CHAPTER FOUR

MULTICULTURALISM AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

1.   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters multicultural public library issues – as reviewed in international literature - were discussed. This chapter presents an overview of the multicultural nature of South Africa, specifically that of the City of Johannesburg. It reviews literature which has a bearing on South African multicultural public library services or services for culturally diverse communities. A brief history of public libraries in South Africa (especially the library services of the City of Johannesburg) is given in terms of their segregated cultural development.

2.   THE MULTICULTURAL NATURE OF SOUTH AFRICA

According to Ocholla (2002:61), South Africa's population is diverse and is composed of Africans, Whites, Coloureds and Indians/Asians. Most of the white population is Afrikaans or English speaking. Other smaller groups are of German, French, Italian and Portuguese descent - amongst others. The black population is also diverse. The major nine ethnic groups are Zulu (the largest), Xhosa, South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Ndebele, Swazi and Tsonga. In terms of the South African Constitution, there are 11 official languages. Religious diversity is also significant. Approximately 80 per cent of the people are Christian, while the remaining 20 per cent is made up mainly of Muslim and Hindu faiths which are widespread amongst the Asian communities.

The multicultural nature of South Africa is highlighted in South African legislation and the Constitution, Act No. 19 of 2002 (South Africa, 2002: 5) states that "the South African nation consists of a diversity of cultural, religious and linguistic communities." The Constitution - Chapter 2, Section 30 - declares that "everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice."

The multicultural nature of South Africa is recognised by President Thabo Mbeki (1998) when he said:

> As does our Constitution, all of us recognise the fact that the entity described as the South African nation is made up of diverse cultural, linguistic and religious groups.

Mbeki continued by recommending that "as a country, we should strive to create a society in which all cultural, language and religious groups actually enjoy equality, with none relegated to a lesser position or disadvantaged relative to others." He points out, however, that the promotion and protection of the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities should not undermine South Africa's quest for national unity. It should be considered within the context of nation building and we need "to find intelligent ways and means by which we would organise ourselves to unite as a people, around national aspirations and a common identity, while we honour and respect our diversity."

3.   STATISTICAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

An examination of the latest national census, Census 2001 (see Appendix 4), highlights how diverse South Africa is. According to Census 2001, communities include not only the 11 official linguistic communities, but also a diversity of other ethnic, religious, linguistic communities and nationalities from Africa, Europe and the rest of world.

According to the Census 2001, of the 44 819 778 people living in South Africa, 35 416 166 are Black (79%), 3 994 505 are Coloured (8.9%), 1 115 467 are Indian or Asian (2.5%), and 4 293 640 are White (9.6%). The distribution of the population, by language most often spoken in the home, is as follows:

- isiZulu   23.8%
- isiXhosa   17.6%
- Afrikaans   13.3%
- Sepedi   9.4%
- English   8.2%
- Setswana   8.2%
- Sesotho   7.9%
- Xitsonga   4.4%
- siSwati   2.7%
- Tshivenda   2.3%
- isiNdebele   1.6%
- Other   0.5%

The Census also indicates that 2.3% of people living in South Africa were not born in South Africa. They originate from SADC countries; the rest of Africa; Europe; Asia; North, Central and South America; Australia; and New Zealand.

This census does not reflect links that people - born in South Africa - have with the heritages of other cultures, such as those of the Portuguese, Greeks, Indians, Chinese and other communities living in South Africa. Religions recorded in the census include Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and African traditional beliefs.

As this study focuses on public library services in the City of Johannesburg, further statistical information regarding the multicultural nature of the population of Johannesburg is given in Section 6 of this chapter.

4. BACKGROUND TO CULTURALLY DIVERSE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

In order to understand the background against which public library services for culturally diverse communities in South Africa have developed, it is important to understand the historical context - especially the past segregated cultural context - within which public libraries developed in South Africa. It is also important to understand the policy context which supports the delivery of multicultural services in South Africa today. Therefore, in this section the historical context in which public libraries developed will be briefly described, while policies that support the present delivery of multicultural services will also be highlighted.

