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The potential impact of establishing a national library

on

library and information services

in

Mauritius

by

Ishwarduth Dassyne

A Master's Dissertation, submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Master of Arts degree of Loughborough University

September 1997

Supervisor:  Professor A. Jack Meadows, MA, MSc., D.Phil., D.Sc.
Department of Library and Information Studies

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This dissertation studies the general issue of the establishment of a national library in the existing library and information environment of the Republic of Mauritius. The Mauritius National Library Act enacted by the Parliament in December 1996 is analysed section by section to see how appropriate the provisions are for the achievement of the objectives of the National Library. Comparisons are also made with relevant section of the national library laws of other countries where the latter can serve as examples within the Mauritian context. The potential impact of the establishment of the National Library on the development of library and information services in Mauritius is then discussed by analysing and interpreting data obtained from a review of the available literature, and from study visits and discussions in libraries in Mauritius and in the national libraries of Scotland and Wales. The general conclusion is that there is a necessity for the implementation of the Mauritius National Library Act as soon as possible and recommendations are also made for the smooth implantation of the National Library of Mauritius within the local library and information environment.
I would like to place on record my deep gratitude for all the people who have made possible the presentation of this dissertation.

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Finally I would like to thank my parents, my wife and my son for their unrelenting moral support - this dissertation is dedicated to them.
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1.1. The island of Mauritius

Mauritius is a pear-shaped island situated in the southern Indian Ocean, about 500 miles east of Madagascar, between longitudes 57°17 and 57°46 East and latitudes 19°58 and 20°32 South (see map on page 2). The Mauritian territory also includes the island of Rodrigues (about 350 miles east of Mauritius), the Agalega Islands (about 580 miles north of Mauritius), and the Saint Brandon Islands (about 250 miles north-east of Mauritius). The combined area of Mauritius and the outer islands is 790 square miles, with Mauritius accounting for 720 square miles and Rodrigues for 40 square miles.

The island is of volcanic origin and consists of a broad plateau sloping towards a northern coastal plain, with elevations of up to 2,710 feet near the mountainous southern coastline. The coastline itself is quite jagged with many natural bays and harbours and the island is nearly encircled by a coral reef.

Mauritius has a sub-tropical maritime climate with two seasons, summer from November to April and winter from May to October. Although the South East Trade Winds blow for the greater part of the year, there is a wide range of temperature and rainfall because of the mountainous nature of the island. The temperature varies from 16° C to 30° C at sea level and from 13° C to 26° C on the central plateau. Rainfall varies between 1000 mm on the coastal areas to 5000 mm on the highlands. Although there is no dry or wet season as such, the rains are heaviest during the summer months and since the island lies within the cyclone belt, it is often visited by devastating tropical cyclones between the months of December and March.
Map of the Indian Ocean showing the location of Mauritius
1.2. Population, language and religion

There was no indigenous population in Mauritius and because the first Dutch settlers did not remain on the island, the earliest permanent inhabitants were the French and their African black slaves. After the abolition of slavery, Indian indentured labourers were brought into the island and the later immigrants included the Chinese and the mulattoes.

The population of Mauritius was estimated in 1995 at 1.13 million of which a majority of 52 percent consists of the Indo-Mauritians (the Mauritians of Indian origin). The next largest ethnic group representing 33 percent of the total population is the general population which includes the people of European (mainly French) extraction and the Creoles of mixed and African descent. The minority groups are the Muslims with 10 percent and the Sino-Mauritians (the Mauritians of Chinese origin) with 5 percent of the population respectively. Although these communities maintain friendly and harmonious relations with one another, ethnic barriers reinforced by religious and linguistic heritage tend to be fixed and inflexible and there is very little degree of assimilation.

English is the official language of the country, but French may also be used in the National Assembly and in the lower law courts. In fact, French is more commonly used than English even though the quality of spoken French varies according to the educational level of the speaker. However the lingua franca is Creole, a language derived from French but with its own syntax, pronunciation and vocabulary modified through borrowings from African languages. Several ancestral languages are also spoken by the members of the respective ethnic groups and these include Hindi, Bhojpuri, Urdu, Tamil, Marathi, Telugu, Gujarati and Chinese.

The religious configuration of the nation closely follows the ethnic and linguistic divisions. Thus the majority of the population is of Hindu faith (51 percent) while the two other main religions are Christianity (33 percent) and Islam (16 percent). Religious minorities
include Buddhists, Confucians, Bahais and Ahmadiyyahs, the latter two being heterodox sects related to Islam.

1.3. Key historical events

According to Burgh, quoted by Rambocus, the island was discovered in 1507 by Domingo Fernandes, a Portuguese sailor who named it Cimi or Cerne after the ship which he commanded. However, the Portuguese never really settled on the island, but they simply used it as a supply station for almost 75 years until they stopped their trade with India and abandoned the place.

The next visitors were the Dutch in 1598 and they called the island Mauritius after their ruler, Prince Maurice van Nassau. In 1638, a Dutch company of about 300 people, including farmers and slaves, settled on the island. They reared cattle, grew food crops and tobacco, and lived on fishing and hunting. They introduced sugarcane, cotton, domestic animals and the “sumbhair” deer on the island, but their hunting activities also led to the extinction of the Dodo, a large flightless bird that was unique to Mauritius. The Dutch also made maximum use of the valuable timber of the ebony trees which they supplied to Europe for the shipbuilding industry until 1710 when they abandoned this trading post and left the island to settle in their new installation at Cape Town in South Africa.

The island was claimed in 1715 by the French who named it ‘Isle de France’, but it was only in 1722 that the first French colonists came to settle in the country. The colony was placed under the French East India Company until 1767 when the French Ministry of Marine took over the administration and started the economic development of the island. With the frequent attack and looting of British trading vessels in the Indian Ocean by French pirates during the late 18th century, the British set their minds on capturing the island because of its strategic position. They succeeded in doing this in 1810 during the Napoleonic Wars and in 1814, the French signed the Treaty of Paris which gave the British control of the island and its dependencies.
The British gave back the name of Mauritius to the island and continued its economic development which had started under the French administration. English merchants started settling in the new colony, but the French still formed the greater part of the European population and this helped to preserve their culture even during the British occupation. The most important reforms carried out by the British were the reorganisation of the government, the police and the administration of justice. With the abolition of slavery in 1835, indentured labourers were imported from India to work on the sugarcane plantations and the production of sugar for export was increased by the introduction of richer cane varieties and improved methods of cultivation. Mauritius also continued to prosper from its strategic geographical position and a further source of revenue was provided by the trading ships which stopped at Port Louis for repairs and refuelling on their way from Europe to India or vice versa via the Cape of Good Hope. The British also did not overlook the welfare of the people and several laws were enacted for the improvement of health services and the development of the educational infrastructure.

1.4. Political development

Up to 1935, only the Europeans and a privileged class of property owners, consisting mainly of Franco-Mauritians and Creoles, could take an active part in the political life of the country. In 1936, the first Mauritian political party, the Labour Party was founded by Dr Maurice Curoé, a Creole medical doctor who demanded that the Indian community should be able to get involved in politics and that the labourers should be represented in the Council of Government. The property qualifications were abolished in 1948 and since then the Indo-Mauritian community has dominated the legislature.

In 1955, the Mauritius Labour Party under the leadership of Dr Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, an Indo-Mauritian medical doctor, had the largest number of elected members in the Legislative Council. It asked for changes in the constitution so that there could be universal adult suffrage, the introduction of a ministerial system, and a clear delimitation of the powers of government. The ministerial form of government was introduced in 1957.
and two years later, the first elections held under universal adult suffrage in Mauritius were won by the Labour Party which started the drive for independence.

The Europeans and the Creoles were afraid that independence would lead to a situation of total domination by the Indo-Mauritians. They therefore united together and formed the Parti Mauricien Social Democrat (PMSD) and this party, under the leadership of Gaetan Duval, opposed independence which was being probed by the Labour Party. The latter then contracted a political alliance with the Independent Forward Bloc (IFB) of Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, a party supported by Hindu workers and small planters, and the Comité d’Action Musulman (CAM) of Abdool Razack Mohamed, a party that was formed to defend the interests of the Muslim community. These three parties went together, under the banner of the Independence Party, to the 1967 general elections that were to determine the future political status of the country. Given the ethnic configuration of the population, they won these elections quite comfortably and on 12 March 1968, Mauritius became an independent nation with Ramgoolam as its first Prime Minister.

Since independence, the Mauritian political scene has been marked by the formation of various political parties. The first and, without any doubt, the strongest of these parties is the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM), a left-wing political formation founded by Paul Bérenger in 1969. It is strongly supported by the trade unions and its membership cuts across all the ethnic barriers within the population of the country. The other parties that have been formed are all splinter groups, consisting of dissidents from the three major political forces. The first party to be formed in this manner was the Union Democratique Mauricienne (UDM) whose members left the Parti Mauricien Social Democrat in 1969 when Duval joined Ramgoolam in a coalition government. Similarly, a first split in the Labour Party in 1978 led to the formation of the Parti Socialiste Mauricien (PSM) by Harish Boodhoo and a second one in 1987 resulted in the formation of the Mouvement Travailliste Democrat (MTD) under the leadership of Anil Baichoo. Even a strong and structured party like the Mouvement Militant Mauricien has been affected by movements of dissidence. In 1983, following differences between Bérenger and the party leader,
Aneerood Jugnauth, the latter had to leave the party and he formed the *Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien* (MSM). More recently in 1993, differences between Bérenger and the new party leader once more led to another split in the party and the formation of a new political party, the *Renouveau Militant Mauricien*, led by Prem Nababsing. The latter party has now been dissolved and incorporated into the *Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien*.

1.5. Constitution and government

The Mauritius Independence Order of 1968, later amended by the Constitution of Mauritius (Amendment) Act No. 39 of 1969, established the country as an independent parliamentary democracy within the Commonwealth, but the British monarch would still be recognised as the Head of State. The latter would be represented in the island by an appointed Governor-General and the final court of appeal would continue to be the Privy Council in the United Kingdom. This situation lasted for 24 years until the constitutional amendments providing for the establishment of a republic came onto effect on 12 March 1992. Since then, the constitutional Head of State is the President of the Republic who is elected by a simple majority of the National Assembly for a five-year term of office.

Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, a unicameral body which has a term of five years and consists of the Speaker, 62 members elected by universal adult suffrage, a maximum of eight additional members and the Attorney-General, if the latter is not an elected member. The additional members, commonly known as 'best losers', are the unsuccessful candidates who receive the largest percentage of votes at a legislative election and to whom seats are allocated by the Electoral Supervisory Commission. The first four seats go to the best losers of whichever community is under-represented in the National Assembly after the general election and the remaining four seats are allocated on the basis of both political party and community. The aim of this exercise is to ensure that there is as even a balance as possible in the representation of the different ethnic groups within the National Assembly without affecting the majority of the political party that won the election.
Executive power is vested in the Prime Minister who presides over the Council of Ministers. The Prime Minister is the member of the National Assembly who is best able to command the support of the majority of the members in this assembly. He is appointed by the President to whom he then makes recommendations for the appointment of the other members of the Council of Ministers.

One of the salient features of government in independent Mauritius is that, except for five years, the country has always been administered by a coalition government consisting of two or more political parties. The various coalitions that have been in government since independence are the Labour Party and the Parti Mauricien Social Democrate from 1970 to 1973 and from 1976 to 1982, the Mouvement Militant Mauricien and the Parti Socialiste Mauricien from 1982 to 1983, the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien, the Labour Party and the Parti Mauricien Social Democrate from 1983 to 1988, the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien and the Labour Party from 1988 to 1991, the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien and the Mouvement Militant Mauricien from 1991 to 1993, and the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien and the Mouvement Militant Mauricien from 1994 to 1995. The latest coalition government, formed after the 1995 general election, consisted of the Labour Party and the Mouvement Militant Mauricien but in June 1997, after a long period of tension between these two political partners, the Labour Prime Minister revoked all the ministers of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien and since then, the country is being governed by the Labour Party alone.

1.6. Economy

For a long time Mauritius has had an agricultural economy dominated by sugar production and in 1995, there was an area of 76,132 hectares under the cultivation of sugarcane and 17 sugar factories produced around 540,000 metric tons of sugar as well as its by-products, such as molasses, alcohol, rum, denatured and perfumed spirits, and vinegar. During the same year the country also produced 3,785 metric tons of tea, 1,017 metric...
tons of tobacco leaves, 15,718 metric tons of potatoes, 5,974 metric tons of onions and 289 metric tons of maize. Subsistence agriculture is still minimal because of the scarcity of cultivable land not already planted with sugarcane and owners of sugar estates are being encouraged to plant vegetables between the rows of cane in order to reduce food imports.

During the seventies, the country moved towards a mixed economy in order to combat the high level of unemployment and the need to lessen dependence on the sugar sector. The government adopted a policy of export promotion and established an Export Processing Zone to attract foreign investment in an industrial sector that concentrates on labour-intensive processing of imported raw materials to produce goods for the export market. Investment in this industrial sector in the first development plan resulted in the establishment of sophisticated industries, making use of the relatively cheap but skilled labour available in the country. This sector has shown remarkable growth in terms of the number of enterprises and also increases in both employment figures and earnings. The major exports from the Export Processing Zone are textiles and clothing, electrical components, diamonds, toys, sporting goods, sunglasses, watches and articles of jewellery, but since 1986, the government has encouraged diversification into other industries such as offset printing and the manufacture of electronic equipment.

Another sector which has been constantly expanding since independence is the tourist industry. Government tourist offices have been set up in the major capitals of the world to promote Mauritius as an ideal tourist destination renowned for the quality of its beaches, the beauty of its sites and the hospitality of its people. Latest available figures show that in 1995, the island was visited by 422,500 tourists who brought foreign exchange earnings of over 6,000 million rupees (£200 million).

