siyabuswa, where the district council offices are located, and where there is also a technical college, is approximately eight kilometres from the village. Maphotla is conveniently situated near Marble Hall and Groblersdal, where the Ndebele College of Education is located.

6.2.3 Community profile

From Table 6-1, it becomes clear that this is an established community with a high number of formal dwellings (1,572), of which most are owned (1,444).

Table 6—1: Demographic and socio-economic figures: Wolwekraal: 1996. Prepared by the GIS Centre, Human Sciences Research Council (Statistics S.A. Census 1996)

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Total population</i> | 8558 |
| <i>African population</i> | 8469 |
| <i>Male</i> | 3967 |
| <i>Female</i> | 4591 |
| <i>Age group: 0 - 4</i> | 944 |
| <i>Age group: 5-19</i> | 3255 |
| <i>Age group: 20-59</i> | 3269 |
| <i>Age group: 60 - 85 plus</i> | 611 |
| <i>Persons with no income</i> | 2944 |
| <i>Persons with annual income from R200 - R1000</i> | 981 |
| <i>Persons with annual income from R1500 - R6000</i> | 387 |
| <i>Homeless persons</i> | 3 |
| <i>Houses on separate stands</i> | 1427 |
| <i>Traditional dwellings</i> | 21 |
| <i>Formal dwellings</i> | 1572 |
| <i>Persons with ownership of dwelling</i> | 1444 |
| <i>Persons employed</i> | 804 |
| <i>Persons unemployed and seeking employment</i> | 1298 |
| <i>Persons with no schooling</i> | 2624 |
| <i>Persons with some schooling</i> | 3630 |
| <i>Persons with matric</i> | 742 |
| <i>Persons with post matric qualifications</i> | 110 |
| <i>Persons studying full-time</i> | 3265 |
| <i>Persons studying part-time</i> | 90 |
| <i>Language: Ndebele</i> | 5667 |
| <i>Language: Sepedi</i> | 1819 |

The unemployment rate in the community is very high (1,298 out of a total adult population of approximate 4,000), as is the number of illiterate persons (2,624). Approximately half of the community is under the age of twenty and there are approximately 3,255 children of school-going age. There are a large number of elderly people (611) and also a high number of pre-school children (944). A small group of people (90) is also engaged in further study. Ninety-five per cent of the employed people work in Pretoria, and spend up to four hours daily commuting by bus. The first

group of commuters returns to the village at 17:45 and the last group at 20:30. There are six crèches in the village looking after 247 children (Ramatsitse: personal communication).

6.2.4 Infrastructure and resources

The community has the following schools, which are all situated in the residential area:

- Intuthuko Secondary School,
- Bekezela Primary School (Senior primary),
- Sijabule Primary School (Junior primary),
- Sitebiso Primary School (Primary),
- Silindile Secondary School (Junior secondary).

All these schools are situated within a radius of one kilometre from one another, some as close as one or two hundred metres (South Africa. Department of Education 1996. School Register of Needs: *Map Wolwekraal Schools*). All the learners of the primary schools and the junior secondary school, and approximately 75 per cent of those in the secondary school, live within five kilometres of the school. The schools fall under the jurisdiction of the Groblersdal Education District and the Weltevrede Circuit (Ndawo: personal communication).

According to the data from the *Schools Register of Needs Survey*, obtained from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), all these schools are in good condition, although two of them need painting and minor repairs. All the schools have on-site water and electricity, but no telephones. None of the schools has a school library or school library collections. All the schools, with the exception of the secondary school, indicated that they had enough textbooks. None of the schools has any audio-visual equipment.

The secondary school, the junior secondary school, and the primary schools did indicate in the *Schools Register of Needs Survey, 1996*, that each school was used as a community centre. The facilities of the senior primary school are used for adult basic education instruction. All the schools use English as the medium of instruction.

6.2.5 Public participation

One of the distinct characteristics of this community is the involvement of its members in local issues and in cultural and educational activities. This is evident from the formation of the Maphotla Arts and Cultural Association (MAPHOTLA ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATION. 1997:1). The association was formed in 1996, with the aims of combining all youth clubs – thus keeping the youth off the streets - and of planning for the establishment of a community library.

