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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF LITERACY  
MATERIALS BY ADULT LEARNERS: A STUDY OF  
THE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN TWO CAPE  
TOWN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

**BY**

**NOBUBELE LINDELA TANDWA**

**A MINOR DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF LIBRARY  
AND INFORMATION SCIENCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

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**FACULTY OF THE HUMANITIES**

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**2007**

**DECLARATION**

**This work has not previously submitted in whole, or in part for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work or works, of other people has been attributed and has been cited and referenced**

**Signature**

**Date** 11/06/07

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May God bless you all for making this research possible

Thank you

Nobubele Lindela Tandwa

## DECLARATION

I, Nobubele Lindela Tandwa, declare that 'An investigation into the use of literacy materials by adult learners: a study of the education programmes in two Cape Town public libraries' is my own work and it has never been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. All the sources I have used in this thesis have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references

Nobubele Lindela Tandwa

Signed by candidate

April 2007

## **ABSTRACT**

The paper deals with the role of literacy materials in adult education in two Cape Town public libraries, namely Bellville South and Milnerton public libraries. Adult education is education that is provided to adult who lack basic education. It involves the teaching of writing, reading, calculation skills and developmental and functional skills such as income generation skills. Literacy programmes are supported by both teaching and reading materials that are usually made available in public libraries and literacy classes.

The objectives of the study were to investigate the availability of locally produced literacy materials for use in literacy programmes in public libraries, the types and features of these materials and the suitability of literacy materials in acquisition of literacy skills. Milnerton and Bellville South public libraries were used as case studies because they had literacy programmes and literacy materials in their libraries. The Stikland Learning Centre was also included because it was partly managed by the Bellville South librarian. The enrolled learners in these literacy programmes, facilitators, librarians and providers were interviewed using face to face interviews. Publishers, (Viva Books. New Readers Project and Project literacy) were also interviewed.

The study showed that both public libraries provided literacy programmes that aim to equip the learners with survival and functional skills. Although they also provided literacy materials to support and maintain the literacy skills, such materials were not sufficient in literacy classes because some learners did not have literacy materials in their classes. The available reading materials in public libraries also need to be adapted so that they can meet the educational and cultural needs of the users. The research also showed that there are two types of literacy materials, namely learning or instructional and reading or informational materials. Learning materials include study guides, manuals and worksheets. They are usually provided by the literacy providers and their main aims are to support the acquisition of literacy skills and they are also used for assessment purposes. Reading or informational materials are usually provided by the public libraries and they are used to maintain the newly acquired skills. The availability of these materials is important for the success of literacy programmes and to avoid relapse into illiteracy. These materials are published by various publishers such as New Readers Project (NRP), Viva Books. Project Literacy (literacy provider) and government

departments such as the Department of Education. They are published in various South African languages.

Both learning and reading materials were characterized with simple languages, colourful pictures and large fonts, aiming to equip learners with the developmental and survival skills that are based on their daily activities. The learners' daily activities included reading the bus/train schedule, writing CVs and job searching related skills, reading medical prescription and reading road signs. The use of either local languages or official language in these materials is determined by the needs of the learners and the language that is used in their literacy programmes.

University of Cape Town

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## **TITLE**

# **AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF LITERACY MATERIALS BY ADULT LEARNERS: A STUDY OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN TWO CAPE TOWN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

## **INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Today the ability to use and understand written information is important for survival and functional purposes. The demand for information is also influenced by developments such as urbanization, the information society, the need for skilled labour and technological advances. The ability to read and write is regarded as the prerequisite for survival, functionality, a healthy life style, quality of children's education, technological use and access to basic community services. Literacy is in great demand because of various factors such as dependence on information ('information age' or 'information society') as opposed to dependence on agriculture. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) report (2005: 137) indicates that

'literacy goes beyond reading and writing because it provides access to the scientific and technical knowledge, legal information, cultural benefits and the ability to use and understand the media because it has a potential to meet peoples' most vital needs and to stimulate social, political, cultural and economic participation'.

Illiteracy on the other hand is viewed as a socio-economic problem and an obstacle to development that affects the economy and the individual's life because it is linked to unemployment, poor health, diseases, high birth rates, poverty, dependency on social grants and crime. Illiteracy and the lack of basic education are major important elements that can contribute to poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. Literacy does not only equip adults with employment skills but also with developmental skills, health related issues like nutrition, healthy life and children's education and also the ability to participate fully in democracy (Fouk et al 2001; Roman 2004; Zapata 2004)

Many countries around the world are greatly concerned with the provision of basic education to illiterates. Such education aims to equip the illiterates with the functional and survival skills so that they can improve their lives. In South Africa literacy education is known as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). It is provided by various organizations such as Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Government departments, the business sector and public libraries. Adult education in

South Africa is regarded as a basic human right in the South African Constitution (Aitchison 2006). Aitchison (2006) states that basic education is also regarded as a foundation for work, training and career progression and educated workforce that is required for a prosperous democratic society. Rule (2005: 19) states that

‘adult education in South Africa is essential because it is an important mechanism for poverty alleviation and economic development, essential contribution to personal and community development, as a component for a democratic citizenship and civic participation and as a response to the historical legacy of apartheid deprivation’.

Therefore adult education is important as an individual’s and a country’s asset for development and personal growth. Rogers (1994) states that the provision of literacy entails various processes and transitional stages such as the following:

- ❖ from illiteracy to literacy (this stage is attained through the provision of literacy classes and the use of instructional and learning literacy materials in literacy centres)
- ❖ development and maintenance of literacy skills (post literacy programmes)
- ❖ and independent learning (through regular access and usage of literacy materials).

These three stages are supported by access to and the availability of relevant and suitable literary reading materials in both literacy classes and public libraries.

Literacy materials are important for developing, maintaining, sustaining and practising the newly acquired skills. It is during this stage (post literacy) where the newly literates use the newly acquired skills for functionality and survival and this stage also enables them to recognize the benefits of literacy. Without access to literacy materials the newly literates are in danger of relapsing into illiteracy (Rogers 1994). The absence of literacy materials also denies them the opportunity of practising their skills. Usually these materials are made available in literacy classes, community centres and public libraries. Public libraries can play an important role in eradicating and developing literacy skills not only for adults that are/were involved in literacy programmes but also to school dropouts and any adult who is interested in developing literacy skills (Wagner 2001). These materials are usually written in a relevant, local and simple language to accommodate their limited skills and their life style or daily activities (Tronbacke 1997). It is the role of public libraries, literacy providers and publishers to make sure that these materials are available and accessible to the newly literates for the maintenance of the newly acquired skills. Many public libraries are involved in fighting illiteracy in various ways. An important

and common way of supporting adult education programmes by public libraries is the provision of reading materials. The aim of the study was to investigate the role of reading materials in adult education programmes and their availability and use in two public libraries in Cape Town.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The success of literacy programmes is determined by various aspects including the curriculum and the learners' access to relevant and suitable reading materials during and after the attendance of literacy classes. Access to reading materials enables the newly literates and school dropouts to practise their skills so that they can cope and function properly when confronted with written materials. If the newly acquired skills are not maintained the learners are in danger of relapsing into illiteracy.

Reading materials also serve as powerful tools in fighting illiteracy and promoting the reading habit culture. In many cases access to the literacy materials is a problem because of various reasons such as the unavailability of libraries (Meyers n.d), unavailability of relevant literacy materials in libraries and lack of knowledge about the way to access these materials because of various problems including poor communication between literacy planners and public libraries (Rogers 1994; Mulaudzi 1992). The unavailability of libraries in some areas of South Africa, especially in rural and small towns, is a problem because such areas are usually characterized by high illiteracy rates. The access to reading materials is a problem because if the newly acquired skills are not maintained the new literates are in danger of relapsing into illiteracy. Many literacy programmes are not successful or they do not have an impact on the lives on the illiterates because of various reasons such as the unavailability of literacy materials during and after literacy classes (Dastidar 1979). In some cases reading materials also act as motivational tools for the newly literates to join literacy classes and to change their lives (Wagner 2001).

Authors such as Mabomba (1990) and Rogers (1994) state that public libraries in Africa and South Africa in particular lack suitable and relevant literacy materials to support adult education programmes and to fight illiteracy. Rogers states that in some cases the available literacy materials do not reach the newly literates hence many studies conclude that they are not available at all. The national survey of May and Nassimbeni (2005: 71-72) indicates that most public libraries in South Africa do not have literacy materials and some public libraries do not know the publishers of these materials or where to find them.

Although there are these problems that are associated with the use, access and availability of literacy materials, literacy materials are important prerequisites for the success of any literacy programmes and all programmes that aim to reduce illiteracy. In some areas, especially urban areas like Cape Town, few public libraries are currently involved in the provision of relevant and suitable reading materials to sustain and maintain literacy (May and Nassimbeni 2005). There is a need therefore to assess the role of available reading materials in both literacy and post literacy programmes in public libraries.

### **1.3 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- ❖ How available are locally produced literacy materials for use in literacy programmes in public libraries?
- ❖ What are the types and features of these literacy materials?
- ❖ How suitable are literacy materials in the adult learners' acquisition of literacy?

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

By working with two public libraries and literacy providers, the researcher hoped to gain an in-depth understanding of literacy materials in adult education and the need for the provision of these materials in public libraries to support reading and adult literacy programmes. Through the research researcher would also establish how and whether the literacy materials have an impact on fighting illiteracy and changing the lives of the illiterates.

### **1.5 USE OF KEY TERMS**

The following are definitions of the major concepts that are used in this thesis. The concepts are discussed thoroughly in Chapter two.

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is defined as 'a general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of context'. The term ABET is also used to refer to literacy and post literacy activities that connects literacy with adult education and income generation skills (Literacy exchange: world resource on literacy 2005).

Adult education is defined by UNESCO (2005) as 'educational activities that are offered through formal and informal framework, targeting adults and aiming at advancing and/or substituting for initial education and training'. The main aim of adult education is to equip adults with basic learning needs. The basic learning needs are defined as 'essential tools for learning (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) that individuals should acquire in order to survive, develop personal capacities, live and work in dignity, participate in development, improve the quality of life, make informed decisions and continue the learning process' (UNESCO 2005).

Literacy is defined by UNESCO (2005) as 'an ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/ her everyday life'. Literacy today is also associated with the use of such skills for functionality that is functional literacy. UNESCO (2005) defines functional literate 'as an individual who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning to his/ her group and community and also enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation skills for his or her own and community's development'.

Illiterate adult is defined as 'an adult who cannot read and write with understanding a simple statement related to his or her everyday life.' Such an adult is also unable to communicate, use and understand printed materials (UNESCO 2005).

Literacy programme or Literacy campaign. UNESCO (2005) used the terms literacy programme and literacy campaign to mean different things. A literacy programme is defined as 'a limited duration initiative designed to impart initial or on going basic reading, writing and calculation skills while literacy campaign is defined as an organized initiative designed to promote the importance and acquisition of basic literacy skills'. In some case the terms literacy campaign, literacy programmes, adult education and ABET are used interchangeably to refer to the basic education that is provided to the illiterates (UNESCO 2005).

Literacy materials. Also known as 'easy readers' (Tronbacke), 'easy reading materials' (French 1992) and 'bridge literature' (Arnold 1982). Literacy materials are materials that are specifically designed for adults with low reading levels.

A neo-literate is 'an individual who has recently acquired a minimum level of literacy and sometimes called a newly literate person. The term also refers to those who have recently completed a literacy training programme' (UNESCO 2005).

Post literacy programmes are 'programmes that are designed to maintain and enhance basic reading, writing and numeracy skills'. They revolve around the use of relevant and suitable literacy materials (UNESCO 2005).

## **1.6 ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter One is the basic introduction to the research problem. The aims and the importance of the study are also discussed. Basic terms are defined.

Chapter Two deals with major concepts of the thesis in-depth. The major aim of this Chapter is to construct a conceptual framework to guide the study. The Chapter deals with literacy and illiteracy, literacy programmes and literacy materials.

The literature review is divided between Chapter Three and Chapter Four. Chapter Three in particular covers international organizations such as UNESCO and United States of America. Literature on African countries is also discussed in this Chapter. The last part of Chapter Three deals with the role of public libraries in literacy programmes.

In Chapter Four literacy programmes in South Africa are discussed. The history of literacy programmes and current literacy programmes in South Africa are highlighted. Literacy materials are also discussed and this section covers the role of publishers and public libraries in the provision of such materials.

Chapter Five deals with the research design and describes the research methods used in the investigation.

The last two chapters, that is Chapter Six and Chapter Seven deal with findings, discussions, conclusion and recommendations.

The questions that were used during the interviews are included as appendixes.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **2. 1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the major concepts of the topic and to construct a conceptual framework to guide the study. Therefore the following topics are discussed:

- ❖ Literacy and illiteracy
- ❖ Consequences of illiteracy
- ❖ Reading culture
- ❖ Literacy programmes
- ❖ Literacy materials

#### **2. 2. LITERACY AND ILLITERACY**

Defining literacy is very difficult because it is associated with the use of a variety of skills such as reading, writing and calculation at different levels and for different purposes. To be literate also means different things in different situations, meaning that one can be literate in one situation and illiterate in another situation. There is no precise definition of the term 'literacy' because it is usually defined within a context and it is continuously changing over time. The definition of literacy is also influenced by time, place, culture and community and it also includes experiences, values and language (Blake and Blake 2002).

Blake and Blake (2002: 10) state 'that the terms 'literacy', 'illiteracy' 'literate' and 'illiterate' are derived from the Latin word 'litteratus' which means the 'learned person'. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century the term was used to refer to reading and writing, especially in a vernacular language. Today the definition of literacy is influenced by historical and social factors, uses and demands of literacy and technological developments. Literacy is also associated with civilization and social and economic development (Wagner 2001).

The term 'literacy' is often used to refer to reading, writing and calculation skills and 'illiteracy' means the absence of these skills. Defining literacy is difficult because of a number of factors that are associated with literacy such as the following:

- ❖ Levels of literacy (when can a person be regarded as literate?) (Lourie 1990)
- ❖ The use of literacy skills (reading, writing and calculation for what purpose?) (UNESCO 2005)

- ❖ Categories of literacy (for example functional literacy) (UNESCO 2005, Pather 2005, Roman 2004)
- ❖ Variety of skills (reading, writing, calculation and sometimes the ability to read and write in certain official languages like English) (Pather 1995; Wagner 2001)

Due to these factors it is difficult to arrive at one precise definition of literacy that covers all its aspects. A functionally literate person is defined by the UNESCO 'as one who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his/her reference group and community and also enabling him/her to continue to use reading, writing and calculations for his/her own community development' (2005:4). Pather (1995: 3) defines 'the basically literate person as someone who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life'. Wagner (2001: 11) affirms that 'the term 'literacy' is used to refer to an individual's ability to understand printed text and to communicate through print'. Literacy is often viewed as a socially constructed term that varies according to cultural and historical context and it is based on certain individual competences, and the societal and historical environment (Roman 2004).

Most definitions of literacy include functional skills such as:

- ❖ reading, writing and calculation skills
- ❖ problem solving skills
- ❖ the ability to use and understand written materials
- ❖ the ability to function properly within the work place, family and society
- ❖ the ability to read and write in English (in South Africa, the ability to read and write in English is still debatable since it is one of eleven official languages).

However the ability to read and write in English is important for functionality purposes in the work place. Sometimes the term 'literacy' is used interchangeably with the term 'functional literacy'. Functional literacy means the use of literacy skills for functional and survival purposes. Functional literacy is defined by UNESCO (2005) as a:

'the ability to use literacy skills for specific purposes in the community or workplace. The functional literacy is also associated with the need of literacy skills in industrialized countries'

Therefore functional literacy means more than reading and writing; it also means the possession of other necessary skills like problem solving, critical thinking, mathematical and verbal skills for functionality, survival and one's general

development. Functional literacy also means the practical use of literacy skills and the necessary skills to cope with written information. Based on several definitions of literacy, a literate person is an individual who is able to do one of the following (but not limited to the mentioned points):

- ❖ Able to read and write a simple sentence
- ❖ Able to pass a written test of reading comprehension at basic level
- ❖ Able to engage in the majority of activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his/her community (this can include the ability to read road signs, filling in employment forms, voting, helping children with school work) (Pather 1995; Wagner 2001; UNESCO 2005).

An individual who lacks one of the above-mentioned skills is labelled as illiterate. The illiterates are those who cannot read and write and they are unable to function properly because they lack the basic functional skills. Functional literacy and literacy are associated with adults who can contribute to the community or nation in various ways such as paying taxes and voting. Literacy is also associated with the levels of schooling. The internationally accepted standard for functional literacy is five years of schooling but this varies from one country to another based on dominant languages and standard of its education. Illiterates are adults who have not had access to basic or primary education, or adults who did not complete their primary education (Lourie 1990). In this dissertation the term 'literacy' will be used to refer to the use of reading, writing and calculation skills for survival and functionality at the workplace, in the family and community while 'illiterates' will be used to refer to adults who lack literacy skills and requisite schooling (because literacy is associated with schooling). The education or training that is provided to the illiterates is usually known as literacy programme, literacy education, adult basic education or adult education.

### **2. 3. IMPACTS OF ILLITERACY**

Literacy does not only entail reading and writing skills but the use of these skills for development, functionality and survival. Today literacy skills are combined with the ability to adapt, to learn and master new skills quickly and efficiently because literacy is related to various factors such as the economy, development and scientific and technological growth. Such factors do not only affect the illiterate person but the country and even the world. Therefore the illiterates are struggling to function and develop properly because they lack basic skills that are viewed as major determinants of development and survival (Pont and Werquim 2000).

Illiteracy is associated with various interrelated problems such as unemployment and underdevelopment that leads to reduced family income and poverty (economic problems), welfare dependence, poor health, lack of self-confidence, frustration, shame, poor quality of children's education, high birth and mortality rates, poor nutrition and crime (social problems) and inability to vote independently (political problems). Adult illiteracy has the capability to undermine the individual's quality of life by limiting his/her potential to develop fully (Roman 2004; Zapata 2004; Wedgeworth 2003; Foulk et al 2001).

Literacy is the major determinant factor of an individual's economic potential because literacy leads to higher employment participation, higher skilled employment, greater mobility and lower unemployment probabilities (Zapata 1994). Literate people are able to contribute to the country's economic development and growth while the illiterates tend to be unemployed, poor, depend on social grants, be in low paying and labour intensive jobs because of their limited skills and inability to perform properly in their jobs (Foulk et al 2001).

Literacy is also associated with a country's economy and the general development of the country (Zapata 1994). Economic development and growth occurs when income increases based on literacy or educational levels. Development is also affected by various factors such as mortality rates, life expectancy, health and the literacy levels. Countries with high literacy rates have a higher proportion of high skilled and mobile workers that are able to contribute economically, scientifically and technologically to the country's development. Literacy is associated with the wealth of the country because the higher levels of education/literacy lead to greater productivity, labour productivity and greater economic growth. It is therefore allied to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) because higher literacy rates result in higher GDP per capita (Pont and Werquim 2000). A nation's literacy levels have a direct impact to the economy, productivity and development of the country (Liu 2004). Generally illiteracy is associated with unequal access to resources, social wealth, information and knowledge (Zapata 1994).

Literacy is also linked with high levels of public and social solidarity and civic participation and institutional development that contribute to the political development of a democratic society, control of the national and local power of the country. Illiterates are unable to participate properly in political life such as elections because they are not well informed about politics and other necessary factors that lead to

effective participation in politics. Illiteracy is regarded as an obstacle to democracy and conscious participation in social and political process such as elections. Democracy is regarded as a product of education and literacy hence the illiterate are unable to participate fully in democracy (Zapata 1994). In some countries political education was intrinsically linked with literacy education. In Africa, and South Africa in particular, for example, some educators and literacy programmes were greatly influenced by Paulo Freire during the liberation struggle because his work was intended to lead to the development of learners' critical understanding of society and an awareness of the need to liberate them by changing the social structures that oppress them. In such cases literacy is also an important tool for political change and democracy. Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educational activist who was a very influential educational thinker during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. He played a major role in adult education. In his most famous book *Pedagogy of the oppressed* that was published in 1970, he views adult education as an act of culture and freedom. The book was translated in various languages including English. Freire views adult education as a political process that equips the adults with the necessary skills such as critical thinking. Critical thinking in particular is necessary for political participation (Avosesh 1981; Sibiya 2005).

Some of the problems that are associated with illiteracy can be reduced through the provision of literacy programmes that will equip the adults with functional skills. According to the UNESCO report (2005: 30) 'literacy strengthens the capabilities of individuals, families, and communities to access health, educational, political, economic and cultural opportunities and services'. Literacy also contributes to women's empowerment, reproductive health and self-esteem. Literacy is important for political, social factors such as employment, economic factors, such as the ability to pay taxes and urbanization, such as ability to read road signs and notices (UNESCO 2005). Literacy increases the ability to think critically, to solve personal and community problems and general participation in the workplace (Wedgeworth 2003). Although literacy has several benefits, such benefits are not automatic but they need to be exercised. This means that literacy strategies need to be delivered in such a way that they allow the illiterates to change their lives.

Roman (2004: 79) states that the technological advances of the 'information society' or 'information age' have also contributed to the demand of literacy hence many organizations (governmental and non governmental) at international, national and local levels are involved in fighting illiteracy rates by providing literacy programmes.

The demands of literacy education are further heightened by the technological advances, information society and the high demand for dependence on information. Wedgeworth (2003: 6-7) states that 'information processing through technological advances has a greater meaning than literacy however literacy is the foundation of understanding and using technological devices'. The provision of literacy education today is crucial as a human asset that includes self-esteem and empowerment. It is a developmental and technological tool and regarded as a basic human right and a financial asset.

