

## RURAL LIBRARY STAFF: ISRAEL, A CASE STUDY

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### INTRODUCTION

If we could look into our crystal ball to see what staffing needs in libraries would be in the future, we could prepare ourselves accordingly. We would have the information for curriculum planning suitable for the future needs and be ready to meet the challenges of change. However, in lieu of lack of a reliable crystal ball, we use research to study the past and the present in order to indicate trends and project future needs.

The purpose of this study was to research the staffing of rural libraries with the hopes of finding significant and meaningful data which could be useful in planning for the future. The study used rural Israel as a case study. The article includes (A) methodology of the study, (B) statement of the problem with terminology and definitions for understanding the context of the study, (C) an extensive literature survey in order to emphasize the scope of the problem, (D) presentation of data gathered on staffing of rural libraries in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Israel, and (E) implications of the analyzed data and conclusions.

## A. METHODOLOGY

The methodology chosen for this study included an extensive literature search and the study and analysis of annual reports of the public libraries in rural Israel under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Section for Libraries. Although the literature search is international in its scope, emphasis has been put on survey results from the United Kingdom and the United States of America in spite of the two sovereignties being much too large and more developed than Israel for common denominator purposes. However, the author has taken the liberty of emphasizing those two countries as leaders in the professional field of public library services. The annual reports of the public libraries in Israel are in the form of questionnaires supplied by the Section for Libraries and completed returns signed by both each library's director and the mayor or treasurer of the library's responsible authority. Of forty-three (43) possible rural libraries in this category at the time of the annual reports in 1985, thirty-eight (38) libraries replied to the questionnaire. In the instances of inadequate or incomplete information on the questionnaires, additional data was acquired through examining interviews and questionnaires conducted by the author through three separate surveys during the years 1982-1985: (a) survey of regional libraries through the Organization of Regional Councils in Israel, 1983, (b) survey of Regional College Libraries in Israel for the Committee of Regional Colleges, 1985, (c) survey of information needs in the Upper Galilee of Israel, 1984. The reliability of the responses to

the various questionnaires was further questioned and tested with the professionals in the Section for Libraries who visit the libraries regularly and are quite familiar with their situations. Facts and figures for staffing of rural library services in the United Kingdom and the United States were taken from professional literature surveyed, and comments are a result of extensive personal observations, visits to rural libraries and training centres in both countries.

#### **B. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND TERMINOLOGY**

The problem of staffing library and information services in rural areas is bifold: how to obtain and how to train staff. Further compounding the problem are the characteristics of remoteness and isolation in populations of rural areas. An additional problem is that of language: i.e., translation between Hebrew and English and also between British English and American English. For the purpose of understanding this article, the following table intends to act as a guideline for staff qualification terms. Library and information are meant to be understood as interchangeable.

TERM	TRAINING LEVEL
Professional:	
Librarian	MA or MLS
Teacher Librarian	Teacher qualification + MA or MLS
Paraprofessional:	
Librarian	BA in Library Science
Assistant Librarian	Non academic, two full years

TERM

TRAINING LEVEL

Asst. Teacher Librarian	Non academic, two full years, dual qualification (seminar)
Library Technician	Non academic, two part-time years
Asst. Library Technician	Non academic, one part-time year

It should be noted here that changes in qualifications occurred in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Israel during the last two decades. In all instances the changes created an upgrading of training and ratings for qualifications.

Professional literature and belles lettres are rich with research results of characteristics of rural populations. The author has chosen the following definitions as reference for this study:

Malcolm J. Mosely, in his study of rural accessibility in the United Kingdom, states:

There is no ambiguous way of defining 'rural areas'. This perceived extent will vary according whether attention is directed to economic criteria (e.g., high dependence on agriculture), social and demographic criteria (e.g., 'the rural way of life' or low population density) or geographical criteria (e.g., remoteness from urban centres).<sup>1</sup>

John Houlahan relates to the different definitions of the word "rural" as perceived in the United States:

The U.S. Census Bureau limits rural to communities of 2,500. The Library Services & Construction Act (LSCA) uses 10,000; the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship uses 25,000; the National Rural Center, 50,000 and some agencies use the non-metro 100,000 population as a cut off point.<sup>2</sup>

The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics classifies rural as:

- a. Localities with a population of up to 2,000 (even if not agricultural)...

- b. Localities with a population of 2,000-10,000 not included among urban localities (at present there are not Jewish localities in this group).<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most meaningful definition of rural is that of Daniel Barron and Charles Curran within the context of rural librarians:

As imprecise as the 'definition' may be, librarians in rural service have little trouble observing that their communities are more sparsely populated and spread over larger land masses than those of their counterparts in urban service. ...rural librarians did not require a definition: they lived one.<sup>4</sup>

Evaluation of information needs in order to plan for library/information services is essential. Therefore, this study is based on results of recent research projects indicating information needs of rural populations in the U.K., U.S.A., and Israel. Clark and Unwin in their study of rural information services in Lincolnshire (1977-1979) distinguish between realized and latent information needs and identify fourteen fields of information needs, here listed according to the frequency of the need:

Transport, travel; entertainment, sport, recreation; education; electricity, gas, oil, telephone service; health, medical matters; law, legal matters; jobs, unemployment; social security, social services; taxes; rent, rates; shopping, consumer advice; town and country planning; housing; and pensions.<sup>5</sup>

Ching-chih Chen and Peter Herson in their 1980 study of six New England states, of which 58.9% of the population is in rural areas, to determine information seeking patterns comment that

...people find themselves in situations where they must make a decision, answer a question, locate a fact, solve a problem, or understand something. ...An information need cannot be separated from the situation which created it and the individual who perceived it.<sup>6</sup>

This author's survey of information needs and sources of supplying those needs in a specific rural population in Israel, 1984, identifies two broad categories as general and professional, the former including life problems and leisure needs, and the latter including educational and work or work-related needs.