Several community organisations are part of the arts and cultural association: the tribal authorities, political parties, the SGBs of the schools in the community, the Choirs Association (representing twelve gospel choirs), the Women's Club for Ndebele Beadwork, youth clubs, and the Rural Women's Movement. The Constitution of the Association lists several objectives:

- *"To encourage and promote arts and culture; also to hold art exhibitions and cultural festivals;*
- *To serve as entertainment platform for bookworms and our future student;*
- *To conduct literacy and reading culture;*
- *To establish and maintain linkages with NGOs whose area of focus is literacy, Art/Culture and Development;*
- *To set up support groups for individuals for Community-based Arts Developer (CBAD);*
- *To set up Sub-committees for the following projects:*
 - *CBAD,*
 - *Development,*
 - *Cultural Affair Educators,*
 - *Libraries;*
- *To take constructive action on any matter affecting Art and Culture of the Community;*
- *To provide practical support to members (MAPHOTLA ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATION. 1997:1)"*

6.2.6 Library development

The planning for the library (Mr Donald ... [2000]:1-3) started with the members of the different choirs collecting usable books from the community, and approaching local business men for donations. Choir concerts were held to raise funds and the

Association paid for phone cards to contact potential donors. Several donations were received, *inter alia* from publishing companies, and from the medical students and staff of the University of Pretoria. A tiny two-room building was acquired rent-free from a local business man, Jim Ntuli, and the community donated furniture.

The library started with three hundred books which has since grown to approximately eight hundred volumes (Ramatsetse: personal communication). Initially the library was open only on Saturdays, but is currently open from Monday to Saturday. Volunteers staff the library of whom three work on a permanent basis. The volunteers are paid a basic food allowance by the Association.

In recognition for the work that has been done, the library, together with the Intuthuko Secondary School, won a competition for outstanding co-operation between a school and a library. This competition was held as part of the National Library Week of 2000, with the theme: “reach the world @ your library” (Ferreira 2000:5). The library received a certificate, signed by the Premier of Mpumalanga, and won a gold medal. In addition, both the library, and the school, won a computer (Mr Donald ... [2000]:3). The occasion was broadcast by the SABC’s regional services in the Mopani Programme (Hendrikz: personal communication).

After several meetings with the Mpumalanga Library & Information Service, a grant of R760,000 was approved for the construction and equipping of the new Maphotla Community Funda Library. A task team was set up, consisting of Donald Ramatsetse, the Ward Councillor, a councillor representing the Transitional Local Council, appointed by the Mayor, and the regional librarian. This team was tasked to draw up a plan for the library. After three months, a draft plan was submitted to the Mpumalanga Library & Information Service (MPLIS) to go out on tender. An agreement between the MPLIS and the local council was signed in terms of which the local council accepted responsibility for the staffing and maintenance of the building.

The MPLIS will provide the building, the book stock, in-service staff training, general management guidance, and marketing. It is planned that the library will have a

computer linkage with the MPLIS central catalogue and the PALS system through dial-up access to the Internet (Hendrikz: personal communication). The next step planned by the Association is to involve NGOs as partners, especially those working in the ABET and literacy field. The establishment of a telecentre within the facility is also contemplated (Ramatsitse: personal communication).

The proposed library is ideally situated within less than one kilometre from all five schools that have to be served (Smit & Hennessy 1995:2). This location makes it ideal for a public library-based school-community library. The secondary school is approximately one hundred metres from the proposed library, while two of the primary schools are respectively two and two hundred and fifty metres away from the proposed library. This would make it possible to schedule classes from these schools, during school hours, for information literacy instruction. The other two schools (within 750 metres from the library) could be scheduled for afternoon classes. A plan of the location of the library, in relation with all five schools, is attached as **Appendix J**.

The plan of the library makes provision for two separate rooms, available for instruction of school learners during school hours. These rooms could also be used as activity rooms and meeting rooms for the community, even when the library is closed. A plan of the proposed library is attached as **Appendix K**.

The community has already identified the services that they would like the new library to offer. These include: pre-school activities (story hours, using grannies to tell stories); puppet shows; provision of audio-visual material for the illiterate, and elderly people; basic computer classes; fax, e-mail and photocopying facilities; and talks on various topics of relevance to the community, such as entrepreneurship, health, and business skills (Ramatsitse: personal communication).

6.2.7 Synopsis

The Maphotla community has shown what can be achieved with community participation and commitment. One manifest conclusion is that the people do not expect to get everything for free. An annual membership fee of ten rand is

presently charged by the library, and the community is willing to pay for services, such as fax, e-mail, and photocopying facilities. The objective is to have such services close-by, so as to obviate travelling far to obtain them (Ramatsitse: personal communication).

Another characteristic of the community is that they do not wait for outside help. They initiate matters and plan carefully to achieve the objectives they set for the community.

The ideal position of the proposed library relative to the five schools in the community, and the positive attitude and commitment of the community, and that of the provincial LIS, makes this community the ideal, rural community for a particular variant of the school-community library model, that is the public library-based school-community library.