4.1 Historical context

The history of South Africa and South African public libraries is well documented. As the purpose of the this study is not that of an historical investigation of public libraries in South Africa, an in-depth report into the history of South African public libraries does not fall within the scope of this research and will, therefore, not be discussed. This has been covered by authors, such as Taylor (1967), Stilwell (1997), von Beck (1997), Leach (1998) and Kalley (2000). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise the past segregated and unequal cultural context within

which public libraries developed in South Africa in order to understand current library services to diverse cultural groups.

Kalley (2000:1) shows that cultural separation in South Africa was reinforced by the Group Areas Act (41 of 1950) which enforced the racial zoning of land; the Separate Amenities Act (49 of 1953) by which the provision of separate buildings and services for people of different racial groups was legalised; and the Bantu Education Act (47 of 1953) which increased the differences in literacy levels between population groups. Public libraries in South Africa developed within this divisive cultural background and the legacy of segregation and apartheid policies.

Taylor (1967:64) indicates that "the first library services in South Africa were initiated by whites for whites." This is supported by Mostert (1999: 1) who explains that following the founding of the South African Public Library - which opened its doors to the public in 1820 - library development was concentrated in mainly European communities. However, Von Bech (1997: 154) - when referring to the development of public libraries in South Africa in the nineteenth century - notes that even in the white community there were unequal developments for different cultural communities as "public libraries were established mainly by the English-speaking (white) section of the population in South Africa." The English speaking section of the population had a tradition of education, reading and writing and was mainly responsible for the establishment of the public library tradition in South Africa. Von Bech (1997: 163) suggests that amongst the Afrikaans-speaking population matters looked very different. Afrikaans had only been declared an official language in 1925. Many obstacles had to be overcome by the people whose home language was Afrikaans, such as the many different cultural backgrounds which made up the Afrikaner nation and which had to be assimilated.

However, it was especially in library services to non-white communities that unequal development was evident. Mostert (1999:1) writes that

the separate development of libraries for whites, coloureds, blacks and Indians, had gained momentum since 1910 when provincial authorities took responsibility for the development of library services. However, inadequacies in the provision of library services seemed to have been the norm. These inadequacies were pointed out by Ferguson and Pitt, who were two librarians commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation to investigate the situation concerning South African provision. This resulted in the Bloemfontein Library Conference in 1928, where greater need was expressed for adequate development of library service to all race groups.

According to Taylor (1967:64), only when the Carnegie commissioners visited South Africa in 1927 was the need for library services to non-white communities even recognised. Grants were then made to initiate such services in each province. The Carnegie Commission recommended that a free library system to serve all sections of the community be established and that library services to all other ethnic groups should be started (Von Beck, 1997:165).

There are several reasons why there were virtually no library services to black communities until 1928. One reason is that up until the 1928 Carnegie Conference in Bloemfontein - at which it was decided to implement free public library services in South Africa - most public libraries were subscription libraries. This gave the libraries the exclusivity, or elitism - as Walker (1994: 61) calls it - whereby only people who could afford to pay for the reading and other facilities of the public library could use them. Another reason was that the library services in South Africa were initially started by Whites for Whites.

Although some public library services have been developed for non-white communities since 1928, this was in an environment of segregation and inequality. Kalley (2000: 7) points this out when explaining that the pattern of library development was unequal for different sectors of the population. This inequity is identified early in the history of South Africa because of the political situation that was prevalent in the country – with the Whites being the overall

beneficiaries. In the years that followed, various segregated "non-white" library services were established. These services were, however, inadequate and - as described by Von Beck (1997:180) – their development was further slowed by Apartheid legislation. It should be noted that these early services to specific communities should not be seen as a form of multicultural library services as they were based on separation, segregation and inequality. Multicultural services emphasise equity and integrated library services to meet the needs of each community equally.