The fourth pillar of the Mauritian economy is the financial services sector. In 1986, foreign exchange controls were relaxed as part of a strategy to establish Mauritius as an international financial centre, with the ancillary aim of attracting capital from Hong Kong after the return of that territory to Chinese sovereignty. The development of this sector
received a further boost in 1989 with the inauguration of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and the launching of off-shore banking operations. Finally in 1991, the government has passed legislation to make Port Louis a free port that will act as an entrepôt centre for the islands of the Indian Ocean and the countries of eastern and southern Africa.

1.7. Education

Education standards are high and 98 percent of all eligible persons attend primary and secondary schools\(^\text{17}\). Primary and secondary education is free, with primary education being also compulsory. The school year is the calendar year and schooling lasts for 13 years, divided into six years of primary school and seven years of secondary school. The curriculum follows the British model and the language of instruction is English, but French is also used as a medium of instruction. In 1995, there were 122,895 pupils in 279 primary schools and 90,604 pupils in 123 secondary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues\(^\text{18}\).

Higher education is provided at the University of Mauritius within its five faculties, namely the Faculty of Agriculture, the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Law and Management, and the Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities. There were a total number of 2,755 students and 187 academic staff\(^\text{19}\) at the university during the academic year 1996-97. There are also a large number of Mauritian students who proceed abroad to British, French, American, Indian and Australian universities for higher studies, especially in those subject areas in which the university does not offer any courses.

The Mauritius Institute of Education is responsible for training both primary and secondary school teachers and for curriculum development. In 1995, there were 3,171 teachers enrolled for training at the institute\(^\text{20}\).

Finally there are a number of training institutions offering vocational training courses to low-achieving students. In 1995, there were 2,566 such students who were in attendance at 11 pre-vocational training centres and a further 2,108 students enrolled for industrial
and vocational training courses in 18 centres. There were also 75 private training institutions registered with the Industrial and Vocational Training Board to dispense training in a number of technical fields.

1.8. Libraries

Mauritius has a long history of libraries and there is a wide range of public, academic and special libraries which cater for the information needs of the population. However most, if not all, of these libraries are situated within the urban belt stretching from Port Louis to Curepipe (see map on page 12). There is therefore an urgent need to develop libraries for the use of the population living in the rural areas and this will not only democratise the access to information in the country but also relieve the pressure of demand on the resources of the urban libraries. A description of the major libraries and information centres is given in section 4.2 of Chapter 4.

1.9. Study of the establishment of the Mauritius National Library

In December 1996, the National Assembly of Mauritius passed the National Library Act (see Appendix A) to provide for the establishment of a National Library for Mauritius. The Act lays down the functions of the National Library in a local situation marked by the dispersion of the national literature over a number of libraries, the absence of national standards for bibliographic control as well as bibliographic tools, little cooperation among local libraries and information centres, and few contributions by local librarians towards the development of library and information services in the country.

However a number of the objectives of the proposed National Library are already being met by the main academic and public libraries of the country. All of these libraries have their own sizeable “Mauritiana” collections of national publications and they are, to some extent, performing the functions of collecting and preserving the national literature for use by the present and future generations.
Map of Mauritius showing with an asterisk the location of the main libraries and information centres
The general methodological approach adopted for this study has been to analyse the situation in Mauritius where an altogether new institution like the National library is being introduced into an existing, even though not ideal, library and information environment. The issue at stake is what are the problems that can arise out of this particular situation and whether there are any grounds to believe that the effect of the National Library on the existing environment will be in any way different from the effects that the establishment of national libraries have had on the library and information services in other countries.

1.9.1. Aim and objectives

The present study aims to look at the possible implications which the establishment of the Mauritius National Library can have for the other already existing libraries in the country and their activities as well as its potential impact on the provision of library and information services in Mauritius.

The objectives are

1. To analyse the objectives and functions of the national library as laid down in the National Library Act of 1996.

2. To identify areas of potential cooperation and conflict between the future national library and the existing academic, public and research libraries in the light of the roles and functions of these libraries.

3. To study, compare and draw lessons from relevant activities in national libraries elsewhere which can serve as models for the Mauritius National Library.

4. To make recommendations on the role of the National Library and on how it can be organised to best fulfill its functions.
1.9.2. Method of investigation

The first step in the study was to make the acquisition of a copy of the Mauritius National Library Act of 1996 as well as copies of similar Acts for other countries, particularly countries whose area or level of economic development are comparable to that of the Republic of Mauritius. Thus copies of the national library legislation for Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, and Singapore were obtained and analysed for any similarities or differences with the Mauritius National Library Act.

An extensive literature search was also conducted in the library catalogue of Loughborough University and in the latest CD-ROM version of the Library and Information Science Abstracts to identify books and journal articles that have already been published on the various aspects of national libraries relevant to the present study.

The next stage was to undertake a study visit to the island of Mauritius in order to gather first-hand additional information on the establishment of the Mauritius National Library through meetings and interviews with the members of the committee that had worked on the draft of the national library legislation. During this visit which lasted for the whole month of April, further literature searches were carried out in the catalogues of the major Mauritian libraries and copies of earlier reports on library and information services in Mauritius were obtained. Fruitful discussions were also held with the Head Librarian of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the Chief Librarian of the University of Mauritius and the Head of the Library Cadre at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

It was also intended to have interviews with the members of the provisional committee that was expected to have been set up by the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Leisure to start working on the things that had to be done before the Act could be proclaimed and the National Library come into operation. Unfortunately such a committee had not yet been appointed and it was not possible to carry out these interviews.
A visit was also made to the National Assembly Library where an unedited copy of the debates of the National Assembly on the Mauritius National Library Bill was obtained and the interventions of the various members of the Assembly on this particular Bill were quite interesting and useful. Finally, visits were paid to the library of the Mauritius Institute, and the municipal libraries of Port Louis and Curepipe to find out the current regulations and procedures for the consultation of national publications by their readers.

The process of data collection on national libraries continued in the United Kingdom with study visits that were made to the national Libraries of Wales and Scotland. The aims of these visits were to get a better insight into the organisation, functions and services of these libraries and also to identify relevant practices which can be useful for the Mauritius National Library. A brief description of the relevant features of the national libraries of Wales and Scotland is given in Appendices C and D respectively.

It was originally intended to visit the British Library for a similar purpose, but this idea was abandoned when it was realised that the latter is unique in its own way and it will be unrealistic, and even presumptuous, to try to use it as a possible model for the national library of a small country like Mauritius. On the other hand, the interviews held with the librarians and also with some staff members in specific departments during the visits to the national libraries of Wales and Scotland were very fruitful and the most relevant points have been incorporated in the discussion as well as the recommendation part of this report.

The penultimate stage was to organise, analyse and interpret the data collected from the books, journal articles and reports identified during the literature search or obtained in person or by post from Mauritius and also the information gathered from the interviews and discussions held with library professionals during the visits to the major libraries in Mauritius and the national libraries of Scotland and Wales.
Finally the result of this analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the investigation form the central part of this study and also provide the basis for the recommendations made at the end of the report.

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3. Ibid., p. 1263.
5. Ibid., p. 896.
11. Ibid., p. 1267.
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The Development of National Libraries

2.1. The origin of libraries

The origin of libraries may be traced, according to Harris, back to the historic age which is considered to have begun with the preservation of written records. One of the purposes for the development of writing was to preserve human communication in such a way as to extend its duration beyond the sound of human voice as well as beyond the memory of mortal persons. The written records contained facts as well as information and these were meant to be preserved in a logical orderly arrangement suitable for use by the future generations. In those early days, the main collections of records usually consisted of religious scriptures, the archives of government departments, the transactions of business organisations, or the family and genealogical papers of private individuals. They gradually grew into libraries as other materials of historical, literary or informative nature were added to them and also as they became useful to people other than the individuals or the groups who had started these collections.

In general, libraries developed and prospered when civilisations flourished and reached their peak, but they could also suffer decline or could be totally destroyed in periods of stress or conquest. If, however, individual libraries could be destroyed, and indeed some of them were often destroyed, the idea of the library as an institution had already become established and was indestructible. The library has ever since served a vital purpose as a main communicative link in both time and space. It has become clear that a record written on a reasonably durable material can immortalise the ideas and actions of a given generation, but such records can affect the development of future generations only if they are properly organised and preserved in libraries.
Though the importance of keeping written records in a logical order of arrangement had been recognised, the growth of libraries was quite slow up to the Middle Ages. It was not until the 16th century that this growth really gathered momentum and the primary cause of this remarkable development was the invention and spread of the printing press from Germany to other European countries in the mid-15th century. There was suddenly a marked increase in the number of books that could be produced, accompanied by a substantial decrease in the amount of labour needed for their production. Consequently, books became much more readily available at a much lower cost throughout Europe and this easier access to books in turn contributed to an increase in the levels of literacy, a development which further stimulated the demand for books and encouraged the rise of a substantial book trade.

The growth of the book trade which resulted from the development of printing meant that there were more books readily available to libraries of all kinds. The ever-increasing size of library collections led to the emergence of a new need, namely that of organising and directing these large and complex masses of valuable national resources. It soon became obvious that the important responsibility of collecting and organising the printed resources of the nation should be taken by a national institution. Therefore many countries started the procedures for the establishment of their national libraries and it is not at all surprising that up to this day, the most outstanding libraries of the world are the national libraries.

2.2. Definition of a National Library

The General Conference of Unesco, at its 16th session held in 1970, adopted the following definition of national libraries:

"Libraries which, irrespective of their title, are responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published in the country and functioning as a ‘deposit’ library, either by law or under other arrangements. They will also normally perform some of the following functions: produce a national bibliography; hold and keep
up to date a large and representative collection of foreign literature including books about the country; act as a national bibliographical information centre; compile union catalogues; publish the retrospective national bibliography. Libraries which may be called 'national' but whose functions do not correspond to the above definition should not be placed in the 'national libraries' category.”

Since the adoption of this definition, there has been a shift in the emphasis of national libraries from the preservation of library materials to the making of these materials available for use by the public. As a result, national libraries have taken up additional functions and carry out information services of various kinds as well as publishing, leadership and representation of the other libraries in the country, and planning or coordinating the national library system. There have also been some changes not only in the ways that national libraries carry out their functions, but also in the different levels of priority assigned to the functions already recognised in the Unesco definition. In fact, there are now so many functions that can be performed by national libraries that, because not all of them can be carried out by any single national library, Line has been prompted to call for a reassessment of the role of national libraries and a revised categorisation of their functions into fundamental functions, 'by-product' functions and other possible functions.

Even more recently the developments in information technology have further changed the basic characteristics of national libraries which nowadays exhibit a considerable diversity. This has led Cornish to state that the only certainties about national libraries are that they are funded from public funds, they are open to the public and they act as the major archive of printed material produced within the country or region concerned.

2.3. Emergence of National Libraries

The first national library began in France in December 1537 when the Bibliothèque du Roi, the Royal Library which had developed through a series of royal family libraries down through the 16th century, was granted the privilege of legal deposit by the Ordonnance de
Montpellier. This ordinance provided the basis for a national collection of printed books, but the collection was still not a possession of the State at that time. Therefore, when the French Revolution removed the monarchy in 1789, it was inevitable that the Royal Library should become officially the National Library and the *Convention Nationale* of the Revolution established the new National Library in 1795. It was then decreed that the national treasury should allow funds for the payment of the conservators and staff of the national library as well as for the expenses of and the additions to the library which still ranks among the finest of European Libraries.

In England, the National Library, although based in part on royal collections, has been largely the result of the amalgamation of many private libraries. According to Humphreys, the process of establishing a British National Library started in 1753 when Parliament agreed to the acquisition of the great collection of books and museum objects of Sir Hans Sloane. The latter had, in his will, offered this collection to the king for the benefit of the nation for the sum of £20,000. Parliament also agreed to provide a proper repository for the Cotton Library which had become the property of the State by an act passed in 1700 and to pay £10,000 for the manuscripts of Robert Harley. In June 1757, George II gave orders for a Bill to be prepared for a donation of his Royal Library to the Trustees of the British Museum who also received the right of legal deposit for a copy of every work recorded at Stationers' Hall. The British Museum was opened to the public in Montague House in 1759 and its Trustees saw it as a national library even if, in the early years, it did not yet offer the services appropriate to such collections and its staff spent most of their time showing visitors round the Museum.

The English and French pattern of take-over of royal libraries by the state, often coupled with the privilege of legal deposit was followed by several other European countries such as Austria, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. These libraries invariably depended on a core of royal collections, built up through a combination of acquisition by conquest - in many cases the books represented the direct spoils of war -
or through the use of the central monarchic or state power to acquire property, in this case library collections, from its institutions and inhabitants.

The new national libraries that were established outside Europe were also based on the pattern of the older foundations, although they did not have the basis of an initial fine library. In the United States, the national library has developed from pre-eminent existing collections to which a national status has been given. Humphreys describes how the national library duties in the United States are shared by the Library of Congress together with the National Library of Agriculture and the National Library of Medicine, but the major role is still assumed by the Library of Congress which was originally intended for the use of the members of the American Congress. In 1802, Thomas Jefferson believed that the Library of Congress should collect material on the history of the nation and he asked for orders to be lodged with United States representatives in Spain, France, England and Holland to hunt up and procure in those countries everything related to the travels, histories and accounts of America prior to the Revolution. By the Copyright Act of 1846, the Library of Congress received the benefit of legal deposit together with the State Department and the Smithsonian Institute. In 1866, the latter transferred to the Library of Congress the materials which it had obtained by the exchange of its publications, with a proviso that the public should have access to these materials for consultation purposes. The Library of Congress finally became the de facto national library of the United States in 1897, when its collections were transferred to a new building separate from Congress and they became more accessible for consultation by the public.