The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to investigate this variant of the school-community library for the rural areas, but, in particular, for those tribal areas falling under the authority of traditional leaders. Those areas, in most cases, would have been part of the former homeland areas. The people living in such areas are particularly disadvantaged as far as access to information to improve their lives is concerned, as has been indicated in Chapter Four, paragraph 4.3.5 and paragraph 4.3.6. The *NEPI report* and the previous regional TransLis Coalitions have identified the provision of information to these communities as one of the key issues requiring immediate attention (National Education Policy Investigation 1992:29; Kaniki 1994:35):

"Those living in rural settlements ... have been virtually ignored (in some cases because of the political carving up of the country), and the correction of this disparity is a matter of urgency if levels of literacy are to be improved and maintained"(National Education Policy Investigation 1992:29).

The variant of the school-community library model that is investigated in this chapter is one where the combined library is located in the public library facility and is surrounded by a cluster of schools.

6.3 Rationale for variant of model

The rationale for this variant of the model is that, according to the findings of the *School Register of Needs Survey*, conducted during 1996 (South Africa. Department of Education 1997:8; Fig. 16), primary school libraries in the rural provinces are almost non-existent, with percentages as low as 2 per cent (Northern Province). The percentage of secondary schools with school library facilities was also found to be very low in the rural provinces, e.g. Northern Province (9 per cent); North West (47 per cent); Mpumalanga (39 per cent); KwaZulu Natal (30 per cent) and the Eastern Cape (26 per cent).

This shortage of on-site school library facilities has been confirmed in the *South African School Library Survey 1999* (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:11). The provinces that were found to be most disadvantaged were the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province, where only 12,2 per cent and 16 per cent of schools respectively were found to have on-site library facilities (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:11). The report states:

"Given that both provinces (Eastern Cape and the Northern Province) have significant rural heartlands, there are unlikely to be other public, municipal or provincial, libraries available" (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:11).

The report also notes (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:11), that the provinces with the most schools, the Eastern Cape (5,741) and KwaZulu Natal (4,874) have low proportions of libraries at 12,2 per cent and 24,1 per cent respectively, and that this

"... implies that a campaign to increase library access in these provinces will be a financially onerous task" (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:11).

In addition, the *School Register of Needs Survey* showed that there was a national shortage of classrooms of 57,499 classrooms in 1996. The provinces with the most classroom shortages, were the Eastern Cape (15,538), KwaZulu-Natal (14,534) and the Northern Province (13,670) (South Africa. Department of Education 1997:9). The building of classrooms, rather than libraries is, therefore, a priority for the government.

Smit & Hennessy (1995:45) point out that schools basically consist of four components: land, buildings, equipment, and personnel, and that funds for these components are limited. They stress that, for that particular reason, maximum shared use should be made of these expensive, specialised facilities and space by schools and the communities. This view is shared by Karlsson, Nassimbeni & Karelse (1996:19).

Smit & Hennessy believe that few schools can afford facilities such as libraries and computer rooms, and that those schools which do have these facilities often do not make efficient use of them. They point out that specialised facilities, such as a library for a secondary school comprise almost 50 per cent of the building cost of the school, while general teaching space usually forms less than 30 per cent of the total cost. They, therefore, recommend that such facilities be used by each school in turn (Smit & Hennessy 1995:45-46).

It is obvious that shared use of these facilities by different schools, and the community could only occur where there are already clusters of schools. The *Schools Register of Needs Survey* has, however, indicated that clusters of schools in South Africa are mainly located in the urban areas, and in the former homelands and TBVC states (South Africa. Department of Education 1997:9).

Hallak, as quoted by Smit & Hennessy (1995:46) lists the advantages of facility sharing among schools as follows:

- Full use of the facilities (up to 90 per cent of the week);
- Lower building costs (fewer specialised rooms to be built);
- Lower running costs;

- Less responsibility imposed on principals of the feeder schools;
- Minimum maintenance cost.

In addition, Smit & Hennessy (1995:50) point out that, because of ever-diminishing resources, "... all new schools have their own ill-equipped library ...", because specialised facilities, such as libraries, are increasingly of an inferior standard.

When these considerations are taken into account, together with the fact, as indicated in Chapter Four, paragraph 4.2.6, that most school libraries in the disadvantaged areas are barely adequate for the school, and much less the public, it is clear that the use of existing school libraries for a combined school-community library would, in many instances, not be a viable proposition. Dube (1998:184), in her study of ninety-four schools in the Umtata district (of the former Transkei), aimed at exploring whether a school-based public library would feasibly solve the lack of library services in previously disadvantaged areas in South Africa, also found that library provision was poor, and that the few school libraries that existed were inadequate in terms of material, staff and accommodation.