#### **2. 4. LITERACY STATISTICS**

Illiteracy rates vary from one region to another but there are countries, especially in the developing world that have notably high illiteracy rates. Fitzgibbons (2000) indicates that

'Four out of five adults in the world were illiterate in 1998 and there were about 880 million illiterate adults in the world. Out of this 880 million illiterates the majority were women and the majority of the illiterates are in developing countries.'

UNESCO reports that in 2000

'there were about 862 million illiterates in the world. In countries like India and Pakistan illiteracy rates are increasing. The majority of the illiterates are in Sub Saharan Africa, South and East Asia and Arab states' (UNESCO 2004).

Illiteracy rates are high among women; UNESCO (2005) indicates that out of the 800 million illiterates, 64% are of women. Illiteracy rates are also higher in developing countries than in developed countries. Regions like sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and South and West Asia have high illiteracy rates while it is lower in regions like Latin America and Caribbean (UNESCO 2004). Literacy is also higher among youth than in adults and this may be attributed to various issues such as demands of literacy, dependence on information and recent expansion of access to basic education (UNESCO 2005).

#### **2. 5. READING CULTURE**

Literacy is associated with reading hence it is important to highlight the value and importance of reading in literacy. One of the aims of literacy programmes is to enable the illiterates and new adult readers to cope with written materials and to have

access to written materials that will enable them to solve their daily problems and improve their lives. A reading culture is achieved through continuous exposure to reading materials especially those that reflect one's true life or one's daily activities (Knuth 1998).

Reading is an important feature of literacy and education. Being able to read is also one of the important aims of literacy education. However, in literacy, the emphasis is not only on acquiring the reading skills but the use of these skills for functionality in society (Sisulu 2004). Lyman (1976:67) states that different people are motivated to read for various reasons including the need to acquire knowledge, broaden one's understanding, relaxation, general development, general literacy increase and to maintain the literacy skills. In some cases adult readers read for problem solving reasons (such as finding a job and family problems) and recreational reasons (such as development of the reading habit and reading for enjoyment).

A reading culture is important for a literate nation/society. Sisulu (2004) identifies the following characteristics of the literate nation and nation with a reading culture:

- ❖ 'Nation with life-long readers who value their local literature
- ❖ Nation with government that promotes the value of reading at all levels
- ❖ Nation that integrates reading with education systems at all level and encourages reading for pleasure
- ❖ Nation with flourishing writing and publishing industry
- ❖ Strong library services backed with rich distribution of books from the book market'.

The typical nation with the above-mentioned characteristics would also have many active readers and high literacy rates. Mabomba (1992: 324) describes 'a literate environment as one in which the majority of people including those who are living in rural areas have acquired sustainable reading and writing skills and able to use the skills for communication and functional purposes'. However, many developing countries do not have such characteristics for various reasons such as the lack of published materials especially relevant and suitable literacy materials, lack of libraries and the strong influence of oral tradition (Mabomba 1992). One of the characteristics of the illiterate community is the lack of a reading culture. Literacy rates improve when people have access to suitable and relevant reading materials. Literacy skills also improve when people are continuously reading for pleasure and leisure. Their continuous reading reinforces the development of basic reading skills. Therefore reading is regarded as a necessary tool to maintain and to develop the reading habit and as a tool that helps the semi-literates to cope and survive in their

daily activities especially in situations where literacy skills are required for survival (Knuth 1998; Sisulu 2004; Mabomba 1990).

## **2.6 LITERACY PROGRAMMES**

To overcome the majority of the problems that are associated with illiteracy several programmes have been established in various areas at international, national and local levels by different organizations such as NGOs governmental organizations, research institutions, universities, libraries (public libraries in particular), business sector and others. All these organizations aim to address the problem illiteracy in various ways.

Rogers (1994) states that literacy programmes involve several processes and transitional interrelated stages as follows:

- ❖ from being illiterate to literacy (literacy classes). This stage is supported by curriculum and learning materials that are usually made accessible in literacy classes
- ❖ development and maintenance of literacy skills (post literacy). The success of this stage is mainly determined by the availability of post literacy materials or reading materials in public libraries
- ❖ independent learning or independent learner. This stage is supported by the availability of suitable and relevant reading materials, in public libraries.

Mabomba (1992: 332-338) has identified three factors that contribute to the success of literacy programmes and the eradication of illiteracy rates, namely:

- ❖ 'compulsory primary education. This ensures that children grow into literate adults
- ❖ reading habits and reading culture allows the community to read frequently so that the literacy skills can be maintained and reinforced.
- ❖ post literacy or follow up programmes for practising the literacy skills
- ❖ access to relevant and suitable reading materials'.

The terms 'literacy programmes', 'adult education', 'adult basic education' and 'basic education' are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the education provided to the adult illiterates. However authors like Avosesh (1981); Wagner (2001) and Torres (2002) attempt to differentiate these terms. Their meaning revolves around the provision of literacy classes to adults that have not reached grade seven and those that are totally illiterate.

Avosesh (1981) views adult education as a programme, course or training that is designed to provide basic education to adults who do not have literacy skills. Therefore adult education includes the teaching of reading, writing and calculation skills in one's language and the country's functional language such as English in South Africa. Adult education is also regarded as a form of non-formal education that is provided to adults of fifteen years and above who lack basic education and are not involved in any form of formal education. Sometimes adult education is defined in comparison to other forms of education. Adult education is an informal education that provides remedial and practical skills to equip the adults (illiterates) for daily survival (Avosesh 1981). Adult education is designed according to the background, needs and interests of the adults and to enable them to analyze social and political issues. Adult education and literacy programmes are the process of learning how to better satisfy basic needs such as nutrition, housing, clothing, health, social and political needs. They allow the adults to participate in community matters (Avosesh 1981). Wagner (2001:9) states that 'literacy and adult education refers to the second chance education that is given to adults and youths who had never attended schools or adults who left schools before they can be regarded as literate'. Adult education is an education that is provided to the adults who lack formal education or have incomplete education. It aims to provide adults with basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, communication and survival skills (Jantjes 1995).

Torres (2002: 21) defines 'adult basic education as a foundation or essential education that aims at meeting and expanding the basic learning needs of adults'. She differentiates adult basic education from adult education by stating that adult education is a broad term that entails basic and continuing education, vocational, technical higher education and professional development while adult basic education is basic or foundation education that enables the adults to grow and meet their daily needs (Torres 2002). In this thesis the terms 'literacy programmes', 'adult education' and 'adult basic education' will be used to refer to the education that is given to the illiterates depending on the context.

## 2. 6.1 AIMS OF LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Literacy programmes provide training that enables adults to cope with literacy (printed materials), to improve their lives and the ability to function properly and more efficiently. They can include home craft skills such as sewing and gardening. The specific aims of literacy programmes differ from one programme to another because they are shaped according to the needs of adult learners. Such needs differ from one

community to another. Bhola and Bhola (1984:21) state that literacy initiatives aim at developing people living in poverty including those that are helpless and unemployed, through the provision of formal and non-formal education.

According to Harley et al (1996) general aims of literacy programmes include the following:

- ❖ 'To enable adults to function properly without depending on others and to cope with written materials
- ❖ To enable people to cope with modernization such as the ability to read urban road signs and the ability to cope with technological developments.
- ❖ The development of critical awareness ('conscientisation'). Critical awareness is specifically important for political participation because it enables the adults to be aware of structures that oppress them as a society. This is exemplified in the programmes that were influenced by Paulo Freire.
- ❖ Competence (know how skills). The provision of literacy classes enables the adults to deal with written materials and skills such as the ability to sign one's name, fill employment forms and to use ATMs.
- ❖ Development. Literacy enables increased productivity, improved health, fertility and gender issues, access to better jobs and environmental protection and economic growth' (Harley et al 1996).

Literacy programmes are supported by the instructional or teaching materials usually provided by the literacy providers.

## **2. 7. POST LITERACY PROGRAMMES**

The term 'post literacy' is used by different authors to refer to reading related activities aimed at sustaining and maintaining the newly acquired skills (Dastidar 1979; Bhola and Bhola 1984; Rogers 1994 and 2002; Reghu n.d). Post literacy programmes differ in their areas of interest but their general aim is to develop, maintain, reinforce and sustain literacy skills through the provision of reading materials. Post literacy initiatives include any reading related programmes such as family literacy and book clubs that aim to fight illiteracy through the provision of reading materials. The term 'continuing literacy' is sometimes used to refer to any strategies for the retention of literacy skills and to make literacy more functional within the learner's environment.

Dastidar (1979) states that

'in the Teheran conference report of 1965 it was stated that no literacy campaign should be started unless and until there has

been a provision of adequate, appropriate and accessible materials for follow up reading of the newly literates. The report further states that for literacy to be effective and lasting it must be sustained by the necessary infrastructure that provides the newly literates with materials that maintains their taste of reading and broadens their understanding and development'.

This means that the access to and the provision of literacy materials is significant for the success of any literacy programme and the general eradication of illiteracy. Post literacy is regarded as an important stage of literacy programmes because literacy programmes are viewed as inconceivable without post literacy which fights the relapse into illiteracy (Cisse 2001).

### 2. 7.1 AIMS OF POST LITERACY PROGRAMMES

As indicated earlier the term 'post literacy programme' is used to include all reading related programmes such as reading campaigns or any other programmes that are concerned with maintenance of literacy skills through the provision of relevant literacy reading materials. These programmes vary from one society, community and country to another because they are based on the needs of the intended community. Therefore their objectives and goals also vary. However, the basic aim of post literacy programmes is to provide reading materials to enable the newly literates to practise and maintain their newly acquired skills.

There are various goals of post literacy programmes including the following as identified by different authors:

- ❖ to maintain, reinforce and increase literacy skills in order to prevent the relapse into illiteracy (Rogers 1994; Mabomba 1990).
- ❖ Meyers (n.d) supports Rogers by stating that the post literacy programmes aim to improve the levels of community development and to increase the practical skills of adults. Community and individual development is an important aim in fighting illiteracy.
- ❖ post literacy activities and materials aim to equip adults with skills necessary to access information or to deal with printed materials (Meyers n.d).
- ❖ post literacy programmes help learners to participate in political or social life issues that are critical to individuals. The participation of adults in social and political issues is specifically important to programmes that aim to changes the adults' lives (Rogers 1994).

## 2. 8. LITERACY MATERIALS

The intended audiences for the literacy materials include all adults with limited reading skills such as semi-literates, literacy learners (those who are currently involved in literacy programmes), the newly literates (those who have graduated from literacy programmes), new readers, any other adults with limited reading skills who are not involved in literacy classes but want to improve their literacy skills through access to reading materials.

Various authors have used different terms to refer to literacy and post literacy materials. These terms include the following:

- ❖ 'Easy readers or Easy-to read materials include all the materials with text that is easy to read and understand not only because difficult words are avoided but because the presentation is specific and easy to follow' (Tronbacke 1997: 189).
- ❖ French (1992: 240) uses the term 'easy reading materials' to refer 'to any reading matter in any language which makes concessions to a lack of proficiency in reading skills or difficulties with mastering the language of the text'.
- ❖ Arnold (1982: 12) uses the term 'bridge literature' to refer to reading materials that act as a bridge between initial and habitual reading. Arnold further identifies various aims of the bridge literature such as developing the neo-literates' reading abilities so that they become habitual readers and improve their reading and writing abilities. For them to move successfully from being initial readers to habitual readers they need access to relevant and suitable reading materials (Arnold 1982).

All these terms are used to describe materials that have special characteristics and features for a particular purpose that differentiate them from any other reading materials. Easy readers are materials that are specifically designed for adults with low reading levels that are used to develop, sustain and maintain their literacy skills during classes and after the attendance at literacy classes. It is also important to highlight that literacy materials are also used for school drop-outs, young people and adults with limited reading skills.

Easy readers are important tools in fighting illiteracy, promoting literacy and promoting a reading culture. The term 'easy readers' will be used to refer to all reading materials aimed to develop, sustain, maintain and improve literacy skills of

the illiterates, semi literates and newly literates. However different countries use different terms for these materials and these will be highlighted where necessary.

Various countries use their own methods to differentiate literacy materials based on their aims. Authors like Ahrends (1984) and Thomas (1993) have identified different types of literacy materials. Ahrends (1984: 47) categorizes literacy materials into three related groups as follows:

- ❖ Study materials. Study materials include guides and workbooks on basic skills and general literacy like reading and writing and they are usually used in literacy classes. Quezada (1996) uses the terms 'curriculum materials' or 'instructional materials' to refer to study materials. Curriculum materials therefore should cover basic skill instruction and life coping skills (Thomas 1993).
- ❖ Informational materials include the materials dealing with survival needs such as health, business related information and daily activities. Quezada (1996) also uses the term 'informational materials' to refer to basic study skills materials.
- ❖ Leisure reading materials. This category includes easy reading fiction and any other materials used for recreation and enrichment (Thomas 1993; Rogers 2002).

The main aims of literacy materials are to increase, sustain, maintain and reinforce literacy either during literacy classes or after literacy classes. Ideally, literacy materials can be categorized in two main groups based on their purposes namely, instructional materials and reading materials. The instructional materials include all literacy materials that are used in literacy classes by literacy facilitators and learners. The literacy providers to support literacy programmes usually provide instructional materials such as guides, workbooks and manuals but they are also provided by some public libraries. Reading materials include materials that are used to practise and sustain the literacy skills, and they are often provided by public libraries. Examples of reading materials include storybooks and comics (Thomas 1993; Rogers 2002; Quezada 1996).

Easy-to-read materials are written to accommodate adults with limited reading skills and this according to Tronbacke (1997: 185) may include 'pupils in schools, people with autism, people with dyslexia, elderly people, people with aphasia, intellectually disabled, deaf people, uneducated people and immigrants'. All these groups that are

identified by Tronbacke are usually characterized as disadvantaged because of their limited literacy skills and inability to function properly. These materials are important for them because they are designed to accommodate their different levels and needs and to improve their life style. He views these materials as useful tools in the struggle against illiteracy and necessary to give the illiterates access to information and literature that would be impossible to use without being written in simple language (Tronbacke 1997).

## 2. 8.1 FEATURES OF LITERACY MATERIALS

Easy readers are known as such because they are different from any other materials in their features and their special audience. Their physical characteristics are similar to that of children's books but their content is different as their intended audiences are adults not children. The defining features of both reading and instructional are that the content, format and layout are adapted for easy comprehension by adults with limited reading skills (Tronbacke 1997). Most materials take the form of booklets and pamphlets but some producers also produce posters, newspapers, comic books, graphic novels and newspaper supplements.

The following features are identified by various authors as major defining characteristics of literacy reading materials (reading and instructional materials) that are used in literacy classes, post literacy programmes and public libraries

- ❖ Relevant and suitable materials
- ❖ Local, simple language and simple vocabulary
- ❖ Importance of pictures (Tronbacke 1997; Reghu n.d; Sihna 1998, Thumbadoo 2006).

Other features of literacy materials include size of book, number of pages and the number of sentences and paragraphs. Such features are determined by the needs, culture and the situation of the particular audience (Thumbadoo 2006).

### RELEVANT, SUITABLE AND SIMPLE MATERIALS

The relevance and suitability of literacy materials are determined by the content and the needs of the particular group. The content of the book should reflect the lives of adults and issues that affect their daily activities. The themes should be appropriate to their interests and suitable for their ages (Tronbacke 1997). The relevance of literacy materials varies from one community to another, for example, materials can be relevant in South Africa but irrelevant in Tanzania because these two different countries have different needs, expectations, cultures and variations in urban and rural areas. Hence writers of literacy materials have to be aware of the needs, culture

and expectation of their audience when writing literacy materials. The content should also be natural and mature to accommodate the needs of the adults (Arnold 1982).

Sinha (1998) states that the content areas of these materials should offer a wide range of choices to accommodate different needs, interests, background and expectations of the intended audience. They can include recreational topics, fiction, general basic education themes, social and cultural issues, health and economy issues and any other interesting topics such as agriculture, community small projects such as sewing and poultry, songs and poetry, bibles and prayers. Literacy materials should enable the newly literates to develop new skills, upgrade the old skills and survive in circumstances where literacy skills are required. Ntuli (1982: 6) notes that the content of reading materials should reflect the adult's development needs and needs in family, groups, social, educational, work and leisure. For example, work related reading materials can cover topics such as tips for getting jobs, work related rights, reading town signs and using banks and automatic teller machines (ATMs).

The relevance and suitability of literacy materials are important because they encourage the newly literates to have an interest in reading these materials. This in turn improves their literacy skills and knowledge and also helps them to develop a reading habit that is an important tool for a literate community and general development of individual and the country. It is also important for literacy material writers to present interesting, popular and familiar topics for the intended audience. Such materials should be in simple language (Land 2006).

Literacy materials can be regarded as relevant and suitable if their content is based on the adult user's daily needs, and activities, and are written in simple language. In order for materials to be suitable and relevant, Reghu (n.d) suggests that writers of literacy materials should have a clear knowledge of the background of the targeted group and this will help them (writers) to know their interests, needs, ages and topics that are interesting and familiar to them. Writers and other literacy stakeholders can determine the background of the intended audience in various ways such as through conducting surveys. The survey of the community or area is important because the results will establish the needs and interests of the adults so that materials can be based on their identified needs and this can also include working together with traditional leaders, community members and other educational institutions such as local schools and libraries. Some of these groups, especially libraries, are likely to know the needs of the newly literates (Reghu n.d).

## MATERIALS IN MOTHER TONGUE

Knuth (1998), Arnold (1982) and (Patel n.d) state that the research has demonstrated that successful literacy materials are very meaningful if they reflect cultural issues in local languages. Patel (n.d: 19) states that 'language is important in literacy because it is shaped by socio-cultural and political factors'. Therefore in literacy education the use of a standard regional or local language is important. Pather (1995: 3) states that 'it is more effective and easy to teach the illiterates in their mother tongue and to introduce foreign languages at a later stage'. Therefore an important foundation for a successful post literacy initiative is the access to materials written in local languages even if learners will learn a foreign language later. Local languages are important in literacy education because learners are quite familiar with the language (Knuth1998). Materials in local languages are also crucial for motivating readers as they reflect their experiences, values and way of living (Gallagher n.d). Mother tongue is also important for literacy instruction as (Dugmore 2006) states that 'learners who are taught to use their mother tongue well do not find the switch to a second language problematic'. The use of language in literacy either local or the national language enables learners to communicate and participate in the context beyond their communities (Patel n.d). The use of familiar language and familiar vocabulary is also regarded as a motivation to the learners (Thumbadoo 2006).

## PICTURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Relevant, clear and logical pictures and illustrations are also important for easy readers because the pictures stimulate interest and illustrate the story. Size of letters, length of the text and binding are also important in literacy materials. Bright colours, large font and pictures attract the attention of the reader. Pictures are important because they supplement words as they say many things and the readers can interpret pictures in different ways. They also enable the reader to think when reading the material. Pictures in easy readers play an important role because they improve the understanding and clarify the message of the text (Reghu n.d; Thumbadoo 2006).

Pictures are important in reading materials for literacy because they also support, reinforce and illustrate the meaning in the text. They can also add more meaning and supply additional information that enables a deep and clear understanding of the book. Like decoration, pictures hold artistic value to attract the reader's attention. They also act as motivational tools especially to reluctant readers like the newly literates. Pictures in books also allow the reader to be fully involved because they

also involve emotions by adding visual elements that strengthen the appeal of the text and supplement it (Arbuckle 2004; Arnold 1982; Knuth 1998).

It is important to note that although these books should be simple and relevant with illustrations and pictures, they should not be childish because they are to be used by mature adults with emotions and experience (Wedgeworth 2003). Other factors like large font, spacing, footnotes, size, length and the binding of the book also contribute to the newly literates' view and use of materials (Thumbadoo 2006). For example, they are likely to be attracted to and interested in materials with large fonts and spacing, and a nice cover. Such features are motivational to them (Tronbacke 1997; Thumbadoo 2006).

Tronbacke (1997: 187) states that 'if literacy materials contain all the above-mentioned features they are highly likely to reduce problems associated with intellectual disability and they are also likely to provide a positive experience and to encourage adult to read them'. It is important therefore for publishers, literacy providers and any other party involved in the production of these materials to make sure that they meet the needs of the semi-literates when writing and providing literacy materials (Land 2006).

Literacy materials are published at different levels to accommodate the varying levels of their readers. These levels start from when an adult joins literacy classes to graduation and post literacy. They all serve different purposes for different learners. Within these levels they should also accommodate learners with disabilities (Tronbacke 1997).

## **2. 9. THE AVAILABILITY OF RELEVANT AND SUITABLE LITERACY MATERIALS IN PUBLISHING INDUSTRIES**

For literacy and post literacy programmes to be successful they need published and available literacy materials that stimulate the development of reading skills. Developing countries including Africa and South Africa are hampered by the lack of appropriate and relevant reading materials for literacy and post literacy programmes (Clarke 1989; French 1992). In some cases materials are available but they are not educationally relevant because they do not reflect the needs of the adult readers. In South Africa, in particular, there is a lack of materials written in local languages (Clarke 1989; French 1992; Yeh 2004). This is a big problem in literacy because materials in local languages are viewed as the main sources of post literacy (Rogers 1994). The unavailability of literacy materials in local languages is aggravated in

countries like South Africa where there are eleven official languages. The majority of the publishing companies cater for the educational sector (Makhubela 1998). Small communities with a minority language are often the victims of this problem. General problems that are associated with publishing of literacy materials include the following as highlighted by Mabomba (1990: 16):

- ❖ 'It is controlled and geared to cater for whites, formal education system and the educated elite
- ❖ The strong influence of oral tradition
- ❖ High rates of illiteracy
- ❖ Lack of translators and writers especially materials for minority languages
- ❖ Limited buying power'

The publishing industry is further affected by the high illiteracy rates and the majority of semi-literates are unable to afford books that are available on the book market because they are mainly concerned with basic needs and survival needs such as the food and shelter (Krolak 2005). Mabomba (1990: 17) affirms that some public libraries and literacy providers have decided to publish their own materials or to approach literacy publishers in order to eliminate the problem of the lack of published materials. Bhola (1989: 465) states that in Third World countries post literacy materials are in great demand especially in disadvantaged areas but such countries do not have the necessary infrastructure to support the production and publishing of these materials and the limited number of publishers in these countries does not view publishing of these materials as commercially viable.