Satisfaction of the expressed information needs indicated that the population is print-oriented and that verbal or personal contact is only slightly secondary to print sources.<sup>7</sup>

The above definitions provide a common understanding for the in-depth literature survey.

### **C. STAFF DEVELOPMENT - LITERATURE REVIEW**

The role of staff in the provision of library/information services is a central important issue. Information needs of the community can be met only after identifying and analyzing them and then accessing the appropriate information. Although technological advances assist in performing the above activities, they do not replace the professional library/information personnel. This literature review relates to obtaining professional staff, formal training of professional staff, continuing education, upward mobility and on-the-job training (OJT), staffing for special services (STI, schools, community colleges, and CIP), and staff interaction and communication.

#### Obtaining Professional Staff:

Staff development in providing library and information services is cited as problematic in the professional literature. In rural areas the problem is multifold due to the characteristics of rural areas and their populations, their isolation and

remoteness. In reports within the United Kingdom during the last decade the problems of obtaining professional staff are related. The 1976 Department of Education and Science report on The Staffing of Public Libraries<sup>8</sup> states,

Because the present allocation of staff, both clerical and professional, to the rural areas, operating almost exclusively in mobiles or part-time branches, varies so considerably for such a variety of partly assessible reasons, it is not possible to determine any usable standards of staffing.<sup>9</sup>

The Welsh study of 1978 points to the lack of adequately trained staff as one of the three necessary factors in the provision of the basic library information services. In the Machynlleth study of this report, A. C. Jones, the Senior Library Adviser, reports that

No qualified librarians are employed in the public library service anywhere in the area covered by this survey.<sup>10</sup>

In the section of the report on library/information services to Welsh industry, one of the recommendations is that each local library should have one or more senior staff members as a liaison for industry and commerce.<sup>11</sup> Maguire's report to British Library in 1978 on the then situation of library services to small communities, reiterates the problem of inadequate staff and recommends that:

5. Further consideration should be given to the staffing implication for library service provision to small communities.<sup>12</sup>

The problem reappears in reports of divisional meetings of the library professional organizations in efforts to alleviate the lack of adequate professional staff.<sup>13</sup>

In the United States the lack of professional staff in rural libraries certainly is no less felt. Bernard Vavrek,

Director of the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, Clarion, Pennsylvania, reports results of a national survey of rural libraries indicating that only nine percent of the staff in libraries in communities of populations of 25,000 people or less are MLS trained, and that communities of 2,500 populations or less are served by only two percent MLS trained librarians.<sup>14</sup>

Obtaining library/information professional staff is increasingly more problematic in developing and less developed countries. Hisham Abbas reports in his survey of public libraries in Saudia Arabia a lack of professional librarians.<sup>15</sup> A. Z. Mwashu reiterates the point in reference to Tanzania.<sup>16</sup> In a paper delivered at the fourth Online Information International Meeting in London 1980, Ryan Hoover states the situation of obtaining professional library/information staff in developing countries with,

...there are often problems of inadequately trained information specialists....<sup>17</sup>

A. M. Woodward from the National Agricultural Documentation Centre in Nairobi, Kenya summarizes the situation in developing countries as,

There are three main problem areas that currently face information systems in developing countries and will probably do for some time to come. They are: (a) lack of professionally trained staff; these are necessary to organise effective information systems and will be required to respond to the future change in information technology.<sup>18</sup>

#### Formal Training of Professional Staff:

Professional literature on the formal training of staff for library/information services indicates the problems of application in rural areas. Houghton and Norrie report on



the cost relationship of mobile versus static libraries in the U.K.; in the section on rural areas they state that small static libraries cannot justify support of professional staff.<sup>19</sup> However, in contrast, a joint statement by the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists on policy for information services for local government relates to the requirements of professional staff:

2.3 The staff responsible for the services must have at least five years relevant post-qualification experience, be sensitive to the often conflicting needs of officers and elected members, and possess a high level of management and communication skills....

2.3. The status of such staff and their salaries should reflect the wide range and high levels of skill required. The organisational problems to be overcome in coordinating all aspects of local authority's information work require that these officers should have direct access to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers' team, especially where comprehensive services to members are provided.<sup>20</sup>

Blaise Cronin further indicates the blurring of distinctions between information scientists and librarians. Cronin reports a lack of mutual understanding between library practitioners and library schools in training for meeting needs in the field.<sup>21</sup> This is ever more so felt in rural areas. John Houlahan, in a address at the American Library Association Conference in 1983, supports Cronin's statement and emphasizes the importance of professional library/information training by, for, and within the rural setting.<sup>22</sup>

Hanks and Schmidt suggest the end of the MLS programs and the creation of combined undergraduate courses for functional positions such as cataloguing and reference, with the client-centered roles to be performed by people with higher

degrees.<sup>23</sup> Bernard Vavrek proposes changes in professional library science training in the United States:

Accreditation with a bachelor's degree with specialization in library science would still be a considerable goal for most individuals working in rural libraries, but it would be a more realistic challenge than the fifth-year program.<sup>24</sup>

Formal training of professional library/information staff generally is conducted in universities which most likely are located in metropolitan areas. The Welsh report of 1978 identifies the problems of obtaining professional staff for rural areas and indicates that training should take place at the College of Librarianship in Wales which is located in metropolitan Cardiff.<sup>25</sup>

In developing and less developed countries Abbas reports on professional undergraduate and MLS training and King Abdul Aziz University and also a diploma program in Imam Mohammed ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh.<sup>26</sup> Ogunsheye reports on a two-year post high school training in Nigeria for "information counsellor librarian."<sup>27</sup> Kaula reports on efforts of UNESCO sponsored National Library System and Information Service System (NATIS) in the education and training of library/information professionals in developing and less developed countries, once again indicating the problem of the gap between the rural needs and the metropolitan training provided.<sup>28</sup>

Formal training of professional staff in providing library/information services is one aspect of staff development. Continuing education, upward mobility and on-the-job-training are additional aspects.