National libraries represent a magnificent cultural heritage in graphic form and their role is nationalistic in nature as they are devoted to collecting, organising and preserving the graphic records and artefacts that reflect the history of their respective nations for the benefit of the future generations. They are frequently the most impressive libraries in their countries and their focus has insured their continued existence even in the most difficult times. They are primarily funded by the government and also benefit from the legal deposit privilege which provides that at least one copy of every book published or copyrighted in
their respective countries shall be deposited with the national library. Since their principal objective is to collect and preserve their national cultural heritage, there is great emphasis laid on the acquisition and preservation of materials. As a result they have become known as great research and bibliographic centres and at the same time have earned themselves a reputation for conservative use policies.

2.4. Evolution of National Libraries

National libraries have been developed as responsibilities of the State which is expected to provide funds for their activities. With the aid of legal deposit, they have been able to collect the publications of their respective nations while some of the richer ones have also built up important collections of foreign literature. The earlier national libraries were large independent, self-sufficient stores of materials which also acted as symbols of nationhood. In fact, the establishment of many of the national libraries of the developing countries in Africa, Asia and Central and South America are closely connected with the development of national identities associated with the movements in these countries for independence from colonial domination. These libraries have been established at the achievement of independence by their countries in order to define their unique cultures and have focused the attention of the people on their national identity, their past and future. Printed books and manuscripts written in the national language on the intellectual, economic and political activities of the country were clearly identifiable as a symbol of national unity, a source of national pride. As a result there did not seem to be any necessity to discuss the mission, role and function of the national library as long as it was providing for the collection and preservation of the national printed heritage, making its collection nationally available and producing the national bibliography.

However, since the mid-1950s, the mere collection and preservation of books and their availability for consultation have ceased to constitute the only library roles that need to be carried out at the national level. Additional functions, such as the production of national bibliographies and catalogues as well as the organisation of document supply through
inter-library lending have begun to be performed by national libraries whose development and continued existence have come to depend very much on economic and technological developments. The increase in the number as well as the unit cost of publications at a time when most, if not all, national libraries are facing the prospect of limited financial support from the state have made the historic role of comprehensive collection and preservation of materials by the national library for public use both unrealistic and impossible, even for the national libraries of the wealthiest countries of the world. Therefore, from an independent and self-assured institution, the national library has come to be regarded as the primus inter pares or as the apex and the hub of the library service of a nation. There is a new attention to cooperation efforts with other libraries in the country and a greater consideration for the needs of the modern readers who have changed significantly in nature and number. The national library now exists to provide an information system with the stated aim of supporting research for the economic, social, educational and scientific development of the country while it makes at the same time a substantial contribution to the social and cultural well-being of individuals. It is expected to be not only the repository of the printed heritage of the country, though this will always be important, but also the driving force for the library profession in its role as facilitator of technical and social progress for the improvement of mankind. There has now developed a new spirit of cooperation in the library services of all countries where the national library is seen as the centre of a national information network to which it makes its own creative contribution. The national library is now expected to be the central agent in the library system of the country and its role should be to receive information and inquiries and to initiate library services for the common good.

Finally, the most recent force affecting national libraries has been the developments in the field of information technology. Wainwright states that, whereas the earlier technological developments until the mid-1980s merely affected the efficiency of processing activities, such as acquisitions, cataloguing, and serials control in the library, the more recent ones, namely the economic storage of large amounts of text and images in electronic media, the development of national and global communications networks, and the advent of desktop
publishing, are now capable of changing the basic nature of all libraries. As a result of these developments, these libraries, including national libraries, have to change their strategies if they are to be successful over the longer term.

This means that the contemporary national library needs to distinguish itself as a major agent for the preservation of the national identity and culture and for access to the national cultural heritage. It also has to provide the world's best collection of materials of national significance, regardless of format, and must harness the benefits of electronic storage and networking to provide access to these materials throughout the nation. The national library also has to ensure the development of a national system for facilitating access to information which is of increasing value for national economic advance. Finally, as global networking permits greater and easier access to materials not held nationally, the national library now has to become increasingly involved with national and international institutions in other countries in order to ensure effective international access services for its users. The overall effect of the new technological developments on most national libraries is likely to be a gradual shift in the emphasis placed on their various functions. The shift will most probably be from a concentration on general collection of materials and direct provision of reader services to the national facilitation of access to information. The national library can also at the same time continue its development as the central national institution for the promotion and preservation of national identity and culture.

2.5. Library development in Mauritius

According to Goordyal, there was already an interest in books in Mauritius as far back as the early days of French colonisation because one of the earliest newspapers published in the island in 1773, Annonces, Affiches et Avis Divers pour les Colonies des Iles de France et de Bourbon, mentions in its early issues a number of important auction sales of books and even libraries by the residents. Furthermore, in its issue of 29 November 1775, the same newspaper advertises Mr Julien Lejeune, Fils, as a bookseller residing at Rue de Bretagne in Lorient and as a library book supply agent for Mauritian booksellers, librarians
and others. This demonstrates that there already were some small collection of books privately owned by some of the residents and colonists. There were, however, no public libraries in the real sense till the beginning of the 19th century even though certain bookshops, popularly called libraries, had a lending section which was made available to the public on payment of a small subscription fee. One such business enterprise was the Librairie Baron as evidenced by a press notice in the Petites Affiches de l’Ile Maurice. In this notice which appeared in the issue of the newspaper on 3 January 1810, Mrs Baron made a request to the clients of her deceased husband to take good care of the borrowed books in their possession.

The first library of the island was perhaps the Bibliothèque du Jardin National\(^{10}\), a small learned library which was started by Intendant Poivre, the French Royal Administrator at his country house in Pamplemousses in 1767, a collection which became government property on his departure from the colony in 1772. Under French rule, the archival materials were kept with various government departments but private libraries continued to be maintained by a few residents and colonists as well as some learned institutions founded during that period. In 1806 the first state school, the Lycée Colonial, was opened in Port Louis and it later became the Royal College but access to its library was restricted only to the students of the college and to the members of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences.

During the early period of the British rule, there was still very little incentive for library growth in the island and the initiative had to be taken up by private institutions, such as the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts and Sciences (1820), the Mauritius Literary Association (1825), the Société d’Histoires Naturelles (1829), the Phoenix Club (1832) and the Cabinet Littéraire (1837). Heads of the different government departments also started measures to collect books and magazines and the departmental libraries which were set up in this manner included the Observatory Department Library (1851), the Police Library (1858), the Supreme Court Library (1865) and the Council Library (1885).
The municipal library of Port Louis was created in 1851 but it was only in 1933 that the general public was allowed access to its collection.

A few additional public libraries were established during the 20th century prior to the accession of the country to independence. The first one to be set up in 1901 was the Mauritius Institute Library and it is still the most important public library run by the central government. Its creation was followed by the establishment of municipal libraries by the local urban authorities to cater primarily for the inhabitants of their respective town areas. The four libraries which were thus set up were the municipal library of Curepipe in 1920, the municipal library of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill in 1946, the municipal library of Quatre Bornes in 1948 and the municipal library of Vacoas-Phoenix in 1966.

There is finally a number of libraries which have developed out of necessity and they function essentially to foster research and specialisation. These libraries are appendages of government ministries or departments, corporate bodies or private institutions. The most important ones are the libraries of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, the University of Mauritius (UOM), the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA), the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) and the Food and Agricultural Research Council (FARC).

2.6. Attempts at national library cooperation

One surprising aspect of the development of libraries in Mauritius is that it took place in the absence of any national legislation for the provision of libraries. This, however, does not mean that there was not any awareness of the need for such a legal framework because there have been, since the 1940s, a number of plans by the government to organise library services in the country.
2.6.1. The Ward Report, 1942

The first plan for library organisation in Mauritius was drafted in 1941 by Drs Vaughan and Toussaint, in collaboration with the British Library Association, and it was presented to Mr Ward who was the responsible officer for the reorganisation of the educational system of the country. Among its recommendations that were incorporated in the Ward Report on Education in Mauritius produced during the following year were:

- the creation of three urban district libraries,
- the introduction of appropriate legislation for the separation of the Mauritius Institute library from the museum,
- the compilation of a union catalogue and
- the formation of a Library Board.

These recommendations of Mr Ward were, however, never implemented and the same fate was reserved for the report made in 1948 by Mr Nichols and which contained similar recommendations.

2.6.2. The Toussaint Report, 1959

In 1959, the government appointed a Technical Committee on Libraries. This committee was placed under the chairmanship of Dr Toussaint who had in 1954 been responsible for the publication of the first and only Bibliography of Mauritius. The report of the committee commonly known as the Toussaint Report underlined the inadequacy of the arrangements for library provision and also the lack of library coordination and cooperation in Mauritius. The main recommendations were:

- the creation of a Central Library Board responsible for framing a national library policy and coordinating library activities
- the transformation of the Mauritius Institute library into a central reference library
• the preparation of a national union catalogue to aid inter-library lending
• the establishment of a book selection and provision policy for libraries of the country as a whole and
• the establishment of training courses for library and archives staff.

Although the recommendations of the committee were acknowledged as sound and noteworthy, the authorities took little or no action on the report.

2.6.3. The Hockey Report, 1966

This report was the result of an invitation made by the Minister of Education and Culture to Mr Sidney W. Hockey, the British Council library organiser for East Africa, to visit Mauritius and to survey the local library organisation with a view to possible development. The report supported the main recommendations of the Toussaint Report and Mr Hockey stressed the need for library legislation as well as the necessity for the phased development of regional and school libraries. He also advocated the creation of an organised network of library cooperation regrouping the academic and government departmental libraries as well as the public, college and special libraries. The government once again decided not to take action on the report because its implementation was too costly and also because there was no unanimity among the local librarians who were consulted for their reactions to the proposals made in the report.

2.6.4. The Harrison Report, 1978

Mr K.C. Harrison, a Unesco consultant, visited Mauritius in 1978 in order to advise the government on the setting up of a national library system in accordance with the recommendations of the intergovernmental conference on the planning of overall national documentation, library and archive infrastructures convened by Unesco in Paris in 1974. He recommended in his report the establishment of a Mauritius National Library Service under the Ministry of Education, the enactment of a national library legislation for
Mauritius, the designation of the Mauritius Institute Library as the National Library of Mauritius. The National Library would be entrusted with the responsibility for national bibliographical services, including the production and publication of a current national bibliography. Its other major role would be to act as the national and international centre for library cooperation and inter-lending. The report also contained proposals for a comprehensive library law for Mauritius.

The government took note of the recommendations made by Harrison, but unfortunately the report had come at a time when the country was going through a very difficult economic situation because of the collapse in world sugar prices. The scarce financial resources had to be harnessed for projects that could create jobs for the mass of unemployed people and therefore, yet another report had to be shelved because of lack of funds to cover the costs of its implementation.

It should also be stated here that, in addition to the implementation costs, another reason for the failure of all these earlier attempts at national library cooperation was the lack of consensus among the local librarians on the need for a national library system. They believed that the cooperation, though informal, which already existed among their respective libraries was quite adequate and they viewed with apprehension any plan which had the potential to jeopardise their autonomy.

2.7. National Library Seminar, 1992

The major breakthrough for the setting up of a National Library for Mauritius came in 1992 with the organisation of a seminar on “The Idea of a National Library”. This seminar was organised by the Fulbright Alumni Association of Mauritius in collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the participants included local professional librarians as well as experts from the United States, France and India. For the first time in the country, there was unanimity among the local members of the library profession on the need for a national library to foster library development as an integral part of a global national policy.
for the collection and dissemination of information. At the end of the seminar, a resolution was adopted that a law should be enacted for the establishment of a National Library for the achievement of an important cultural and developmental ambition of the country.

Unlike all the previous recommendations for the introduction of library legislation for Mauritius, this resolution received the favourable attention of the government. Soon after the seminar, the Minister of Arts, Culture and Leisure set up a committee, consisting of officials from his ministry as well as professional librarians, to work on a draft bill for the establishment of the National Library. The draft bill was then sent to the State Law Office to give it the necessary legal flavour for introduction into the National Assembly where it was passed on 17 December 1996 as the Mauritius National Library Act.

REFERENCES


Analysis of the Mauritius National Library Act

3.1. Importance of the National Library Act

The legal basis for most national libraries rests on a general national library decree or law enacted by the legislature of a state and Al-Nahari rightly argues that without the issuance of this legal decree, there would be neither a plan for a national library nor a rationale for its establishment\(^1\). The purpose of such legislation is to legally authorise the establishment of the national library, to define how it is to be governed and to provide the support necessary for its maintenance and operation. The Mauritius National Library Act of 1996 aims at investing the national library with the necessary powers to effectively play a crucial role not only in the limited sense of bringing books and knowledge to the people, but also on the broader front of nation-building through the preservation of the national cultural heritage. It would, therefore, be very important to analyse the various provisions of this Act and see how appropriate it is in a situation where the long absence of an institution to fulfill the functions of a national library has meant dispersion of the national literature, no bibliographic control or standardisation of bibliographical tools, little cooperation among local libraries and information centres, and few contributions towards the development of library and information services in the country.

3.2. Interpretation

In this Act --

"Board" means the National Library Board established under section 5;
"Chairperson" means the chairperson of the Board;
"Director" means the Director of the National Library;
"Library" means the National Library established under section 3;
“library materials” means any form of written or graphic record, including manuscripts, type-scripts, books, newspapers, periodicals, music-scores, photographs, maps, drawings and other graphic art forms, and non-print materials such as films, filmstrips, audio-visual materials including tapes or discs and reproductions thereof;

“Mauritiana section” means the section consisting of library materials -
(a) relating to any subject and produced in Mauritius; or
(b) relating to Mauritius and produced overseas.

“member” means a member of the Board and includes the Chairman;

“Minister” means the Minister to whom responsibility for the subject of Arts, Culture and Leisure is assigned.