After the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948 the Library system for Whites grew, but this growth took place at the expense of facilities accessible to Blacks (Von Beck, 1997:180). According to Mostert (1999: 1), after 1948 the policies enforced by the South African Government resulted in the development of an advanced system of library services for the privileged white minority, while those for Blacks were left largely underdeveloped.

Von Beck (1997:168) also explains that references to non-white communities were often broad, and referred to as "Non-Europeans". No distinction was made in these references between any of the many ethnic groups in South Africa who fell outside the white minority group. This makes it difficult to say with any certainty what percentage of the "Non-Europeans" referred to were Zulu library users and what percentage were, for example, Indian users.

Library services for non-whites were, therefore, disproportionate (Walker, 1994:121). Even though - by the 1950s - there were some library service points in operation for the non-white groups, when they were transferred from Provincial Councils to the Department of Native Affairs in 1954 there was a breakdown even in these services due to a lack of financial support. Until 1970 requests to government for the reallocation of these services to the Provincial Councils fell on deaf ears.

The situation of segregated, unequal library services continued well into the 1970s and beyond. The first public libraries only started opening their doors to all races in the 1970s. Both the Johannesburg Public Library and the Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzurg opened their doors to all race groups in 1975 (Issak, 2000). However, it was not until the end of Apartheid in 1994 that equal access to all public libraries by all populations was guaranteed by the Constitution.

The new laws guaranteed all persons equal, non-discriminatory access to public services, such as public libraries. However, it is important to mention the following statement made by Stilwell (1997: 27):

> South African public libraries have been democratised in the sense that they are open to all races and this, in itself, gives communities the opportunity to make their needs known. Very little evidence is available, however, on systematic and continuous needs assessment by the public sector.

This remark is relevant to multicultural services. While multicultural library services emphasise equal access to all population groups, a multicultural approach in public libraries is about more than equal access. It requires the materials and services - offered by public libraries – to be representative and relevant to the needs of their diverse communities. Positive actions in the form of concrete services should be rendered to meet the specific needs of each group. These may include library services in the native language of the members of a group or - as Tinker suggests (1990: 40) - the provision of services and materials which reflect the multicultural nature of society.

This is supported by Walker (1994: 125) when referring to the challenges of providing information to all in South Africa. Walker maintains that as libraries have opened their services to black users, many librarians have been challenged by unfamiliar problems, including illiteracy or newly acquired adult literacy; the selection and acquisition of appropriate material for a multilingual, multicultural

society; and cultural and language barriers in the communication between users and librarians.

Finally, it is important to describe the situation of public libraries in South Africa, in general, since 1994. Although public library services have become free to all and equal access is guaranteed for all communities by legislation, the Memorandum on the State of Libraries in South Africa (Lor, 1998) reveals an alarming deterioration of library services in many parts of South Africa. Leach (1998: 18) agrees with this when referring to the public library sector post 1994 survey:

> It is, however, clearly becoming increasingly difficult (if not impossible) to achieve redress let alone maintain existing services. The public library sector (amongst other sectors) is finding that it must continuously compete for increasingly limited funding at local and provincial level. This financial factor is impacting negatively on many other important aspects of LIS work.

It can be assumed that the present position in which public libraries find themselves in South Africa - in terms of the financial factor - will also impact on what libraries can achieve regarding an equitable offering of multicultural collections and services to culturally diverse communities.

4.2   Policy context

In contrast with the Apartheid policies of the past, there are various policies in place in South Africa today which directly - or indirectly - support the principle of providing equitable public services, including library services, to the country's multicultural people.

As mentioned in Section 2 of this chapter, the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) promotes and protects the rights of the diverse communities in South Africa.

Chapter 2, Section 30 of the Constitution, states that "everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice." Another part of the Constitution, Section 31, asserts that "persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community -

a. to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language; and
b. to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society."

Chapter One of the Constitution confirms that "the official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu." It recognises that with "the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages."

Furthermore, the Constitution specifies that conditions should be created for, "the development and use of -
      i. all official languages;
      ii. the Khoi, Nama and San languages; and
      iii. sign language; and
promote and ensure respect for -
      iv. all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, including German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu; and
      v. Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa."