In spite of these constraints, Dube (1998:184) found that respondents were unanimous in their support for the school-based school-community library model. Those interviewed believed that the school could benefit from joint library services. Dube (1998:186), however, acknowledges that, given the poor provision of school libraries in the area under investigation, the mere merging of facilities would not solve the problem of inadequate provision. Bristow (1992b:78-79), in the light of a lack of adequate school library facilities in the former Gazankulu and Venda homelands, believes that, in the rural areas, ways have to be found to make the most of whatever resources are available. She then asks the question:

"Why not let the public library serve the purpose (of the school-community library)?"

Against this background, it can be assumed that the establishment of a combined school-community library in an accessible, public library building (if such a facility were available), would, most probably, be a more cost-effective and practical solution

for a rural area. This, especially, would be the case if such a facility could be shared by a cluster of schools. Smit & Hennessy (1995:1) support this view:

"... instead of providing an understaffed community library and a number of ill-equipped school libraries, one fully staffed and fully equipped library to serve both the community and a number of schools could be provided within a school cluster."

They feel that multi-functional and shared facilities should be encouraged, particularly in poorer areas, where resources are usually very limited (Smit & Hennessy 1995:34). The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Service indicated, in 1996, that they were already planning and building public libraries in school clusters (Bawa 1996:17).

6.4 Presumed characteristics of variant of model

6.4.1 Community traits and involvement

Based on the characteristics of the Maphotla community, general traits of the target communities for the variant of the model under investigation can be deduced. The target community for the public library-based school-community library would be a tribal community living in a rural area, which, in all likelihood, would have formed part of the former homelands and TBVC states, and would fall under the authority of a traditional leader. This community would comprise a relatively small and homogeneous group of people, who live and work together in close, interdependent proximity, who would share close personal relationships, common value systems, and a strong awareness of their distinct group identity (Thompson 1981:265).

The adult community would be characterised by a high level of illiteracy, a dominant oral tradition, limited resources, and a need for information for mere survival (Bristow 1992b:72). Social support groups and personal sources of information (friends, neighbours and family) would be the main support systems for coping with the daily problems of living (Fairer-Wessels 1990:360; Pienaar 1995:10; Rosenberg 1993:33). In general, the community's disadvantage, in terms of access to information, would mean (Bunch as quoted by Lor 1991:3):

- they are unaware that helpful information even exists;
- they are also ignorant that any support agencies - informational or advisory –are available;
- they are unable to understand the information in the medium in which it is presented;
- they may be unable to gain access to information because of distance or physical handicaps.

The community would show signs of direct involvement in school matters and social and cultural activities. This would include the desire and willingness to support their schools, and other cultural, social institutions with money, and in other ways, such as with voluntary work. Bristow (1992b:79) refers to this type of community involvement and commitment as “a sense of communality”, considering it the greatest resource of rural disadvantaged areas:

“If something is seen to be of benefit to the community, the people of that community will undergo a great deal of sacrifice to obtain it.”

Therefore, the idea of a combined library in the community would be enthusiastically accepted, since, according to Bristow (1992b:79), the degree of acceptance of the facility determines whether it will be used to capacity or become a white elephant. This acceptance would include the community’s commitment to maintain the operating services of the facility by means of funds and voluntary personnel:

“... it must be their system, and they must own it” (Line as quoted by Rosenberg 1993:29).

6.4.2 Location, size and design of facility

The location of the combined facility would be within a 750m radius of participating schools, i.e. the schools would be within ten minutes’ walking distance from the library (Smit & Hennessy 1995:56).

The facility would be either a new purpose-built library or an existing structure found to be suitable by the provincial LIS for housing a combined library facility (Hendrikz 2000:8).

The nature of the accommodation and of the facilities would be determined by the aims, goals and objectives of the information service (Stander 1993b:95), which would be established by a thorough community survey (Carstens 1994:16), which would include all the stakeholders. The facility would be attractive and sufficiently spacious to accommodate the programmes and services required by the participating schools and the general public. The facility would have one or two separate classrooms which would be used for information literacy education during the day, and for adult community meeting rooms during the evenings. These classrooms would have outside doors for easy access by the community when the library is closed. During these hours, the classrooms would be used for community gatherings, meetings, educational talks, ABET classes, skills training, and for general social contact.

Such a special classroom would be able to accommodate at least one class for the instruction of information literacy, and the use of audio-visual media. The library facility would make provision for:

- an area for group and individual study;
- an area for the use of audio-visual media;
- storage space for
 - an expanding book collection;
 - audio-visual materials such as video recordings and sound recording;
 - illustrative and non-book materials, such as wall-charts, maps, photographs, pictures, pamphlets, brochures, and newspaper cuttings;
 - audio-visual equipment
- an area with other electronic facilities, such as a faxing service, accessing the Internet and the exchange of e-mail, and word processing.