The interpretation section is a common feature of library legislation for the definition of technical terms. It not only enables the use of the defined terms without qualifications in the remainder of the law but also establishes more positively the intent of the legislators when enacting the law.

This section of the Mauritian Act defines the authority governing the national library and names the minister responsible for the implementation of the Act. It also identifies the “Mauritiana” categories as well as the physical formats of materials which will form part of the collection of the national library. There is, however, in the definitions one important omission concerning electronic or digital documents. A large amount of information is today being published in electronic media or in a digitised format as a result of recent developments in the field of information technology. The technology has reached the shores of Mauritius and although there are already a few publications being produced in this new media in the country, there is no mention in the Act whether the National Library will be responsible for the collection and preservation of materials in this format.

3.3. Establishment of the National Library

(1) There is established for the purpose of this Act a National Library.
(2) The Library shall consist of --

   (a) the Mauritiana section of the Mauritius Institute Library;
   (b) the Mauritiana section of the Archives Department.

(3) The library materials comprised in the 2 sections referred to in subsection (2) shall, on the commencement of this Act, be transferred to the National Library.

(4) The National Library shall be a body corporate.

This section clearly states the purpose of the Act which is the setting up of the National Library as a corporate body with an initial collection, consisting of the “Mauritiana” sections of the Mauritius Institute library and the Archives Department respectively. This may look like a very judicious choice in the sense that these two institutions are the oldest legal deposit beneficiaries of the country and are therefore bound to have the most comprehensive collections of national publications. On the other hand the take-over of these collections by the National Library may have an adverse effect on the quality of services provided by the Mauritius Institute library and the Archives Department.

Furthermore it is stipulated that the identified “Mauritiana” collections will be transferred to the National Library on the commencement of the Act. This implies that there will be a new building which will be constructed to house the collections of the National Library. However, it is a fact that the archival records of administration have often turned out to be valuable primary research materials. Therefore, there may be a case for a section of the new building to be reserved for the Archives Department for the convenience of users who may have to consult complementary documents from the collections of both the National Library and the Archives Department.

3.4. Objects of the Library

The objects of the Library shall be --

   (a) to promote and encourage the use of library materials;
(b) to acquire library materials generally, and, in particular, a comprehensive collection of library materials relating to Mauritius;

(c) to collect, receive and preserve all library materials required to be deposited in the Library;

(d) to lend library materials to the public;

(e) to make library materials available to the public for reference;

(f) to participate in planning library services in Mauritius, promote research in library fields and provide assistance in information handling techniques;

(g) to act as the national bibliographic centre and maintain the national bibliography and other bibliographies;

(h) to act as an organising agency for national and international lending and exchange of library materials; and

(i) to initiate and promote co-operation between the Library and other libraries, both local and foreign.

This is definitely the most important section of the Act as it lists the various functions for which the National Library is being established. It is in the light of these objectives that the Library Board can decide on the activities which should or can be carried out by the National Library.

(a) Promotion of library materials - this is a general function for a national library and it is usually the natural result of the carrying out of other fundamental functions by the national library. Nevertheless, it gives the National Library the possibility of mounting exhibitions and publishing catalogues which have been proved to be useful ways of publicising the national heritage of information media.

(b) Acquisition - because the output of national publications in Mauritius is relatively low, it may not by itself justify the establishment of the National Library. It is, therefore, quite wise that the latter should also be responsible for the acquisition of materials published abroad but relating to the country, as well as a selective but representative collection of
the best foreign literature in response to the national information demands and needs for the socio-economic development of the country.

(c) *Collection and preservation of deposit materials* - this is the function to which the national library should give the most attention because the purpose for which the library exists is precisely to collect, preserve and make accessible the publications of or about the country. The granting of the legal deposit privilege will ensure that the Library will hold a comprehensive collection of the national literature, but there should also be a mechanism for the acquisition of materials relating to the country but which are published elsewhere and therefore cannot be obtained through legal deposit arrangements.

(d) *Lending to the public* - this is usually not a function of the national library although loan activities can be undertaken if the National Library has a number of duplicate copies of the national publications. Even then, the loan activities should not represent an obstacle for the carrying out of the more essential functions which can only be performed by a national library. A decision also has to be taken by the Board on whether the materials will be lent directly to individual users of the Library or if they will be delivered through other libraries which can request them on inter-library loan for these users.

(e) *Reference* - provision of library materials free of charge for reference is essential for the promotion of the use of these materials and is also in line with the democratisation of access to information. However, this subsection also means that the Board may not be able to exercise the power granted under section 7(b) to levy fees and charges in respect of the use of library materials by the public. It may also look a bit archaic at a time when most national libraries are already thinking of introducing admission fees or entry tickets as a means of raising funds to offset the reduction of state financial support.

(f) *Planning and research* - this is a very important function, especially in Mauritius where there is a real need for the development of a national library and information system. The main objective of the planning and research activities will be the development of a national
library and information system. The National Library will thus be the apex library which will coordinate the activities of other libraries within the system for the effective provision of a national library service and the optimal exploitation of library materials by the public.

(g) National bibliographic centre - this is an obvious function resulting from the legal deposit privilege enjoyed by the National Library. In addition to being responsible for the publication of the current and retrospective national bibliography, the Library should also promote adherence to national and international standards. It can also act as the national centre responsible for providing access to national and foreign databases as well as for the international exchange of bibliographic records.

(h) Interlibrary loans and exchange - the National Library in its capacity as the national repository for the collection, storage, preservation and supply of materials will have the most comprehensive collection of national publications. Its status and prestige can also place it in an ideal position to coordinate international loans and exchanges.

(i) Cooperation - the Library can attempt to develop cooperative policies and programmes with the local academic and public libraries in order to maximise the broadest possible use of the library resources relevant to the country. It can also be the focal point for international cooperative programmes for the exchange and flow of information, for example the programmes supported by Unesco for Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and for the Universal Availability of Publications (UAP).

3.5. The Board

(1) The Library shall be administered and managed by a Board which shall consist of -
   (a) a Chairperson, who shall be a person of academic distinction appointed by the Minister;
   (b) a representative of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology;
   (c) a representative of the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Leisure;
(d) a representative of the Ministry of Economic Planning, Information and Telecommunications;

(e) a representative of the Ministry of Finance;

(f) the Director of Archives;

(g) the Head of the Library Cadre;

(h) 5 librarians as follows --

(i) one from an academic library;

(ii) one from a public library;

(iii) one from a special library;

(iv) one designated by the Association of Urban Authorities; and

(v) one designated by the Association of District Councils;

(2) The Board may also co-opt such resource persons as it considers necessary to assist it in its deliberations.

(3) Every member of the Board, other than a member specified in subsection (1)(b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g), shall be appointed by the Minister for a period of 3 years and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

Although the Act clearly spells out the composition of the Board which will be responsible for the administration and management of the National Library, there is, however, some confusion regarding two of the members of this Board. Firstly, the criteria of "academic distinction" for the appointment of the Chairperson by the Minister is too vague and may result in controversial appointments that can undermine the authority of the Chairperson as well as the Board in general. Secondly, there is no post of Director of Archives in Mauritius and the Archives Department is presently headed by the Chief Archivist. Since the Act states that one of the Board members should be the Director of Archives, it is clear that the Board cannot be fully constituted under the present circumstances. Therefore the Archives Act has to be amended as soon as possible and the post of Chief Archivist should be changed into that of Director of Archives so that the person responsible for the Archives Department can sit on the National Library Board.
It is nevertheless important to note that seven out of the twelve members of the Board will be persons coming from the library and information profession. Provision has also been made to co-opt other resource persons to help the Board in its deliberations. Lastly, it would have been very useful to specify the tenure of office not only for the Chairperson and the five librarians but also for all the Board members including the co-opted ones.

3.6. Meetings of the Board

(1) The Board shall, at such place and time as the Chairperson may determine, meet --
    (a) at least once a month; or
    (b) whenever a request for a meeting is made by not less than 5 members.

(2) Nine members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

(3) Subject to this section, the Board shall regulate its meetings and proceedings in such manner as it thinks fit.

The regular monthly meetings of the Board are essential for the proper monitoring of the performance and the activities of the National Library and there is also provision for members to request special meetings. The only problem is with the number of members (nine out of twelve) required to constitute a quorum for these Board meetings. It is not always easy, even in a small place like Mauritius, to get the presence of 75% of the Board members at every meeting and it may be more realistic to have seven members (half the total number plus one) as the quorum.

3.7. Powers of the Board

The Board may do all such things as appear requisite and advantageous for the purpose of furthering the objects of the Library and may, in particular --

(a) raise funds;

(b) levy fees or charges in respect of the use of library materials by the public;

(c) buy or sell property;
(d) receive grants-in-aid, gifts, donations or legacies;
(e) appoint committees in consultation with the Minister.

It is important that the Board should be given certain powers to raise funds as this increases its autonomy and also reduces the amount of public money which has to be earmarked for the maintenance of the library. In Malaysia, for example, there is a legally established National Library Fund for the purpose of library development. However the power to levy fees or charges in respect of the use of library materials by the public seems to be in contradiction with the first objective of the National Library which is to promote and encourage the use of library materials. As far as possible, the public should not be asked to pay for the direct use of library materials, particularly when the operations of the National Library are funded by the government. However, charges may be made for the use of expensive library equipment, for communication costs or for specialised searches conducted for users by the staff of the national library. For example, the National Library of Wales requests from its users a fee based on the number of staff hours required for complicated genealogical searches. Other libraries have an associated marketing scheme whereby they can produce and sell popular publications as well as pens, bookmarks, ties, mugs and other souvenirs with the name and logo of the library.

3.8. Director

The Board shall, with the approval of the Minister, appoint on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, a Director of the Library who shall be a qualified and experienced librarian possessing high academic status and who shall be responsible for --

(a) the execution of the policy of the Board;

(b) the control and management of the day to day business of the Library, including the keeping of all books, records, deeds, documents and minutes of proceedings of the Board.
The duties of the Director seem to be quite limited in scope if we consider that he or she is expected to be a qualified and experienced librarian possessing high academic status, a person who can be a central figure in the national library system. The responsibilities of the Director should not end with the execution of the policy of the Board but should also include the provision of guidance and advice to the latter in the planning of library and information services for the whole country. According to Humphreys⁷, the national librarian should be a leader, a person to whom the government and other library colleagues can look for advice. In this context the Director should be eligible for appointment as a member of the Board as is the case in Singapore⁸. Another option is that he or she should, like the Director of the Kenya National Library Service, be allowed to attend and speak, but not vote at meetings of the Board⁹.

3.9. Appointment of staff

(1) The Board may, with the approval of the Minister, appoint on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, such officers as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions of the Library.

(2) All officers shall be under the administrative control of the Director.

It is quite normal that the Board should have the right to appoint officers of the National Library, but there does not seem to be any justification for ministerial approval to be obtained in the case of appointment of officers who will be under the administrative control of the Director.

It is also very significant to note that there is presently a shortage of experienced and capable library personnel readily available in the country. Therefore, great care has to be exercised by the Board when making these appointments. Recruitment of staff for the National Library must be done in such a way that it does not have an adverse and negative effect on the other existing libraries in terms of the quality of their human resources.
3.10. Protection of members and officers

*No liability, civil or criminal, shall attach to any member or officer in respect of any act which is done or committed by him in good faith in the furtherance of the objects of the Library.*

This protection may help to ease some of the pressure off the members of the Board and the officers of the Library in the performance of their duties. Nevertheless, it should still be borne in mind that these persons are entrusted with an important and valuable part of the national cultural heritage. Some of their actions, even when done in good faith, may result in irreparable loss of or damage to treasures of the national literary production and these losses or damages cannot be written off too easily.

3.11. Execution of documents

*No document shall be executed by or on behalf of the Library unless it is signed by --*

(a) the Chairperson or, in his absence, a member designated by the Board; and

(b) the Director or, in his absence, an officer of the Library designated by the Board.

This provision may slow down the activities of the Library because experience shows that it is not always possible to have the Chairperson and the Director readily available for the signing of documents to be executed and very often action on some documents may have to wait till the Chairperson comes for the next Board meeting. It would have been better to leave this responsibility to one single person, the Director or, in his absence, an officer of the Library designated by the Board.
3.12. Powers of the Minister

(1) The Minister may give such directions of a general character to the Board, not inconsistent with this Act, as he considers necessary in the public interest and the Board shall comply with these directions.

(2) The Board shall, at the request of the Minister, furnish to him such information and such documents in relation to the activities of the Library as he may require.

It is perfectly legitimate that the Minister responsible for the implementation of the National Library Act should be provided with relevant information and documents on the activities of the library. It should however also be noted that the Minister already has an important say in the appointment of Chairperson of the Board and the Director and staff of the National Library. Therefore the additional powers being granted to him under this section particularly the power to give directions with which the Board has to comply can, if they are not properly exercised, have serious implications for the library in the sense that the minister will legally be in a position to control the access to information and even act as a censor of information.

3.13. Donations

*Article 910 of the Code Napoleon shall not apply to the Library.*

It is an established fact that national libraries benefit from donations and testamentary bequests from owners of valuable private and rare collections. It is, therefore, essential that the procedures for the National Library to receive donations are made as simple as possible and do not require the prior approval of the Attorney-General like all corporate bodies have to do under Article 910 of the Code Napoleon. This will no doubt encourage more benefactors of the Library to come forward with their donations, but the Board should also realise that the decision to donate valuable private collections to the National Library will depend very much on the extent to which the potential donors have faith and
trust in the capacity of the library to preserve these donations and make them available for future public use.


(1) The Board shall, on or before 31 October in every year, submit to the Minister a report together with an audited statement of accounts on the operation of the Library in respect of the 12 months ending on 30 June of the same year.