Act No. 19 of 2002 (South Africa, 2002) was proclaimed by the Constitution of South Africa to support constitutional democracy. The Act established the

Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. Beukman (2000: 139), points out the various functions of the Commission. The functions that might be considered most relevant to public services include:

- Resource allocation: promoting an equitable distribution of available resources among the cultural, religious and linguistic communities.
- Promoting multiculturalism and mutilingualism: promoting the diversity of the nation through awareness campaigns concerning multiculturalism and multilingualism and celebrating our cultural heritage through joint projects Beukman (2000: 140).

Another policy which focuses on an aspect of multiculturalism - that of multiligualism - is the Language policy of the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB). The Mission Statement of PANSALB (2005) declares that "the purpose of the Board is to promote multilingualism in South Africa by

- creating the conditions for the development of, and the equal use of, all official languages;
- fostering respect for, and encouraging the use of, other languages in the country;
- encouraging the best use of the country's linguistic resources.

In May 2004 PANSALB launched a campaign to raise the public's awareness of their rights to be served in their own language at government institutions.

Government has also published other policies which have an indirect bearing on diversity and multiculturalism. Although not referring directly to diversity or multiculturalism, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (South Africa, 1997) indicates in its Foreword, that "access to decent pubic services is no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a few; it is now the rightful expectation of

all citizens, especially those previously disadvantaged." Services should be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias (South Africa, 1997: 10).

The White Paper (1997: 19) also notes that "information must be provided in a variety of media and *languages* to meet the differing needs of different customers."

The Preamble of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, notes that

> Whereas the system of local government under Apartheid failed dismally to meet the basic needs of the majority of South Africans; … the Constitution of our non racial democracy enjoins local government not just to seek services to all our people but to be fundamentally developmental in orientation (South Africa, 2000:2).

The Act (2000: 32) maintains that when communicating information, a municipality must take into account language preferences and usage in the municipality.

The above general government policies indicate government's recognition of the multicultural nature of South Africa. There are also various international and national library specific policies which directly - or indirectly - recognise or support the principle of providing equitable library services to the multicultural populations in South Africa. Internationally, the IFLA Multicultural Communities Guidelines (1998) - as discussed in Chapter Three - apply. According to IFLA, although the ethnic, linguistic and cultural composition of the world varies greatly, "these guidelines are international" (1998: 5). The guidelines also point out that "they are meant to be used in conjunction with standards and guidelines for particular types of libraries in each country."

Another international policy which applies to countries all over the world - including South Africa - is UNESCO's Public Library Manifesto (1994). The Manifesto encourages national and local governments around the world to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries. It points out that the "services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status". It goes on to suggest that one of the key missions of the public library is that of fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity.

South African library policies exist which support diversity and multicultural library services directly or indirectly. In one of its general constitutional aims, the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA Constitution, 2005) strives to "promote the transformation of the library and information services into equitable and accessible services for all the people in South Africa." In its specific Policies and Strategies (LIASA Policy, 2005), the organisation states that

> libraries have a responsibility both to guarantee and to facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity. To this end, libraries shall acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society, and libraries shall make materials, facilities and services equally accessible to all users.

The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (South Africa, 1996) - which includes policy for Library and Information Services - supports the principles of diversity and multiculturalism in numerous sections. In the Introduction, it states that the Department supports

- the arts, culture and heritage, by valuing diversity.
- the linguistic diversity of our country as a resource in empowering all South Africans fully to participate in their country's social, political and economic life.

Chapter 3 of the White Paper indicates that "the cultural diversity of our people is a major national asset" (1996: 1) and that it is guided by the following operational principles:

- **Equity**: Shall ensure the equitable distribution of resources to all forms of culture
- **Multilingualism**: Shall promote multilingualism in the arts in accordance with the Constitution
- **Diversity**: Shall ensure the recognition of aesthetic pluralism and diversity of artistic forms, within a multicultural context.