Continuing Education, Upward Mobility and On-the-Job Training:

Continuing education, upward mobility and on-the-job-training (OJT) (or in-house training) have important roles regarding staff development. Barbara Conroy defines staff development and continuing education:

Staff development is a purposive effort intended to strengthen the library's capability to fulfill its mission effectively and efficiently by encouraging and providing for the growth of its own human resources.

Continuing education...consists of those learning opportunities utilized by individuals in fulfilling their need to learn and grow following their preparatory education and work experiences.<sup>29</sup>

Conroy further expands that staff development focuses on library services and the productivity and skill of library personnel, whereas continuing education focuses on the learner as an individual who learns something related but apart from the work setting.<sup>30</sup> Edwin Olson, in a report on Improving the Effectiveness of Library and Information Systems<sup>31</sup> in the U.K., applies staff development and continuing education with the suggestion that staff development should be conducted on all levels with complimentary and multi-disciplinary backgrounds and interests including the capacity to function within the social system.

Bescoe and Stone comment on adults and motivation, citing Maslow's principles of self-actualization and hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's principles of how to motivate employees. They apply these principles to staff development in the library situation and the quality of work life, maintaining that continuing education offers the library staff the upward mobility motivation necessary for self-actualization<sup>32</sup>

Continuing education concerns all aspects of the library/information profession. Provision of it in rural areas is as necessary as in metropolitan areas but more difficult to achieve. In the Department of Education and Science report on Public Library Services in Mainly Rural Areas<sup>33</sup> from 1974 the importance of staff training and continuing education is evidenced in the report from Cornwall:

The participation by field staff in area and inter-area study groups and working parties, though expensive in terms of staff time and transport costs, is a valuable way of introducing new ideas and fresh thinking into the service.<sup>34</sup>

The report further concludes and recommends that:

Short residential courses and conferences, possibly sponsored jointly by both counties [Devon and Cornwall], are considered to be a most satisfactory means of in-service training.<sup>28</sup>

This is again expressed and expanded in the Department of Education and Science report on Library Services in Rural Areas, 1978<sup>35</sup> in the statement:

Part-time libraries in rural areas are normally run by unqualified staff who must inevitably be recruited locally. They need to be encouraged to regard themselves as an important part of the whole staff team, in the interests both of their own morale and of the efficiency of the service they will give. They must be able to look for support to professional staff with responsibilities of the area, and they need training relevant to their duties, and the opportunity to meet colleagues in other libraries.<sup>36</sup>

In the telephone survey of 448 rural libraries and 41 rural library directors in the state of Pennsylvania, Steven Herb reports that "63%...indicated a personal need for continuing education...."<sup>37</sup> The results of the survey show the three most popular forms of continuing education, in order of their preference, as workshops, programs at the district library, and correspondence courses.<sup>38</sup>

Barron and Curran in their study of rural information needs in South Carolina, report that rural library workers, in spite of their possible lack of professional qualifications, probably will continue to serve and therefore should have continuing education programs to meet their needs.<sup>39</sup> They cite high motivation amongst these workers:

...practically all of those serving in rural libraries wanted to do the best job they could and were sincerely concerned for the communities in which they worked.<sup>40</sup>

As a result of needs analysis following continuing education for paraprofessionals offered at the Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado Springs has designed an "Information/Library Technician Curriculum" program for rural library staff personnel.<sup>41</sup>

The provision of suitable continuing education to the library/information worker is varied in order to meet both the personal needs of the worker and also the institutional needs of the library. Barbara Conroy presents methods and techniques for continuing education and staff development.<sup>42</sup> Mary Casteleyn offers theoretical and practical suggestions for preparation and implementation of continuing education for library personnel including examples for further training for non-professionals in U.K. rural county library systems.<sup>43</sup> Shirley Smith reports on a two week intensive continuing education course in West Virginia for rural librarians offered during the summer school break when accommodations and teachers at the university are available.<sup>44</sup> Smith writes that, "Many librarians from rural areas welcome the chance to enjoy the 'big-city'."<sup>45</sup> Stone, Sheahan, and Harrig propose a model of

non-traditional form of continuing education as a result of their study for the Continuing Library Education Network and Exchange (CLENE). The model, Continuing/Library/Information/Media Education (CLIME), suggests criteria for continuing education program development, presentation, measurement and reporting, and provides a recognition system for individual home study.<sup>46</sup>

Library/information practitioners are aware of the benefits of on-the-job-training (OJT). In rural areas it is sometimes the only way of training library staff. However, OJT is usually used in the induction of new employees to introduce them to the where, who, when, and what of the new position.<sup>47</sup> Mary Casteleyn suggests conducting orientation OJT of branch librarians first in the central library and then in the branch where they will expect to work.<sup>48</sup> She also favors OJT for the pre-library school students so that they can be familiar with the various aspects of library work. Blaise Cronin suggests that pre-course practical experience can help weed out unsuitable candidates for formal study.<sup>49</sup>

#### Staffing for Specific Services:

Continuing education, upward mobility, on-the-job-training and formal professional training are all part of the overall programs of staff development. They are also evident and necessary for specific types of library and information service such as: professional information for local agencies and institutions, school service, community colleges and adult education, and community information.