There would also be a space for pre-school children's story hours, and a separate area for adults, e.g. browsing in comfort, quiet reading, or enjoying audio or video cassettes.

6.4.3 Staffing

The library would be staffed by a qualified public librarian with, at least, paraprofessional qualifications. In addition, the part-time services of teacher-librarians or teachers from the participating schools would be used for literacy information education, and to inculcate a reading habit, by providing them with reading opportunities, and an environment conducive to information use. Use would also be made of voluntary library workers to assist with the performing of routine library tasks, and the rendering of the various services and outreach programmes to the community.

The librarian would be active in interpreting the information needs of his or her users, who may not be functionally literate, and in providing the necessary material (Kempson 1986:189). This could entail reprocessing and repackaging it in a variety of formats - visual, oral as well as written - so that it is appropriate to the people who need it. (Kempson 1986:187). This would necessitate a librarian who has credibility and standing within the community (Kempson 1986:189), a 'new breed' of librarian, as Bekker & Lategan (1988:70) express it. The librarian would be a fully committed member of the community, would be highly sensitive to its needs, would be involved in its productive activities, and would have proved his or her commitment to serving the people in the community (Durrani 1985:154).

The teacher-librarians of the participating schools would be time-tabled to teach literacy information education to each of the schools' classes. In addition, they would play an important role in creating and sustaining a positive reading climate by making effective use of storytelling, group work, dramatisation, music, and project work on issues relevant to the learners' lives (Stander 1993a:10). They would also, in co-operation with the librarian, plan for the purchase of curriculum-oriented information resources.

The voluntary library workers would assist the librarian with marketing the library and its services to the community and thus will play a pro-active role in ensuring its use by the community (Bekker & Lategan 1988:70). They would also assist in the rendering of the various outreach programmes. Retrenched teachers in the community would, for example, make themselves available for conducting literacy and ABET classes.

6.4.4 Library stock

The information resources would mainly comprise printed material, but would include other materials and media to meet the needs of non- and newly-literate users (Rosenberg 1993:29). The study by Bekker & Lategan (1988:70a) indicated that the holdings of the combined library should include:

- Written material, e.g. instruction leaflets, colour brochures and information packages with clear and colourful diagrams;
- Visual material, e.g. posters, pictures and charts with step-by-step instructions;
- Audio and video cassettes.

Topics which research has indicated as popular among rural women are domestic science, cooking, embroidery, sewing, knitting, and childcare. Other topics pertinent to rural communities are crafts, crops, rearing livestock and health (Atherton 1993:36-37). Ngulube (2000:2) stresses that literates, neo-literates and illiterates continually require information to raise their educational standards, advance democracy, participate in decision-making, develop the economy, and enhance the quality of life. Major issues, in this regard, are health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, family planning, education, scholarship opportunities, employment, international donor funding, loan and credit facilities, marketing information, party politics and government policies. This information would be available in an easy-to-understand written style, and would also be available in the indigenous language of the community. A multi-media approach to this information communication would be followed. All available media would be used to convey this information, such as video cassettes, audio cassettes and pictorial material (Durrani 1985:155,156).

Since children form a major part of the population in South Africa, and also because they are the more literate component in a rural community, special attention would be given to their reading needs, in order to create the habit of using libraries for information, education, and for recreation (Bristow 1992b:75). Rosenberg (1993:34) shares the view that priority should be given to this user group:

"If a choice has to be made, it may be better to concentrate energy and finance on the needs of school age children in rural areas. It is they who will become the rural adult population of tomorrow. If they are already trained in the use of information sources and in the value of information, then the establishment of rural community centres will become much easier and more in demand."

Stander (1993a:7-8) believes that in developing countries, such as South Africa, the school library should go beyond merely resourcing the curriculum and should play an active role in the overall development of learners. Table 6-2 shows the development areas and information needs for which the school library collection would have to make provision in order to play this role.

6.4.5 Services and outreach programmes

The level of services of the combined library would be determined by the community itself. It would be a people-oriented, informal information service, combining the oral tradition and the print medium, so that everybody in the community could be reached (Durrani 1985:154,157; Wyley 1995:6):

"Information workers should be teachers as well as themselves learning from the peasants; they should combine the role of educators, mass media workers, historians, broadcasters, and workers on the cultural front. Information centres should be centres of dramatic and creative activities which can release the creativity of the peasants. ... Only by assuming all these roles (which also implies that ... the peasants themselves, in turn become part-time information workers), only by such a creative interpretation of the role of information workers, will it be possible to give birth to people-oriented information services" (Durrani 1985:155).