Another document that touches on issues of diversity in library services indirectly is the National Council for Library and Information Services Act (6 of 2001) which has as its objective to advise the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on matters relating to library and information services. One of the functions of the Council mentioned in Section 4 (e) is to advise the Minister on "existing adequacies and deficiencies of library and information resources, including literature in African languages, and services" (2001: 3).

Finally, the provision of equitable materials and services for its culturally diverse population is supported by actual CJLIS policies. This includes the Minimum Standards for the CJLIS (2003) which state that the Library should reflect the variety of cultures represented in the community; support cultural traditions; and provide resources and services in the languages spoken and read in the local community. Also included is the Policy for the Selection of Materials for the CJLIS (2002) which states that the library's materials should reflect the cultural diversity of the City, especially materials in the languages of the indigenous communities.

The above policy framework allows for - and supports - the principles of multicultural public library services in South Africa. At public library level though, the actual implementation of these policy positions needs to be considered. How public libraries have actually responded to these policies; or whether these policies have had an impact on library services; or even if libraries are at all aware of these policies, also needs to be investigated. These issues are explored in the interviews with the CJLIS which are analysed in Chapter Six.

5. A REVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE ON MULTICULTURAL LIBRARY SERVICES

The following section focuses on the literature that directly - or indirectly - has a bearing on public library services to culturally diverse communities in South Africa.

References to library services for broad racial groups, especially the black population, are frequently found in the South African library and information literature. These populations are often treated as one large homogeneous cultural group with similar needs. However, it is important to note that race or skin colour do not, necessarily, constitute a cultural community. Race usually refers to "physical variations" and attributes. On the other hand, ethnicity, culture, language and religion refer to "cultural practices and outlooks of a given community that have emerged historically" (Giddens, 2003).

Therefore, within the Black, White, Asian and Coloured racial groups in South Africa, there are various cultures, languages and religions. In the literature on these broad racial groups the differences in language, religion and culture are often overlooked. According to Von Beck (1997:168), "no distinction is made in these references between any of the many ethnic groups in South Africa." References that date back to the Carnegie Commission visit to South Africa in

1928 are to library services for broad racial categories such as "Bantu and coloured people", "Non-European", "Natives", "white" and "non-white people".

References in the literature to broad racial groups cannot be regarded as multicultural as they do not focus on the specific library and information needs of communities with their own unique languages, literature, cultures, customs, religions, and traditions. Studies of these broad racial categories are, however, justifiably important as they explore the common needs that these broad groups have as "disadvantaged" communities - groups who lack basic facilities, literacy skills, etc. Examples of such studies include the following:

- Kalley (1995) who refers to the role of community libraries in South Africa that attempts to overcome the *lacunae* in the provision of library services to the black sector of the population.
- Von Beck (1997) who examines the role of the South African public library in support of adult black illiterates in urban areas.
- Leach (2001) whose study investigated ways in which information is provided to rural communities.

Direct references to multiculturalism, cultural diversity and related topics in the literature pertaining to South African library and information are, however, not often found. Direct references encountered during the literature survey include Behrens (1990), Schimper (1992), Mothuloe(1992), Walker (1994), Van der Merwe (1995), Edwards (1999), Mostert (1999), Cosijn *et al* (2002), Ocholla (2002) and Fredericks and Mvunelo (2003). These articles provide some initial thoughts and opinions of other South African authors on the topic of multicultural library services.

An article written by Behrens (1990) during the Apartheid era focuses on cross-cultural reference interviews in a multicultural society. The author explores the communication barriers which could be encountered during a cross-cultural

reference interview, such as poor racial and social interaction, verbal, and non-verbal communication differences. It is suggested that in order to overcome these barriers "the librarian requires an understanding of the communication norms of the various cultures represented in the country" (Behrens, 1990:87). It is further suggests that "South African library schools take culture-related communication barriers into consideration when developing curricula relating to the reference interview."