(2) The report of the Board shall be laid before the National Assembly.

The submission of an annual report together with an audited statement of accounts to the responsible Minister is a common requirement for corporate bodies funded entirely or partially by the government. In the case of the National Library, these documents will not only allow the Minister to better monitor and supervise the activities of the library but they can also be used as effective promotion tools to publicise the crucial role of the library in collecting, organising and providing access to information for the socio-economic development of the country. Such publications can, therefore, make it easier for the library to attract additional funding for the introduction and development of new services.

3.15. Deposit of copies of library materials

(1) There shall, free of charge, be deposited with the Library, in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed --

(a) 6 copies of every book;

(b) 6 copies of every journal;

(c) 6 copies of every issue of every newspaper; and

(d) 6 copies of non-print materials, produced in Mauritius.
(2) The library materials referred to in subsection (1)(a) and (c) shall be deposited by the printer and the library materials referred to in subsection (1)(d) shall be deposited by the producer.

This is a very important section of the Act as it deals with the main mode of acquisition of library materials by the National Library. It lists the number of copies for the types of materials required to be deposited with the library although once more there is no mention of electronic media and digitised information. Furthermore, the six copies of all locally produced material required to be deposited seem to be on the high side, especially when the setting up of the National Library no more warrants the sending of copies of such material to the British Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Library of Congress.

The persons responsible for depositing each type of material are also identified, but unfortunately there is one very serious omission. The Act does not state who should have the responsibility of depositing with the library the six copies of every journal produced in Mauritius. This section also fails to specify the time limit within which the materials have to be received in the National Library.

The final weakness of this particular section is the absence of any mention of sanctions and penalties for persons who fail to comply with the legal deposit provisions. National library laws which also incorporate legal deposit provisions, like the Act of Papua New Guinea\(^{10}\), do specify the nature of such sanctions and penalties. The absence of such a provision in the Mauritian Act may lead the printers or publishers of deposit materials to take their legal responsibilities less seriously, an attitude which can have direct repercussions for the development of a comprehensive national library collection.

3.16. Exemption from duty

*Notwithstanding any other enactment* --
(a) the Library shall be exempt from payment of any duty, levy rate, charge, fee or tax;

(b) the Library may frank letters or postal packets, make remittances by money orders or despatch telegrams free of charge.

This is a section which can be very useful as the savings made on the payment of duties, levy rates and taxes not only reduce the running costs of the National Library, but they can also be used for developing new reader services. Furthermore the postal handling fees and charges in Mauritius can, in some cases, be quite high and exemption from the payment of these fees and charges will enable the Library to play more efficiently its role as the national centre for inter-library lending and exchange of materials.

3.17. Regulations

(1) The Board may, with the approval of the Minister, make such regulations as it thinks fit for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Regulations made under subsection (1) may provide that any person who contravenes them shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 1000 rupees.

It is quite sensible that the Board should be vested with necessary powers to make regulations regarding the use of the Library by the public even if the regulations made under this section of the Act will still have to obtain the approval of the Minister. The main advantage is that new regulations can be introduced and existing ones changed to adapt to new circumstances without the need to go back to Parliament.

3.18. Consequential amendments

(1) The Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act is amended in Part II by adding in its appropriate alphabetical order, the following -- National Library
(2) Sections 8-14 of the Archives Act No. 71 of 1952 are repealed.

(3) The auditor to be appointed under section 5(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall be the Director of Audit.

It is a usual legislative practice, when enacting a law, to simultaneously amend or repeal other acts or sections of other acts in order to eliminate any possible confusion in the interpretation and implementation of the present Act when the latter comes effectively into operation. This section, first of all, establishes the legal status of the National Library as a statutory corporate body, but more significantly it repeals the sections of the Archives Act (see Appendix B) which presently regulate the legal deposit of materials in Mauritius. Therefore, there can be no confusion in the minds of the local printers and publishers as to where they should send the materials that fall under legal deposit regulations once the National Library Act comes into operation.

3.19. Transitional provisions

Notwithstanding the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act --

(a) the period extending from the commencement of this Act to 30 June next following shall be deemed to be the first financial year of the Library;

(b) section 7(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall not apply in relation to the first financial year of the Library.

Since the National Library is also subject to general acts such as financial administration acts, it is necessary to spell out in the National Library Act the cases where the Library should be excluded from the application of these general acts either in full or in part. Otherwise, the Library authority may find itself in an uncomfortable and often embarrassing situation with respect to the constitutional law of the nation.
3.20. Commencement

*This Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation.*

The National Library is a very important institution and is not expected to be set up as soon as the relevant Act is passed. Therefore, it is quite normal that the people who will be responsible for the implementation of the Act should be given enough time to activate matters so that the Act can come into operation as smoothly as possible. This section should, however, not be used as an excuse to take more time than reasonably necessary for the establishment of the National Library.

REFERENCES

5. Interview with Y. Chan Kam Lon, Head Librarian, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka, Mauritius, 9 April 1997.
Potential impact of the National Library on the development of library and information services in Mauritius

4.1. The National Library as an apex library

The setting up of a national library as the apex library in a country generally has a definite impact on the provision of library and information services in that country. The functions and activities of the national library will determine to a great extent the various policies and methods adopted by the other individual libraries in the country for the collection, preservation and organisation of library materials so that they can be made available for use by the public. This leadership role of the national library is now duly recognised by the authorities and it not surprising that the most recently enacted national library law of Malaysia¹ as well as that of Singapore² states that one of the general objectives of the national library is the planning and development of libraries and information centres within the country. The Mauritius National Library Act does not assign to the National Library the responsibility for the planning of library and information services in the country, but it states that the library shall participate in the planning process for these services. However, it is quite likely that once the National Library becomes operational, its wide-ranging functions will place it in a very strong position to directly influence both the current and future library and information activities and practices in the country.

4.2. Library and information services in Mauritius

Libraries have existed in Mauritius since the early days of colonisation and there are today a number of public, academic, research and special libraries serving the educational, informational and recreational needs of the population. It is, therefore, important to take a
closer look at those libraries which are more likely to be influenced by the policies and practices of the National Library.

4.2.1. Mauritius Archives Department

The Department, situated in Coromandel, is responsible for the collection and preservation of all government records, manuscripts and printed materials produced in Mauritius for the use of future generations. It also receives on legal deposit copies of all books, journals and newspapers published in the country. However, the lack of a more rigorous application of the existing legal deposit regulations means that there are still some materials produced in the country which do not reach the Department. Moreover, the location and the physical state of the Archives building are such that there are many precious documents which are in a very deplorable state and there are some which are already damaged beyond repair and have to be considered as lost forever.

The Archives collection is available to the public for reference, but readers have always been complaining about the heavy bureaucracy, the short opening hours, the deplorable state of some of the material and the lack of reprographic equipment as well as the shortage of trained personnel within the department.

The Department publishes in March, June, September and December the Memorandum of Books which is the list of all materials deposited at the Archives during the preceding three months. A single list is cumulated at the end of the year and published in the annual report of the Department.

4.2.2. Mauritius Institute library

The Institute is located in the capital, Port Louis and its library is a public one funded by the central government with the main objective of making reading materials available for lending to the general public. Unfortunately many of its items (mainly from the private
collections of Sir Virgil Naz and from those of the learned and scientific societies which were allowed incorporation with the Institute) are considered so valuable and difficult to replace that they cannot be borrowed by the registered library members. The library also has not had the adequate funds for the sustainable development of its lending, reference, and periodicals sections with the result that it does not attract as many users as the neighbouring Port Louis City Library. However the Arts and Humanities collection of the library is still very highly considered by the public as well as the "Mauritiana" section which is constantly updated free of charge since the Institute receives one of the copies legally deposited at the Archives Department.

4.2.3. Municipal and District Council libraries

The municipal libraries are public libraries funded by the municipal councils and they act as local archives for the municipal councillors and staff and the inhabitants of their respective towns. They also acquire and make available library materials to satisfy the information, educational and recreational reading needs of their users who include the local residents as well as readers from other towns and villages. All these libraries have lending, reference, periodicals and "Mauritiana" sections though the quantity and quality of these sections differ from library to library depending on the funds available and the number of users.

Unfortunately, some of the older items within the "Mauritiana" sections of the municipal libraries are not stored in the best conditions and there is a great risk that in a few years they might become unavailable for future users because the libraries cannot individually afford the cost of reparation and conservation of these materials. These libraries also suffer from a lack of trained personnel because, in most cases, it is only the Senior Librarian who has received any professional training and this affects the quality of their services.

It is worth noting, however, that the Carnegie Library in Curepipe houses a unique collection of materials on the islands of the Indian Ocean, largely composed of books and manuscripts from the private collections of Prosper D'Epinay and Edouard Rouillard.
Likewise, an important characteristic of the Port Louis City Library is that it is the library that processes all requests for items needed by Mauritian libraries on inter-library loan from the British Library.

The district council public lending libraries are funded by the Local Authorities in the rural areas and have been set up to carry out the same functions that the municipal libraries perform in the urban areas. Nevertheless, the meagre funds at their disposal, coupled with the fact that their targeted users already have access to facilities offered by the municipal libraries, has adversely affected their development into fully-fledged rural library service providers. Their main function is now to keep a small general reference collection for use by the staff of the Council and to provide recreational reading materials to the users who reside within the limits of the district council and who are not yet members of the bigger municipal libraries.

4.2.4. University of Mauritius library

The university library in Réduit is, as expected, the most important academic and research library in the country and it is, therefore, seen as having a major role to play in the socio-economic development of the country. The main objective of the library is to provide the necessary bibliographic support to the academic staff and the students registered on the different courses run by the university. It also gives access to its facilities to non-members of the university, but this is subject to the approval of the Chief Librarian. However with the increase in the number of students and the growing demand for more specialised services, the resources of the library are being stretched to the limit and it is becoming more and more difficult to satisfy the information needs of non-campus users.

The library is the repository for all theses and dissertations presented by students of the university. It also receives free of charge one of the copies legally deposited at the Archives Department. It is the partial depository library for publications of the United Nations Organisation and for those of the World Bank.
Cooperation agreements exist between the university library and those of other academic and research institutions, namely the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, the Food and Agricultural Research Council, the Mauritius Institute of Education, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, and the Mauritius College of the Air. The library is also responsible for the exchange of publications of the university with other academic and research institutions, both local and international.

4.2.5. Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) library

The main function of this library and information service is to provide the necessary bibliographic support to both the staff and the students of the Mauritius Institute of Education which offers training courses for secondary school teachers. The strength of the library lies in the importance of its collections in the subjects taught only at the institute, particularly in areas like the Philosophy and Sociology of Education and also in Pedagogy. The proximity of the Institute to the University of Mauritius and the courses run jointly by the two institutions have resulted in cooperative agreements being reached between them so that their bona fide members can have access to the collections and facilities of both their libraries.

4.2.6. Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) library

The main objective of the institute is to encourage and promote study and research in the ancestral languages and culture of the people of Mauritius, in particular those whose forefathers came from India and China. The library collection is, therefore, one of the best in the island for library materials produced in the ancestral languages still spoken (Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Telegu, Marathi, and Mandarin) in Mauritius. These materials include books and journals as well as non-print items produced either locally or abroad.

The library collection is available for loan to research staff and students at the institute while members of the public can obtain the permission of the Head Librarian to have
access to the materials for consultation and reference only. The library has also entered into inter-library loan arrangements with the University of Mauritius library.

4.2.7. Special libraries

There are also a number of special libraries which have important collections in specific subject areas and these collections can be complementary to those of the National Library.

*The Mauritius Sugar Research Institute (MSIRI) library* - The Institute which is financed by the private sector conducts research on sugar cane and the other commercial crops produced on the sugar estates. Its library is the most important agricultural research library in the country, but access to its rich collection of books, journals and computer-based materials is very difficult for members of the public.

The institute is situated in Réduit next to the University and there is an agreement between the two institutions concerning subscriptions to periodicals in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of subscriptions to often expensive agricultural journals. Each one subscribes to different journals which are then made available to members of both institutions. There is also an agreement between the MSIRI and the University whereby their staff and researchers can have access to either of their libraries and also request materials from their collections through inter-library loan.

*Mauritius Standards Bureau library* - The Mauritius Standards Bureau in Moka is a corporate body of the Ministry of Trade and Shipping and its library, the only standards library in the country, houses the most comprehensive collection of International, British, American, French, Australian and Indian standards. These documents are available for consultation by staff of the Bureau, people in industry as well as the members of the public and the Bureau also acts as the sales agent for British standards. Technical staff of the Mauritius Standards Bureau are also registered members of the University library which in
turn can request materials from the standards library on inter-library loan for the benefit of its regular users.

*Mauritius Export Development and Investment Authority (MEDIA) library* - This library has taken over from the documentation centre of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry as the most important business reference library in the country. Its objective is to collect the latest business and investment information available in all types of format and to make it freely available for reference to people who are interested in launching themselves into business and investment activities in Mauritius.

Finally there are the *Supreme Court Library* and the *National Assembly Library*, both located in Port Louis, which have got comprehensive collections of the laws, statutes and ordinances of the country, but access to these collections are restricted to members of the legal profession and the National Assembly respectively. The Supreme Court Library also keeps copies of the judgements delivered by the Court while the National Assembly Library is responsible for the preservation of copies of the debates of the Assembly.

4.3. Establishment of the National Library

The very fact of establishing a national library is an indication that there is a strong awareness that something needs to be done in the context of library development in Mauritius. The position of the National Library as the apex or the hub of the national library and information service is bound to have a positive effect on the other libraries in the country. It can be expected that the development of the National Library will go hand in hand with that of the other local libraries because the national library should be able to rely on the support and cooperation of these smaller libraries in order to carry out its own fundamental functions. Otherwise the national library will be an apex without a base and, as pointed out by Xuereb, “there are few things more futile than a massive national library with a splendid collection of the national literature and perhaps first-rate services to scholars, existing in what is, library-wise, one large desert”. The setting up of the National
Library can therefore act as a catalyst for the development of libraries in the country as it becomes clear that the success of the national library, as well as its status and prestige, is closely linked with the strengthening of the other libraries within the national infrastructure for library and information.