Table 6—2: Development areas and information needs for which the school library collection has to make provision (Stander 1993a:7)

| <i>DEVELOPMENT AREAS</i> | <i>INFORMATION NEEDS</i> |
|--|--|
| <i>Religious development</i> | Life values World views State of mind |
| <i>Educational and intellectual development</i> | Literacy and numeracy Study and reading skills Vocational training Career planning Educational services Tertiary education |
| <i>Cultural and community development</i> | Traditions, culture and language Community information |
| <i>Social development</i> | Environmental information Sexuality and venereal diseases Family planning Child care Social problems, e.g. drug abuse and alcoholism |
| <i>Human development</i> | Job opportunities Life skills Recreation Listening and viewing skills Health Food and water |
| <i>Economic development</i> | Money management Banking |
| <i>Political development</i> | Citizenship Voting rights and procedures Political parties |

The service would be a two-way process. The people in the community would not only be supplied with information from outside the community, but the information existing within the community, the 'indigenous knowledge', e.g. folklore, rituals, crafts, skills and local information, would also be reproduced in print, visual and other media, all of which would be made available to other communities. This presupposes an investigation into what information is available within the community, what information the community needs, and what capacities exist within the community (Durrani 1985:154; Pienaar 1995:10; Wyley 1995:7). Information might also be disseminated in the form of rhythmic jingles and short messages to enlighten and entertain people during public gatherings (Nwagha 1992:81). Information would at the centre of the human resource development equation for the people within the community (Wyley 1995:7-8).

The publication of poetry, drama, comic strips, prose, local newspapers, posters, video and sound recordings, relating to the people's lives and development, would be facilitated by the combined library, and would involve the arts and cultural organisations in the community (Wyley 1995:8); Bristow 1992b:74).

A community information service would be provided according to the needs of the community, and which would form an integral part of the community development process. This service would be interactive and encourage a two-way flow of information (Pienaar 1995:10). The level of service would be decided by the community, e.g. the library could be a clearinghouse of information (i.e. details about sources and the collection of information to be provided on request), or it would become involved with individuals needing help to survive. Members of the community could, for example, be assisted in writing letters, filling in forms, or making telephone calls (Louw 1992:9). Unemployment and an increased demand for health care might generate a need for various counselling services about work, career options, and for access to basic and specialised health information. An information file on, for example, community activities, public and welfare services, could be compiled and kept in the library (Pienaar 1995:9).

Block loans, circulated regularly, to the participating schools, would be one of the services rendered by the combined library, as a resource for both teachers and learners. The block loans would entail selections of books (fiction, non-fiction and some basic reference books) which would be placed in strong, lockable, portable wooden boxes, functioning both as storage containers and classroom display cabinets, similar to those used by READ. These block loans would enable the teacher to move away from textbook-centred teaching and make classroom teaching more interesting.

The availability of books in the classroom would enable the teachers to demonstrate to learners that facts can come from more than one source, and that knowledge is selected, presented and interpreted differently in different sources. This would encourage learners to acquire and develop critical thinking and appraisal skills, which are so essential for independent study and research. The presence of books in the

classroom would also ensure that books and book-related learning are integrated into the learners' classroom experience from an early age, which would promote an awareness and appreciation of the importance of books and libraries (READ [1994]:3-4).

Teachers and teacher-librarians would be engaged in various activities to inculcate the reading habit in the learners. These activities would include: the creation of opportunities for sharing book experiences in class; the compilation of lists of suggested reading; silent reading periods; the creation of pictorial book reports; the writing of original stories, short stories and poetry; and the compilation of files or catalogues of books read (Dike 1996:7).

The combined library would form part of the existing provincial library system. This would immediately provide access to the advantages of participating in the interlibrary loan system, of resource sharing with other libraries, and of receiving block loans of scarce material from the provincial LIS (Vermeulen & Vosloo 1999:48). Linkage to the computerised library system of the provincial LIS, such as the PALS system, brings with it the added benefit of dial-up access to the combined selection of information resources (Adams & Hodges 1994:14).

The combined library would forge links with other community-based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs to enhance existing services to its users. These would include literacy organisations, educational organisations, and initiatives such as telecentres and MPCCs (Mzimande 1993:13).