Schimper (1992) maintains that South African libraries should become more African centred, cautioning, however, that this does not imply "throwing overboard universal values, such as the importance of a reading tradition. It rather means giving those values an African face by taking into account African traditions and needs" (Schimper, 1992: 1). Practical ways in which libraries can become more multicultural include:

- Involving the client in the planning of services with a library committee representative from the community.
- Providing user training to communities.
- Creating a user-friendly library environment characterised by approachable staff and the effective use of space and signs.
- Developing outreach activities for these communities (Schimper, 1992: 3).

Besides books, materials that meet the needs of each community and the use of alternative information sources, such as the community as an oral information source, are also recommended (Schimper, 1992: 5).

Another South African author, Mothuloe (1992), who examined multicultural library services in South Africa, recommends a variety of ways in which a library can 'restructure' itself to become more multicultural. As South Africa transforms itself into a multicultural society, communities will demand that the institutions which serve their needs provide services and goods that reflect the population of

South Africa. Mothuloe also recommends that libraries provide these services in a manner that will facilitate cross cultural understanding without weakening the multicultural component of society. This approach requires a prior understanding of ethnic and cultural differences and similarities to ensure acceptance and tolerance.

Mothuloe (1992:8) further addresses the question of why a multicultural library approach in South Africa is so important by maintaining that South African society constitutes a diversely multiethnic and multicultural community, and that institutions must reflect this mixture and accommodate all cultures. Failure to do so could invite rejection and criticism by members of the various communities. It is suggested that this approach be adopted to help make the library more relevant and significant in the eyes of the public. Practical steps that libraries need to adopt in order to develop multicultural services, include the following:

- Developing policies that commit libraries to a multicultural approach.
- Conducting studies to identify the needs of communities.
- Marketing the library to the diverse cultural communities.
- Developing appropriate materials and services for a multicultural society (Mothuloe, 1992: 9).

Libraries should be a place where inter-ethnic and intercultural relations and understanding are fostered. To achieve this, librarians need to acquire additional qualities, skills and qualifications, which include multiligualism - speaking users' languages when providing services attracts them to the library. Additional funding is also required. As libraries often do not have these additional funds, to overcome this problem - at least partially - library co-operation and networking is recommended (Mothuloe, 1992:9).

Walker (1994), another South African author who deals with multicultural library services, emphasises the need libraries have in selecting and acquiring

appropriate materials for a multilingual, multicultural society, and their need to develop skills and attitudes to overcome cultural and language barriers in communications between users and librarians - which would enhance community acceptance of a library. There is a need to acquire new communication skills in African languages and develop a sensitivity to cultural differences (Walker, 1994: 126).

Van der Merwe (1995: 12) refers to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's depiction of South Africa as the "rainbow nation" as an apt description of the country. The article by Van der Merwe focuses on the Western Cape, and provides an insight into the different racial and linguistic communities that make up that region. The article also gives details of the general library facilities offered by the Western Cape and emphasises the disproportionate library services that developed for different groups in South Africa as a result of Apartheid. The specific multicultural services offered by the Western Cape include materials in indigenous languages despite the shortage of materials published in these languages. There is a challenge in promoting libraries to diverse communities - some of which only speak an indigenous language.

The provision of information to all communities in South Africa is explored by Mostert (1999) whose research focuses on the provision of information by means of alternative information services. When comparing the public library with the alternative services, the biggest problem with the public library is that it is "not addressing the real needs of the communities it is serving, especially in the kinds of services offered to the public" (Mostert, 1999: 6). It is therefore, recommended that these services should co-operate with one another. Collections of all these services should reflect the multi-ethnic needs of its users, and should suit the language of all its users. It is also suggested that in-depth research should be carried out to determine the real information needs of each community (Mostert 1999: 6).