It is, however, important to discuss the impact which the establishment of the National Library will have on the Archives Department and the Mauritius Institute Library, the two institutions whose "Mauritiana" collections will be transferred to the National Library. In the case of the Archives Department, this take-over may be good, and even desirable, because the Department can then devote itself fully to its natural function of preserving and maintaining the archival records of public administration in Mauritius. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the Mauritius Institute Library which is the only public library administered by the government in Port Louis. Because of its meagre budget for the purchase of books and periodicals, the library has already lost a great number of its members to the neighbouring municipal library and one of the reasons for its survival is that it has a comprehensive collection of national publications acquired through legal deposit. Divesting this library of its prize collection can lead to a further exodus of its readers to the municipal library and eventually to its closure, an outcome which can lay an unbearable pressure of demand on the resources of the only remaining public library in the capital of the country.

4.4. Promotion of the use of library materials

One of the stated objectives of the National Library is to promote and encourage the use of library materials in Mauritius. National libraries usually organise special exhibitions based on the resources of their collections. These exhibitions are aimed at the education of the general public and also help to generate greater interest in the materials held by the national library. Some libraries, like the National Library of Wales, have permanent exhibitions to illustrate the evolution and highlights of the national literature so that it is
possible for the visitors to familiarise themselves with the publications of leading scholars and other documents of historical significance.

However, the encouragement and promotion of the use of library materials also creates a greater demand for these materials by an even greater number of library users with sophisticated information needs. It is not certain whether in Mauritius all the existing libraries, which house the materials being promoted, will have the capacity to cope adequately with this newly created demand because their resources are already stretched to the limit. Therefore, the National Library may also have to look into ways and means of removing the obvious obstacles to reading, particularly obstacles such as the lack of books in the local libraries, the quality of the services and the poor relations between libraries and their customers, and also the other library atmospheres which may not be conducive to reading. There may be a strong case for the setting up of new libraries while the already existing ones may use the awakened interest in library materials as an argument to obtain from their governing bodies the necessary funds for their consolidation and development as they will be seen to respond to the genuine information needs of their users.

Furthermore, library materials here are taken in the broadest sense and they also include non-book materials in the new electronic media, but there are very few libraries in the country that hold these non-book materials in their stock. Consequently, the nature of the collection of the libraries may undergo some important changes with more funds being provided for the acquisition of non-print materials. The libraries will also need to have the equipment necessary to access the information published in the new format and this may mark the beginning of a new generation of high-tech libraries in the country.

4.5. Acquisition of library materials

The National Library will acquire library materials generally, and in particular a comprehensive collection of library materials relating to Mauritius. The responsibility of the National Library for the acquisition of library materials generally can have serious
implications for the acquisition policies of the other Mauritian libraries and information centres. There is no problem about the acquisition by the national library of publications relating to the country and in fact, it is quite desirable that the Mauritius National Library should indulge in this activity because the output of national publications is still relatively small. However, this is not the case with the acquisition of other general library materials which are already being acquired by other libraries in the country. The question here is what should be the size and the coverage of the national library’s collection of foreign literature so that the information needs of the local researchers can be met without excessive dependence on foreign sources.

The continuing publishing explosion throughout the world and the constantly increasing cost of library materials mean that no national library can or should try to acquire a comprehensive collection of the literature of the world\(^5\). For the same reasons the other libraries in the country have to be selective in their collection of foreign literature and often cannot meet all the needs of their readers. Therefore, the acquisition policy adopted by the National Library for foreign materials may influence the collection development policies of other libraries and information centres in the country.

The National Library may opt to coordinate a national acquisitions plan to ensure that the research collections of the principal libraries and information centres are complementary and that there is as little unnecessary duplication as possible in order that the best use is made of the available funds and resources. The National Library can then concentrate on subject areas for which there is a demand but which are not well covered by other libraries in the country. The adoption of such an approach by the National Library may lead to the setting up of a network which can be the basis for a national library system for Mauritius.

4.6. Legal deposit

The National Library will collect, receive and preserve all library materials required to be deposited in the Library. The legal deposit privilege is the most important method by
which a national library can collect and preserve the national collection of library materials. With the enactment of the Mauritius National Library Act, the sections of the Archives Act of 1952 relating to legal deposit have been repealed with the result that, when the Act comes into operation, the National Library shall be the only legal deposit library for materials published in the country.

This implies that the Archives Department, the Mauritius Institute Library and the University of Mauritius Library will no longer receive copies of deposit materials. This may not be of great importance to the first two institutions as their “Mauritiana” collections, which include the legal deposit materials, will be transferred to the National Library on the commencement of the Act. In the case of the university library, however, the withdrawal of the legal deposit privilege will have a considerable impact on the future maintenance of its “Mauritiana” section as well as on the general collection development policy for the library.

The “Mauritiana” section of the university library is very heavily used not only by the lecturers and students on the campus, but also by outside researchers who find the conditions for consultation at the university more accommodating than the conservative use policies prevailing at the other legal deposit libraries. If the outside researchers can be referred to the National Library for consultation of national publications, the lecturers and students will still rightfully expect to be provided with these materials at the university library itself and funds will have to be earmarked for the development of a section which in the past was maintained at a very low cost6.

The withdrawal of the legal deposit privilege from the university library will thus have a dual negative impact on the leading academic and research library in the country. The budgetary as well as the collection development policy of the library will have to be reviewed. Money which could have been used for the purchase of relevant foreign literature will have to be allocated for the acquisition of materials formerly received free of charge through the legal deposit privilege. This may lead to lesser availability of items in
the "Mauritiana" section of the university library to non-members of the university and there may be some bona fide scholars and researchers who will be deprived of access to the specialised collections of the university library.

The legislators also seem to have overlooked the important aspect of the security of legal deposit materials when assigning the privilege of legal deposit to only one library, namely the National Library. One should always bear in mind that, in spite of all the precautionary measures that can be taken for the preservation and conservation of library materials, the latter can never be altogether safe from damages caused by disasters, such as a fire due to an electric short circuit or by floods after a cyclone or heavy rains. Should such a calamity occur, the deposit collection of the National Library may be damaged beyond any recovery and there may be some items for which replacement copies are no more available either from the booksellers or from other libraries elsewhere.

4.7. National bibliographic centre

The National Library will act as the national bibliographic centre and maintain the national bibliography and other bibliographies. It is in this role that the National Library is likely to have the greatest impact on the library and information services in the country. The national bibliography, both current and retrospective, which will be compiled and published by the National Library will provide local libraries with the most accurate and detailed bibliographic records of the national publications. These authoritative records, when copied into the catalogues of the individual libraries, reduce the time and money spent on cataloguing activities and help to expedite the provision of library services to the users. Librarians can also use the national bibliography as a selection tool for the upgrading of the "Mauritiana" collections in their own libraries because the national bibliography can bring to their attention the publications which they have to acquire to keep their collections up to date.
According to one member of the committee which drafted the National Library Bill, the Library will also be responsible for the production of the national union catalogue. Whether in printed form or as a machine-readable database, this catalogue is the key to the collections of the main libraries of the country. It will help libraries to reduce the risk of unnecessary duplication of costly items and can also be used as a device for locating materials which can be requested on inter-library loan. Individual libraries can also compare their respective collections to identify particular strengths and weaknesses and this can lead to a more harmonious development of the national library system.

Finally it can be reasonably assumed that the production of the national bibliography as well as the national union catalogue will ensure the standardisation of bibliographic records across the country because both the bibliography and the catalogue are normally expected to be produced in accordance with accepted international standards or, at least, with compatible national ones.

4.8. Services to readers

The Mauritius National Library Act provides that the National Library will not only make library materials available to the public for reference, but it will also lend these library materials to the public. The combination of these two functions will mean that the National Library will be assuming two contradictory and often conflicting roles, namely a national as well as a public library role. This situation can have serious repercussions for the National Library and the remaining academic and public libraries.

The main consequence of this dual role of the National Library is that the lending of materials can lead to irreparable damage or loss of valuable items which ought to be preserved for future generations and this is a fundamental task of a national library. Secondly, the staff of the National library may find that they have to spend much time providing the routine services of a public library rather than performing the duties expected from national library personnel for the development of bibliographic services.
The reader services of the National Library can also affect the use made of local public, academic or special libraries by the readers. Given the liberal policies of the National Library, many readers may prefer to use the National Library as the library of first resort instead of one which provides back-up collections for materials which are not available in local libraries. The National Library of Scotland has had to review its policy regarding the admission of undergraduate students to the library because of this particular reason. Liberal access to the National Library may not only increase the pressure of demand for the materials in its collections, but it can also diminish the importance of the role of local libraries in the national library service and thus make it much more difficult for these libraries to lobby for the resources necessary for their development.

4.9. Research and assistance in library fields

The National Library is expected to conduct research in library fields and provide assistance in information handling techniques. According to Brault, it is the duty of the staff of the national library to conduct research in library matters as they are, in general, the most qualified persons in their field within the country. The research projects undertaken by the staff of the National Library are different from the fundamental or pure research conducted by academics within a school of librarianship. The research initiatives of the National Library will essentially focus on library operations and the results can be disseminated not only to the library under study but also to other libraries for possible application.

Likewise, local libraries can benefit from the expert assistance of National Library staff in information handling techniques such as the cataloguing of printed as well as audio-visual, electronic and digital library materials. This can ensure the standardisation of bibliographic descriptions necessary for the continuous updating of the national union catalogue and for the exchange of bibliographic records between libraries within the national system. The ultimate aim of the research and assistance will be the improvement of library services, library procedures and cooperation among libraries in the country.
4.10. Lending and exchange of library materials

The National Library will act as an organising agency for national and international lending and exchange of library materials. No library is in a position to supply all the publications requested by its readers from its own collection and some materials will always have to be obtained from other libraries. In Mauritius, the National Library will not normally borrow materials from other local libraries, but it will provide referral services and direct readers to these libraries. Therefore, the national lending and exchange of library materials to be organised by the National Library will mostly be concerned with the loans from the National Library to other local libraries or those between these libraries themselves. It is quite natural that the National Library should be able to organise and control the movement of materials from its collection to other libraries, but this is not necessarily the case for document delivery between individual local libraries and information centres.

Lending between libraries in Mauritius is a long established practice and it is based on the goodwill and cooperation of their respective librarians. It has also been a success because of the relative proximity of the libraries to one another and the adequate communications systems existing in the country. Consequently, having to go through the National Library for the request and delivery of library materials at the national level may not be the ideal practice. Firstly, it can slow down the whole inter-library lending process much to the detriment of the readers. Secondly, it may be interpreted by librarians as a tendency towards centralisation and a threat to their autonomy. This may affect the cooperation that is desirable between the National Library and other libraries in the country and the end losers will be the readers who should be the first beneficiaries of the library and information service.

On the other hand, the responsibility of the National Library for international lending and exchange of library materials can be very advantageous to both local and foreign libraries. The staff of the National Library are usually in a stronger position to identify and locate the materials requested by local libraries while the status and prestige of the National
Library can, in some cases, make it easier for materials to be obtained on loan from foreign libraries. In the same way, the National Library is in a better position than any other library to entertain requests for national publications because of its most comprehensive collection and the availability of multiple copies obtained through legal deposit. This can not only reduce the pressure of demand on the often single copies of national publications in other libraries, but also enhance the reputation of the national library and information service at the international level.

4.11. Cooperation with local and foreign libraries

The National Library will initiate and promote cooperation between the Library and other libraries, at both the national and the international level. This is a noble objective which can be achieved by cooperative policies and programmes developed through consensus and adhered to by all the libraries on a voluntary basis. The development of the national library and information service can depend a lot on the degree of cooperation between the National Library and the other large or small libraries in the country. The compilation of the national bibliography and union catalogue, the adoption of national standards for bibliographic control, the agreements for inter-library loans, and the provision of reference and referral services in response to user needs can maximise the broadest use made of the total library resources of the country and can help towards the development of a nationwide library and information network.

Finally the National Library can participate with foreign libraries in regional and international efforts which are already being promoted by organisations like Unesco and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). These programmes pursue such goals as the improvement of access to information through the adoption of modern technologies and also common standards to facilitate the interconnection of the systems in place for the storage and transfer of information. As a result of this involvement in the international cooperation for the exchange and flow of information, the National Library can help in the creation of national infrastructures and the development of policies and
programmes at the national level for the most effective use of the library resources of the country.

REFERENCES

7. Interview with Y. Chan Kam Lon, Head Librarian, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka, Mauritius, 9 April 1997.
Conclusion and recommendations

5.1. General conclusion

There is a definite necessity for the implementation of the Act for the establishment of the National Library of Mauritius. The Library will not only be a symbol of nationhood, but also a national institution that can satisfy the information needs of the country with the main objective of fostering its economic development as well as the social and cultural advancement of its population. In this age which is rightly called the "information age", the availability of information and the ease of access to that information is of crucial importance for development. The National Library can therefore play a very important role in the development of a national library and information service as an integral part of a global national policy for the collection and dissemination of information in the country.