It is important to highlight the role of other media such as television and radio and technologies such as computers. Television and radio have an important role in supplementing printed materials. For example, if the book is available in both printed and non-printed form it can broaden the user's understanding and interpretations since audio (television) also has sound and pictures that supplement the printed words. Bhola (1989: 464) is of the view that 'post literacy activities should not only include the use of printed materials but other media such as electronic media so that learners will also benefit from the whole collection of learning materials that are used in information society'.

If we view the use of television and radio as supplements to printed materials we can agree that they are important in sustaining literacy but this is not always the case as people have different views about television, radio and computers and their impact on printed materials. In some cases adults with a television and a radio do not see

the need of being literate because they feel that they know what is happening around them through the use of television, radio and even cell phones. The use of these modern technologies does not necessarily require literacy skills but if adults continuously use these technologies they do not view themselves as disadvantaged and different from the literates. In this case television, radio and cell phones can be viewed as the contributing factors to the deterioration of the reading ability to the newly literates (Ntuli 1982).

## **2.10. GENERAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LITERACY AND POST LITERACY PROGRAMMES**

Many literacy programmes do not improve literacy levels for various reasons that differ from one country to another. These problems can be categorized as follows:

1. Problems that are associated with learners.
  - ❖ Many illiterates do not join the literacy programmes for various reasons such as the lack of a reading culture and strong influence of oral culture. In some cases they do not view literacy as an important and necessary skill that can improve their lives because they think that they have survived for a long time without literacy skills. Low enrollment and low completion rates may be attributed to various causes such as family and personal responsibilities (Musa 1968; Treffgarne 2002).
  - ❖ High drop out rates that may be attributed to various reasons such as lack of motivation, lack of time, family responsibilities and lack of resources for learners (Wagner 2001).
2. Problems that are associated with literacy providers.
  - ❖ Lack of proper planning for both literacy and post literacy programmes (Mulaudzi 1992), the lack of proper planning from literacy providers and inadequate programmes quality (Wagner 2001) are also cited as common reasons for lack of success. Meyers (n.d) states that the major problem of post literacy programmes and materials is that they are not planned as part of literacy. This means that during literacy planning, literacy providers do not arrange the follow up reading initiatives. Treffgarne (2002:1) argues that the majority of literacy programmes that have failed to produce the expected outcomes are due to the lack of planning and the lack of resources.

- ❖ Lack of cooperation between literacy providers and libraries as Mulaudzi (1992: 399) argues that 'planners tend to ignore or fail to see the library as useful resource in literacy programmes'.

### 3. Reading materials.

- ❖ Lack of literacy materials especially materials that are based on the users' needs, language and daily activities. The lack of relevant literacy materials may be attributed to various reasons such as the reluctance of publishers to invest in publishing for the newly literates because they do not consider them as potential book buyers since they are usually characterized by poverty and a lack of reading culture (Mulaudzi 1992, Mabomba 1992).
- ❖ Irrelevant materials. Meyers (n.d) states that in many cases literacy programmes are supported by materials that are irrelevant to the adults' needs and their daily activities. In some cases this happens when the adults were not considered in planning and writing literacy materials or in cases where materials are developed at national level for all adults without considering the different regional needs, language and culture of adults. Adults are unable to use and understand materials that do not relate to their daily activities. Real and relevant materials are those materials that relate to adults' daily activities, culture, language and their needs and adults are more likely to use these materials than irrelevant and unreal materials (Meyers n.d). Meyers (n.d) notes that 'some materials are inaccessible because of technical language such as essay style and classical vocabulary that is used'. Adults are unable to understand and use these materials.
- ❖ In some cases materials do not reach adults especially those who are living in remote areas (Meyers n.d). Rogers (1994) supports Meyers by stating that  

'literacy materials do not reach the adults in rural areas and small towns because the distribution is often poor. Rogers research report also shows that even if materials were produced by producers they are not getting out into the field and they are not effectively used in both literacy and post literacy programmes and some materials only reach those who are in formal post literacy groups and these are the minority of the people who have attended adult literacy classes'.

- ❖ Meyers (n.d) states that literacy materials are very expensive and the adults are unable to afford them because the majority of adults are unemployed or in low paying jobs and therefore their earnings only allow them to buy survival needs such as food. In some cases even the libraries and literacy providers are unable to afford these materials.
  - ❖ Lack of a reading culture. Most poor communities, especially in rural areas, are characterized by the lack of books, newspapers, posters and magazines because of the lack of reading culture and strong influence of oral tradition. Meyers (n.d) states that it is difficult or impossible to introduce literacy to the community that lacks a reading culture. The lack of a reading culture is also problematic for the maintenance and practising of literacy skills.
4. Public libraries. The problems that are associated with public libraries include the unavailability of public libraries (Mabomba 1992), unavailability of literacy materials in libraries (Cole 2000; Krolak 2005), shortage of library staff for outreach programmes such as literacy programmes (Cole 2000; Krolak 2005), lack of funds and the inability of libraries to be involved in literacy programmes (Cole 2000; Krolak 2005). This aspect will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

## **2. 11. CONCLUSION**

The literature shows that there is no precise definition of the terms 'literacy' and 'illiteracy', however their different meanings include the ability to read and write, understanding of the printed materials, problem solving, functional and survival skills. In some cases the ability to use an official language is also included because it is viewed as a means of communication for functional purposes. Illiteracy means the inability to function properly, inability to cope with printed materials and the lack of basic literacy skills. Illiteracy has economic, social and political consequences such as unemployment, poverty, poor health, high birth and mortality rates, lack of confidence, shame and frustration. Illiteracy hinders the development of individuals and nations. Therefore illiteracy problems affect not only the illiterates but the world as a whole. Literacy is regarded as an asset because it is viewed as a necessary tool in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to pursue different livelihood strategies. Literacy today is also affected by the technological developments and

information society hence the provision of strategies to eradicate literacy is a great priority.

'Literacy programmes', 'adult education' and 'basic education' are terms that are used to refer to the education that is provided to the illiterates in order to address the problems that are associated with illiteracy. Literacy provision entails two interrelated stages, namely literacy programmes (the teaching of basic skills) and post literacy programmes (maintenance and practising of the newly acquired skills). The success of these stages depends on access to special literacy materials. Literacy materials have special features such as simple language and vocabulary, pictures, and they should be relevant and suitable to the user's needs. Ideally the availability of reading materials is necessary for the reading culture and the literate society. Therefore literacy materials are important for the success of any literacy provision prevailing the relapse into illiteracy and also encouraging the newly literates to practise their skills.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **3. 1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines literature pertaining to literacy programmes, reading materials and their use and availability in public libraries in different countries. In order to gain a comparative perspective, the dissertation emphasizes literature relating to developing countries. The first part of the chapter deals with international organizations and the United States of America for global perspectives. Different countries from the developing world were selected based on their involvement in and success of literacy programmes to reflect different literacy programmes around the world. Such countries were selected with the view that they represent different social, political and economic values of literacy and post literacy programmes. The last part of this chapter deals with the role of public libraries in literacy programmes. The chapter covers the following organizations and countries:

- ❖ International organizations such as UNESCO and International Federation of Library Association (IFLA)
- ❖ United States of America
- ❖ Cuba
- ❖ India
- ❖ Tanzania
- ❖ Botswana

Literacy programmes in South Africa will be discussed in Chapter Four.

#### **3.2 SELECTED LITERACY AND POST LITERACY PROGRAMMES AROUND THE WORLD**

##### **3. 2.1 UNESCO INITIATIVES**

UNESCO has been involved in literacy and post literacy programmes in various ways such as actual literacy programmes, in the formation and establishment of specific days that aim to review and increase literacy efforts, establishment of literacy institutions, publication of materials, conferences and encouraging the involvement of libraries. Such programmes include the following:

1. Literacy programmes such as the following:
  - ❖ Education For All (2003-2012). Education For All was developed in 1999 at the General Assembly of the United Nations (Eyre 2004). One of the aims of the Education For All is to fight illiteracy by providing basic education to all. Education For All is also concerned with educational input (materials and resources), outcomes (reading,

writing and numeracy skills) and process (curriculum, teaching and learning methods) that are relevant to individuals (Eyre 2004).

2. Observation of a special year and dates such as the following:
  - ❖ International literacy year (1990) with the aim of continuing and encouraging public awareness in fighting illiteracy (Fitzgibbons 2000; UNESCO 2005). The aims of the International Literacy Year included the increased public awareness of illiteracy, the means to fight illiteracy and increased participation in literacy provision to various countries (Cole 2000). The major aim of the International Literacy Year was to reduce illiteracy rates through the provision of the primary education for all, post literacy and literacy programmes and to encourage public libraries to be involved in literacy programmes (Clarke 1989).
  - ❖ International Literacy Day celebrated on 08 September annually around the world is viewed as a reminder of the role and importance of literacy for individuals, families and the nations (UNESCO 2005).
  - ❖ World Book Day also known as the International Day of the Book (23 April). Its main aim is to encourage promotion of reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property (UNESCO 2005).
  - ❖ United Nations Decade of Literacy (2003-2012) aims to extend literacy to those who do not have access to it. Rule (2003: 13) states that through the United Nations Decade of Literacy, UNESCO places literacy at the core of all development so that people can be educated and informed.
  - ❖ United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). 'It aims to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development in all aspects of education including basic education and learning' (UNESCO 2005).
3. Establishment of special literacy institutions such as
  - ❖ The International Literacy Institute. Fitzgibbons (2000) notes that in 1994 UNESCO and the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education established the International Literacy Institute in the United States whose aim is to provide research development and training in literacy at international level.
4. Publication of special materials such as:
  - ❖ *The guidelines for libraries promoting literacy*. Fitzgibbons (2000) states that 'in 1993 UNESCO published the guidelines for public libraries to promote literacy and this was done in conjunction with IFLA'. The book published in 1993, *The guidelines for libraries promoting literacy* prepared

by Barbro Thomas highlights various components of literacy in public libraries, guidelines and goals of literacy programmes, conditions of illiteracy, collection development and examples of successful projects by public libraries (Fitzgibbons 2000).

- ❖ 'UNESCO Public Library Manifesto' which highlights various issues such as development of literacy programmes for all ages including the illiterates (Cole 2000). UNESCO's publications about literacy and adult education include the annual reports and statistics and materials that are published annually. Some of these reports have contributed to the definition of both literacy and illiteracy (Cole 2000)

5. Conferences and workshops such as:

- ❖ UNESCO in London launched the World Congress on Books in 1980 with the theme 'Towards a Reading Society for the Purpose of Assessing Progress in Book Promotion' (Fitzgibbons 2000).

There are also other international organizations involved in fighting illiteracy. These organizations include the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). IFLA started in 1989 to consider the need for the libraries to support literacy programmes. Its activities include the provision of workshops and conferences (for example the 1989 conference that was held in Paris and 1990 in Sweden). The major aims of these conferences and other IFLA initiatives are to provide support in eradication of illiteracy (Cole 2000). OECD contributed in fighting illiteracy through conducting the International Adult Literacy Surveys (IALS) (Fitzgibbons 2000). Other international literacy initiatives include the following:

- ❖ International Reading Association. The International Reading Association is involved in promoting high levels of literacy through improving the quality of reading and disseminating research about reading. Various associations such as Reading Association South Africa affiliates to the International Reading Association for promoting reading in South Africa.
- ❖ World Education Literacy division that is active in countries like India and United States (Cole 2000).
- ❖ The Laubach Literacy International Division involved in helping adults with reading, writing and problem solving skills (Cole 2000).

Through these influences and others, literacy and post literacy initiatives spread to a number of countries as discussed below.

### 3. 2.2. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The results of the US National Adult Survey of 1988 indicate the following:

- ❖ 'Illiteracy continues to be a significant problem
- ❖ 90 million adults have extremely limited reading skills. Out of these 90 million adults, 44 million are only able to read at level one therefore they lack the ability to fill in application forms, unable read food and medicine labels and to read simple stories for their children while 46 million are only able to read at level two and they experience difficulties in understanding lengthy text and they are unable to solve mathematical problems'
- ❖ Government funding for literacy programmes is very low' (Proliteracy America 2003).

According to Proliteracy America (2003), illiterates in America are faced with various problems such as personal illness, family difficulties such as hunger, substance abuse, poverty, unemployment, loss of welfare and hopelessness. Fitzgibbons (2000) notes that the illiterate population in United States includes immigrants, school drop outs, adults and pensioners (over 65 years), visually impaired and individuals with health problems.

Sticht (2002) notes that early literacy programmes can be traced as far back as the period of Revolutionary war and that they included religious instructions, apprenticeships and basic reading and writing skills. The Massachusetts Law of 1647 played an important role in adult education and the general establishment of schools in United States. According to the law of Massachusetts 'every town with 50 households was expected to appoint a teacher of reading and writing' (Sticht 2002). It also resulted in the establishment of primary and secondary schools. The industrial revolution, World Wars and the Civil Rights movements influenced the demands of literacy skills. After these periods literacy was viewed as a prerequisite for survival and general functioning of adults. Therefore literacy programmes were designed to provide illiterates with survival and coping skills (Blunch and Verner 2000).

During the late 1800s and 1900s various institutions such as the business sector, industries, colleges, universities, government agencies (including the military), labour unions, libraries, mass communication media, public schools, religious institutions and voluntary institutions were involved (some are still involved) in literacy programmes (Sticht 2002). The major notable early literacy programmes in United States include Laubach Literacy International (1930s) and Literacy Volunteers of America (1962). They were both involved in supporting literacy providers and in

assisting the illiterates to acquire the listening, speaking, reading, writing, mathematics and technology skills. In 2002 they merged to form Proliteracy America. Early literacy programmes were associated with employment and economic issues and both federal and regional government played an important role in reducing literacy (Fitzgibbons 2000).

Fitzgibbons (2000) notes that literacy programmes in United States were supported by the establishment of legislative acts that were also developed to reduce illiteracy rates. They include:

1. Literacy related acts

- ❖ Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Its major aim was to mobilize the human and financial resources to combat illiteracy and poverty in U.S and it resulted in the establishment of Adult Basic Education programmes (Fitzgibbons 2000).
- ❖ Adult Education Act of 1966, reviewed and amended in 1970, 1978 and 1988. In 1991 it was replaced by the National Literacy Act of 1991. The National Literacy Act of 1991 aims to provide literacy, basic skills and functional skills to illiterates (Sticht 2002).

2. Literacy programmes

- ❖ Right to Read campaign of 1969 (Fitzgibbons 2000).
- ❖ The National Reading Improvement of 1971 (Sticht 2002).

3. Other

- ❖ The Commission on Adult Basic Education (1971 to present) (Sticht 2002).
- ❖ The National Adult Literacy Survey 1992 (Fitzgibbons 2000).
- ❖ National Governors' Association. It announced in 1989 its aim to make every American literate by 2000 (Sticht 2002).
- ❖ Children's Book Week every Fall (Sticht 2002).
- ❖ National Library Week every Spring (Sticht 2002)

The current literacy organizations in United States of America include Proliteracy America. Proliteracy America was formed in 2002 after the merger of Laubach Literacy International and Literacy Volunteers of America. It is a division of Proliteracy Worldwide and it is the largest literacy organization in the United States. Proliteracy America works with national organizations to mount awareness of literacy issues, to advocate the needs of adults and literacy programmes. It provides information, training and technical assistance and it also supports 47 programmes in

developing countries. Its publishing division produces and distributes instructional materials and programme resources to literacy organizations and libraries (Proliteracy America 2003).

Early public libraries in the United States played a role in the liberal education of adults with the aim of increasing self-improvement to the illiterates and they later provided literacy programmes (McCook and Barber 2002; Sticht 2002). The study of Estabrook and Lakner (2000) showed that

‘various libraries are directly involved in literacy while others are making referrals. Over 43, 000 learners are in Adult Basic Education, 31,000 in English as Second Language (ESL) and 20,000 are in family literacy and all these learners are supported by the libraries’.

Public libraries in the US are viewed by adults as places where they can learn, practise their skills and be referred to literacy programmes in their communities. Estabrook and Lakner (2000) state that one in three public libraries sponsors literacy programmes for adults who want to improve their literacy skills and programmes to help immigrants improve their English skills. Cole (1997: 51) describes US public libraries as

‘the community anchors for literacy that could be seen as the irreducible backbone of the literacy movement because librarians claim literacy as the public library issue and as a result most libraries and their branches are part of basic education infrastructure and they are actively involved in literacy programmes’.

Some of the library programmes have been influenced by the strong involvement of the American Library Association (ALA) in literacy programmes. ALA literacy programmes include the following as highlighted by Cole (1997):

- ❖ ‘Born to read project’
- ❖ ‘The library change lives efforts’
- ❖ ‘The library advocacy now’
- ❖ ‘Logon @ the library day’
- ❖ ‘National library week’

The ALA has a full time literacy officer responsible for liaising with public libraries (McCook and Barber 2002).

Various public libraries in United States are also involved in literacy programmes that are centered on writing and reading development, use of native language, life

experiences and they also include family literacy programmes. These libraries include the following as highlighted by Grant (1997) and Fitzgibbons (2000):

- ❖ The Reading Improvement programme started in 1955 at the Brooklyn Public Library. The Carnegie Corporation of New York financed it and initially it provided printed materials to support literacy programmes (Fitzgibbons 2000).
- ❖ New York Public Library that offers reading and writing related programmes in eight branch libraries. Their programmes include reading and writing based on various areas such as history, health, nutrition, environmental sciences and voting process. New York Public Library specializes in working with adults with low literacy skills (Grant 1997).
- ❖ Oakland Public library has 14 sites that are involved in literacy programmes and it also has a history related collection in four reading levels (Grant 1997).
- ❖ Redwood City Public Library also offers literacy programmes (Grant 1997).

### 3. 2.3. CUBA

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean and it has been under the power of Fidel Castro's Cuban Communist Party (PCC) since 1959. Cuba has been successful in providing basic education to the illiterates through the leadership of Castro. Hamilton (2002: 19) states that 'Cuba has the highest literacy rates and it is one of the highest in the world with 95.7% literacy rates' (2000 statistics). The adult literacy programmes in Cuba were influenced by political factors because the provision of literacy was viewed as one of the most effective tools for the transmission of values, ideologies, symbols and myths (Hamilton 2002). Adult education provision in Cuba was political in nature with the following aims:

- ❖ 'empowering the masses by providing the poor majority or the illiterate with the basic skills of reading and writing
- ❖ empowering the new systems by serving to consolidate the revolution and to legitimize their political hegemony' (Trinca: n.d)

Trinca (n.d) states that before the introduction of literacy programmes, education was only accessible to the wealthy people. Poor urban people and the peasants and those in rural areas had no access or limited access to education. The provision of literacy programmes by then was not regarded as the priority by the government because they felt that education would provide the illiterate with the knowledge to question and threaten the government (Trinca n.d). Literacy was also economically unnecessary because people depended on agricultural means for survival and such survival means needed only labour not education. This resulted in the high illiteracy rates. Political leaders and revolutionary regimes considered literacy as an important

tool to change the political system and other conditions in Cuba. Revolutionary regimes believed that through education they could take control of the economic and material power of the society (Trinca n.d).

Trinca (n.d) states that 'literacy programmes started during the end of 1959 as the means to transmit appropriate myths, symbols that were viewed as necessary for the new political culture'. The provision of literacy included rewriting of the history, teaching of reading and writing skills. Posters were also distributed and discussion forums were formed where educational matters were discussed. The majority of the illiterates participated in these programmes that were more political in nature. The programmes were accompanied by slogans such as 'If you can read, teach someone else how to'; 'If you cannot read, learn how', and 'Every home a school' (Trinca n.d). The illiterates were mobilized and were also encouraged to participate in societal matters. Although the programmes managed to reach many people, some could not join and participate for various reasons such as low self-esteem or feelings of being too old to go to or return to school. Literacy programmes were also viewed as socially and democratically important because they were associated with personal empowerment and the written word was regarded as a means of communication that would enable the illiterates to participate in the modern society (Trinca n.d).

Two primers were developed to support the programmes developed in consultation with the revolutionaries, not with the learners. The goals of the primers were to promote work, unity and mass organisation and they were written in English and Spanish. Adults were assessed on various issues such as writing names, reading aloud, answering questions based on reading and writing sentences. Post literacy programmes were also provided (Trinca n.d).

Cuba was affected by political issues where certain types of materials were banned and prohibited from the libraries and the public by the government. Hamilton (2002) states that in 1998 Fidel Castro announced the end of book prohibition by stating that all books should be made available and accessible to the public. This resulted in the establishment of independent libraries as opposed to state libraries. Independent libraries were developed with the aim of providing equal access to all. By the end of 1999 there were about 18 independent libraries. Hamilton (2002) states that literacy programmes are supported by various libraries including provincial, municipal and branch libraries. Although independent libraries are involved in providing the information and materials to all Cuban including the semi-literates, government is

trying to control them because they are viewed as threats to government for the following reasons:

- ❖ they challenge the government censorship
- ❖ and they offer spaces where Cubans can attend uncensored debates, seminars and film showing (Kent 2001)

Hamilton (2002: 20) also states that the independent libraries are opposed by the Cuban government because government believes that the people that are involved in independent libraries are the members of the opposition parties. As a result some of the libraries and librarians have been intimidated, harassed and detained.