Certain authors, namely Edwards (1999) and Ocholla (2002) have focused their attention on diversity management of multicultural library staff in South Africa. Edwards (1999) explores the management of multicultural staff at the University of Witwatersrand libraries. Ocholla (2002) discusses staff diversity in the South African library and information field as a whole, including public libraries. According to Ocholla (2002: 2), current social relations - created largely through urbanisation and globalisation - assume that people increasingly appreciate each other's culture, cuisine, attire, religion, language, sports, music, art, interests, tastes and values. The benefits of having a diverse staff in a multicultural society include, amongst others, tapping skills not previously available; responding quickly and effectively to diverse markets; and promoting a culture of inclusivity.

In his conclusion, Ocholla (2002: 7) notes that diversity is not a focus issue in the library and information work environment. He recommends that - given the lack of research in this field - research projects be conducted into diversity in the library and information workplace to provide insight into the true situation. The recommended research is, however, limited to staff diversity and not to other aspects of multiculturalism, such as services and materials for diverse communities.

References to an aspect of multiculturalism - multilingualism in library materials in indigenous languages - is also found in the South African literature. Fredericks and Mvunelo (2003) investigate the impact of the adoption of the eleven official languages on the production of books in indigenous languages, as well as the role of public libraries in promoting the use of books written in these languages. The study shows that "despite the provisions of the New Constitution regarding language, it seems that the publishing houses have not made much effort to reduce the predominant status traditionally enjoyed by Afrikaans and English in the South African publishing industry" (2003: 133). Their findings show that most libraries have collections published mainly in English and Afrikaans, and that books in indigenous languages make up less than 1% of the collections of most

responding libraries. They recommend that efforts be made to promote the use of these indigenous languages and that government support be sought.

Another study exploring the issue of multilingualism in South African public libraries is reported in an article mentioned earlier - that of Cosijn *et al* (2002) which examines information access in indigenous languages.

Although aspects of multiculturalism are observed in South African library and information literature, these are usually examined in isolation. Generally, these studies lack a more comprehensive approach towards the importance of public libraries adopting a multicultural approach where the multiple South African cultures are represented throughout the services and the collections of libraries. Finally, the above studies - focusing on multicultural library services - have been smaller limited studies directed towards the publication of articles in journals. The need for a major research project - such as the present study - is, therefore, reinforced by the above local literature review.

6.   FOCUS ON JOHANNESBURG AND THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES (CJLIS, REGION EIGHT)

Additional statistical information for Johannesburg is provided in this section as this study focuses on public library services for multicultural populations in the City of Johannesburg with an emphasis on the fact that public libraries in the City exist within a culturally diverse environment.

Like the rest of South Africa, Johannesburg is very diverse. According to Census 2001 (see Appendix 3), Johannesburg has a population of 3,2 million people. Blacks account for 73% of the population, followed by Whites at 16%, Coloureds at 6% and Asians at 4%. The main languages spoken are Afrikaans, English,

isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga. It includes 34% of Johannesburg residents who speak Nguni languages (isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati, and isiNdebele) at home, 26% who speak Sotho languages, 19% who speak English and 8% who speak Afrikaans. The rest of the population speaks other languages, including other African languages, such as Shangaan; other European languages, such as German, Greek and Portuguese; and Asian languages, such as Chinese and Gujarati.

Fifty-three percent of the population belong to mainstream Christian churches, 14% are members of independent African churches, 3% are Muslim, 1% are Jewish, and 1% follow Hinduism, while 24% are atheists.

The public library that serves this diverse City of Johannesburg, is the City of Johannesburg Library and Information services (CJLIS). Johannesburg's library was founded in 1889 - less than three years after the proclamation of the goldfields (Taylor, 1967:16). It was initially run as a subscription library by a committee of subscribers until February 1924 when it became a municipal institution and the first library in South Africa to abolish subscriptions.

As with other South African public libraries, the Johannesburg Public Library was established for white communities only. It was only in 1940 that the Johannesburg Public Library established its first segregated non-white branch. The Non-European Library opened on 3 January 1940 - so named because it was intended to be the focal point of the Non-European branches of the Municipal Library Services (Kalley, 2000: 44). Its collection included books in the vernacular and newspapers in English, Afrikaans and the "Bantu" languages. Because the library was housed in a private club used exclusively by African men, it was not conducive for African women, Coloureds and Indians to use the library. Although there were problems, the library must be considered a success and a pioneering venture. It was the first time that a South African municipal

authority had made a library service for Blacks a part of its public library (Kalley, 2000: 45).