The enactment of the Mauritius National Library Act is the first step in this direction as it provides the legal framework within which the Library can operate in order to achieve its objectives of promoting the use of library materials in the broadest sense, participating in the planning of library services in the country, and promoting cooperation between libraries at both the national and the international level. From the analysis of the Act in Chapter 3, it is quite clear that the establishment of the National Library will not have only positive results for the information infrastructure of the country, but that it can also have some negative impacts on the libraries that already exist within the national library and information environment. These possible effects have already been discussed in the preceding chapter and the following recommendations are now being proposed as a possible means of ensuring the smooth implantation of the National Library of Mauritius within the local library and information environment.
5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. The establishment of the National Library should be treated as a top priority by the government, in particular the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Leisure to which is assigned the responsibility for the implementation of the National Library Act. A target date should be set for the Act to be proclaimed and the Minister should immediately appoint a working committee under the chairmanship of his Permanent Secretary or a senior official from the Ministry, and consisting of representatives of the ministries of Education, Economic Planning, Finance and Works. This committee should be responsible for coordinating and monitoring all decisions and activities related to the setting up of the National Library, in particular the physical infrastructure, including the building as well as the furniture and equipment that are necessary for the proper storage and preservation of a very important part of the national cultural heritage.

5.2.2. The National Library building should be a functional one and the architectural design and physical lay-out should be able to reconcile the status and prestige of the institution with its functions. The site for the building should be centrally located or well serviced and easily accessible by public transport, and it should be large enough to allow for future expansion as and when required. The plan should be based on both the present and the anticipated space requirements for the collections, the administrative and technical staff, and the readers. The building should also be equipped with air-conditioners in order to control both temperature and humidity, and with special lighting or shields to protect the library materials from ultra-violet or infra-red rays. Finally, the whole building should be provided from the start with adequate electrical wiring so that any equipment needed in the future for reprography or for using non-book materials, including electronic media, can be easily installed in any part of the building.

5.2.3. The government should come forward as soon as possible with an amendment to the Archives Act so that the Head of the Archives Department is henceforth known as the Director of Archives instead of Chief Archivist. This is necessary to allow for the Board to
be fully constituted so that it can start holding its meetings to take decisions on the recruitment of staff and on general policies and programmes for the National Library.

5.2.4. The Chairperson of the Board should not only be a person of academic distinction, but also someone who is knowledgeable in matters relating to the field of library and information in general so that he or she can have a good understanding of the important role that the National Library can play in the country. This person should be a prestigious personality who has the ear of the Minister, but this should not be used as an excuse for the latter to appoint a Chairperson on the basis of his political inclinations or his affinities with the government of the day.

5.2.5. The Director of the National Library, apart from being a qualified and experienced librarian, should be a good manager and a natural leader. These qualities are essential if he or she is to obtain the necessary support of the library staff, the members of the Board, the government and the library community at large. The Director should also enjoy a certain degree of discretion in the daily administration of the Library and his or her authority should be free from any encroachment by either the members of the Board or the Minister. The Director should finally be an ex-officio member of the Board in his or her capacity as the chief executive officer responsible for the implementation and management of the policies and programmes of the National Library.

5.2.6. The National Library should recruit staff of the highest competence with the appropriate salaries in order to give it the means to carry out its functions and fulfill its objectives. Given the scarcity of professional librarians in the country, the Library should be able to employ qualified people from other countries on a contractual basis so that the recruitment of staff for the National Library does not deprive the other existing libraries of the services of professional staff necessary for their own development. In the meantime, facilities should be given to interested persons to get training, either locally or abroad, for possible employment in the Library.
5.2.7. Section 15 of the National Library Act which deals with the legal deposit of library materials should be amended in order to identify the person who shall be responsible for the deposit of journals produced in Mauritius. This section should also specify the time limit within which the materials to be deposited should reach the National Library after the date of publication or production, and the sanctions and penalties that can be imposed on publishers or producers who fail to comply with the existing legal deposit regulations. The legal deposit privilege should also be extended to at least one other major library to guard against the total loss of an important part of the national cultural heritage in case of any unforeseen natural disaster.

5.2.8. The collection of foreign literature in the National Library should supplement the existing research collections in the other libraries of the country. The Library should also conduct inventories of these existing collections as well as surveys of user demands and needs so that it can concentrate on areas for which there is a demand but which are not well covered by other libraries and documentation centres. The National Library should promote and participate in a national acquisitions plan aimed at avoiding the unnecessary duplication of little used material and at maximising the use of available library resources.

5.2.9. The National Library should be responsible for the compilation of the national bibliography, both current and retrospective, and the coverage should include new as well as traditional forms of publication. The bibliographic records should be in accordance or compatible with international standards of bibliographic description and the Library should promote adherence to these standards by other local libraries.

5.2.10. The National Library should provide information services geared towards facilitating access to the library materials in its own collections as well as to the resources of other libraries and information centres both within and outside of the country. These services should include reference and referral services as well as lending through inter-library agreements, but materials should be loaned only if they are not available from any library except the National Library. These information services should rest on adequate
facilities, such as reading rooms, current catalogues, photocopiers and other reprographic equipment. They should also include on-line searches of national or foreign databases to provide current awareness services as well as retrospective bibliographic searches. All these services should be supported by a staff of qualified professionals who can advise users on the optimal use of the collections and other resources of the National Library.

5.2.11. The National Library should develop and implement a conservation programme to ensure the preservation of its own collection in its original format or otherwise. It should also help with the restoration of important collections held by other libraries in the country when the latter lack the necessary expertise and equipment to carry out this function. The conservation policy of the Library should include both the traditional techniques of preservation and the more recent methods of micrographics as well as the transfer of information to other supports by digitisation or optical disks.

5.2.12. The National Library should be able to enlist the best experts from other libraries to work with its own staff on specific research projects directly related to the improvement of library and information services in the country. Although professional training should not be the responsibility of the Library, it should conduct regular updating training programmes for members of its staff. Moreover, professional staff of the National Library should be allowed to accept invitations from the University of Mauritius to give special lectures or run seminars on topics in which they have a recognised expertise. However, the National Library should not provide training in new information handling techniques as a basic training for future librarians, but only as a means of ensuring the application of these techniques to facilitate exchange of data or documents between libraries and information centres at the national as well as the international level.


*Mauritius*. *Archives Act, 1952*.

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THE NATIONAL LIBRARY ACT 1996

Act No.32 of 1996

Arrangement of Sections

1. Short title
2. Interpretation
3. Establishment of the National Library
4. Objects of the Library
5. The Board
6. Meetings of the Board
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8. Director
9. Appointment of staff
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12. Powers of the Minister
13. Donations
14. Accounts
15. Deposit of copies of books by printer in Library
16. Exemption from duty
17. Regulations
18. Consequential amendments
19. Transitional provisions
20. Commencement
An Act

To provide for the establishment of the National Library

ENACTED by the Parliament of Mauritius as follows:

1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the National Library Act 1996.

2. Interpretation

In this Act --

"Board" means the National Library Board established under section 5;
"Chairperson" means the chairperson of the Board;
"Director" means the Director of the National Library;
"Library" means the National Library established under section 3;
"library materials" means any form of written or graphic record, including manuscripts, type-scripts, books, newspapers, periodicals, music-scores, photographs, maps, drawings and other graphic art forms, and non-print materials such as films, filmstrips, audio-visual materials including tapes or discs and reproductions thereof;
"Mauritiana section" means the section consisting of library materials -
(a) relating to any subject and produced in Mauritius; or
(b) relating to Mauritius and produced overseas.
"member" means a member of the Board and includes the Chairman;
"Minister" means the Minister to whom responsibility for the subject of Arts, Culture and Leisure is assigned.

3. Establishment of the National Library

(1) There is established for the purpose of this Act a National Library.

(2) The Library shall consist of --
(a) the Mauritiana section of the Mauritius Institute Library;
(b) the Mauritiana section of the Archives Department.

(3) The library materials comprised in the 2 sections referred to in subsection (2) shall, on
the commencement of this Act, be transferred to the National Library.

(4) The National Library shall be a body corporate.

4. Objects of the Library

The objects of the Library shall be --

(a) to promote and encourage the use of library materials;
(b) to acquire library materials generally, and, in particular, a comprehensive
collection of library materials relating to Mauritius;
(c) to collect, receive and preserve all library materials required to be deposited in
the Library;
(d) to lend library materials to the public;
(e) to make library materials available to the public for reference;
(f) to participate in planning library services in Mauritius, promote research in
library fields and provide assistance in information handling techniques;
(g) to act as the national bibliographic centre and maintain the national
bibliography and other bibliographies;
(h) to act as an organising agency for national and international lending and
exchange of library materials; and
(i) to initiate and promote co-operation between the Library and other libraries,
both local and foreign.

5. The Board

(1) The Library shall be administered and managed by a Board which shall consist of -
(a) a Chairperson, who shall be a person of academic distinction appointed by the
Minister;
(b) a representative of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology;
(c) a representative of the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Leisure;
(d) a representative of the Ministry of Economic Planning, Information and
Telecommunications;
(e) a representative of the Ministry of Finance;
(f) the Director of Archives;
(g) the Head of the Library Cadre;
(h) 5 librarians as follows --
   (i) one from an academic library;
   (ii) one from a public library;
   (iii) one from a special library;
   (iv) one designated by the Association of Urban Authorities; and
   (v) one designated by the Association of District Councils;

(2) The Board may also co-opt such resource persons as it considers necessary to assist it in its deliberations.

(3) Every member of the Board, other than a member specified in subsection (1)(b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g), shall be appointed by the Minister for a period of 3 years and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

6. Meetings of the Board

   (1) The Board shall, at such place and time as the Chairperson may determine, meet --
      (a) at least once a month; or
      (b) whenever a request for a meeting is made by not less than 5 members.

   (2) Nine members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

   (3) Subject to this section, the Board shall regulate its meetings and proceedings in such manner as it thinks fit.

7. Powers of the Board

   The Board may do all such things as appear requisite and advantageous for the purpose of furthering the objects of the Library and may, in particular --
   (a) raise funds;
   (b) levy fees or charges in respect of the use of library materials by the public;
   (c) buy or sell property;
   (d) receive grants-in-aid, gifts, donations or legacies;
   (e) appoint committees in consultation with the Minister.
8. Director

The Board shall, with the approval of the Minister, appoint on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, a Director of the Library who shall be a qualified and experienced librarian possessing high academic status and who shall be responsible for --

(a) the execution of the policy of the Board;
(b) the control and management of the day to day business of the Library, including the keeping of all books, records, deeds, documents and minutes of proceedings of the Board.

9. Appointment of staff

(1) The Board may, with the approval of the Minister, appoint on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, such officers as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions of the Library.

(2) All officers shall be under the administrative control of the Director.

10. Protection of members and officers

No liability, civil or criminal, shall attach to any member or officer in respect of any act which is done or committed by him in good faith in the furtherance of the objects of the Library.

11. Execution of documents

No document shall be executed by or on behalf of the Library unless it is signed by --
(a) the Chairperson or, in his absence, a member designated by the Board; and
(b) the Director or, in his absence, an officer of the Library designated by the Board.

12. Powers of the Minister

(1) The Minister may give such directions of a general character to the Board, not inconsistent with this Act, as he considers necessary in the public interest and the Board shall comply with these directions.

(2) The Board shall, at the request of the Minister, furnish to him such information and such documents in relation to the activities of the Library as he may require.
13. Donations

Article 910 of the Code Napoleon shall not apply to the Library.

14. Accounts

(1) The Board shall, on or before 31 October in every year, submit to the Minister a report together with an audited statement of accounts on the operation of the Library in respect of the 12 months ending on 30 June of the same year.

(2) The report of the Board shall be laid before the National Assembly.

15. Deposit of copies of library materials

(1) There shall, free of charge, be deposited with the Library, in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed --
   (a) 6 copies of every book;
   (b) 6 copies of every journal;
   (c) 6 copies of every issue of every newspaper; and
   (d) 6 copies of non-print materials, produced in Mauritius.

(2) The library materials referred to in subsection (1)(a) and (c) shall be deposited by the printer and the library materials referred to in subsection (1)(d) shall be deposited by the producer.

16. Exemption from duty

Notwithstanding any other enactment --
   (a) the Library shall be exempt from payment of any duty, levy rate, charge, fee or tax;
   (b) the Library may frank letters or postal packets, make remittances by money orders or despatch telegrams free of charge.

17. Regulations

(1) The Board may, with the approval of the Minister, make such regulations as it thinks fit for the purposes of this Act.
(2) Regulations made under subsection (1) may provide that any person who contravenes them shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 1000 rupees.

18. Consequential amendments

(1) The Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act is amended in Part II by adding in its appropriate alphabetical order, the following --

National Library

(2) Sections 8-14 of the Archives Act No. 71 of 1952 are repealed.

(3) The auditor to be appointed under section 5(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall be the Director of Audit.

19. Transitional provisions

Notwithstanding the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act --

(a) the period extending from the commencement of this Act to 30 June next following shall be deemed to be the first financial year of the Library;

(b) section 7(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall not apply in relation to the first financial year of the Library.

20. Commencement

This Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation.

Passed by the National Assembly on the seventeenth day of December one thousand nine hundred and ninety six.

ANDRE POMPON
Clerk of the National Assembly
Sections 8-14 of the Archives Act 1952

(Repealed by The National Library Act 1996)

8. Delivery of copies of books by printer

(1) Six copies of the whole of every book produced in Mauritius, together with all maps, prints or other engravings belonging thereto, finished and coloured in the same manner as the best copies of the same, and six copies of any second or subsequent edition which shall be so produced with any additions or alterations, whether the same shall be in letterpress or in the maps, prints or other engravings belonging thereto, and whether the first edition of such book has been produced before or after the commencement of this Act shall, within one month after the day on which any such book shall first issue from the press and, notwithstanding any agreement (if the book be published) between the printer and publisher thereof, be delivered by the printer to the Chief Archivist, bound, sewed or stitched together, and upon the best paper on which the same is printed, engraved or otherwise processed, free of any charge, claim or demand.

(2) The publisher or other person employing the printer shall, at a reasonable time before the expiration of the month, supply the printer with all maps prints or engravings, finished and coloured as under subsection (1), which may be necessary to enable him to comply with the requirements.