Although literacy programmes that were provided by the revolutionaries managed to equip the adults with political skills such as critical thinking, Trinca (n.d) states that they 'failed to equip the illiterates with the necessary skills to analyse serious and complicated life and social issues and to deal with technologies'. The following problems in literacy and post literacy materials have been identified by Hamilton (2002) and Trinca (n.d):

- ❖ 'Libraries, independent libraries in particular, have underdeveloped collection with old books.
- ❖ Publishing is still difficult and this is due to the expensive paper since it is imported from other countries' (Hamilton 2002).
- ❖ Primers were not based on adults' needs because they were not consulted when materials were written (Trinca n.d)
- ❖ Some illiterates did not join the literacy classes for various reasons such as low self esteem and family responsibilities (Trinca n.d)

### 3. 2.4. INDIA

India has many languages but English is regarded as the language for functionality. Literacy programmes in India were and are still provided for functionality and to fight poverty. Early literacy programmes were confined to urban areas. There were few places in rural areas that had literacy classes and they were known as night schools. The national leaders that were concerned about educating the masses provided them. The Congress Government in 1937 provided adult basic education in various areas of India but it did not have an impact on the lives of the illiterates because of the lack of the follow up literacy programmes (Literacy exchange 2005).

Harley et al (1996: 58) state that the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) developed nationwide literacy programmes in 1978, provided by Desai's Janata Party Government. NAEP in India formed the basis of adult literacy programmes which were continuously evaluated, renamed and changed. Examples of literacy programmes in India include the Farmers' Functional Literacy Programmes of 1967 under the leadership of the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, Functional Literacy for Adult Women, Rural Functional Literacy Project, State Adult Education Programmes, the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy and the formulation of the National Policy on education in 1986. The Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme was not successful because of the lack of funding. The emphasis was placed on vocational skills and continuing education through the rural libraries, rural newspapers, health, community programmes, social consciousness and responsible citizenship training (Literacy exchange 2005).

Some universities and NGOs are involved in providing research and the production of literacy materials. Special programmes are also provided for different groups of people including workers, youth and housewives. The majority of literacy programmes in India aim at providing functional and critical thinking to the illiterates because literacy is considered as an important tool for functionality and conscientisation (Indian Department of Education 2004). Public libraries have been established to support literacy and other information needs. These libraries include Delhi Public Library that was established by Indian Government in Collaboration with UNESCO. There are also reading rooms in villages and rural areas, community libraries, Braille libraries and state libraries that support and provide literacy materials. The aims of these different libraries include the eradication of illiteracy, lifelong learning, provision and the circulation of literacy materials (Indian Department of Education 2004).

Rogers (2002: 150) states that in India, literacy and post literacy programmes have been the major concern of the government. NAEP was renamed National Literacy Mission in 1988. The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) was established as part of the National Literacy Mission. Both the National Literacy Mission and the TLC provide literacy classes. The aims of National Literacy Mission include the provision of literacy classes to reduce illiteracy rates, to encourage community participation in developmental processes and to improve the skills of adults. It was arranged that the objectives would be achieved through the provision of teaching- learning process, relevant and suitable learning materials and human resources. Literacy programmes

are supported by three primers. The National Literacy Mission has been evaluated and the results show that in 1988 it covered 587 districts out of 600 and that these districts also have 202 post literacy programmes. In 1999 it was awarded the NOMA literacy prize by UNESCO because of its achievements (Indian Department of Education 2004).

Reghu (n.d) states that post literacy programmes are organized to strengthen the illiterates' learning skills. The post literacy programmes aim to enable the neo-literates to meet their daily needs, to avoid slipping back into illiteracy and to upgrade the literacy skills of semi-literates. Therefore different types of materials are produced to meet this purpose. These materials are viewed as important and useful to improve the newly literates' skills. Without programmes of this nature, illiterates are in danger of relapsing into illiteracy. The post literacy programmes aim to promote civilization, tradition, improve the socio-economic situation and to develop individuals as well as communities for the advancement of the country. The post literacy programmes follow the basic literacy phase, and primers and other related materials are used to support post literacy programmes (Literacy exchange 2005).

Rogers (2002: add) points out that in India some people view post literacy as a learning stage that relies on the supply of relevant and necessary materials (textbooks, primers and any additional reading matter), while others view it as local action geared to the social transformation of people through group formation and decision-making where people discuss important community issues. Post literacy activities were not planned during the planning of early literacy programmes. They were started at a later stage when people felt their need and realized their importance because of the relapse into illiteracy (Literacy exchange 2005). UNESCO also influenced the development of post literacy programmes. UNESCO is concerned with the loss of the acquired skills that can be prevented through the provision of reading materials. Basic literacy primers, literacy, numerical skills and workbooks are integrated. Primers, with illustrations and bold letters are based on life experiences, daily needs and topics such as agricultural technology, health, interpersonal relationships, hygiene, folk stories, population growth, income generation, self esteem and responsibility (Literacy exchange 2005).

Some of the programmes are faced with several problems such as the following:

- ❖ high level of drop outs (Literacy exchange 2005).

- ❖ absenteeism caused by the environmental factors such as sowing and harvesting (Literacy exchange 2005).
- ❖ socio-political factors such as work migration, insufficient training of volunteers has also reduced the participants' motivation in attending classes (Literacy exchange 2005).
- ❖ lack of appropriate teaching and reading materials (Literacy exchange 2005)
- ❖ lack of heating and electrification (Literacy exchange 2005).
- ❖ insufficient funding to support literacy and post literacy activities (Daswani 1997).

### 3. 2. 5. AFRICA

For a long time in Africa literacy and adult education were not regarded as necessary for survival because people depended on agriculture and oral tradition. Agriculture only needed labour, and other skills were passed orally from one generation to another. The need for literacy was experienced after urbanization which required skilled labour which in turn depended on literacy skills (Avosesh 1981). The urgent need for the provision of literacy programmes was also influenced by impacts of illiteracy such as poverty, unemployment, diseases, malnutrition and high birth and mortality rates. Illiteracy in Africa is regarded as the major cause of underdevelopment as it impedes one's development of knowledge and skills, hinders the individual from extending and utilizing his/her potential fully (Mabomba 1992). Some of these factors can be reduced through the provision of literacy programmes because today literacy is regarded as an individual and community development tool for social change (Zapata 1994; Foulk et al 2001).

Various countries in Africa are involved in the provision of literacy education at local, regional, and national levels. Avosesh (1981) states that in Africa educators such as Paulo Freire, who viewed adult education as a transformation process of people's conditions, have influenced adult education. He views adult education as a process that enables the society to be aware of the structures that oppress them as a society. Such education is provided in such a way that adults would develop critical thinking so that they can transform their lives politically, economically and socially. However the transformation also needs a strong participation of adults and the provision of resources such as reading materials and tutors. In countries like South Africa, literacy education has contributed to political freedom but there are still some economic and social needs for the provision of adult education (Avosesh 1981).

Aitchison (2005) notes that literacy programmes in African countries are geared towards community and human development, income generation and poverty alleviation. The curriculum of literacy programmes is different from one country to another and is shaped by the needs of the intended audience. In Africa there are various countries involved in providing the illiterates with education that will make them functional within the society. All these programmes vary according to the needs and goals of a specific country and the interests of adults. However the majority of them aim to equip adults with the necessary skills for social, political, cultural and economic participation (Avosesh 1981; Bhalalusesa 2002; Molefe 2004).

Although there are several programmes in African countries that are currently involved in reducing illiteracy rates there are still some factors that are considered as obstacles to creating a literate society. Such factors include the following:

- ❖ Socio-cultural environment and the characteristics of the illiterates. The illiterates are characterized by poverty, poor health and unemployment (basic needs). Some of the illiterates prefer to concentrate on basic needs because they view written communication or literacy as foreign to them (Mabomba 1992).
- ❖ High incidence of out-of-school children. Out-of-school children are regarded as future illiterate adults (Mabomba 1992).
- ❖ Rural conditions. Adults living in rural areas have poor access if any at all to libraries, health services and literacy programmes and some of these places have poor road construction (Mabomba 1992).

The examples of literacy and post literacy programmes in Tanzania and Botswana will be highlighted. These two countries were selected because they have been and are still involved in relatively successful literacy and post literacy programmes. The examples of literacy and post literacy programmes in these countries will be highlighted, therefore, with the aim of providing a representative picture of functioning literacy and post literacy programmes in Africa.

### 3. 2.5.1 TANZANIA

Tanzania gained its independence in 1961. Lasway (1989: 480) states that 'during ancient times literacy was associated with commerce because it was used by the highly educated people for economic survival like keeping and recording business transactions'. Today it is not only associated with economic survival but also with social and political survival and development of the country. The terms 'adult

education' and 'literacy education' are used interchangeably to refer to the 3Rs: reading, writing and the ability to do simple arithmetic at a level equivalent to grade four in the formal system (Bhalalusesa 2002).

Lasway (1989: 481- 482) states that

'National literacy programmes started in 1970s after the presidential declaration that emphasized the importance and the need for adult education. The national policy believed that literacy provision would enable the Tanzanian to participate in economic, social and political development. Since then the government and other organizations had been involved in the provision of literacy programmes. For example Tanzania is one of the countries that participated in the UNESCO/ UNDP experimental World Literacy Project'

The government (Tanzanian African National Union) started to be involved in literacy during 1961 under the influence of former Tanzanian President J.K Nyerere and was concerned about the community development of workers. Mushi (1994: 173-174) states that literacy was considered as a need to increase productivity of the labour and to increase the living and working standards of the workers. The government viewed literacy as important so that adults can also educate their children. Examples of literacy programmes include the literacy programmes of 1971 provided in Swahili and regarded as very successful. Tanzania also participated in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) during 1967-1972, UNESCO Work Oriented Adult Literacy Pilot Project (WOALPP) and Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) between 1968 and 1972. Some of these programmes developed some primers that are related to the economy and state development (Harley et al 1996). The majority of these literacy programmes were successful. However, some were not successful because they had no clear policy, were not evaluated, had no follow up programmes and they were poorly conceptualized since the majority of people had a limited knowledge about the importance, impacts and the role of literacy (Bhalalusesa 2002). Generally problems of the literacy programmes include lack of space, long walk to literacy centres, inadequate curriculum and literacy programmes which do not equip women with the necessary practical skills and knowledge to make them fully functional. Some literacy programmes were reviewed and changed in 1975 (Bhalalusesa 2002).

Mushi (1994: 174) affirms that post literacy programmes were not considered as part of literacy during the planning of literacy programmes but that the planners recognized this need when the newly literates were relapsing into illiteracy. The relapse into illiteracy resulted in the urgent need for the post literacy programmes to

enable the neo-literates to continue to practise their literacy skills for social and economic purposes, to create an adequate environment and facilitate the provision of life long education. Post literacy programmes were developed and they are currently supported by materials on political education, mathematics, agriculture, health, home economics (first aid and home dressing) handicraft, history, geography, economy and English. Some of these materials are written in Swahili. Newspapers were also produced. Mushi (1994: 174) adds that 'post literacy was influenced by the social and economic conditions and their aims were to enable the neo literates to acquire skills and the knowledge needed for functionality at work place, community and in families'.

Literacy exchange (2005) states that the early literacy and post literacy programmes had various objectives such as self-development and development of critical thinking. Literacy classes were divided into four levels. In level four, learners were expected to be able to read newspapers, to read and write simple daily things like road signs, medicines and simple financial statements. Twelve different primers were designed and evaluated in two sequences to support literacy programmes. The primers covered various subjects such as cotton, banana, home economics, fishing, cattle, tobacco, maize, rice, cashew nuts, coconuts and political education and teachers' guides were also developed (Literacy exchange 2005). Avosesh (1981) states that Paulo Freire influenced the majority of literacy programmes and he was concerned with social change and the development of critical thinking.

Mabomba (1990:17) states that regional libraries were established and staffed by primary school teachers and trained volunteers. The library services are currently involved in sponsoring, promoting, assisting and engaged in the production of books and other literacy materials. The government and public libraries are also involved in doing research about the production and marketing of books and other literacy works (Mabomba 1990). In their production of literacy materials they are aware of basic important aspects in production of literacy materials such as relevance of topic, simple language, cover design and layout. Public libraries also provide simple books, vernacular newspapers, magazines and other materials on popular topics such as farming, domestic matters and health. The publication of newspapers for adults also has a great impact on sustaining and maintaining literacy skills. In rural areas there are special newspapers for these readers (Ntuli1982).

The adult education programmes experience various problems including the following:

- ❖ Inadequate funds and materials (Bhalalusesa 2002).
- ❖ Lack of motivation from both learners and facilitators to continue attending classes. The learners' lack of motivation to attend classes results in high levels of drop out. The facilitators' lack of enthusiasm may be attributed to various factors including the irrelevant curriculum (Bhalalusesa 2002).

Current literacy programmes include the following as indicated by Bhalalusesa (2002):

- ❖ The Integrated Community Basic Adult Education programme (ICBAE). The ICBAE started in 1993 to provide access to quality sustainable basic education to adults and out of school youth
- ❖ The Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) programme is provided by the Ministry of Education in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Its main aim is to provide reading, writing, numeracy and survival skills to children and youths of 11-18 years old. It uses literacy materials that are provided by the Tanzanian Institute of Education
- ❖ CARE in Tanzania is also involved in various programmes such as the provision of basic education to adults and youth. CARE is an international independent relief and development organization working with more than 70 countries including Tanzania. It aims at fighting various problems such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and illiteracy. Examples of their programmes include the following:
  - The Basic Education Fellowship Project which aims to provide basic education to children and youths
  - The Bagamoya Educational Trust which aims to reduce illiteracy through the provision of literacy classes.
  - The Dogodogo Street Children Centre. Although it started as an institute for children's needs such as food, clothing and shelter, in 1994 it expanded its services to include adult education programmes such as vocational and basic literacy skills, family life and health related services

### 3. 2.5.2. BOTSWANA

Maruatona (2004: 54) states that Botswana gained its independence from Britain in 1966 and that its national language is Setswana but there are other languages in use that are not used for educational and official communication. The provision of literacy

programmes is regarded as an important element for personal and national development.

Molefe (2004) states that

'Botswana is located in the Southern part of Africa and it is sharing the boundaries with Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Its population is 1.7 million. In 2003 literacy rates were about 79.8 percent. Literacy rates for males were 76.9 percent while it was 82.4 for females'.

The literacy provision is regarded as the major important aspect for development entailing transformation activities that go beyond reading, writing and calculation. Therefore it includes the provision of basic education training that is linked with social, economic and development issues because it was observed that illiteracy results in low productivity in the workplace, poverty, poor health and high imprisonment rates (Molefe 2004).

The early literacy programmes were provided by the Botswana Christian Council, The Women's Christian Association, The Botswana Council of Women and The Lutheran Church of Botswana (Nyirenda 1997). The London Missionary Society was involved in the translation of the Bible in 1929 into Ikalanga and it also produced religious materials in Ikalanga. These materials were used in schools for pedagogical purposes until independence (Molefe 2004). The National Literacy Programme was launched in 1981 by the Department of Community Development after the systematic adult literacy experimental programme (Mulindwa and Legwaila 2000). Nyirenda (1997) states that the National Literacy Programme was targeting 250, 000 illiterates between 1980-1985. The efforts were unsuccessful for various reasons such as poor funding and dependence on foreign donors (Maruatona 2004; Nyirenda 1997). It was evaluated and re-launched with new objectives. The Botswana National Literacy Programme aims to eradicate illiteracy through the provision of literacy classes (Nyirenda 1997; Maruatona 2004).

The Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) is regarded as the major provider of literacy programmes in Botswana and it is supported by other organizations such as NGOs, religious groups and small companies (Molefe 2004). The DNFE views literacy as a major survival and needed skill to improve one's life, to acquire basic reading skills for daily activities. Its services include post literacy programmes that involve the provision of reading materials for adults. The National Literacy Programme is delivered in Setswana. The curriculum covers reading, writing and

numeracy equivalent to Standard Four, English as a second language, work place literacy and life skills such as sewing and craft (Maphorisa 2004). Although the DNFE is the major literacy provider it experiences a variety of challenges such as the following as highlighted by Molefe (2004):

- ❖ 'The use of same literacy materials in all areas. This is viewed as problematic since the illiterates have different needs and cultural backgrounds
- ❖ Most teachers are volunteers and they lack proper training and some do not have such training
- ❖ Literacy programmes that are conducted in prisons, villages and mines lack ideal teaching environment and the infrastructure
- ❖ Language and cultural backgrounds are not taken into consideration
- ❖ Some programmes are too artificial and unreal' (Molefe 2004).

The Botswana National Literacy Programme, in particular, experiences the following problems:

- ❖ Low enrolment of learners. This may be attributed to lack of resources and the inability of the DNFE to mobilize the existing and potential learners (Nyirenda 1997; Maruatona 2004)
- ❖ High levels of drop outs (Nyirenda 1997)
- ❖ Inadequate funding (Nyirenda 1997)

Primary schools play an important role in providing the children with basic education with the aim of eliminating the future illiteracy. Primary school initiatives include the establishment of school libraries by various groups such as the Maun and Kanye project. The NGO programmes include the Children's Information Trust (CIT), Emang Basadi, a women's association that provides training on democracy, voter education and skills, and the Kuru Development Trust which provides training in multiple skills such as sewing and crafts. The information and library science professionals, who were later joined by other groups, established CIT. Their activities involve the provision and marketing of literacy programmes because they view literacy as a major social, economic, political and technological tool. Cultural groups include The Society for the Promotion of Ikalanga Language and Kamanakao Association. Both groups are governed by the NGOs and they are involved in literacy and language development, cultural activities, translation of the Bible and production of literacy materials. They are also supported by the University of Botswana (Molefe 2004).

Religious groups include the London Missionary Society which is involved in the provision of the basic education to children that are out of school and the Young Women's Christian Association that is involved in educating the teenage mothers and Sekole, in Gaborone also providing education to the disabled. Companies such as Debswana Mine in Orapa run adult literacy classes for its workers using South African materials. Churches have also implemented programmes to enable adults to read the Bible. Examples of the churches include the Reformed Church of Botswana (Maphorisa 2004).

The conference that was held in 1985 on libraries and literacy in Botswana raised the awareness of the role of libraries in literacy education and the conference recommendations led to the establishment of Village Reading Rooms and to popularizing the concept of the barefoot librarian (Makhubela 1998). Libraries are involved in literacy programmes in various ways. Molefe (2004) states that the National Library was established in 1967 to meet the information needs of the country including the development of libraries. The National Library currently supports literacy through the following services:

- ❖ 'Village Reading Rooms (VRRs). VRRs were started by the Department of Non Formal Education. In 2004 there were 67 VRRs. Today VRRs are regarded as integral to service provision in remote areas. Their services have been extended to the publication of suitable reading materials in local languages such as Setswana.
- ❖ Book Box Service. It is involved in circulating materials to where they are needed.
- ❖ Mobile Library Services. They aim to reach schools and places that are far from the library' (Molefe 2004).

The aims of the VRRs include the promotion of reading habits, the provision of the literacy and post literacy materials and the general maintenance of literacy skills. Its activities include the tutoring the non-literate, accommodating literacy classes and they are also used for community cultural activities. Mulindwa and Legwaila (2000) state that post literacy provision through Village Reading Rooms is viewed as a success because of the following important issues that are the main features of any post literacy programme:

- ❖ 'Books are available in rural areas. This is a main feature of post literacy especially in areas where public libraries are in town and inaccessible to the newly literates as they are mostly found in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas.
- ❖ Provision of suitable materials. Suitable materials as indicated before include all those materials that address the needs of the particular community and written in local languages. Literacy providers and librarians are

encouraged to be involved in the publication of these materials and this has resulted in the publication of 40 titles for this purpose

- ❖ Although post literacy initiatives in Botswana concentrate on the provision of reading materials they also provide survival and functional literacy related programmes such as sewing, carpentry and business skills. They also provide books on these topics. These are also important as the main of literacy and post literacy is to change illiterates' lives and their style of living' (Mulindwa and Legwaila 2000).

The National Literacy Programme's aims and objectives include the production of literacy materials and stories for neo-literates and for people with limited reading abilities. However Maruatana (2002) states that even if literacy materials are published in Botswana, there is no evidence that the adults were consulted for the publication of the literacy materials. If learners were not consulted or prior research before the publication of these materials was not done it is possible that they have limited impact on the life of the newly literates. Planners used a technical approach that assumed that experts knew what learners need and want to read. However, research has found that production of literacy materials should include the learners' input so that writers can write according to the needs of the adult readers (Reghu n.d; Knuth 1998). Although authors like Mulindwa and Legwaila (2000) regarded literacy and materials provision in particular successful in Botswana, Maruatana (2002) highlighted the following problems of literacy programmes and literacy materials in particular:

- ❖ Planners have ignored the gender and ethnic differences in generating literacy materials and materials are not context specific. For example, issues that affect women are not addressed (Maruatana 2002).
- ❖ High levels of dropouts (Maruatana 2002).
- ❖ VRRs materials are not sufficient in quantity and producers of literacy materials, especially materials written in Setswana, produce only a few copies per title (Makhubela 1998).
- ❖ There is also a shortage of materials that reflects adults' needs (Makhubela 1989).

### **3. 3. PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

As noted before, the planning of literacy programmes entails a number of different steps and these steps are interrelated in that they work together for the success of literacy programmes. These stages include the production of literacy materials for the classes and post literacy programmes. After the production of these materials they

need to be distributed or to be made accessible to the users (Sempira 1968). Literacy materials have to be distributed in various places for easy access by adults. However, Sempira (1968: 45) suggests that such materials need to be promoted first. This can be done through sending review copies to potential buyers like public libraries, newspapers, bookshops and schools and promotion can also be done during special celebrations like book week and adult learner's week. There are three major channels for the book distribution namely:

- ❖ 'A school system
- ❖ A system of libraries, public libraries in particular for the distribution of literacy materials
- ❖ Nation wide distribution and book sales' (Sempira 1968: 46)

The best distribution channel for the illiterates and semi-literates is the public library because its services are available free of charge to all citizens irrespective of their education status. The importance of materials distribution is that literacy materials are made accessible to the literates easily and the distributor or organization is able to help the illiterates in accessing these materials (Sempira 1968).