Staffing for provision of professional information to local agencies and institutions in rural areas not only

includes library/information personnel but also those people involved and working within the local agencies and institutions themselves. To name a few of the possible professional information seekers in the rural community are the county and regional councils and their departments, industry and commerce, and agricultural field stations. Often the training is cooperative. Wilson and Streatfield, following their study on information seeking behavior amongst U.K. social science personnel in government authorities (project INISS), write,

As a result of our experience we have no doubt that education in information seeking and communication is relevant to those who work in local government. However, information professionals who work in this area, either in particular departments or in organizations servicing those in local government, must learn that the context of information use is of prime importance.<sup>50</sup>

They confirm this opinion following two practitioner training courses for social service personnel in Devon in October 1978, with,

A high level of cooperation was obtained from the County Libraries Department, and from the Library at the College of St. Mark and St. John, where the courses were held. Two of the course organizers had previous experience of librarianship and information work and a third had considerable personal knowledge of the work general capacities of the course participants.<sup>51</sup>

In the field of agriculture training is necessary to assist in the dissemination of information. Nwagha reports results of a study of reference librarians serving agriculturists in Nigeria:

...Agricultural research scientists using those libraries manned by nonprofessional reference personnel were consciously suppressing some of their demands for documents.<sup>52</sup>

AGRIS (The International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology) provides training programs, seminars

and workshops for use of literature in agriculture throughout the world, often in cooperation with other local agencies.<sup>53</sup> Stephen Lawani reports the need for non-book oriented training for librarians in order to provide information to the rural agricultural communities in Tanzania; he suggest the use of audiovisual materials.<sup>54</sup>

Staff training for provision to schools and educational institutions receives attention in the professional literature. In preparation for the reorganization of local government in the United Kingdom the Department of Education and Science comments on staffing of school libraries:

Commonly, however, in a small school the person with day to day responsibility for the library will be the teacher-librarian.

Ideally the person appointed should have a dual qualification as both teacher and librarian, and opportunities for acquiring both qualifications are increasing.

For practical and for personal reasons it is desirable that full-time school librarians, especially if they are by profession librarians rather than teachers, should feel themselves to be members both of the staff of the school and of the team of librarians serving the school.<sup>55 47</sup>

Colin Ray cites the need for professionally trained staff for school libraries complimented by clerical or support staff.<sup>56</sup> Frances Carroll identifies staffing as problematic in school libraries in remote areas indicating a lack of professional librarians available and remoteness from regional resource centers.<sup>57</sup> Organizational structures for staffing of school libraries to include "head of resources" coordinating activities between librarians and teachers is suggested.<sup>58</sup> Ron Davis, reporting from Australia, discusses library services in the remote Northern Territory where joint facilities and "community"



librarians provide the foundation for total library/information provision:

We attempt to break down the professional/nonprofessional barriers--at the same time recognizing the unique skills which each staff member brings to the group.<sup>59</sup>

Staffing for adult education and college libraries requires professional and non-professional librarians.<sup>60</sup> The American Library Association Guidelines for Two-Year College Learning Resources Centers calls for faculty status for the professional staff of the library.<sup>61</sup> Lynn Dennison in a study of resource organization in U. S. community colleges reports that,

In many cases, nonprint materials were serviced by persons for whom training in librarianship was not required.<sup>62</sup>

Rural libraries often are "one-man-band" operations and cannot always support an array of professional and nonprofessional staff. Hilary Rees suggests the teamwork approach for small libraries, citing that the professional librarian usually performs a variety of duties and that

There cannot be a strict division of professional and non-professional duties.<sup>63</sup>

C. M. Turner reiterates this "...blurring of the distinctions...."<sup>64</sup>

Another library/information service area requiring special staff training is that of community information. Dorothy Turick comments,

Community information services should not be thought of as 'competitive' with traditional services or as drawing the librarian into the role of a social worker.<sup>65</sup>

Development of non-professional staff as village contacts<sup>66</sup> and training of professional and non-professional staff in rural areas for community information provision is covered by

Eidleman in rural Maryland<sup>67</sup> and Barron and Curran in South Carolina.<sup>68</sup>

The American Library Association's 1985 revised "Guidelines for Establishing Community Information and Referral Service in Public Libraries" suggest that,

The most important qualifications for staff working in the Community Information and Referral Service are that they have the ability to relate to people of various ages, races, and cultural backgrounds and that they be knowledgeable and versatile in the use of library and community resources.<sup>69</sup>

The consensus of opinion is that provision of community information services needs to be a cooperative effort between the multitude of agencies and institutions in the rural community and the library/information personnel working within the community.

Staffing for special services requires careful planning on the part of the library/information community in the rural area. Training of staff prior to induction and during employment is vital in order to assure provision of services suitable to needs of the community.