9. Receipt for copies

The Chief Archivist shall upon delivery of copies of books under section 8 give a receipt in writing for the copies so received.
10. Disposal of copies

One of the copies shall remain in the Archives Department, and of the other 5 copies, one shall be sent to the Mauritius Institute, one to the University of Mauritius, one to the British Museum, London, one to the Library of Congress, Washington, and the fifth to the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

11. Printer and publisher to keep register of books

Every printer and every publisher shall keep -

(a) a register of books printed or published by him, containing the particulars mentioned in section 13 and which shall be made available for inspection by the Chief Archivist at any time;

(b) a list of all his other publications.

12. Notification to Chief Archivist

(1) Every printer, publisher or editor shall, on starting business, or on selling or transferring his plant, or on retiring from business, as the case may be, so notify the Chief Archivist in writing within 48 hours of the event.

(2) Every printer, publisher or editor who fails to comply with this section shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 rupees.

13. Registration of memorandum of books

The Chief Archivist shall keep a register to be called "catalogue of books printed in Mauritius" in which shall be recorded a memorandum of every book delivered to him under section 8 and the register shall contain -

(a) the title of the book;

(b) the language in which the book is written;
(c) the name of the author, translator, or editor of the book or of any part thereof;
(d) the subject;
(e) the place of printing and the place of publication;
(f) the name or firm of the printer, and the name or firm of the publisher;
(g) the date of issue from the press or of the publication;
(h) the number of sheets, leaves or pages;
(i) the size;
(j) the edition, whether first or subsequent;
(k) the number of copies of which the edition consists;
(l) the price at which the book is sold to the public; and
(m) the name and residence of the proprietor of the copyright or of any portion of such copyright

14. Publication of memorandum registered

The memorandum under section 13 shall be revised during each quarter and published in the Gazette, as soon as may be after the end of such quarter.
APPENDIX C

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

The National Library of Wales was established in March 1907 by a Royal Charter granted through the Privy Council as a result of the 19th century movement for the creation of national institutions for Wales.

The legal deposit privilege was granted to the Library by the Copyright Act of 1911 which accorded the Library the right to claim a copy of any printed item published in the United Kingdom from 1 July 1912. Under the Irish Free State Industrial and Commercial Property (Protection) Act of 1927, the Library was also granted the right to claim a copy of every printed item published in the Republic of Ireland, a right confirmed by the Irish Copyright Act of 1963.

Aim and objectives
The object of the Library, as it is defined in the Charter of foundation, is the collection, preservation and maintenance of manuscripts, printed matter, maps, photographs, visual and audio-visual material relating to Wales and the Celtic peoples and of all literary works which may help to attain the purposes for which the educational institutions existing in Wales were created or founded, especially the furtherance of higher education and of literary and scientific research.

The core functions which represent the fundamental work which the Library must carry out to fulfill its Charter are:

1. Provide an effective and timely service to near and remote users by delivery and enquiry services and by the provision of automated and manual catalogues and handlists.
2. Collect materials by legal deposit, purchase, donation, bequest, exchange, and deposit, according to defined collection development policies drawn up in accordance with the terms of the Charter, and process and store materials acquired.
3. Preserve and conserve materials in the collection.
4. Interpret and publicise the collections by means of guides, publications, printed and online bibliographies, exhibitions, lectures and any other appropriate means, and produce and maintain the national bibliography.
5. Provide expert and professional input and collaboration at a Welsh, UK, and international level.

Library authority
The governing body of the Library is the Court of Governors which consists of Members of Parliament for Wales and representatives from different Welsh institutions and eminent persons co-opted by the Court. Executive powers are vested in the Council of the National Library and the Chief Executive Officer is the Librarian who is also an ex-officio member of the Council.

Organisation
The Library has three curatorial departments, namely the Department of Printed Books, the Department of Manuscripts and Records, and the Department of Pictures and Maps. There are also the Administrative and Technical Department and the Department of Finance. The Senior Management Group is chaired by the Librarian and consists of the Keepers of the curatorial departments and the Directors of Administration and Finance. The latter is also the Secretary of the Council of the National Library.

Funding
The library is funded by the government through a grant-in-aid from the Culture and Research Division of the Welsh Office. The money is allocated for capital projects, running costs, purchase of non-legal deposit materials, and training expenses. There are also monetary bequests to the Library which have been invested and the return on these
investments is used for special purchases. Funds are also obtained via the sale of the publications of the Library and the charges imposed on users for certain services.

**Size of collection and number of staff**

The Library has the largest collection of research materials in Wales. The present holdings of the Library amount to 3.8 million volumes including periodicals and there are some 220 permanent and fixed term staff working in the Library.

**Promotion of materials**

The Library has a permanent exhibitions to illustrate the evolution and highlights of the national literature so that it is possible for the visitors to familiarise themselves with the publications of leading scholars and other documents of historical significance. It also organises special exhibitions based on the resources of its collections and produces special publications and catalogues aimed at generating greater interest by the public in the materials held by the national library.

**Acquisition of materials**

Most of the materials are acquired through legal deposit via an agency established by the British copyright libraries (excluding the British Library). The Library pays an annual subscription which finances the operation of the Agency which claims a copy of each new publication for each library. A monthly list of new periodical titles is also circulated and the Library selects the titles which the Agency should claim for it as they are published. Items which do not fall into the legal deposit category are obtained either by purchase or by exchange or still as gifts. The Library also purchases non-print materials which still do not come under the provisions of the existing legal deposit legislation.

**National bibliographic centre**

The Library publishes the Welsh National Bibliography, a responsibility imposed by the Royal Charter. This is published in 300 copies of which 250 are used for exchange purposes and 50 are sold to Welsh libraries.
There is no centralised cataloguing of Welsh materials but the computerised catalogue of the Library can be accessed on the Joint Academic Network (JANET) and copied into the catalogues of other libraries. This database which started in 1985 has now 1.5 million records and some 5 million more are expected to be added by retrospective conversion. The Library also participates with the other five British copyright libraries in the Shared Cataloguing Programme where it is responsible for the cataloguing of Welsh publications as well as a portion of the more general print output in Britain.

**Services to readers**

The Library is a reference library which does not lend materials directly to the users, but it acquires duplicate copies which are made available to other Welsh libraries on inter-library loan. Items are loaned only if they cannot be obtained from any other library except the National Library which also indulges in loans and exchanges with other UK and foreign libraries.

**Research and training**

The Library does not offer any formal training in librarianship as this is left to the Department of Information and Library Studies of the University of Aberystwyth. The Library regularly welcomes students from the latter department for an assessment of its information services and there is also an exchange of resource persons between both of these institutions.

There is, however a Training and Staff Development Forum at middle management level to consider the training needs for staff across the departments of the Library and the members of the Library staff are also given facilities to enable them to carry out research in their respective fields of interest.

**Library cooperation**

The National Librarian chairs the Welsh Higher Education Libraries Forum and the Chief Librarians of Wales Committee which is the Welsh branch of the Society of Chief
Librarians. He is also the ex-officio president of the Welsh Library Association and the secretary of the newly established Consortium of Welsh Library and Information Services. Cooperative agreements also exist with the Aberystwyth Centre for the Book and the Welsh Book Council.

The Library is represented on the Standing Committee for Legal Deposit (SCOLD) which regroups representatives of the British copyright libraries and which discusses all the issues associated with the management and the development of legal deposit collections. Finally at the international level, the Library has exchange and inter-library loan agreements with foreign libraries.
THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

The National Library of Scotland was established by the National Library of Scotland Act of 1925 when the government accepted the offer of the Faculty of Advocates to present its Library, with the exception of the law books and manuscripts, to the nation to become the National Library of Scotland.

The legal deposit privilege which the Advocates Library had held since 1710 was also transferred to the National Library and the latter has had the right to claim a copy of any printed item published in the United Kingdom. By reciprocal legislation, the Library also has the right to claim a copy of every printed item published in the Republic of Ireland.

Aim and objectives
The Act of 1925 does not set out the functions of the Library in detail but the latter has recently carried out a review of its activities and worked on a strategic plan that seeks to define its objectives till the end of the century. The mission statement of the Library is that it serves the people of Scotland by acquiring, preserving and making available the information that documents their past, informs their present and will shape their future; it also offers this information to those outside Scotland who are concerned with the country and its people, or need to use the national collections in their research.

The key objectives of the Library are defined in the corporate plan for 1997-2001 and these are:

1. To function as the national legal deposit library for Scotland and as a general research library of international importance, operating as a library of last resort, and meeting the
information needs of scholarship, research and reference through collections acquired by legal deposit, purchase and gift.

2. To act as the international focus for the record of Scotland through the collection, preservation and cataloguing of information relating to Scotland and the Scots.

3. To develop the Library as a key central resource for scientific, technical and business information in support of the economic development of Scotland.

4. To promote the use and interpretation of the collections of the Library and awareness of its services.

5. To stimulate, support and facilitate cooperation and collaboration among the libraries and other information providers of Scotland, and to participate in appropriate cooperative projects at national and international levels.

6. To develop the knowledge, skill and expertise of the staff of the Library.

Library authority
The governing body of the Library is the Board of Trustees which consists of 32 unpaid members representing the government as well as Scottish institutions. The Board has delegated some of its powers to make policy decisions to a Standing Committee which consists of 16 trustees. The Chief Executive Officer is the Librarian who also acts as the ex-officio Secretary of the Board.

Organisation
The Library has seven departments, namely the Department of Manuscripts, Maps and Music, the Department of Printed Books, the Department of Electronic Information, the Scottish Science Library, the Department of Administration, the Computer Services Division, and the Public Services Division. The Librarian and the Keepers (the heads of the different departments) attend meetings of the Standing Committee and meetings of other committees of the Board as appropriate.

These departments are located in four separate buildings in Edinburgh because of lack of space. The George IV Bridge building houses the large part of the printed book and
manuscript collection, staff accommodation and public reading rooms. The Lawnmarket building accommodates the departments of Administration and Computer Services. The Causewayside building houses the Scottish Science Library, the Map Library and the lending services of the National Library. The Sighthill building in the industrial estate on the outskirts of the city accommodates the bindery and a microfilming unit.

**Funding**

The library is funded by the government through a grant-in-aid from the Scottish Office and the money is allocated for capital projects, running costs, purchase of foreign and older Scottish materials. Training expenses are covered by a grant-in aid from the Scottish Library and Information council. Funds are also obtained from the fees levied for the use of reprographic equipment of the Library and the sale of items through the Library Shop.

**Size of collection and number of staff**

The Library is the most important repository of books and manuscripts relating to Scotland and the Scots. Its present holdings amount to more than 6 million volumes including periodicals and there are some 250 full-time-equivalent permanent staff working in the Library.

**Promotion of materials**

The Library has an Exhibitions and Publications Division whose function is to expand access to the national collections and increase understanding of the national literature. In addition to special exhibitions based on the resources of the Library and held in its Exhibition Hall, there is also a programme of touring displays on the life and works of leading Scottish writers and scholars. The Library also produces a newsletter entitled Quarto and special publications and catalogues aimed at generating greater public interest in its collections. For example, a new CD-ROM version of the Bibliography of Scotland has been produced and the Library is continuously developing its World Wide Web site.
Acquisition of materials
Most of the materials are acquired through legal deposit and there is a special arrangement whereby all materials dealing with law and related subjects are sent to the Advocates Library. Deposit materials are obtained via an agency established and financed by the British copyright libraries (excluding the British Library) and which claims a copy of each new publication for the library. A monthly list of new periodical titles is also circulated and the Library selects the titles which the Agency should claim for it as they are published.

Items which do not fall into the legal deposit category are obtained either by purchase, exchange or as gifts. The Library, however, does not purchase sound and image materials which are not covered by the provisions of the existing legal deposit legislation. The acquisition of these materials is left respectively to the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh and the Scottish Film Archives in Glasgow.

National bibliographic centre
The Library publishes the Bibliography of Scotland and the Scottish Union Catalogue, which includes the catalogue of the Library and the catalogue of locations maintained by the lending services of the Library. These publications are also available on CD-ROM. A general catalogue of printed books is presently in preparation and, when it is completed in the year 2000, it will contain 2.5 million records for 6 million volumes. There is no centralised cataloguing of materials relating to Scotland but the catalogue of the Library can be accessed online through the World Wide Web and copied into the catalogues of other libraries. The Library also participates with the other five British copyright libraries in the Shared Cataloguing Programme in which it is responsible for the cataloguing of Scottish publications and a portion of other British general publications.

Services to readers
The Library is a research library of last resort and new admissions procedures for undergraduates have been introduced to create better conditions of service delivery to users. The Library does not lend materials directly to the users, but it acquires duplicate
copies and also makes photocopies of journal articles which are then made available to other libraries on inter-library loan. Items are loaned only if their temporary removal from the collection will not harm the interests of the researchers, students or the public using the Library.

Research and training
The Library does not have any budget for research and therefore does not conduct any fundamental research. However, staff of the Library participate in UK-wide research and funds for their participation are taken from a grant-in-aid from the Scottish Library and Information Council. There are some internal training courses run by the Scottish Library Association for the National Library staff and these can also be attended by outsiders after payment of the necessary fees.

Library co-operation
The National Library provides the Secretariat for the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) which regroups the National Library, the libraries of the 13 universities in Scotland and the municipal research libraries of Edinburgh and Glasgow. It maintains the Co-operative Purchasing File as a record of the expensive items ordered by members of the confederation in order to assist purchasing decisions by these members.

The Library also participates in the work of the Standing Committee for Legal Deposit (SCOLD) which aims at furthering the development of co-ordination of acquisition policies among the legal deposit libraries within the United Kingdom. Finally at the international level, the Library has exchange and inter-library loan agreements with foreign libraries and it is also the depository library for publications of the United Nations.