### 3. 3.1 THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Public libraries are generally viewed as community educational institutions that aim to meet information needs of all community members irrespective of educational levels, age, race and religion (Mabomba 1990; UNESCO Library Manifesto 1994). Various authors view public libraries as very important organizations in any illiteracy eradication strategies for the following reasons:

- ❖ Public libraries are cultural, educational, social and learning centres for all (Mabomba 1990; Zapata 1994; Liu 2004).
- ❖ As educational institutions they have a responsibility to educate the community and to support all education related programmes including literacy programmes (Mabomba 1990; UNESCO Library Manifesto 1994; Thomas 1993).
- ❖ They are repositories of learning and information providers, therefore they are in a good position to support literacy programmes (Sinha 1998).
- ❖ They are regarded as community services that provide information to community members including those who are not library users. This may include illiterates and people in institutions like prisons and hospital. (UNESCO Library Manifesto 1994).
- ❖ According to the UNESCO Library Manifesto (1994) they are also responsible for increasing and maintaining a reading culture. The functions of public

libraries also include supporting and participating in community activities such as literacy programmes (UNESCO Library Manifesto 1994; Sinha 1998).

- ❖ Public libraries are also regarded as developmental institutions because they have an important role in raising nations' literacy levels and literacy levels have significant effects on nations' economic productivity (Liu 2004).

Today many public libraries all over the world are involved in promoting literacy and reducing illiteracy levels through various ways such as the provision and arrangement of classes and literacy activities, provision of support through the usage of library halls as venues for literacy classes or provision of literacy materials.

Library literacy programmes include the following:

- ❖ Provision of literacy materials. This service includes the evaluation, selection and circulation of literacy materials. Such materials must have a specific location in the library and in most libraries they are marked with coloured dots on spines so that they can be easily recognizable by the newly literates (Zapata 1994; Johnson 1997; Tronbacke 1997; American Library Association 2006).
- ❖ Provision of training and support services (Zapata 1994)
- ❖ Provision of space for literacy classes because many libraries have halls that can be used for literacy classes (Quezada 1996).
- ❖ Creation of public awareness. This can be done by all stakeholders such as libraries, literacy providers, writers and publishers (Clarke 1989; Thomas 1993). The creation of public awareness includes publicizing the literacy programmes through recruiting the illiterates to join the literacy programmes.
- ❖ Establishment of reading assistance such as reading clubs. These programmes can include book circulation and story telling (Clarke 1989).
- ❖ Changing the image of the library by reaching out to the illiterates. Reaching out to the illiterates will help them to view public libraries as educational institutions for all community members irrespective of their levels of literacy (Clarke 1998; Thomas 1993).

Mabomba (1990: 17) recommends that 'public libraries can provide simple books, vernacular newspapers, magazines and other materials so that adults can browse through, read them at the library or they can also borrow them for home reading'. It is also important for public libraries to involve the new readers or adult learners in their programmes such as the selection of literacy materials and literacy programmes that

aim to improve reading habits. Sinha (1998) recommends that public libraries should work with literacy facilitators, literacy providers, researchers, reading specialists and publishers.

Sinha (1998) views library literacy services as extension programmes that aim to provide materials to people who are unable to go the library. Sinha views these services as extension services because in most cases during this service public libraries go to the community and to the literacy programmes to circulate literacy reading materials. Some programmes also aim to deliver materials to the doorstep of the semi-literates or any people who do not have an access to the library. This is done through mobile libraries, community-reading rooms and through working together with school libraries and literacy programmes (Sinha 1998).

International organizations such as IFLA and UNESCO have made special contributions to literacy developments and the role of public libraries in different ways. These organizations have different aims and objectives but they are geared towards reducing illiteracy rates worldwide. Some of their aims also emphasize the development and use of literacy materials to reinforce literacy. Bhola (1989: 465) states that UNESCO, in particular, started during the 1950s to emphasize the need of relevant and suitable reading materials for literacy.

Library associations such as the American Library Association (ALA) are involved in encouraging libraries to be involved in fighting illiteracy. Quezada (1996:3) states that the:

‘ALA has played an important role in providing the guidance to public libraries for the development of outreach programmes to eradicate illiteracy and such initiatives include the establishment of library outreach service office with the aim of providing training to libraries on techniques to develop and establish literacy programmes’.

Public libraries in various countries such as South Africa and Botswana are involved in celebrating Library Week (Adams et al 2002). Library Week celebrations were initiated by ALA started during the mid-1950s. Its main aim is to encourage and promote reading. It is celebrated annually in April (American Library Association 2006). Public libraries activities include the Adult Learners’ Week that is celebrated annually in September. It activities include activities such as family book sharing, learning displays, daily activities and book launches (Adams et al 2002).

The provision of literacy materials in libraries is regarded as an important factor in the success of any literacy programmes. Various countries in the world are concerned with the provision of literacy materials for a variety of reasons including the following:

- ❖ human factors such as empowerment and the ability to make informed decisions,
- ❖ political factors such as the ability to vote independently,
- ❖ cultural factors such as the respect of cultural diversity,
- ❖ social factors such as good health and life expectancy
- ❖ and economic benefits such as income generation.

Apart from these benefits the provision of literacy is regarded as a basic right for both adults and children and this is supported by various international regulations such as 1948 *Universal declaration of human rights* and the 1989 *Convention on the rights of the child* (UNESCO 2005).

Although the involvement of public libraries is important in reducing illiteracy rates some libraries are unable to support literacy programmes for various reasons including the following as highlighted by Cole (2000):

- ❖ 'Over emphasis on formal education such as support given to school children. In such cases informal education (adult education) is usually neglected.
- ❖ Lack of literacy materials because of the difficulty in finding these materials in the book market.
- ❖ Lack of library personnel.
- ❖ In some cases the role of public libraries in literacy programmes is neglected by the literacy providers. Therefore literacy providers do not include public libraries in their literacy programmes
- ❖ Some libraries have limited budget and therefore they cannot support the literacy programmes providing literacy materials'.

Krolak (2005) supports Cole (2000) by stating that public libraries experience a variety of problems such as the following:

- ❖ Libraries worldwide are under funded. This makes it difficult for libraries to be effective and attractive to their communities and to other community projects including literacy programmes.
- ❖ The non-professional staff and volunteers run some public libraries and such people do not have training in library related activities including literacy

programmes and the selection of relevant literacy materials and they are unable to support community programmes in an appropriate way.

- ❖ The majority of libraries have irrelevant materials because they rely on foreign book donations. Such materials are usually culturally irrelevant.

### **3. 4. CONCLUSION**

The study of selected countries shows that literacy programmes have been developed based on the demands for literacy such as socio-economic factors and political factors. In some countries like Cuba, literacy programmes were established because the revolutionaries and government wanted to change the political structure and they viewed literacy as a useful tool for political change. Literacy programmes in these countries take a variety of forms and functions but they are all based on each country's needs such as economic and social development, political participation and general human development. The majority of early literacy programmes of these countries did not include the provision of literacy materials in their planning of literacy and this also means that libraries were not centrally involved in fighting illiteracy. Nonetheless libraries, literacy providers and international organizations realized the need for the provision of the follow up reading materials in libraries and they also released that their programmes were not reducing the number of illiteracy rates because the newly literates were relapsing into illiteracy because of the lack of follow up reading programmes that are usual made accessible in libraries. Public libraries then started to play a role in literacy by providing literacy materials, support, and guidance and, in some cases they provide literacy classes. The literature also shows that primers were developed, evaluated, and distributed in public libraries, resource centres and reading rooms. The success of these programmes also depends on the development and distribution of suitable and reading materials in public libraries. The following Chapter will discuss the provision of literacy programmes in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ADULT EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **4. 1. INTRODUCTION**

South Africa is officially known as the Republic of South Africa. Its population is made up of Blacks (majority), Whites, Coloureds and Asians. In South Africa there are eleven official languages, that is nine African languages and Afrikaans and English. May (1998) states that South Africa experiences a great problem with poverty associated with alienation, shame, crowded homes, insufficient forms of energy, unemployment, poor health and high birth rates. Poverty and unemployment may be attributed to various factors including the lack of education as the major factor as May (1998) indicates that:

'there is a very strong correlation between level of education and standard of living. Poverty rate among people with no education is 69%, 54% among people with primary education, 24% among those with secondary education, and 3% among those with tertiary education. There is also a correlation between poverty and ill-health, although this is more difficult to measure, and access to effective health care is specific to particular social and environmental situations'.

These differences clearly show that there is a correlation between education, development and poverty. According to Aitchison and Harley (2004: 3) the 2001 general population census showed that:

'15.8 million adults (52%) had grade nine and above while 14.6 million (48%) had not reached grade nine. Out of the 48% that had not reached grade nine, 9.6 million (32%) had less than grade 7 and 4.7 (16%) million had no schooling at all. There are also variations in provinces; Limpopo had highest illiteracy rates (33.4%) while the Western Cape had the lowest illiteracy rates (5.7%) and in race; 22.3 % Black Africans had no schooling at all in 2001 while only 1.4 % of whites had no schooling in 2001'.

Literacy exchange (2005) presents the following statistics:

'1.5 million adults have had no education at all, 4.6 million adults aged 15 and above have had no schooling above grade 6 and 19.3 of the population aged 20 and above have never been to school. Rural areas have high illiteracy rates (52%) than urban areas (14%)' (Literacy exchange: 2005)

Arbuckle (2001: 461) calculates that 'about third or more of South African adults are unable to read newspapers, health instructions like medical prescriptions, agricultural materials and directions including the road signs and bus schedules'.

High illiteracy rates in South Africa may be attributed to various causes. Such issues include the strong influence of oral tradition (Fouche 1978), specific life long difficulties, deprivation, lack of literate culture (Sisulu 2004), unavailability of compulsory education, absenteeism, high rates of drop outs (Yeh 2004), poverty, Bantu Education (Pather 1995, Aitchison 2003, Sibiyi 2005, Rule 2005), multi-lingual society, inaccessibility and unavailability of libraries especially in remote areas, high cost of printed materials and lack of reading culture (Mabomba 1995). Although there are still high illiteracy rates in South Africa, various organizations including government, NGOs, business sector and libraries have been involved in fighting and reducing the problems that are associated with lack of education through the provision of literacy programmes (French 1992).

Sibiyi (2005:35-36) notes that early education in South Africa was passed orally from one generation to another. The first schools were established for the slaves in Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch East India Company because the slaves were unable to understand their masters. The major aims of these schools were to teach the slaves Dutch, arithmetic, trade skills and the religious instruction such as prayers and the Ten Commandments. In the period between 1799 and 1910 adult education was provided by missionaries such as The Wesleyans, The Paris Evangelical Church and The American Board Mission. Their main aims were to introduce Christianity as they felt that the conversion could be done properly and easily if the Blacks were able to read the Bible independently. However the teaching of other skills like carpentry, building and domestic science was also included (Sibiyi 2005).

## **4.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF ADULT EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **4. 2.1. LITERACY PROGRAMMES FROM 1910 - 1953**

The period between 1910 and 1953 was characterized by a major demand for skilled workers as some few positions were opened for Blacks after urbanization and this resulted in a great demand for adult education because the majority of Blacks were unable to read and write. Some of the prerequisites for survival in urban areas are the ability to read and write so that one can be able to read road signs, notices and fill in employment forms. Various groups and students played an important role in developing Adult Basic Education (ABE) so that Blacks could cope with the

## THE AFRICAN COLLEGE AND MAYIBUYE NIGHT SCHOOLS

The African College and Mayibuye night schools were established by the students of the University of Witwatersrand. Using the Laubach method, their aim was to provide Blacks with education that would enable them to cope with and adapt to urban life. They were similar to the early missionary night schools. The African College and Mayibuye College taught English, arithmetic, civics and government laws with an emphasis on Native laws and other elective subjects such as geography, history and Afrikaans. They were also affected by the problems that existed during 1910-1953 such as Pass Laws, unfavourable physical conditions and untrained teachers (Sibiya 2005).

Other literacy programmes whose main aims were the lifelong learning of men and women and teaching of literacy include the following:

- ❖ The Transvaal Workers' Education Association's classes were held at the University of Witwatersrand, supported by municipal funds (Sibiya 2005).
- ❖ The classes for the Workers' Association of Durban were conducted at the Natal Technical College, supported by a grant from the Union government (Sibiya 2005).

Sibiya (2005) affirms that the night schools of the Workers' Association including the Transvaal and Durban ones were not successful for various reasons including the following:

- ❖ 'conditions arising from the Great War
- ❖ struggle between the Chamber of Mines and White workers that resulted in the Great Strike and Red Revolts and
- ❖ the large number of Afrikaans speaking workers made it difficult to concentrate on demands of Blacks' (Sibiya 2005: 55).

In 1953 the Bantu Education Act was passed. This affected the night schools because there were certain rules that governed the night schools. These rules include the following as noted by Sibiya (2005: 63):

- ❖ 'Night schools had to be registered and unregistered ones were to be closed
- ❖ They had to operate during the normal school terms
- ❖ Only adults with legal residence status and above sixteen years could be admitted into a night school'

Night schools were severely affected by the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and this resulted in a reduction of night schools and adult learners (Sibiya 2005). Aitchison

(1999:103) states that 'adult education went through the dark age during the apartheid period for various reasons including the conditions of Bantu Education Act of 1954'. Aitchison (2003: 126) states that before the 20<sup>th</sup> century the provision of adult education in South Africa was limited because of the nature of apartheid education in which Black education was neglected.

#### 4. 2. 2 LITERACY PROGRAMMES FROM 1954 - 1994

French (1992: 58) states that the oldest literacy programmes dating from the 1960s in South Africa are the Bureau of Literacy and Literature (1964) and Operation Upgrade (1966). The Bureau of Literacy and Literature provided functional literacy to mine workers and it also produced primers and readers to support and sustain the literacy programmes (Aitchison 1999 and 2003). Dr Laubach was a Christian Evangelical missionary who was deeply concerned about poverty, injustice and illiteracy. French (1992: 60) notes that Operation Upgrade offered teacher-training courses, courses in writing for neo-literates and courses for managing and establishing literacy programmes. It also produced easy readers (primers and readers) dealing with practical skills, health and religion.

Apart from the Bureau of Literacy and Literature and Operation Upgrade, there were other literacy programmes and organizations including those in the mining and industrial sector that were involved in fighting illiteracy. Although the majority of them were closed because of various problems such as funding some of them are still actively involved in literacy. These literacy programmes and organizations include the following:

##### A. The organizations:

The South African Student Organization (SASO) 1969. SASO was formed by African students like Steve Biko, Barney Pityana, Patrick Lekota and others who were involved in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). SASO linked the student protest with the development of communities by encouraging the community to participate in community activities. This was done through the establishment of community health centres, literacy classes and advice offices. Bird (1984: 212) states that SASO was influenced by other organizations and leaders such as the Reverend Colin Collins of the University Christian Movement who received and circulated the works of Paulo Freire during the 1970s. Although Freire's work was banned in South Africa about 500 copies of his book entitled *Pedagogy of the oppressed* were made and circulated and this led to the formation of literacy teachings (classes) throughout

South Africa. SASO was involved in the Soweto uprising in 1976 and it was banned in 1977. Other organizations like Black Community Programmes were also banned and some leaders including Steve Biko were detained (Bird 1984). Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* influenced organizations such as Black Consciousness Movement, the Independent Black Trade Union Movement and the United Democratic Front. These different organizations also played an important part in literacy programmes (Aitchison 1999).

#### B. The Universities

Various universities such as the University of Cape Town, the University of Natal and the University of Witwatersrand also played an important role in literacy programmes in various ways such as the involvement in research into literacy and illiteracy, the establishment of the adult education department within the university and publishing materials for learners and teachers. French (1992: 71) states that the University of Cape Town in particular has published several publications including *A survey of illiteracy in South Africa* and it was also involved in hosting and organizing conferences on literacy. Universities like the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Centre for Adult Education has been involved in adult education since 1971. Its activities include adult education programmes and courses such as certificates in education, adult literacy and basic education, development programmes such as research on literacy and basic education and materials development programmes such as *Learn with echo* (newspaper supplement for semi-literates) and New Readers' Project (adult literacy material publishers).

#### C. Research Institutions

The Human Science Research Council (HSRC) started to be involved in literacy programmes during the 1970s by publishing and conducting surveys, evaluating programmes and holding a conference in adult education (French 1992).

#### D. Industrial and mining sectors

Various organizations in the mining and industrial sectors also played an important role in adult education by providing literacy classes and training in English as a medium of communication to their workers. The programmes that were provided by the industries include the following as highlighted by French (1992):

- ❖ Communication in Industry, established in 1971, was involved in teaching English through an activity approach (French 1992).

- ❖ Consulting Education and Training was established during the 1980s to offer training courses, professional consultation and implementation of literacy programmes. It was closed in 1987 because of its unsatisfactory results (French 1992).
- ❖ Learning for Empowerment and Progress (LEAP). LEAP was formed in 1990 with the aim of promoting democratic literacy and worker participation in various areas such as management.

#### E. The role of the State

During the 1970s the Department of Bantu Education which was later named the Department of Education and Training (DET) established various regional education departments for black people with the aim of implementing adult education and literacy programmes. DET designed and published a literacy curriculum in mother tongue, English and Afrikaans (French 1992). Sibiyi (2005: 66) notes that early DET classes were based on community development, personal enrichment and basic literacy.

Other departments such as the Department of Manpower, Department of Agriculture, Department of Forestry and Water Affairs, Department of Health and Population and the Department of Prisons also played a significant role in attempting to fight illiteracy rates (French 1992).

#### F. Companies/ media

The South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) was also involved in reducing illiteracy by broadcasting literacy related programmes. The early programmes included 'Literacy Alive', 'The struggle for literacy' and 'Adult basic education in the workplace', 'Basic skills in English and 'Mochochonono'. Some of the programmes were duplicated in various languages on radio (Aitchison 1999 and 2003).

#### G. Libraries

French (1992: 78) notes that a number of libraries especially the Cape Provincial Library Services started to be involved in literacy programmes by providing support and space for adult literacy and by encouraging the local libraries to provide materials for semi-literates. The Read Educational And Development Trust (READ) also played an important role in encouraging the development of libraries (Aitchison 1999).

#### H. Other literacy programmes:

- ❖ The Western Province Literacy Programmes (WPLP). The WPLP was established in 1974 in Cape Town to provide literacy classes to workers. It provided reading and writing classes in IsiXhosa and English (Aitchison 2003).
- ❖ In 1974 the Molteno Project, based at Rhodes University was established through the funds of the Molteno brothers. It is involved in teaching and improving English instruction in Black primary schools, breakthrough literacy and in researching and publishing materials for learners and teachers. The material development includes thorough and systematic writing, translating, evaluating and rewriting. The Molteno Project is still actively involved in literacy programmes (French 1992). The Molteno Project currently offers Breakthrough to literacy for children and adults (a mother tongue literacy course for the first three years of learning), bridge to English for children and adults and it also provides learner support materials (The Molteno Project website 2006).
- ❖ Learn and Teach (1974). Bird (1984: 214) notes that Learn and Teach was involved in encouraging the community to initiate classes. Learn and Teach viewed literacy as education rather than training and it created course books, readers related to the learners' contexts and history. In 1979 it established the *Learn and Teach* magazine. The magazine is no longer published since Learn and Teach was closed down after 1994 because of financial difficulties.
- ❖ The National Literacy Cooperative (NLC) was established in 1980s and it was organized on national and regional levels. Its main aim was to fight illiteracy through the provision of the literacy classes (French 1992).
- ❖ Use Speak and Write English (USWE). USWE's main aims were to teach and improve the use of English as a second language to domestic and migrant workers. It also published workbooks and a collection of learner's materials (French 1992).

Learn and Teach and USWE experienced financial problems because foreign donors wanted to work directly with the government and this resulted in retrenchment of staff and they were finally closed down. NGOs were also affected by other problems such as assessment issues and curriculum (Aitchison 1999).

The apartheid period gradually ended during the 1990s after the announcement of the unbanning of political organizations. The 1990s were characterized by the need

for development and educational programmes to fight illiteracy and inequalities. Jantjes (1995: 14) states that 'in 1995 the millions of people in South Africa had been denied access to education and about 66% of the population was not fully literate in any language'. Therefore there was an urgent need of literacy programmes in order to reduce illiteracy rates. Aitchison (2003: 126) states that before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literacy provision in South Africa was limited with the result that after 1994 there was a great need and demand for adult basic education to facilitate the country's development. The provision of adult education was regarded as a priority to facilitate economic development and to enable the adults to participate in democracy (Makhubela 1998). The transition from apartheid to democracy has led to the formation of various policies, literacy strategies and the general provision of literacy programmes.

#### 4.2.3 LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1995 TO DATE

Baatjes (2003:6) states that the Department of Education has launched the following three programmes since 1995:

- ❖ Ithutheng (Read to Learn) campaign of 1996 by the Department of Education and National Literacy Cooperation (NLC). It targeted 10 000 learners in each South African province (Sibiya 2005). Baatjes (2003: 6) affirms that 'it was launched as a political project that aimed to mobilize illiterates and the under-educated'. Ithutheng was not successful for various reasons such as the following:
  - Provinces lacked the personnel and facilities to implement the programmes (Baatjes 2003; Sibiya 2005).
  - Ithutheng had a limited budget and was mainly dependent on donors (Aitchison 1999).
  - ABET directorates were unfamiliar with the relevant policies (Sibiya 2005).
  - Training for teachers was inadequate (Sibiya 2005).
  - It was not monitored and evaluated (Sibiya 2005).
  - Unavailability of literacy materials to support the campaign (Baatjes 2003).
- ❖ South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) of 2000 which targeted 3, 3 million adult learners. Baatjes (2003: 6) states that 'SANLI also experienced problems such as lack of funds, some of the management staff were appointed only in 2001 while the campaign was launched in 2000'.