In the same year the library opened another one for blacks - the Winifred Holtby Memorial Library (Taylor, 1967: 67) which was, perhaps, the most successful of the African libraries established in Johannesburg. Everything that could be found in vernacular languages of South Africa was purchased for this library. Cultural extension activities; library use instruction; and children's story times for Africans were offered at the library. Unfortunately, this library burned down (Kalley, 2000:45).

In the years that followed, libraries for Coloureds and Indians were also established. The one in Coronationville was the first library to be opened in a Coloured township. In 1957 a branch library for the Indian community was opened in Fordsburg (Kalley, 2000:47).

Subsequently, a number of segregated branch libraries for non-whites were established and by the 1960s the Johannesburg Public Library had twelve non-white branches, including services to all three racial groups - i.e. Black, Coloured and Asian (Taylor, 1967: 67). These services were developed in an environment of segregation and inequality and were dealt with in broad racial categories, including library services for Blacks, Coloureds and Indians which often ignored the specific make-up and needs of the diverse cultural and linguistic communities that constitute these broader racial groups. These services can, therefore, not be considered to have been multicultural.

In 1974 the Johannesburg Public Library opened its doors to all, and

> since February 1974, Johannesburg's Public Library services have been open to members of all population groups and the Library has accepted the challenge of a changing readership with great energy and

commitment, and does everything in its power to meet the specific needs of all its readers (Johannesburg Public Library, 1990).

However, although the Johannesburg Public Library opened its doors to all population groups, whether the Library is actually catering for the needs of its diverse communities in the collections and services it offers, requires some investigation. Opening its doors to all is one thing, but making sure its materials and services are relevant, equitable and representative of all the communities is another. The Centenary Publication (Johannesburg Public Library, 1990: 20) notes that the reading public has changed "just as it did in 1938 when suddenly librarians had to face up to the fact that Afrikaans had taken the place of Dutch." According to the publication, "the changes today are not quite as simple."

According to the official web site of the City of Johannesburg (2005), when the Unicity (five previously independent metropolitan areas that were merged in 2000 to form the current Johannesburg "unicity") came into being, it was decided to change the name to the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Service (CJLIS). Besides books, Johannesburg's libraries have a selection of magazines and audio-visual materials. In addition, study areas are available and further educational services are provided in the form of exhibitions, lectures and talks. Literacy tuition is offered and mobile library services operate in remote areas. There are also plans to increase the library coverage of disadvantaged areas.

The Johannesburg Public Library has over 1.5 million books in its collection and more than 250 000 members. Apart from the main library in the centre of the city, there are many other libraries in the suburbs. The Central Library Building includes the Central Lending Library, Reference Library, Children's Library, the Harold Strange Library of African Studies, the Children's Book Collection, the Michaelis Art Library, the Music Library, and Internet centre and a Newspaper Reading Room. A Multimedia Library is stocked with educational and film

material. At present Johannesburg has 76 public libraries and one of the aims of the CJLIS is to establish a uniform standard of delivery (CJLIS, 2005).

The CJLIS is divided into eleven regions. As reported in Section 4.3 of Chapter 1, this study focuses on Region Eight which is considered to be the inner city of Johannesburg, including the Central Library and six other branch libraries – namely, Hillbrow, Mayfair, Murray Park, Rhodes Park, Southdale, and Yeoville.

7.   CONCLUSION

Chapter Four has presented an overview of the multicultural nature of South Africa, particularly that of the City of Johannesburg. It has also reviewed the South African literature which has a bearing on multiculturalism and public libraries in South Africa. A brief history of public libraries in South Africa - specifically that of the City of Johannesburg - was also given.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, describes the research methods used in this investigation into multicultural library services for the CJLIS, Region Eight.