6.5 Perceived advantages of the public library-based school-community library model

The perceived advantages of the public library-based variant of the school-community library model are:

- A proper, purposely built or adapted, fully equipped library building for use by the entire community;

- Support from the provincial LIS system with access to a greater array of expertise to ensure effective management of the library;
- An integrated library and information service for a community, such as a rural, tribal one with no school library services, which would not be able to support separate school and public library services, and which would thus promote equality and redress (National Education Policy Investigation 1992:3);
- Efficient utilisation of public money:
 - staff costs could be shared between the provincial LIS, the PED and the local council;
 - facilities would be provided more cost-effectively, as it would save the PED the costs of supplying expensive school library facilities (Smit & Hennessy 19959:46);
 - acquisition of information resources could be co-ordinated, e.g. reference and audio-visual materials, which would result in substantial savings;
- Access to the combined collections of the public library and the participating schools' educational collections which could potentially create a better collection in terms of quantity and quality;
- Contact with proficient and suitably qualified staff, consisting of a qualified public librarian with, at least, paraprofessional qualifications, and the part-time services of teachers or teacher-librarians of the participating schools;
- Telecommunication facilities which would make it possible to have dial-up linkage with the provincial LIS and SABINET, thus facilitating interlibrary loans, resource sharing, and online access to providers of further education;
- Extended opening hours;
- Marketing and promotion facilities available through the provincial LIS;
- A cultural focus point, able to collect and display local history and art work;
- Access to both systems of central support, i.e. that of the provincial LIS and the provincial ELIS;
- Better opportunities for life-long learning;

- Increased community awareness and understanding of current education practice through regular contact with educators and learners (South Australia 1990:3);
- Greater community interaction by establishing a community focal point (South Australia 1990:3);
- Improved access to community and government information;

6.6 Conditions needed for the successful implementation of the model

6.6.1 Government funding and support

Although this variant of the school-community library model presupposes the involvement and financial commitment of the local community, the financial backing and other support of the provincial and local government are crucially important to the success of the combined facility. This argument is aptly summarised by Thompson (1981:283):

“Careful thought must be given to delineating precisely which areas of responsibility are to be devolved, to whom and through what machinery, allocating a measure of real responsibility whilst at the same time ensuring that local communities possess in sufficient measure the resources and support in the form of advice, expertise and money to make this responsibility a reality.”

6.6.2 Location and size of facility

Smit & Hennessy (1995:2) recommend that a multi-purpose facility, such as a combined school-community library model, should be located within a minimum walking distance of the schools: about one kilometre from primary schools and two kilometres from secondary schools. They also suggest that it should be close to the intersection of major public transport routes. A cluster could, according to Smit and Hennessy (1995:2), consist of five to twelve schools.

Smit & Hennessy (1995:34) are of the opinion that the facility should be appropriate to the community's needs, and they suggest further that appropriateness relates to the degree to which human need is met, which may vary significantly from community to community, according to different community dynamics and circumstances.

The generic standard proposed by the DoE in its policy document as a spatial norm for a school library is that

“ ... Every school must provide educators and learners with adequate space to access library-based resources in comfort and safety” (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:33). (emphasis the Department's)

The draft policy document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:33), confirms that this generic standard will be defined and/or applied differently for each library model. In the case of the public library-based school-community library, the DoE places the responsibility on the SGBs of the participating schools to define their spatial norms according to their learners' information needs. This DoE requirement

“... emphasizes the need for schools to view their teaching programmes objectively and determine the level of support which would be required from a school library and information skills programme in a particular situation - to support their progressive programmes, or to transform their traditional ones” (Vermeulen 1994:154).

6.6.3 Pre-service and in-service training

While Kaniki (1994:36) ponders whether specialisation in education and training programmes for librarians, working in rural communities, is needed, Bekker & Lategan (1988:70) believe that librarians should be trained in both library and communication skills in order to fill this role. Töttemeyer (as quoted in Radebe 1996:69) is of the opinion that librarians should be trained to fulfil 'shifting' roles when serving both schools and information deprived communities. Radebe (1996:69-70) argues that modules on community librarianship, on materials' development (including the repackaging of information), and on needs assessment techniques, in the training of teacher-librarians, would prepare them to serve both the school and the general community.

Thompson (1981:286-267) refers to the role of the teacher in a rural community as that of an 'animateur', a community leader, assisting the community in matters to which their training and education is relevant, e.g. clerical work and accounting, or the

interpretation of regulations or explanation of national events. He feels, however, that if teachers were to become genuine *animateurs* they would have to be equipped with new skills which would normally not form part of pre-service teacher training.

Radebe (1997:225) is of the opinion that courses on marketing strategies should form part of teacher-librarians' training to provide them with the skills for dealing with difficult and unwilling principals, teachers and learners. Teacher-librarians should also receive ongoing and in-service training to keep them up-to-date with the latest developments in their field, for example on methods regarding the integration of the library in the curriculum. In addition, workshops for principals and educators on the role of the library, its value in the new outcomes-based education (OBE) curriculum, and its centrality in learning, are also essential, as the different attitudes of principals have been identified as being a major hindrance to the promotion of libraries (Radebe 1997:225).