#### Staff Interaction and Communication:

Staff interaction and communication are the key areas in provision of library/information services. B. C. Vickery states:

L and I services are intermediaries in one form of human communication--distinguishable on the one hand from personal communications (conversation, letter) and on the other hand from mass communications (newspaper, broadcast, cinema, poster). Practitioners in our field must be aware of--and design their services in the light of--the main feature of the two adjacent fields.<sup>70</sup>

Without clientele there is no need for the existence of library and information services. Therefore, clear, direct communications between those needing information and those

providing it is the foundation of the rationale for library/information services. Stoakley writes,

If we want to present a good image of our libraries and indeed encourage their use to the full, then it is necessary to give particular consideration to the way staff relate to those they seek to serve.<sup>71</sup>

Richard Emery reports results of his study communication of staff in libraries indicating:

that informal relationships and communication tend to cut across departmental status barriers or formal lines of division, thus providing a wider variety of staff links....<sup>72</sup>

He further finds that,

Communications flourish and work most effectively in libraries with flexible forms of organisation,<sup>73</sup>

Characteristics of rural populations show that they are people and word-of-mouth oriented in terms of their information needs, expressed and non-expressed. Descriptions of rural library/information provision show us small, isolated facilities often linked with distant regional facilities. Therefore, the person working in the small isolated facility is the linking communicator between the rural resident and the organizational provision of information needs. The rural worker needs to be equipped with resources, human and material, to be able to perform his or her job. Staff participation is often one of the ways for equipping the isolated library/information personnel and the way to keep communication lines open so as to be aware of who needs what, where, and when; and how to provide that need. This is expressed in B. G. Dutton's definition of staff participation:

...an active cooperation between manager and subordinates in the setting up and pursuit of agreed job-related objectives.<sup>74</sup>

Staff participation can be founded on open communication between all staff members. Organizational development can help staff members recognize the role of communication in relation to their jobs,<sup>75</sup> both in terms of providing services to the community and in terms of being a staff member of the library/information organization. Team librarianship,<sup>76</sup> so often cited in the professional literature on rural library/information provision, certainly can offer the foundation for staff development through staff communication, especially when implemented in the spirit of working as members of a team.

In the following section is a literature review of staff development specific to Israel and its rural libraries.

#### Staff Development for Library/Information Provision in Israel - Literature Review

Some scenic descriptions of libraries and librarianship in Israel are helpful background to understanding the literature survey on staff development in Israel.

Public libraries in Israel are predominantly collections of reading materials for the general public. Shmuel Sever writes about accessibility:

Since most libraries, including research libraries, are open to whomever wishes to use the collection, and since the country is very small, any book in any library is usually accessible--all it takes is determination, time, and money.<sup>77</sup>

Several descriptive articles of kibbutz (rural cooperative community) libraries appear in the professional journals of librarianship in Hebrew. In order to appreciate the situation of the newly created regional libraries, it is helpful to

draw a general picture of the average kibbutz library in 1978 as reported in one of the journals by an anonymous author:

a. The general public-kibbutz libraries were established many years ago and run by volunteer librarians with general educations.

b. Those volunteer librarians had no knowledge in librarianship.

c. The veteran librarians did not adjust to the sociological changes which occurred within the kibbutz movement during the past years:

1. communications' explosion: radio, cinema, and television,
2. information explosion, with the multitude of books and magazines published,
3. demographic changes in the kibbutz settlement,
4. diversity of professions and interests within the kibbutz.

d. No research has been done on the kibbutz libraries in spite of their rich collections of books and periodicals and their exemplary high school libraries.

e. The above points have led to a waste of resources, as evidenced by separate teachers' libraries, volunteers' libraries and the like within the kibbutz settlement.<sup>78</sup>

The Library Committee of the Organization of Regional Councils working in coordination with the Section for Libraries and the staff of the Organization of Regional Councils, surveyed all fifty-three regional councils in the country to identify where regional libraries were lacking and in what way the Committee could assist in their establishment or in what way the Committee could assist in their operation. Thirty-three regional libraries were identified in the 1981 survey. In 1983 the Library Committee reported a total of forty-two regional libraries in operation. The unique feature of the working committee was the support received by the individual regional councils of their chief librarians to

travel distances in order to participate in meetings with the Library Committee and officers of other regional councils.<sup>79</sup> At the annual conference of librarians in 1983 the Library Committee reports on the creation of a non-degree course for community librarians, the publication of a new professional periodical in Hebrew specifically for rural librarians, and short technical workshops throughout the country on book repairs and use of audio-visual aids in the regional libraries.<sup>80</sup>

Staff development library/information personnel in Israel is conducted in three different levels and by a variety of institutions. The subject of professional training has been under review since 1977.<sup>81</sup> Three universities offer academic library/information studies: all three grant the professional diploma, one grants the Master Degree, and one grants the Bachelor Degree. Until 1985 The Israeli Librarians and Archivists Association (ASI) offered a non-academic course in three stages for technical librarianship. ASI and the Library Advisory Council of the Ministry of Education and Culture have decided upon the upgrading of the ASI courses with the introduction of a new level librarianship course which is non-academic but comparable with teachers' seminar studies. In Snunith Shoham's study of Israeli public libraries she reports on the increase of public libraries between 1962-1973<sup>82</sup> as well as an

...increase in the level of professional education of librarians: the percentage of librarians with an academic degree in library science doubled from 2.5 percent in 1968. However, the percentage of librarians with professional training (mainly non-academic training) increased from 28.1 percent in 1962 to 67 percent in 1977.<sup>83</sup>

The above figures are totals and do not differentiate between metropolitan and non-metropolitan public libraries. Continuing education courses are offered through the academic library schools and the two professional organizations ISLIC and ASI. COSTI provides short courses in training library/information personnel in the use of scientific and technical information,<sup>84</sup> and AGRIS offers training courses in cooperation with ISLIC and COSTI.<sup>85</sup> Adler recommends a continuing education course for library/information automation in Israel based on a minimum of "...six meetings of four classroom hours each."<sup>86</sup> Carl Keren proposes that the education and training of information specialists should be included in the design of a national information policy.<sup>87</sup> In addition to formal professional training and continuing education courses for staff development, the reward-system for promoting motivation of staff is reported from the University of Haifa Library. Sever and Westcott review motivation for performance, stating:

The greatest resource of any library is a qualified, motivated staff.<sup>88</sup>

They cite the University of Haifa Library as an example where the use of rewards and reinforcement theory gave positive results.<sup>89</sup>

Continuing education and professional training for staff development in Israeli rural libraries is problematic.<sup>90</sup> Since the formal librarianship courses are offered in the major metropolitans, travel distances and costs are obstacles to the rural librarian wishing to participate in courses and to the rural libraries wishing to support the training of

staff. In an unpublished report of the Library Committee of the Organization of Regional Councils Shoham cites survey results of a questionnaire to 47 regional library directors at an annual conference in 1984:

30% of the regional libraries hold continuing education programs for branch librarians in the central library

50% of the regional libraries send branch librarians to continuing education programs outside of the regional councils' boundaries

In that same report Shoham further cites that one-third of staff in regional libraries is voluntary.<sup>91</sup> Some attempts to provide continuing education courses within the regional councils' boundaries have been made, usually organized by the various regional libraries in cooperation with the Section for Libraries of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Continuing education courses in general education are encouraged by those regional libraries which are affiliated with regional community colleges offering adult education courses. The problem of professional training is particularly critical in the supply of school librarians and in small village libraries, where the potential work force is predominantly female, married and with children, therefore making it even more difficult to study outside of the area.<sup>92</sup> Attempts to organize formal librarianship courses in the rural regions themselves met with high operating costs due to the small number of students and the high cost of bringing lecturers to the courses; therefore, the courses ceased to be offered in the regional council boundaries. Staff development in the rural areas is left to the ingenuity of the library directors



themselves on how to motivate and train staff for meeting library/information needs of their rural communities.

Library and information provision to schools is also fragmented in Israel with no single official government office being responsible either for the funding of the libraries or for the staffing of them. Generally, they come into the category of the Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture, whereas the Section for Libraries of the same Ministry is under the auspices of the Culture Department. The Section for Libraries guides those school libraries which are members of public library networks. There appears to be a growth of school and college libraries in Israel rural library networks, as is reported in the next section on data.

#### **D. DATA AND ANALYSIS**

In this section the data and analysis of staff in rural libraries in Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States is presented.

In 1985 the Section for Libraries of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Israel recognized forty-three regional libraries. Of those forty-three regional libraries, thirty-eight completed annual reports for the Ministry. The thirty-eight responding regional libraries served a total population of 231,950. Population sizes served ranged from a minimum of 700 people to a maximum of 30,400 people. The libraries reported a total of 327 branches. However, not all of the responding libraries reported on staff of their branches;

this fact will be related to in the analysis of the data. Seventeen of the responding thirty-eight regional libraries, or 44.74%, maintain their central library in a school or regional community college. A combined total of four-hundred staff members comprising 189 positions were cited in the 1985 annual reports. Branches reported accounted for a total of 239 staff members comprising 75 positions. It should be noted that with the exception of three bookmobile drivers and one binder, no other operations or maintenance staff were reported by the responding regional libraries.

Of the total four-hundred library personnel reported, thirty-eight directors were cited with training levels as follows:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# DIRECTORS
Professional Librarian	4
Paraprofessionals:	
Librarian	2
Assistant Librarian	4
Assistant Teacher Librarian	4
Teacher	2
Library Technician	15
Assistant Library Technician	4
No training at all	3
	<hr/> 38

Of the remaining 362 staff reported, levels of training and numbers cited were as follows:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	9
Paraprofessionals:	
Librarian	13
Assistant Librarian	21
Assistant Teacher Librarian	2
Teacher	20
Library Technician	69
Assistant Library Technician	34
No training at all*	194
	<hr/> 362

(\*Includes three drivers of bookmobiles and one binder.)

In adjusting for branches staff reported non-director staff training reported by the regional libraries in 1985 is as follows:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	7
Paraprofessionals:	
Librarian	7
Assistant Librarian	11
Assistant Teacher Librarian	4
Teacher	0
Library Technician	34
Assistant Library Technician	13
No training at all*	<u>47</u>
	123

(\*Includes three drivers of bookmobiles, one binder, and four secretaries.)

Branch staff and level of training as reported by the regional libraries shows that 239 staff personnel were employed in 178 branches. Training levels are seen in the following table:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	0
Paraprofessionals:	
Librarian	7
Assistant Librarian	9
Assistant Teacher Librarian	2
Teacher	16
Library Technician	35
Assistant Library Technician	21
No training at all	<u>149</u>
	239

Reports on staff and training for public libraries in the United Kingdom and the United States during the same period of time that the study was completed in Israel, show the following results:<sup>93</sup>

UNITED KINGDOM - English Counties

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	3311
Paraprofessionals	<u>8857</u>
	12168

UNITED KINGDOM - Welsh Counties

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	269
Paraprofessionals	835
	<u>1104</u>

A study completed in the United States in 1982 by the National Center for Education Statistics cited staff training reports from 7719 rural libraries.<sup>94</sup> The results are as follows:

UNITED STATES (By numbers of population served)  
Less than 9,999 population:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	6955
Paraprofessionals*	3796
	<u>10751</u>

(\*Including 741 plant operation and maintenance personnel)

Between 10,000-24,999 population:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	5006
Paraprofessionals*	5974
	<u>10980</u>