- ❖ Masifunde Sonke of 2000. This was launched as a national reading campaign that targeted the whole nation. Unlike Ithutheng and SANLI that were launched to teach literacy, Masifunde Sonke aims to promote reading. Masifunde Sonke emphasizes the role and importance of reading in schools, libraries and workplace (Baatjes 2003). Problems of Masifunde Sonke include a lack of resources including funding and poor advertising (Baatjes 2003). Sisulu (2004) states that failures of Masifunde Sonke may be attributed to various issues such as lack of investment in material resources and human resources, absence of core funding and its reliance on volunteers.

### Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)

The term ABET is used to refer to basic education that is provided to the illiterates. It includes both literacy and post literacy provision. ABET is defined as 'a general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of context' (Literacy exchange: world resource on literacy 2005). ABET providers include the state, NGOs, business sector, municipalities and churches. ABET aims to provide free basic education, learning skills such as reading and writing and qualifications to adults who want to finish their basic education. It entails four basic levels, from Grade R to grade nine. The adults are trained in language, literacy and communication; mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences; natural sciences; arts and culture; life orientation; technology; human and social science and economic and management sciences.

Literacy education is also provided by the following:

- ❖ READ Educational Trust. Yeh (2004) notes that READ is one of the largest literacy programmes with eighteen centres and eight major literacy projects.
- ❖ Department of Transport and the Department of Public Works also provide literacy classes for its employees. The registered learners attend classes once a week and classes are offered from level one to level four. Some government departments such as the Department of Labour play a smaller role in ABET provision and they are mainly concerned with their employees. This means that the literacy programmes that are offered by such departments are only accessible to the working adults and this is the minority of the illiterate adults (Aitchison and Rule 2005).

### 4. 3. THE PROBLEMS OF THE ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Although South Africa has been involved in fighting illiteracy there are still a large number of illiterates as it is stated that in 2005 about 1.5 million adult had no education at all (Literacy Exchange: world resources on literacy: South Africa 2005). Various authors are of the view that literacy programmes in South Africa are inadequate for various reasons such as the following:

- ❖ Lack of suitable and relevant literacy and post literacy materials especially materials in vernacular languages (Fouche 1978; Ahrends 1984; Yeh 2004; Land and Buthelezi 2004; Mulaudzi 1992; French 1992; Clarke 1989; Baatjes 2003).
- ❖ Lack of a reading culture (Yeh 2004; Sisulu 2004).
- ❖ High levels of school drop-outs (Yeh 2004).
- ❖ Lack of public awareness (Clarke 1989).
- ❖ Lack of motivation for both learners and facilitators (Clarke 1989).
- ❖ Strong influence of oral culture (Fouche 1978).
- ❖ Distribution of literacy materials is also problematic because many places in rural areas do not have access to public libraries (Rogers 1994)

A number of commentators have analyzed the problems of adult literacy programmes as follows:

- ❖ The lack of political will and commitment from the government (Baatjes 2003; Sibiyi 2005). Rule (2005) states that in South Africa the provision of adult education is regarded as a basic human right but the government neglects it and it operates on limited budget that is less than 1% of the total education budget.
- ❖ Limited budget for adult education provision and in some provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal it has gone to below than that of the apartheid era (Aitchison 1999). Vivian (2002: 16) notes that the funding is a major concern in adult education provision and the available NGOs' funding is very limited.
- ❖ ABET provision is not regarded as major need by the state (Aitchison 1999).
- ❖ NGOs have experienced problems such as funding uncertainties, loss of experienced staff and poor management, (after 1997) and some of these problems resulted in the collapse of the National Literacy Cooperation, USWE and English Literacy Project in 1998 (Aitchison 1999; 2006 and Rule 2005).
- ❖ The provision of ABET is also limited as the majority of government departments such as Department of Labour concentrate on their employees

for skills development. This means that the majority of unemployed illiterates have limited access to literacy programmes (Rule 2005; Aitchison 2006).

Various authors suggest that the following are necessary for literacy strategies in South Africa:

- ❖ Proper planning of literacy programmes. Such planning includes the planning of post literacy materials to support, motivate and reinforce literacy skills (Baatjes 2003).
- ❖ Cooperation between literacy providers including the reading related programme providers, libraries and publishers (Baatjes 2003).
- ❖ The government's strong commitment and financial support in literacy programmes are also important for illiteracy eradication strategies (Sibiya 2005).

The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor established a ministerial committee on literacy in 2006. The aims of the committee include the following:

- ❖ To investigate the nature of successful literacy programmes in Cuba
- ❖ To investigate successful mass literacy models
- ❖ To investigate similarities between National Literacy Mission (Indian literacy programme, literacy programmes in Brazil and New Zealand
- ❖ To draw up a proposal for mass literacy in South Africa (The republic of South Africa 2006).

Initiatives like these are necessary for the improvement of literacy programmes in South Africa.

#### **4. 4. THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN LITERACY PROGRAMMES**

In previous chapters it has been indicated that libraries have an important role in fighting illiteracy. Makhubela (1998: 12) states 'that the term "library" is synonymous with literacy because a library is defined as an organization that preserves social and cultural forms of knowledge and this has been associated with the written literature'. Therefore access to the written literature that is held by the library is largely dependent on the ability to read and write.

Harley (1999: 29) notes that libraries and literacy are inseparable because without the literate community the library is not likely to have an impact in the community and it is also difficult or even impossible to maintain literacy skills especially the newly

acquired literacy skills without the library as a provider of the literacy materials or information in general. Reading is the basis of library use and it is therefore the role of the library to create readers. Frylinck (1984: 184) states 'that the illiterates have various library needs but generally they need someone to teach them how to read and they also need something to read based on their abilities, interest and daily needs'. Public libraries are in a position to meet these two basic needs for the illiterates. Literacy is regarded as the prerequisite of using a library. Therefore libraries have an important role in all community developmental programmes such as literacy education. Generally development is inconceivable if the majority of adults are illiterate (Mabomba 1992).

Public libraries in South Africa are involved literacy in various ways such as the following:

- ❖ The provision of literacy materials (both reading and instructional materials) such as manuals and workbooks for learners and tutors/ facilitators, fiction and non-fiction biographies, magazines and newspapers for adults with limited reading skills (Frylinck 1984; Makhubela 1998; Harley 1999).
- ❖ Providing facilities such as venues and resources for the literacy classes (Frylinck 1984; Harley 1999; May and Nassimbeni 2005).
- ❖ Running literacy classes (Harley 1999; Makhubela 1998; May and Nassimbeni 2005).
- ❖ Promoting literacy and recruiting the illiterates (Harley 1999).
- ❖ Promoting the creation of literacy materials by working with publishers and writers (Frylinck 1994).

Two stages of literacy programmes, namely literacy teaching and the retention of literacy skills, can be supported by public libraries in a direct and an indirect way. For example, some public libraries provide venues and facilities for the literacy programmes while others are involved in retaining the literacy skills through the provision of reading materials based on the adults' needs (Fouche 1978). May and Nassimbeni (2005: 12) state that public libraries that are involved in literacy by either participating directly in literacy programmes or by providing support such as venues and book loans. Harley (1999: 31) notes:

'that the Cape Provincial Libraries Services in particular support literacy programmes through the provision of venues for classes, providing information about literacy agencies, providing reading and learning materials,

creating awareness about illiteracy impacts and encouraging the use of libraries’.

Although public libraries have been encouraged and motivated to be involved in literacy programmes many are still not involved in literacy programmes (Ahrends 1984; Frylinck 1984; May and Nassimbeni 2005). Khunou (1994: 7) states that ‘public libraries should change and they should reach out to the community and get involved in community activities such as providing services to the illiterates’. Makhubela (1998: 18) also states ‘that the libraries have long been identified as significant to any illiteracy eradication strategies’. The library should reach out to the community especially the illiterates because in some cases the illiterates form the majority of the community in which the library is based (Pather 1995). Khunou (1994: 7) states that some

‘public libraries argue that they are not educators they are librarians therefore they do not want to be involved in literacy programmes in any way. They either intentionally or subconsciously resist being involved in literacy programmes. Some librarians have an attitude that they can only serve those who are able to read and write or those who are able to come to their libraries’

The survey by May and Nassimbeni (2006: 45) indicates that in Western Cape the majority (68.2%) of libraries are not involved in literacy programmes while few libraries (31.8 %) are involved.

May and Nassimbeni (2005: 11) report that

‘the majority of public libraries in the various provinces do not participate in literacy programmes. However a few public libraries in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Western Cape, Free State and Eastern Cape are currently involved in literacy; Northern Cape and Mpumalanga are partially involved and Limpopo is not involved at all’.

Many public libraries are not involved in literacy programmes for various reasons such as:

- ❖ Limited funding to support literacy programmes and to purchase literacy materials (Frylinck 1984; Jantjes 1995; May and Nassimbeni 2005).
- ❖ Lack of personnel especially those with literacy training (Frylinck 1984; Jantjes 1995; May and Nassimbeni 2005).
- ❖ Shortage and unavailability of relevant and suitable literacy materials (Ahrends 1984; Makhubela 1998; May and Nassimbeni 2005).

- ❖ Do not see their role in literacy programmes as other organizations are already involved (May and Nassimbeni 2005).
- ❖ Not interested and some do not see the need (May and Nassimbeni 2005)
- ❖ Some public libraries are not involved in literacy programmes because they underestimate the problem and impacts of the illiteracy on the community (Frylinck 1984).
- ❖ Some public librarians argue that they are librarians not teachers; therefore they cannot be involved in literacy programmes (Makhubela 1998; Khunou 1994).

#### **4. 5. THE ROLE OF PUBLISHERS AND OTHER MATERIAL PRODUCERS**

Various authors like Van Gend (1996), Land and Buthelezi (2004) and French (1992) note that in South Africa there is a great demand for suitable and relevant materials especially materials in indigenous languages and Afrikaans. French (1992: 239) claims that

‘the provision of literacy materials is still problematic and insufficient and some literacy programmes are failing and some do not have an impact in changing the illiterates’ lives because they do not have the reading materials to sustain and maintain the literacy skills’.

Land and Buthelezi (2004: 429) argue that there is a limited number of suitable literacy materials and ABET materials especially materials in indigenous languages for various reasons such as poor sales, reluctance to publish in African languages, high illiteracy rates and lack of government support in promoting publishing of Indigenous materials. However various organizations such as Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) are involved in promoting the publishing of literacy materials in various ways (Land and Buthelezi 2004).

Some literacy providers have produced their literacy materials to support their own programmes. Literacy organizations such as Operation Upgrade, Learn and Teach, READ, Bureau of Literacy and Literature, The Department of Education and English Literacy Project have produced their own materials for their literacy programmes (Aitchison 1999; French 1992).

Apart from literacy providers there are publishers that are involved in producing literacy materials in order to support literacy promotion and fight against illiteracy rates. Such publishers produce and distribute various materials such as instructional

literacy materials, post literacy materials and newspapers. Most of them are concerned with promoting the publication of literacy materials in local languages. Publishers of literacy materials in South Africa include New Readers' Project (NRP), Easy Reading for Adults (ERA), Viva Books, Kwela Books and Adult Readers' Collection. The role of NRP, Viva Books and Project Literacy in literacy materials will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six, as they were interviewed during data collection.

There are also other projects/initiatives that produce literacy materials such as newspapers. These initiatives include *Learning with echo*, *The South African reader*, Fundani and The Centre for the Book. *Learning with echo* is a newspaper supplement produced by the University of KwaZulu-Natal and New Readers Project. It is printed by 'The Witness', a Pietermaritzburg newspaper (Land and Buthelezi 2004). Rogers (1994: 11) states that *Learning with echo* aims to provide the new readers and readers with limited reading abilities with non-political information with the aim of encouraging reading and developing a reading culture. It serves people mainly within the KwaZulu-Natal region, especially people living in townships. Its content includes cartoon strips in both English and Zulu. It also includes articles on health, childcare and topics such as the history of KwaZulu-Natal, HIV/AIDS, child abuse and water and sanitation. *The South African reader* is Project Literacy's monthly newspaper, covering various issues such as human rights, learning productive skills and entertainment. It is written for adults with limited reading skills (Literacy exchange: world resources on literacy 2005 and Project literacy website). Van Gend (1996: 31) points out that Fundani was launched in 1994 by Juta and Adult Basic Education (ABE) as an adult literacy course in Xhosa. Fundani produces teachers' manuals, workbooks and each contains a set of simple readers that are designed to complement Fundani which can also be purchased separately. These materials are produced based on the research findings that indicated that people wanted materials on topics such as health, prayers, Bible stories and stories that reflect their lives. Yeh (2004) notes that the Centre For the Book is involved in promoting the publication of South African books in all eleven official languages.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The literature shows that the selected countries offer different types of literacy programmes that aim to equip the adults with the developmental skills, income generation skills, functional and survival skills. Different stakeholders such as government departments, the Department of Education in particular, NGOs, the business sector and public libraries provide such programmes. Literacy programmes

are also supported by different organization such as research institutions, universities and publishers. Literacy programmes take a variety of forms; Sibiya (2005) has noted that literacy can take a functional literacy approach, mass literacy, fundamental approach and/ or critical awareness (political approach or conscientisation).

The success of literacy programmes depends on various factors such as the following:

- ❖ The availability of compulsory universal primary education. Literacy programmes in countries like Cuba and India are successful because they have compulsory universal primary education.
- ❖ Government involvement and the political will
- ❖ The access to the relevant and suitable literacy materials
- ❖ Strong financial support
- ❖ The participation of public libraries for the provision of literacy materials to support and sustain the newly acquired skills (Sibiya 2005).

Literacy programmes meeting most of these criteria are more likely to be successful and to equip the adults with functional and survival skills. In South Africa, literacy programmes are provided and supported by the government departments but the majority of the government departments are concerned with the education of their employees other than the general illiterates. Other providers are NGOs such as Project Literacy; public libraries such as Milnerton public library; research institutions such as the Human Science Research Council; publishers such as NRP and universities such as University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town through their research related strategies. Literacy programmes are also supported by the availability of the reading and instructional materials that are made accessible in literacy classes and public libraries. Publishers such as NRP, Kwela Book and literacy providers such as Project Literacy publish such materials. The success of literacy programmes is determined by various issues such as the availability of literacy materials in both literacy classes and public libraries. The research before the publication of literacy materials is also important because it helps the publishers to know the needs of their audience so that they can publish materials based on those identified needs.

Although South Africa has long been involved in literacy programmes there are still obstacles that hamper the success of these programmes. These obstacles include the following:

- ❖ Poverty
- ❖ Lack of reading culture
- ❖ Lack of political will
- ❖ Lack of relevant and suitable literacy materials
- ❖ Limited financial support
- ❖ Lack of public libraries

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **5. 1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the research design that guided the investigation. Therefore the following will be highlighted:

- ❖ The research questions
- ❖ Qualitative research design
- ❖ The case studies
- ❖ Selection of sites
- ❖ Data collection methods
  - Interviews
  - Observation
- ❖ Site visits
- ❖ Data analysis

#### **5. 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The objectives of the study were to investigate the type of materials that are used for literacy classes and post literacy in public libraries and to investigate the availability of and access to these materials in two public libraries in Cape Town. The researcher used case studies to answer the following questions that are derived from the objectives of the study:

- ❖ How available are locally produced literacy materials for use in literacy programmes in public libraries?
- ❖ What are the types and features of these literacy materials?
- ❖ How suitable are the literacy materials in the adult learners' acquisition of literacy?

#### **5. 3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research follows the qualitative research paradigm. Myers (2000) states that 'qualitative research paradigm aims to understand the social world from the viewpoint of respondents, through the detailed description of their cognitive and symbolic actions and through the richness of meaning associated with observable behaviour'. Qualitative research therefore deals with the real world, human beings (Shelef 1994) and their experiences, social context and multiple realities (Myers 2000; Bodgan 1992). Qualitative research methods have the following attributes:

- ❖ Provide an understanding and in-depth analysis of the social or human problem and experiences of a selected topic (Vishnesky and Beanlands

2004). The understanding and the in-depth analysis allow the researcher to develop a new understanding about the topic that is being investigated (Shelef 1994). They provide a holistic picture of a situation in the form of words or/and pictures (Bogdan 1992; Miles and Huberman 1994).

- ❖ Are conducted in a natural setting which Vishnesky and Beanlands (2004 234) describe as the naturalistic paradigm. The natural setting allows the researcher to observe and describe the situation as it occurs. Qualitative research therefore is a useful paradigm to describe a social phenomenon (Hoepfl 1997).
- ❖ Emphasize the use of human beings as research instruments (Shelef 1994; Hoepfl 1997).
- ❖ Are non-experimental of and do not require dependent and independent variables (Shelef 1994).
- ❖ Enhance the understanding and learning about social processes. They promote illumination, understanding and extrapolation as opposed to causal determination, prediction and generalization of findings which are important features of quantitative methods (Shelef 1994).
- ❖ Use inductive methods and provide descriptive research results (Bodgan 1992; Shelef 1994).
- ❖ Provide meaning and understanding rather than verifying and predicting outcomes, and qualitative research methods provide data that contribute to the community and the society (Myers 2000). Qualitative research methods are regarded as a source of rich description and explanation of social processes and they deal with real life issues (Miles and Huberman 1994)
- ❖ Sampling in qualitative research methods is not predetermined; it attempts to include as many participants as possible based on their experiences and involvement in the phenomenon (Vishnesky and Beanlands 2004).

Although qualitative research methods are regarded as useful for in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon they are criticized in various ways including the following:

- ❖ They deal with small sample sizes and are therefore incapable of generalization (Myers 2000). Myers does not view small samples as the major disadvantage in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to carefully examine the situation in-depth and such in-depth careful examination is not possible in large samples. Small samples also allow the researcher to gain a personal understanding and contacts with respondents

which is also regarded as an advantage in gaining a holistic and in-depth view of the situation.

- ❖ Qualitative research methods are subjective and biased (Myers 2000). Qualitative research methods are subjective because the researcher strives to be in the shoes of the participants so that he/she can have a better understanding of the topic. Although the close contact of a researcher to the participants may lead to bias and subjectivity it is also important for the in-depth understanding of the social process that is being investigated. Various techniques such as triangulation are used to eliminate these problems (Myers 2000).
- ❖ They are expensive and time consuming (Frechtling and Sharp 1997).
- ❖ The investigator has little control over the situation (Frechtling and Sharp 1997).

Qualitative research methods were viewed as the most appropriate method for this thesis because the topic deals with human beings (Shelef 1994), is concerned about meaning (Bodgan 1992), provides description and explanation of real life and social issues (Miles and Huberman: 1994), and allows the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of the topic from the participants' point of view (Vishnesky and Beanlands 2004). Therefore as the main aim of the research was to gain a better understanding of literacy materials from adult learners' point of view, qualitative research methods were viewed as suitable for this investigation.

#### **5. 4. THE CASE STUDIES**

A case study is defined by Yin (2003:2)

'as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context especially when boundaries between a phenomenon and a context are not clearly evident'.

The case study is used to gain an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon because it allows researchers to gain a holistic understanding and meaning of real life in its natural settings. Punch (1998: 150) supports Yin by adding that the main aim of 'a case study is to obtain a better understanding of the case or a situation being studied and it enables the researchers to study and understand the wholeness and unity of the case in its natural setting'. A case can be an individual, small group, or a nation. Case studies can be a single case or multiple case designs. Multiple cases are useful to strengthen the research results. Hoaglin et al (1982:117) affirms

that a 'case study is an analytic description of an event, process, an institution or a programme'. Case studies have been used in various aspects such as evaluative studies where researchers want to determine if a certain programme is useful and helpful to the intended audience. It allows a researcher to look closely at what is happening through collecting data from the respondents. Once data is collected and analyzed, the results can provide an in-depth understanding of the case (Tellis 1997).

For this investigation a case study approach was chosen because it:

- ❖ is a qualitative approach suitable for a study of social processes (Miller and Salkind 2002).
- ❖ provides in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon (Yin 2003).
- ❖ provides an opportunity to understand a complex situation (Yin 2003).
- ❖ provides an ability to examine the real issues in their natural setting (Bogdan 1992).
- ❖ allows the researcher to study the life cycle of the unit (Burns 2000).

Although the case study was regarded as an appropriate method it has been criticised in various ways. Generalisation is difficult in case studies (Punch 1998; Tellis 1997), construct validity is problematic and case studies use small samples (Tellis 1997). It is only appropriate as an exploratory study (Soy 1997) and it is biased and subjective (Burns 2000). However Miller and Salkind (2002: 163) and Punch (1998) state that generalization is not the major disadvantage of case studies because they do not intend to generalize their findings but rather to get an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon. Therefore generalization is not regarded as the major aim in qualitative research. Safeguards such as the use of multiple sources of evidence such as documents, interviews and observation and getting the case study report reviewed by key informants were adopted to resolve possible difficulties in case studies (Yin 2003).

## **5. 5. SAMPLING**

The case study uses purposive rather than random sampling. The sample size is not predetermined. Therefore it includes only those participants with experience in the topic being investigated. Generally it aims to include as many participants as possible with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding and generating insights into key issues of the subject being studied (Vishnesky and Beanland 2004). Burns (2000: 465) states that case studies use non-probability sampling. 'In non-probability sampling there is no way of estimating the probability of being included, or that the case is the representative of some population and therefore there is no validity in

generalizing the account'. The researcher used purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling. In purposive sampling a case or cases are selected based on the purpose and objectives of the research topic or subject. Therefore purposive sampling aims to select information-rich cases for an in-depth understanding of the study (Burns 2000).

