

Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library 'well stocked'

By Rachel Alwala

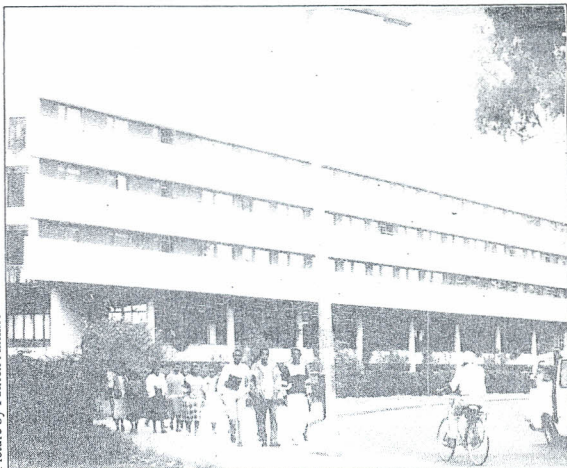
Students are not making proper use of the books in the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML) on allegations that the books are archaic. There has been complaints over unavailability of current reference materials in the Library.

Contrary to the accusations that the books in the library are old and out dated, there are thousands of new books that have progressively been purchased or donated by well-wishers over the last few years. This was said by, Mr. Joseph Mulwa, Deputy Chief Librarian at JKML.

He pointed out that the library had just completed a *World Bank book* project that has lasted eight years. The World Bank donated an estimated Ksh.80 million to facilitate the purchase of books to the library. A total of 22,515 books have been bought so far and the entries are still being made. This adds to the current stock of over 500,000 in the JKML.

He cited the School of Nursing as one of the prime beneficiaries from the World Vision books, a constant donor, and added that they even had a surplus to give to the associate colleges of the School.

"To most students, books have lost meaning. They no longer value them as a source of background knowledge. Besides their lecture notes and references on the reading list, they make no further efforts to seek other sources," the librarian said.



Picture by Patrick Amimo

JKML library: A "granary" of knowledge - students take a break after a "filling."

Part of the blame for this reluctance is the financial crisis facing the students since the Structural Adjustment Programmes in Kenya were imposed on university which have forced students to find ways of surviving at the expense of their studies.

Mr. Mulwa said that unlike countries in the West that have employment opportunities for students, Kenya does not offer avenues when it comes to jobs and the means to survive therefore remain the sole responsibility of students.

He said that the JKML has an inter-library network and is linked to research institutions like ICRAP, ILRI among others. "Students who

express interest in material that is unavailable in JKML can be referred to the partner libraries," he said.

Going by the purchases in the bookshop, the Bookshop Manageress, Mrs. Margaret Muriuki, admitted that the reading culture at the University has declined.

She advised students utilise the available means to achieve and maintain high academic standards. Meanwhile, the United States Information Services (USIS) has donated 42 books to the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE)/School of Journalism. The donation was facilitated by Mr Zeke Waweru of the School of Journalism.