(\*Including 648 plant operation and maintenance personnel)

Between 25,000-49,999 population:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professionals Librarian	4883
Paraprofessionals*	7534
	<u>12417</u>

(\*Including 588 plant operation and maintenance personnel)

Total of all rural populations:

LEVEL OF TRAINING	# STAFF
Professional Librarian	16844
Paraprofessionals*	17304
	<u>34148</u>

(\*Total 1977 plant operation and maintenance personnel)

Additional data on professional staff is found in "The National

Rural Library Reference Survey" in the U.S. where 106 libraries report 901 personnel, 16 of which are professional librarians.<sup>95</sup>

#### ANAYSIS OF DATA

The lack of trained librarians is certainly one of the greatest problems for rural libraries.<sup>96</sup>

As the data presented above shows, there appear to be some correlations between the findings in the Israeli case study and the information cited from the United Kingdom and the United States. However, it is important to determine guidelines of definitions pertaining to the results of the studies. Considerable confusion and lack of clear guidelines of terminology occurs within the professional literature, perhaps due to the dynamics of curriculum changes, educational and cultural differences and changing standards. Whereas the author stated initially in this article the definition of professional librarian to mean the training qualifications of a MLS or MA, the analysis of the gathered data recognizes that the British and American reports cited in the section on data regarded a BA in library science as professional status. In addition, the American report regards the Israeli paraprofessional librarian, the assistant librarian and assistant teacher librarian as professional staff.

In analyzing the data we find that professional staff in relation to total staff is as follows: English Counties report 27.21% of total staff as profession; Welsh Counties report 24.36% of total staff as professional, with an average of 26.97% in the United Kingdom. The United States reports

49.33% of total staff as professional. After adjusting the number of staff reported in the Israel case study in order to consider the regional libraries without their branches (161 total staff), the Israel case study shows 24.22% of staff as professional. This indicates a close correlation between the figures in Israel and the figures from the United Kingdom. If however, we adapt our definition of professional librarian within Israel and consider the Israel Library Technician (ASI B) to be a professional librarian, then the Israel case study would show 54.66% of staff as professional; this would correlate closely with the figures from the United States.

The question of interpretation is essential in analyzing the data. The argument for including the Israel Library Technician (ASI B) with no additional academic degree as professional librarians seems reasonable when understanding the history of training for librarianship in Israel. This author has considered the combined training of a first degree (BA) plus the Library Technician (ASI B) as equivalent of professional training as interpreted in the results from the United Kingdom and the United States. However, in recognizing the curriculum requirements for paraprofessional librarianship in the United States and the United Kingdom, it is clear that the counterpart of the Israel Library Technician course has not been in practice in either of the two countries for at least twenty-five years. Therefore, comparative analysis of data presented in this article maintains the figure of 24.22% professional staff in the rural libraries surveyed in Israel.

However, it should be noted that, as reported in the literature survey of this article, comparable courses to the Israel Library Technician course are conducted in rural U.S. and U.K. for paraprofessional library/information staff as part of continuing education.

Professional librarians with MLS or MA training account for 1.77% in the United States survey of rural libraries and 3.25% of the surveyed regional libraries in Israel. Exact figures for the United Kingdom were not available.

It is interesting to note the correlation between highest degree earned and type of regional library in Israel. As stated previously, almost half of the regional library networks in Israel maintain their central library in an institution of education. Further detailed analysis of staff training in rural libraries in Israel shows that 77% of all MLS or MA qualified professional staff cited in the 1985 annual reports work in regional libraries which maintain their central library in either a school, or a regional community college. The remaining 23% of MLS or MA qualified professional staff are employed in the same regional library network with one-third of them in a branch school library.

In the literature survey of this article the characteristic of isolation in rural populations was stated. Professional literature related to the one-man-band syndrome regarding the isolated rural librarian. The Israeli case study supports this finding with 1.22 staff per library location. We also find that more than 50% of all staff is part time.

No training accounted for 49.25% of all rural library staff in the 1985 survey. When eliminating the branches' staff, the percentage of none trained personnel decreases to 31.06%. Therefore, it appears that branches have a higher number of untrained staff in rural Israel.

Additional analysis of the information on rural library staff in Israel includes a comparison of staff of three regional libraries which are similar in population sizes and types. The three libraries have between 24-30 branches, and none maintain bookmobiles. All three maintain their central library in secondary schools or community colleges. Interesting information is available regarding staff in the three rural networks. Fifteen percent of total staff work in the central libraries of the two networks located in secondary schools, and 27% of total staff work in the central library of a college. One-third of all staff employed in two of the networks are professional by standards of definition for comparative studies, and 12% of all staff employed in one network is professional. Highest degree earned shows that 3.7% of all staff employed in the three networks has achieved the MLS or MA qualifications in library science; this figure is slightly higher than the mean average for all the Israeli rural libraries surveyed. An average of 38.47% have no formal training. Listed in the below table are details of level of staff training in the three regional library networks:



LEVEL OF TRAINING	% OF TOTAL STAFF IN LIBRARY NETWORK		
	A	B	C
Professional Librarian (MLS/MA)		2.2	7.4
Paraprofessionals:			
Librarian	11.1	2.2	3.7
Assistant Librarian		26.7	5.6
Assistant Teacher Librarian		2.2	
Teacher	16.7	2.2	
Library Technician	27.7	37.8	12.9
Assistant Library Technician	2.8	6.7	16.7
No training at all	41.7	20.0	53.7

The three libraries report an average of 1.6 staff per library location, and more than half of all staff work part time.