Two public libraries, Bellville South and Milnerton public libraries were selected as cases. The Bellville South public library runs two literacy programmes, one at Bellville South public library and the other at Stikland Hospital. Milnerton public library only runs one programme that is conducted at the library. Participants from these two literacy programmes were interviewed. These sites were selected because they are currently involved in literacy programmes and they have literacy materials to support and maintain the literacy programmes.

The researcher included as many participants as possible based on their experience and involvement in the literacy programmes. Shelef (1994) describes this process as maximum variation sampling which allows the researcher to capture and describe the central and main themes, core experiences, shared aspects and impacts of the research topic. Participants were selected based on their experiences, expertise and their involvement in literacy classes.

Participants at each of the three sites were as follows:

- ❖ Adult learners. They were selected because they are enrolled in the literacy programmes. The researcher included as many learners as possible.
- ❖ Facilitators. All the facilitators teaching at the selected sites during the data collection period were interviewed.
- ❖ Librarians. Two librarians were interviewed based on their involvement in the literacy programmes.
- ❖ Literacy providers. Literacy providers were either the library or the Department of Education.

Publishers were also interviewed. Two major adult literacy materials publishers were selected based on their involvement in the publication of adult literacy materials. They were also selected because the libraries had materials that were published by these specific publishers. The selection of the publishers was also determined by their location in that the researcher selected those that are available in Cape Town.

The researcher arranged meetings with publishers who managed to come to Cape Town.

## **5. 6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Data were collected through the use of face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and observation.

### **5. 6.1 INTERVIEWS**

Interviews involve questioning on issues that are related to the research topic. Interviews are regarded as a major source of data collection in qualitative research because of their advantages such as the ability to probe and clarify unclear questions and answers. Hoepfl (1997) suggests that they can be used as a major research strategy or in conjunction with observation and document study. Interviews were regarded as an appropriate tool for the investigation because they provide descriptive data directly from the participants and they allow the researcher to explain and rephrase unclear questions, and they have high response rates in comparison to other data collection methods such as the mailed questionnaire (Bogdan 1994).

Face-to-face interviews were used because they were viewed as good data collection methods with the following advantages as highlighted by Simon (1969); Babbie (1995); Bailey (1994):

- ❖ Higher response rates than mailed questionnaires
- ❖ Researcher is able to observe non-verbal behaviour that can also add value to the information
- ❖ They are the best-suited collection method in areas with low literacy skills or limited reading abilities.
- ❖ Interviews provide an interpersonal contact between the researcher and the respondents and such contact is useful for the in-depth understanding of the situation.

Open-ended and closed-ended questions were used. The researcher used an interview schedule for guidance and consistency. Telephone interviews were used in cases where the researcher was unable to conduct face-to-face interviews. Bailey (1994) views telephone interviews as necessary tools in cases where a researcher is unable to meet participants for various reasons such as unavailability and geographical issues.

Although face-to-face interviews have high response rates, the ability to observe non-verbal behaviour, spontaneity, and high assurance of completeness, they have some limitations (Babbie 1995). Bailey (1994: 175) states that these limitations include the following:

- ❖ cost (travelling) and time (the process of administering questions and travelling from one place to another). Travelling can be very problematic in scattered and unsafe areas
- ❖ bias (interviewer's personal beliefs and attitudes)
- ❖ inaccessibility of the respondents
- ❖ face-to-face interviews are not relevant for sensitive topics because they are not anonymous like mailed questionnaire and they produce huge amount of data that can be difficult to analyze, transcribe and reduce. (Frechtling and Sharp 1997).

Although some of the above-mentioned problems such as cost and travelling were not solved some were solved because the respondents were interviewed in their sites and the topic was not a sensitive issue, therefore the learners responded freely to the researcher's questions.

#### 5. 6.2 OBSERVATION

Observation can be done in various ways but its main aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' behaviour and reaction concerning the topic. Hoepfl (1997) views observation 'as a traditional data collection method for naturalistic, field research, description of the people's activities and reactions'. It is also a useful tool for a deeper understanding of the situation and participants' non-verbal behaviour. Observation is used to observe non-verbal behaviour which is important if the researcher aims to get a holistic perspective of the situation. Observation also allows a researcher to learn about certain issues that the respondents are not aware of Frechtling and Sharp (1997) state that observation provides direct information about the behaviour of the group/ respondents, provides an opportunity for identifying unanticipated outcomes and is useful in natural, unstructured and flexible settings. Observation was carried out by the researcher to observe non-verbal behaviour and gain an in-depth understanding of participants' reactions.

Learners and facilitators were observed in literacy classes to allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of what was happening in the classes and to observe the use of the literacy materials. Observation included observing the respondents'

participation, interaction and responses to the programme and the literacy materials. Although observation is regarded as a useful method it is very expensive, time consuming, can make the respondents nervous and the researcher has a little control over the situation (Hoepfl 1997). Frechtling and Sharp (1997) state that during observation, participants may not react freely as they usually do because of the fear of being judged by the researcher. However the participants were firstly informed about the research therefore their chances of fear and panic were minimised. The researchers' goal and role were clearly stated to the participants.

During the data collection process the researcher is responsible for recording the process and this may include the taking of notes and use of devices such as tape recorders (Frechtling and Sharp 1997). The researcher is also responsible for monitoring time and observing the non-verbal behaviour. If the researcher has multiple responsibilities some important areas can be overlooked. For example taking notes, conducting interviews and observing can be difficult or impossible. Frechtling and Sharp (1997) suggest that interviews can be recorded on a tape with the permission of the respondents. The use of a tape recorder allows the researcher to write only important points and it allows the researcher to concentrate and listen carefully to the participant's responses (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 1999; Bogdan 1992). If the tape is being used only important points and themes need to be recorded as notes. However if the tapes are not used the process of taking notes can be distracting, time consuming and it can result in less concentration on the participants especially the non-verbal communication (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 1999). Interview notes are also important because they act as a supplement to the tapes and such notes can be taken during and immediately after interviews (Burns 2000).

During data collection the researcher recorded data by taking notes and using the tape recorder. Permission to use the tape recorder was asked from the participants and the advantages of using the tape recorder were also discussed with the participants. Although the tape recorder is important in data collection it also has disadvantages such as the following:

- ❖ Participants may feel anxious and nervous to respond honestly if the responses are being recorded. The anxiety may be caused by the fear of confidentiality of the information given. However this disadvantage can be reduced if the purpose of the research, distribution methods of the thesis and the importance of recording are clearly stated and discussed with the

participants. The researcher minimised this problem by discussing the importance of using a tape with respondents

- ❖ Transcribing tapes is time consuming (Burns 2000).

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1999: 164) suggest that it is necessary to keep the notes in the form of research dairies, boxes and files, sticky notes, card indexes and computer files to ease the process of analysis. This is important as it allows the researcher to keep track of what has been done and what needs to be done.

## **5. 7. SITE VISITS**

Data were collected from different participants using standard interview schedules. Participants included learners, facilitators, librarians and literacy providers. The researcher also attended literacy classes. The literacy materials in libraries were also examined. Sites were visited twice a week (Milnerton on Tuesday and Bellville South on Thursday) for a period of six months (visitation dates attached as an appendix F).

## **5.8. DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is defined by Bogdan (1992: 153) as 'the process of systematically and physically arranging interview transcripts, field notes and other collected data that was accumulated during data collection'. Data analysis includes working with data, organizing and breaking it into manageable pieces, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and deciding what to tell others (Bodgan 1992). Data analysis provides a way of examining and interpreting data (Miles and Huberman 1994). Data analysis in qualitative research is inductive in nature because critical themes and meaning emerge from the data and requires creativity and the necessary skills to communicate and interpret data (Hoepfl1997). The data were in the form of tapes and notes in notebooks. Tapes were listened to and transcribed after each interview. Bodgan (1992: 107) uses the term 'field notes' to refer to the transcripts, notes from interviews and observation. Basically field notes comment on participants' responses and what has been observed. Data analysis therefore started with the physical sorting of field notes and reading of such notes. Data were screened for accuracy and to double-check the unanswered questions, incomplete and unclear answers.

Field notes were sorted according to the participants' categories, that is learners, facilitators, librarians, providers and publishers. Within these categories data was sorted according to themes, topics, patterns, words and phrases. Numbers and

codes were allocated to facilitate sorting. Common words and phrases that were used by the participants were also noted to facilitate categorisation. The ultimate goal of data analysis was to develop explanations and interpretations derived from the evidence. Comparisons, insights, and contrasts were made (Burns 2000). Different authors such as Punch (1998), Bogdan (1992), Miles and Huberman (1994) use the term 'data reduction' to refer to this process. 'Data reduction includes editing, segmenting and summarizing the data'. This process is necessary for clustering data according to themes and patterns to facilitate the interpretation and analysis. Punch also states that 'the main aim of this stage is to reduce and to group relevant data together without losing valuable information'. Burns (2000: 432) uses the term 'categorization' to similarly refer to data reduction. Burns states that during categorization, notes are read and re-read for the grouping together of similar topics in order to categorize them. Categorization is followed by data coding that is classifying data into themes, issues, topics, and concepts.

Punch (1998: 203) also suggests that after data reduction and data coding, data can be organized and assembled to gain meaning. He calls this process data display and this includes the use of tables, graphs and diagram for the interpretation of data into meaningful information. Miles and Huberman (1994: 11) also use the term 'data display' to refer to this process which facilitates the last stages, that is the drawing of conclusions and verification. This stage was repeated for accuracy because it is an important stage of data analysis. After data reduction and data display, conclusions were drawn based on the analyzed data (Punch1998).

## **5.9 CONCLUSION**

The research followed the qualitative research paradigm because it was viewed as the most appropriate method for the social studies. Qualitative research methods also provide an in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon and the researcher was interested in understanding the role of literacy materials in literacy programmes and public libraries. Two public libraries, that is Milnerton Public Library and Bellville South Public Libraries, were selected as case studies because they had literacy programmes. The researcher used interviews, telephone interviews and observation as data collection methods. The respondents included learners, facilitators, librarians and publishers. Data was collected and analyzed. Findings are discussed in Chapter six.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE CASE STUDIES**

#### **6. 1 INTRODUCTION**

The following chapter deals with the responses of the respondents and the findings. The responses of the respondents are arranged according to the different sites and by respondents' categories. This is preceded by a discussion of ABET provision in the Western Cape as an important introduction to an understanding of the case studies. It is arranged as follows:

- ❖ Milnerton Adult Learning Centre.
  - Learners' responses
  - Facilitators' responses
  - Librarian's responses (Milnerton librarian)
  - Providers' responses
- ❖ Bellville South Home Support Literacy Programme and Stikland Learning Centre
  - Learners' responses
    - ✓ Stikland Learners
    - ✓ Bellville South Learners
  - Facilitators' responses
  - Librarians' responses (Bellville South Librarian)
  - Providers' responses
- ❖ Publishers
  - NRP
  - Viva Books
  - Project Literacy
- ❖ The literacy programmes
- ❖ Literacy materials
- ❖ The role of Milnerton and Bellville South in literacy programmes

#### **6. 2 ABET PROVISION IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

ABET programmes of Milnerton Adult Learning Centre, Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland Learning Centre were based on general ABET standards and procedures and they were shaped according to the learners' needs. Their source of funding differed. Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project in particular is funded by the Department of Education and was based on ABET standards. Milnerton Learning Centre was provided by the library and supported by

sponsorship from the Rotary Club. Stikland Learning Centre was partly funded by the Department of Health. However all centres had specific objectives based on ABET programmes and learners' needs which informed the curriculum.

ABET in the Western Cape is provided mainly by the Western Cape Department of Education but there are other providers such as NGOs, libraries and other government departments. ABET is available to adults who do not have basic education or those who want to finish their basic education. ABET aims to equip adults with problem solving skills, critical thinking, life skills, and knowledge about various issues such as health through teaching them reading and writing skills. ABET programmes are outcomes based programmes that aim to provide basic learning tools, knowledge skills and provide participants with a nationally recognized qualification. Outcomes based programmes/education is based on learners' needs, relevance, developmental outcomes, life skills and critical outcomes. Literacy classes are based on learners' needs. ABET therefore is a flexible, developmental programme that targets specific needs of particular audiences and provides access to nationally recognized qualifications (Western Cape Education Department website 2006).

ABET is governed by two frameworks, namely the Curriculum Framework and National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Curriculum Framework indicates that literacy education aims to achieve critical outcome and developmental outcomes and life skills including reading, writing, communication and numeracy and that such teaching are based on unit standards. Unit standards organize and describe what the learner will know, levels and range of competence and assessment. Unit standards inform curriculum and assessment materials and they consist of specific outcomes that a learner is expected to achieve in order to be declared competent (Western Cape Education Department website 2006). The training is carried out according to the NQF which

is a framework on which standardized qualification, agreed by the education and training stakeholders throughout the country, are registered. NQF is based on appropriateness of training, national recognition and international comparability. NQF is necessary for learner's achievement and formal crediting. ABET level four in particular is at level one on NQF and it is a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) (Western Cape Education Department website 2006)

ABET consists of four levels equivalent from Grade R to nine. These levels are as follows:

- ❖ Level one: Learning to read, write and calculate. This is a basic or emergent level where learners are introduced to basic literacy, numeracy, language and communication. In most cases level one is delivered in the learners' home language. However, language use, that is English or the learners' home language is determined by the needs and objectives of the programme based on the learners needs (Western Cape Education Department website 2006).
- ❖ Level two: Reading, writing and calculating to learn at intermediate level. Level two entails teaching literacy, numeracy, language and communication (Western Cape Education Department website 2006).
- ❖ Level three: Learning to learn and preparing to specialize. Level three also entails literacy, numeracy, language, and communication at an advanced level. Learners can specialize in Arts and culture, economic and management sciences, human and social sciences, life orientation, natural science or technology. Level three language may be home language or English (Western Cape Education Department website 2006).
- ❖ ABET levels one to three provide the foundation for learners who wish to gain access to level 4.

### **6. 3 MILNERTON ADULT LEARNING CENTRE**

#### **A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Milnerton Adult Learning Centre was established in February 2000 after the identification of community literacy needs by the library through a community needs survey. The Milnerton Adult Learning Centre aims to teach disadvantaged adults reading, writing and communication skills in English for functionality and survival purposes. The programme was first publicized in various ways such as a fun run day. Funds were received from various organizations including Rotary Club, Old Mutual, and the Provincial Library Services. In 2000 the library was provided with a *Media Works* Programme. The *Media Works* Programme is a computer based ABET English programme which incorporates life skills training and various topics such as AIDS, home care, job searching and business training skills. The major sponsor of the programme is the Rotary Club. The classes are freely available to the community and the facilitators assist on a voluntary basis. The classes are on Monday evenings and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10h00 to 12h00. There are 12 facilitators for these different days, for example there are three facilitators for Tuesday classes. The site was visited once a week for the period of six months from

June to November 2007 on Tuesday mornings and the researcher attended classes and communicated with learners, facilitators and librarians.

At Milnerton the respondents were as follows:

- ❖ Learners. The researcher included as many learners as possible. However this was also determined by the attendance as the researcher managed to interview only those who were coming to classes regularly.
- ❖ Facilitators. The three facilitators available during the researcher's visits were interviewed.
- ❖ Librarian. Only one librarian was interviewed because she was the only person who was involved in the literacy programme.
- ❖ Provider. At Milnerton the provider of the literacy classes was the librarian. Therefore she was also interviewed as a provider.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Milnerton Learning Centre has achieved a variety of things since 2000. Some of these include the following:

- ❖ Handing of certificates to more than 250 learners; some have received more than one
- ❖ Some learners have managed to get employment and others have started their own businesses
- ❖ Voted as best centre in the Western Cape 2004 and second place in adult learners' week awards in 2004

## B. CLASS OBSERVATION

There were three literacy classes namely level one to level three. The classes were further divided according to learners' home languages, for example there was a class for the Portuguese speakers and French speakers but they were all in level one. The idea was to introduce them to English and this was done in conjunction with their language because the facilitators were also using French and English words so as to introduce English. Although the main aim of the classes was to teach English it was thought necessary to use both English and their home languages in basic classes. They had small exercise books where they wrote all the new English words and their meanings in their languages.

In classes learners were taught communication in English based on *Media Works*. However some learners in level one were not using *Media Works* because they had

to learn and acquire basic English first. Their lessons were based on what was prepared by the facilitators. The facilitators were allowed to shape their lessons according to what they viewed as important or relevant to the learners. Lessons for level two and three were based on *Media Works* and included the use of computer based materials. All learners were expected to participate in classes through answering and asking questions where necessary and doing tasks set by facilitators.

The characteristics of learners differed. The majority of learners were eager, enthusiastic and participative in that they asked and responded to the facilitators' questions and they also visited the library and practised their skills at home. Those who participated in classes outnumbered those who were not participating and they indicated that they wanted to acquire English skills as soon as possible so that they could change their lives. However, there were those who were not participating in classes. The majority of them were in level one. They were also reluctant to speak English and they only wanted to speak their home languages. The majority of learners were staying in Brooklyn, Milnerton and Joe Slovo (informal settlement) and they were using public transport to and from the classes.

### **C. LITERACY MATERIALS IN MILNERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The Milnerton Literacy Centre uses *Media Works* materials. *Media Works* materials are available to support two broad literacy approaches, namely face-to-face classes, through facilitator teaching method and Computer Assisted learning, that is multimedia programme with work books and facilitators' guide. At Milnerton they used Communication in English for ABET, level one to three. *Media Works* materials aim to equip the adults with life skills including the reading and writing skills. This will be discussed in detail in the sections on instructional materials.

The literacy classes were conducted on the library premises. The learners had two literacy collections, one stored at the main library (Milnerton library) while the other was stored in one of the storerooms close to the classes. To differentiate these two collections, the term 'learners' literacy collection' will be used to refer to the collection that was stored in storeroom to support the literacy classes. The characteristics of these collections were similar because they both contained materials to support and maintain the literacy classes and the newly acquired skills, they were written in various South African languages with pictures and written in simple language. Further information on literacy materials and libraries will be discussed in the section on materials and libraries.

## **D. LEARNERS' RESPONSES**

The researcher wanted to understand the whole process of literacy programmes and the use of literacy materials. The interview schedule was used to facilitate the process. The major interest was on literacy materials for literacy classes and post literacy activities. Therefore the researcher asked questions about materials they were using in classes and public libraries and features of the learners' favourite materials. General questions about literacy programmes were also included. The interviews were conducted after the classes since the researcher was also attending the classes. Learners were interviewed in groups of three to four people according to their levels. The interview schedule is attached as appendix A.

The following section discusses the responses of the thirty-five learners who were interviewed. The number of interviewed learners was determined by the attendance in class.

### **1. REASONS FOR JOINING THE ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME**

All learners indicated that they had joined the literacy programme because they wanted to learn and improve their reading and writing skills in English and also their general communication skills. They wanted to learn English in order to improve their lives, get jobs or get better jobs. Some wanted to further their education. Some of learners had tertiary qualification such as a diploma or a degree from their countries but they were illiterate in English which is not used as a medium of communication in their countries. They viewed English as an important language to acquire since it is regarded as a medium of communication and language for functionality in South Africa and in Cape Town in particular. They viewed the ability to read, write and communicate in English as necessary for survival and functionality. One learner specifically said that 'I have joined literacy classes because I want to be able to communicate in English because it is used as means of communication and used for job advertisements and I am unable to communicate with the majority of people because I don't know English'. This means that this particular learner viewed literacy in English as a necessity for communication.

They expected to be able to express themselves in English after completing the programme and to cope with and understand basic written materials. They also expected to know at least basic English in order to improve their lives, get jobs and solve their daily problems that are caused by their illiteracy. They indicated that their

major problems are the inability to communicate and understand the written information in English and therefore they were unable to get jobs or better jobs, express themselves in English and to read signs including road signs. The majority of learners were foreigners and they viewed literacy as a prerequisite for functionality at work and within the family and the community.

## 2. WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED FROM THE PROGRAMME?

All learners have learned reading, writing, numeracy, communication in English, general life skills and basic computer skills. At a basic level, learners learned basic English and how to read and write their names. Basic English includes pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary. Level one learners indicated that they had been learning basic English such as spelling, reading time tables, addressing envelopes and filling out forms while level two and three learners said that they had learned various skills like dictionary skills, letter writing, comprehension, reading maps, writing a curriculum vitae and general communication skills. They also learned how to communicate with others in conversation and how to ask and answer questions.

## 3. THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL OR LEARNING MATERIALS IN CLASSES

This question was specifically referring to learning materials in classes. Out of 35 interviewed learners, 12 (34%) indicated that they do not have learning materials while 23 (66%) indicated that literacy learning materials were available and they were used in classes. Those who said learning materials were available were asked to describe them. They were described as follows:

- ❖ They are written in English
- ❖ They have pictures, illustrations and exercises
- ❖ They are written in simple language

They are based on daily issues like doing shopping, going to town, reading road signs, job related issues, writing letters and health issues. Each level has its own materials. Level one is very basic with alphabets and an introduction to learning and writing English. Level two materials are for the individual who has passed level one and level three is more advanced. All levels had their specific materials (*Media works*) except in one of the level one classes because learners were still learning basic English. It was thought necessary for them to first learn basic English before they could use the materials. Therefore the 12 learners that indicated that they do not have literacy materials in their classes were in level one basic class.

#### 4. TYPES OF MATERIALS THEY WOULD LIKE TO READ

Learners were asked the type of materials that they would like to read and they indicated that they would like to read newspapers, Bible stories, magazines, story books including love stories, cookery books, and books about history and basic life skills such as health issues, how to start a business, how to write a curriculum vitae. The majority of learners liked newspapers, Bible stories and magazines while there were a few who liked materials about history, cooking, and how to start a business related books. One learner said that 'I like reading my Bible but it is written in French and I am unable to read the English Bible'. They also said that they preferred materials that are written in simple language that will help them to improve their lives and help them to learn English. Their responses showed that they like simple and easy written materials that relate to their daily lives.