In the light of the growing IT industry and its application in libraries, the staff of the combined library would need computer training by the provincial LIS. The librarian and other staff would have to be proficient in 'core competencies' regarding the use of the computer, such as, booting a PC, logging on to the LAN, and basic troubleshooting. It is also important that library staff keep pace with the frequent changes occurring in the information technology (IT) environment. For that reason Buchanan & Thomas (2000:1-2) believe that library staff should be empowered to have:

- a greater awareness of changes in IT;
- a basic knowledge and understanding of computer hardware and software;
- the knowledge to use programs directly related to their jobs, e.g. SABINET, URICA, PALS;
- the ability to use software applications, such as e-mail, effectively;
- a basic knowledge of other computer applications in the library.

In addition, the PED should provide educator development programmes to utilise technology and the Internet as a tool to enhance teaching and learning.

6.6.4 Access to and utilisation of ICT

The South Australian experience with the school-community library model has established that the utilisation of ICT can make an important contribution to a successful combined library, especially in remote areas. Access to Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilitates the use of the parent LIS organisation's central services, such as a cataloguing system, the interlibrary loan system, and linkage to national or regional bibliographic networks or union catalogues. It also encourages effective use of various databases and the Internet by teachers and learners, thus enhancing the information gathering process (Little 1996:39). In addition, it provides online access to further educational courses, government publications, and government services (Little 1996:42-43).

Some provincial LIS and individual public libraries in South Africa already make use of the ICT infrastructure available in South Africa. Fourie (1996:211) found that, in 1996, fifty-one libraries were using PALS in South Africa. This fact, as well as the existence of the four PALS consortia operating in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng (Le Roux 1999:8) and an additional one operating in MPLIS (Mpumalanga Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture 1999:24), is an indication that provincial LIS are more than aware of the advantages that ICT can have for the improvement of services to their affiliated community libraries. In the Western Cape, where both the Western Cape Provincial Library Service and the Western Cape Education Library & Information Services (EDULIS) use the PALS system, great potential exists for the sharing of resources between the two organisations (Le Roux 1999:8-9).

The MPLIS in its White Paper (Mpumalanga Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture 1999:24), makes mention of the establishment of an electronic network of libraries to improve co-ordination and co-operation of LIS in Mpumalanga. Public libraries will be encouraged to standardise and become part of the PALS system.

The examination of the various ICT initiatives in South Africa in Chapter Four, shows that they have great potential to enhance the public library-based school-community library model in the rural, tribal areas. Partnerships with these initiatives could add a new dimension to the public library-based school-community library model and enable members of remote rural communities “to exploit information to enhance their well-being” (Economic Commission for Africa 1999:19).

6.7 Summary

In this chapter, a variant of the school-community library model, the public library-based school-community library for rural, tribal areas, was investigated. A particular rural, tribal community was introduced, which displays characteristics, potentially ideal for the successful implementation of this variant of the school-community library model. Thereafter, the rationale for this variant of the school-community library model was outlined, followed by an analysis of the presumed characteristics of this variant of the model. The perceived advantages of the public library-based school-community library model were then presented, followed by the conditions required for the successful implementation of this library model.

The outstanding characteristics of the described rural, tribal community included commitment and public participation in educational and cultural activities. The people also displayed initiative and a willingness to improve themselves without outside help. The *Schools Register of Needs Survey* indicated that in the rural, tribal areas of South Africa, school library facilities were almost non-existent. It also showed that clusters of schools were common in these areas. It would, therefore, appear that a community living in these areas, and with these characteristics, would make the ideal community for this particular variant of the school-community library model.

It is clear that this variant of the school-community library model can only succeed when a public library facility already exists in and is effectively used by the community. In addition, as this model implies the use of the library by a cluster of schools, the existence of a cluster of schools, and the central location of the library

within this educational cluster area, is of paramount importance. Moreover, there should be a commitment from all the partners involved to fund and staff the facility competently. The community's desire to have such a library and its choice of librarian, because of his or her specific personal attributes, will also be contributing factors to the successful operation of the library model. It follows that the choice of the community for implementing this variant of the library model will be of critical importance.

The support of the provincial LIS and the PED will also play a crucial role in the success of the library. The appropriateness of the services will, however, determine whether the library will be utilised effectively and whether it will be sustained by all the contributing partners.

In Chapter Seven some guidelines for the establishment and operation of the rural public library-based school-community library will be given.