Conclusions and implications of the data gathered and analyzed in this study are presented in the following section.

#### E. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The data gathered and analyzed implies that the situation of obtaining and training staff for rural library and information services in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Israel is similar. Problems of recruiting professionally trained personnel in rural areas exist, as do problems of training professional staff.

It appears that rural library centers endeavor to find local solutions for staff development through regional training programs. Most rural areas cannot support formal academic programs for professional training of staff. Recruiting, developing and maintaining academic curriculum with appropriate teaching staff and support resource collections has proven to be too costly for most rural authorities to provide. Sending local staff to formal programs outside of the rural area has proven to be impractical and also expensive as indicated in

the professional literature. Therefore, many rural library and information centers have experimented with developing locally designed and administrated paraprofessional courses to meet training needs for the centers. As the local market has become satisfied, and since needs are always changing, these local courses have had to change accordingly. In recent years the trend appears to be toward provision of local and regional continuing education courses instead of formal degree awarding qualification courses. In some instances the continuing education courses enable participants to accumulate credits toward qualifications for advancements.

This study indicates that there seems to be a correlation between level of staff training and the type of rural library in which staff is employed; higher qualified staff is reported in the central libraries of rural networks and in library of schools and colleges rather than in branches of the rural library networks. This might be due to a greater need for professionally trained staff in the educational institutions or perhaps a greater awareness of benefits of professional skills. This does not mean, however, that there is no need for higher qualified staff in all service points. This study suggests that some library populations might be information deprived due to lack of professionally trained staff. The scenario could be whereby the professional skills of the librarian in charge the local clientele could be denied its inherent right to know.

In addition, it appears that branch libraries are understaffed with part time personnel who often have little or no training for their jobs. Certainly the one-man-band service point is vulnerable to its librarian's physical and emotional condition. Professional literature reports on attempts to solve the problems of professionally staffing branches by having roving teams of professional librarians and also use of mobile caravan libraries instead of permanent branches. In some cases, lack of properly trained staff has led to replacing static branch services with bookmobile service.

The dilemma of how to provide professional staff for rural library and information services has neither a singular nor simple formula. Whereas the desire and trend has been to upgrade professional qualifications in the U.K., and U.S., and Israel, the facts reveal conflict between theory and reality. An additional factor affecting this dilemma is technology. Technological progress has influenced the information seeking behavior of both patrons and staff and therefore has influenced the training of library personnel. It can be assumed that technological advances will continue to be of influence in the provision of library and information services.

Some significant questions arise regarding provision of library and information services in rural areas:

1. What are the information needs of rural populations?  
In what way(s) can they be met? What is the rural library's role in meeting those needs?

2. Does technology affect the provision of library and information services today, and in what ways? How might it affect services in the next three to five years?
3. Does cooperation affect provision of services, and in what ways?

The above questions require serious consideration when attempting to staff library and information centers. The first set of questions is of primary importance prior to obtaining and training staff. Perhaps there is a need for interdisciplinary and stratified training. The second set of questions requires innovative thinking, objectivity, and practicality in answering them. Whereas the paperless society might be too extreme, perhaps technology can expedite the provision of some services. Does technological progress suggest a need for technical personnel? The third set of questions is interrelated with the first two sets of questions. After determining the rural population's information needs and what the library's role in meeting those needs is, the question of cooperative ventures with other organizations and libraries within and outside of the rural area can be considered. Does technological progress suggest that cooperation between service points might be effective enough to aid the end user directly? Could the rural library be the linking agency in the coordination and provision of information? Would this suggest an interdisciplinary approach when recruiting and training staff? The following scenarios are not science fiction:

Alice Mitrand, a newcomer to Matlock from Leon, is preparing for external matriculation exams. She wants the full text of Macbeth in both English and French plus explanatory material in French. Alice visits the public library in Matlock where she borrows the play in English and reads the French translation from a microcomputer.

Mr. Jones wants to know what possible markets exist for the wool of his herd of sheep. He telephones his local public library with his request. Library staff instructs Mr. Jones to turn on his television to channel 22 where he can find a list of the current markets and today's prices for wool.

This study attempts to shed new light on the situation of staffing rural library and information centers. The data indicates a need for local training programs which can satisfy staffing needs of library and information services within the rural area. It is of utmost importance that the approach to staff development in the rural area be interdisciplinary so as to enable the widest possible scope of candidates and to provide the widest possible scope of information services. It appears that technical assistants might be able to provide some services otherwise provided by professional staff. To that end perhaps the library/information education community should be designing appropriate curriculum for A level graduates and also for other professionals wishing to make a career change. The trend of continuing education courses provided by local authorities should be encouraged; an emphasis should be made to award credits which would be acceptable and recognized nationally. Cooperative efforts between the academic Schools of Library and Information Science and regional colleges and colleges of further education could result in a standardization of both technicians' courses and continuing education courses. The essential issue is

that the paraprofessional courses be offered within the rural area so as to enable broad participation. Qualifying with a MLS or MA would continue to be conducted in the urban centers, but perhaps cooperative efforts between the various authorities could make it less tedious for rural librarians and information personnel wishing to earn their qualifications gradually. Intensive summer courses, correspondence courses, and open university studies are some of the ways of enabling staff to gain professional qualifications.

Alison Shute, county librarian of Devon, relates to the role of public libraries' services in rural areas and change.

The tools of change are different, so too is the tempo, but the most important ingredient is the human factor--staff who are willing to walk the road of change.<sup>97</sup>

Rural library staff must have the options in order to walk that road. It is in the responsibility of library and information educators, planners, and funders to provide viable options.

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