The learners were asked if they practise their skills at home. The majority of learners, that is 74% (26 learners), said that they were practising their skills during their spare time while the remaining 26% (nine learners) were not practising their skills. The learners who were not practising their skills said they did not have time because some of them were working. Some said that they did not have reading materials in their homes while others said there was no one to help, guide, correct and motivate them when they were reading. One of the learners said 'I do not have time to read, at home I have to clean, cook and perform other household functions so I do not have time at all. I am always busy' Those who were practising their skills were reading newspapers, magazines, listening to English videos, communicating with English speakers and using any available and easy library material.

#### 5. THE AVAILABILITY OF PERSONAL BOOKS AT HOME

The majority of learners, that is 29 (83%), owned books or reading materials while 6 (17%) did not have reading materials. Those who owned books had story books, Bibles, cookery books, 'how to start a business' books, history books, dictionaries and magazines and books written in French or Portuguese. Very few had English books. The most commonly owned materials were Bibles, magazines, dictionaries and storybooks. Learners were also asked the reasons for not having books at home and they said that they had never thought of owning a book, they did not see the need of owning books as they were unable to read and some said books are expensive and some said they did not see the need of owning books if they could use the library collection. Some of these stated reasons may be attributed to low self-esteem and the lack of a reading culture because they said that they were illiterate

while they are literate in their home languages. They also argued that they consider book ownership as one of the characteristics of the educated people and they did consider themselves as educated people although they were literate in their home languages.

## 6. LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP AND USE

This question was not specifically referring to the Milnerton library but to any library that was close or convenient to the learners. Out of 35 learners, 15 (43%) indicated that they were members of the library while the remaining 20 (57%) were not members of the library. The majority of the learners who were not members of the library (Milnerton in particular) were in level one because learners were given library cards after they have completed level one and when they were able to fill out the application form. This was done by the librarian to encourage the learners to use the library. Those who were not members of the library said they did not see the reason to get the library membership because they were illiterate and would not be able to use the library. They did not want to disclose their status or ask assistance from the librarians. Some said they did not have the required documentation like proof of residence. Some said they did not have time while others said they were using their literacy collection and therefore they did not see the need to use the main library or any other library because they could get what they needed in their literacy collection. Those who were using the library were in level two and three while level one learners were not using the library. The reasons for not using the library may be attributed to various reasons such as the lack of confidence and the fear of disclosing their status to the librarians. Some learners indicated that they did not know the requirements for using the library.

### 6.1 Use of the library

The respondents were asked about their general use of the library collection even if they did not take out materials. A slim majority of learners, that is 18 (51%) did not use the library collection while the remaining 17 (49%) did use the library. The majority of the reasons for not using the library were similar to those for not joining the library because they indicated that they were illiterate and therefore unable to use the library, or they did not know the requirements or conditions of using the library or they did not have time. Library requirements included the proof of residence. Some said they were using the learners' literacy collection.

Those who were using the library were asked if they were able to get the materials they like. They all indicated that the materials were available and if they needed something that was not available at the library they used their literacy collection. They also indicated that they did not specifically use the adult literacy materials at the library but they used any materials such as magazines, newspapers and the children's section. None of the 35 learners was a member of a reading club.

## **E. FACILITATORS' RESPONSES**

The facilitators' interview schedule was similar to that of the learners because they were asked about literacy programmes, literacy materials and the suitability of these materials based on learners' responses in classes and their own views. The major aim was to get an in-depth understanding of the role of literacy materials in literacy programmes from the facilitators' point of view. The interviews were conducted after classes and facilitators were interviewed individually. The interview schedule is attached as appendix B.

The researcher interviewed three facilitators who conducted classes on Tuesday, the day that the researcher made her weekly visits. Therefore the researcher interviewed only the available facilitators during the site visits.

### **1. TEACHING OF ADULTS**

The facilitators were teaching reading, writing, communication and basic computer skills in English from level one to three. Reading included comprehension skills, pronunciation, reading instructions and spelling, while writing included writing their names, filling out forms such as library membership forms, writing letters, CVs and examinations. Basic computer skills included learning basic computer use like using a mouse, keyboard and Microsoft Word. Computer skills were included because they had computer assisted learning materials. The majority of classes were based on *Media Works*. *Media Works* is an ABET company that provides teaching materials that comply with the required outcomes of the NQF. (*Media works* materials will be explained in the section of materials).

### **2. RECRUITMENT OF THE ILLITERATES TO JOIN THE PROGRAMMES**

The recruitment was done through the word of mouth, in community gatherings and celebrations such as church services and through community notice boards including library notice boards. The recruitment was done at the end of the first and the last semester because they take new learners at the beginning of the year and during

July/August (second semester). Word of mouth was viewed as the most suitable way of recruiting the illiterates. It was indicated that newspaper advertisements do not reach the majority of the illiterates because they are unable to use and understand written materials including newspapers. Therefore newspapers would reach a limited number of their target group. The librarian who was also a provider of the literacy programme mainly did the recruitment.

### 3. RETENTION AND MOTIVATION OF LEARNERS TO ATTEND CLASSES ON A REGULAR BASIS

The facilitators reported on the various methods they use to motivate the learners including the following:

- ❖ After three months learners were given a library card. This was done to motivate them to fill out a form such as a library membership application form. Through this, they also gain confidence in using the library and taking out library materials. Practising writing their names and filling out forms is important so that they can fill out employment forms. Although the librarian and facilitators indicated that learners were given library cards after three months of attendance, they were other factors such as the ability to write one's name and library needed documentation such as the proof of residence that were considered as the prerequisites of getting library cards. Therefore, if learners were unable to read and write the basic information in a library application form after three months attendance, they were not given the library cards. This was also determined by the attendance as they were expected to be able to read and understand the basic library application form after three months of attendance.
- ❖ Recreational and educational tours. The learners visit various places like Robben Island.
- ❖ Through various activities such as wedding culture activity, Book Day celebration and others. Through these activities they get to know about different issues such as different culture and daily survival issues and most of all communicating with other people.
- ❖ Certificates. They were given certificates after they have completed a level, depending on their performance.
- ❖ Through discussing the importance in classes of being literate and its benefits
- ❖ Life skills courses like small business course and computer courses. For example, level three learners had a Business course in 2005 and at the end

of the programme they wrote a business plan and won a R1000.00 voucher to start a business.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT

The facilitators indicated that there is no formal assessment but that learners were assessed in various ways in order to monitor their performance. They were using informal assessment. For example, at the end of each chapter/lesson, learners were expected to write an exercise and the facilitators marked each learner's work and decided if the learner could proceed to the next chapter up to the end of the book. Once they have done and passed all the exercises they proceed to the next level. Informal assessment was based on *Media works* exercises and other materials that were viewed as relevant and suitable for the learners' assessment.

#### 5. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Milnerton Adult Learning Centre uses *Media Works* and other materials that were viewed as relevant and useful for the learners' needs. For example different sources were collected and adapted for literacy classes. However *Media works: communication in English* is the basic learning resource. They acquire these materials from the literacy provider (that is the library). One facilitator indicated that learning materials are based on the learners' needs while two facilitators indicated that they need to be adapted because they are not based on the needs of the learners. Facilitators had different views about learning materials because they said that various issues such as the background, education and general culture of learners determined the relevance of learning materials. For example, some learners had a tertiary qualification from their countries, while others only had a basic education. So, some of the level one learners were not using the materials because they were not based on their needs as they wanted an introduction to basic English and their teaching was partly delivered in their home languages. It is also important to note that these materials are based on South African culture and daily issues which may be totally different to those experienced by the learners of whom the majority were foreigners. Therefore the facilitators' different responses were based on their different group that is level one to level three. They also indicated that *Media works* materials are helpful and useful if they are adapted and used properly.

#### 6. THE LEARNERS' READING NEEDS

Learners were encouraged by their facilitators and the librarian to use the library or the literacy collection and to speak to them (facilitators and librarians) if they had any

problems regarding their reading needs. Learners were also advised to use newspapers, magazines and dictionaries and to practise their skills at home and to ask assistance from the literate people.

The learners required materials that would help them to learn English and survival skills quickly. They also desired materials that they can relate to, and that can help them to solve their daily problems such as filling out employment form, responding to newspaper advertisements and communicating in English. They also indicated that they liked to read materials that are based on their daily activities. The majority of them liked religious materials and informational materials. They preferred simple written materials with bright colours, pictures and large fonts. They also indicated that they need materials that are written in English because their main aim is to learn English.

One facilitator indicated that learners' needs were being met because they had two different literacy collections to support the literacy programmes. One facilitator indicated that the available literacy materials were not meeting the learners' needs because they need to be adapted. The remaining facilitator said she did not know whether the learners' reading needs were being met or not because learners were reluctant to use the library or the literacy collection. It is important to note that the background of the learners' needs and culture mainly determined the relevance of literacy materials to their needs. In terms of their needs, the facilitators indicated that the *Media Works* and literacy materials were satisfactory because they provide basic English skills, communication skills, and daily survival skills like writing a letter, reading road signs and writing a CV. Neither collections had materials in foreign languages like French and Portuguese; they had materials only in South African languages.

## 7 CHALLENGES

There were various challenges and problems experienced by the facilitators. They indicated that it is difficult to motivate the learners to attend classes on a regular basis and to finish the literacy programmes. Learners often think that the acquisition of literacy skills takes a few months and once they see that it takes longer than expected they lose interest and give up. Some learners did not want to participate in classes. This made it difficult for the facilitators to know if such learners were progressing or not. Some of them were not practising their skills during their spare time and the time that was allocated for the classes was not enough. It was

necessary for the learners therefore to practise their skills at home or during their spare time.

Milnerton had about 12 facilitators and such facilitators used different teaching styles and they were allowed to use various sources to shape their classes. It was difficult for facilitators to keep track of what other facilitators have covered or what was taught to the learners. Such different teaching methods made it difficult for facilitators to follow up on lessons that were not clearly understood by the learners.

It is difficult in Milnerton Learning Centre to select the materials and shape literacy classes according to the learners' needs because the intakes change every year. For example, in 2006 the majority of learners were French and Portuguese speakers while in previous years they had many Xhosa and English speakers and few French and Portuguese speakers. The Centre serves the diverse community and learners are continuously changing. It is difficult for the facilitators to know the characteristics and needs of their intakes so that they can shape their classes based on their needs.

The available materials need to be adapted because they are based on South African cultures and daily activities and the majority of learners in 2006 were foreigners with basic reading needs that are different from the South African learners' needs especially with regard to culture.

## **F. THE LIBRARIAN'S RESPONSES**

The librarian was interviewed because the researcher was interested in knowing about her role and experience in literacy materials, literacy programmes, the selection and availability of literacy materials to support the literacy programmes and post literacy materials. The librarian was interviewed before the classes on Tuesdays. She was also a provider of the literacy programme. Her questions were based mainly on literacy programmes, literacy materials and the retention of the newly acquired skills. The interview schedule is attached as an appendix C

### **1. ENCOURAGING THE LEARNERS TO SUSTAIN AND MAINTAIN THEIR NEWLY ACQUIRED LITERACY SKILLS.**

Generally learners were encouraged by the librarian to join and use the library. They were also advised to use the library that is close to them. They were given library cards after three months of attendance (there were also other prerequisites for getting the library card as noted in the section on facilitators' responses. This acts as

motivation because learners were expected to fill in application forms, showing that they are able to write their names. There was also a special collection for the literacy classes and learners were encouraged to use this collection and to speak to the facilitators or librarians if they did not find what they want. They were also encouraged to read and practise the newly acquired skills at home or during their spare time. The librarian was also a provider of the literacy programme. Therefore she had regular contact with the facilitators in everything including the learning and reading materials and the learners' reading needs. This means that there was cooperation between the library and facilitators.

## 2. READING MATERIALS

There were two collections that specifically catered for the adult learners. One was at the main library while the other was housed at the Milnerton Learning Centre in one of the storerooms. These two collections served the learners' reading needs and the one in the Learning Centre was specifically kept for the learners. The available reading and learning materials at the library and learners' collection were written in a simple language with pictures and illustrations, large fonts and attractive colours and they were available in different South African languages. Learners preferred to use magazines, newspapers, story books and dictionaries. The librarian stated that some of the available materials needed to be adapted as the learners sometimes complained that they are too easy or too complicated for their levels. It is difficult and time consuming to adapt these materials because the learners' needs change continuously based on the Centre's intakes.

## 3. THE USE OF THE COLLECTION

The literacy collection at the library was open to everybody who was interested in using it for internal use but only registered library users were allowed to take out library materials. The literacy collection (stored in storeroom) was open to the registered learners and learners were allowed to take as many books as they needed, but they had to arrange loans with the facilitators. Learners get literacy materials through loans like any registered library user however the literacy collection does not require a library card as it is opened to all registered learners. Literacy materials in the library were placed in a separate easily accessible section and they were marked with 'L' or 'A'

#### 4. LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO LITERACY MATERIALS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THEIR LEARNERS' NEEDS

The librarian indicated that learners respond differently based on their background and literacy levels and are treated individually. Some learners felt that the materials were too easy or too complicated for their learning needs while others said that they were relevant and suitable for their needs. The available materials aim to equip the learners with reading, writing and survival needs and the majority of the materials were not based on their background and cultures. The majority of learners in 2006 were foreigners and the library did not have materials in their local languages and materials that were based on their cultures. It only had materials that were written in South African languages and based on local cultures.

#### 5. SELECTION OF LITERACY MATERIALS

Literacy materials were selected based on an assessment of learners' needs and this was done with facilitators. They did not have a precise written selection policy. It is important to note that the librarian was also a provider. She selected materials with facilitators as both a librarian and a provider. However the librarian indicated that it was difficult to select literacy materials based on learners' needs because the intakes were continuously changing. For example, the majority of their learners in 2006 were foreigners who have been educated in their own countries. Such adults are literate in a certain language but illiterate in South African languages and in English in particular.

#### 6. THE AVAILABILITY OF LITERACY MATERIALS FROM THE PUBLISHERS

The Milnerton librarian stated that there are various literacy material providers but they wanted an inexpensive provider or a provider that was willing to negotiate the prices based on the library's budget and that it was difficult to find such a publisher or provider. However various publishers continuously send flyers and catalogues to the library but their materials are very expensive. The librarian works directly with the publishers.

Milnerton Library works with New Readers Project (NRP) and Project Literacy. The library does not work only with these publishers but NRP and Project Literacy were viewed as major literacy publishers with relevant and suitable materials for the Milnerton public library. NRP was considered to be the best literacy publisher because their materials cover various issues related to the learners' needs and they

are provided in different languages and they are always willing to provide support in terms of learners' needs and to give advice about materials.

## 7. PROBLEMS

The librarian indicated that she has limited time to organize literacy programmes related activities like adapting materials, planning activities like educational tours and to maintain regular contacts with the facilitators and learners because she also has library duties. During the investigation the librarian was the only staff member at the library that was involved in literacy. The available literacy materials were not sufficient for their needs and they need to be adapted since most of them are not based on learners' background and culture.

The librarian also indicated that there is a need for learner and materials research. Such research will enable them to know the needs of their learners and to enable the learners to discuss their literacy and materials needs so that the classes and materials can be based on their needs. The research will also reduce problems like absenteeism and high levels of drop out. The centre did not have high level of drop-outs but she indicated that the learners drop out if they feel that the process of acquiring literacy skills is longer than they expected and they also drop out when they get jobs however the librarian and facilitators did not have the specific number of the drop out rates. The Milnerton Learning Centre operates on a limited budget and there is a lack of support from the City Libraries, their parent body.

## G. PROVIDER'S RESPONSES

### 1. LEARNING MATERIALS: *MEDIA WORKS*

The Milnerton Learning Centre is using *Media Works* materials for the classes. *Media Works* is an ABET company that is based in Johannesburg with offices in Cape Town, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Bloemfontein. It offers learning programmes based on two approaches, namely:

- ❖ Face to face classes
- ❖ Computer Assisted learning.

*Media Works* currently reaches 10 000 learners in Southern Africa. *Media Works* provides workbooks or instructional materials and learning materials for numeracy (level one to level four), communication (level one to four), Natural sciences (level three and four), Economic and human sciences (level three and four), life orientation (level three and four), technology (level three and four), human and social sciences (level three and four) and Small Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME). These

materials are available in various languages such as IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, English and Afrikaans (Media Works website 2006).

At Milnerton, learners were using *Media Works for Communication*. The material is available in both multimedia computer assistant training and face-to-face methods training. The materials are described below.

## 2. COMMUNICATION ABET LEVEL 1

Communication level workbooks and computer-based materials are written in English. The Computer based materials consist of computer lessons, workbook exercises and facilitator support. Materials comply with the required outcomes of the NQF. Course content consists of alphabets, vowels, reading instructions, basic letter writing skills, sequencing events, basic comprehension skills and filling out forms. The workbook provides life skills that are needed by the adults to improve their lives. Such skills include learning to read and write, spelling, writing a CV, reading a recipe, reading a time-table or bus schedule and writing a letter. *Media Works* also provides basic knowledge of computer skills. However, at Milnerton the majority of level one learners' were not using these materials because they lacked basic English. The facilitators had to teach them basic English first before they could use these materials (Media Works website 2006).

## 3. COMMUNICATION ABET LEVEL II

Communication ABET level II workbooks also provide learners with life skills such as the use of telephone directory, writing a telegramme, wild life conservation, dictionary skills, punctuation and reading and writing skills. *Media Works* materials were used by all level two learners and they also have exercises that learners are expected to do at the end of the lesson (Media Works website 2006).

## 4. COMMUNICATION ABET LEVEL III

Communication ABET level III entails lessons on health related issues, reading maps, writing a CV, international culture, reading and writing skills, farming and South African history (Media Works website 2006).

*Media Works* materials have attractive self-explanatory pictures and large fonts. They are flexible to use, based on local cultures and are written according to South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), (a committee responsible for implementing and developing NQF) requirements. They also provide learners an opportunity of learning

basic computer skills. They can be modified and changed to meet the needs of particular group. Milnerton learners indicated that the *Media Works* materials were based on their needs and they are suitable and helpful (Media Works website 2006).

## **6.4 BELLVILLE SOUTH HOME SUPPORT LITERACY PROJECT AND STIKLAND HOSPITAL LEARNING CENTRE**

### **A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE BELLVILLE SOUTH HOME SUPPORT LITERACY PROJECT**

The Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project is a literacy programme that is conducted at the Bellville South Public Library. It is known as the Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project because classes were previously conducted at the learners' homes as they were targeting housewives and other community members. The University of Western Cape started the Home Support Literacy Project with other institutions such as Bellville Community Organization, Gleemor Congregational Church and Bellville South Public Library in 1994. A preliminary community survey was conducted in 1989 by the University of the Western. One of the purposes of the survey was to investigate the reading habits of the Bellville South community. The survey results indicated that many adults were illiterate and that there was a need for literacy classes. The survey results led to the establishment of the Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project. Various funders such as Western Cape Department of Education and the Cape Provincial Library Services have supported the Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project. In 2000 it was registered as a learning centre under the Department of Education. It is currently receiving a regular grant from the Department of the Education. The classes are available free of charge.

The classes are currently conducted at Bellville South Public Library but they were previously conducted at the Dorothy Boesak Book Centre. The Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project targets parents, caregivers and adults of 15 years and above. It provides basic literacy skills, numeracy and communication skills in Afrikaans.

The researcher interviewed only ten learners. Although Bellville South Library had 21 learners the researcher did not manage to meet all the learners because of poor attendance at classes. Seven of the learners are working, eight of them are unemployed, three are pensioners and three are disabled, that is emotionally

disabled and abused. Classes were centered around daily life activities like reading road signs, reading medical prescriptions, personality, health issues and basic reading and writing. Classes were conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10h00 to 13h00 and from 17h00 to 19h00.

## **B. CLASS OBSERVATION**

There were two classes, namely level one and level two and three (level two and three in one classroom). In both classes learners were given work to do in classes and at home after classes. The facilitators firstly explained the work and did exercises with them based on the lessons. During lessons the facilitators asked the questions and the majority of learners were participating in that they answered questions and asked questions when they did not understand the facilitators. Classes were conducted in Afrikaans as the majority of learners were Afrikaans speakers. All classes did not have literacy materials however learners were given different lessons and exercises from different sources of materials including prescribed books (from the provider), newspapers, and a variety of materials that were regarded by the facilitators as relevant for their purpose. Although the learners were participating in their classes in Afrikaans, some of them were reluctant to speak English with the researcher. The researcher had to ask the facilitators to translate the questions into Afrikaans for the learners and the answering to English for the researcher because the researcher did not understand Afrikaans.

## **C. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT STIKLAND HOSPITAL LEARNING CENTRE**

The Stikland Hospital Learning Centre targets the employees of the hospital. It started in 2004 as a SANLI project through the leadership of the Bellville South librarian. After the collapse of the SANLI project the hospital took over the financial costs of the programme. At the beginning of 2005 the partnership between the Department of Health and Bellville South Library was formed for the financial support of the programme. The classes are currently conducted in Afrikaans, starting from level one and continuing to level three. There were two facilitators at Stikland Hospital Learning Centre and classes were held from 12h00 to 13h00 on Thursdays.

## **D. CLASS OBSERVATION**

There were two facilitators and two classes. Level two and three classes were conducted in one classroom while level one was conducted in a separate classroom. All learners were employees of the Stikland Hospital and they were all females. They

were eager to learn literacy skills in order to perform their jobs better and communicate better with their colleagues and supervisors. They participated in classes through doing class work and asking and answering questions. They did not have literacy materials, and facilitators used different sources of materials to shape the classes. In some cases they had to translate English materials into Afrikaans as they all complained that suitable Afrikaans literacy materials were very scarce. Learners were living in Stikland, Kraaifontein and Eerste Rivier, suburbs reasonably close to their place of work.

## **E. LEARNERS' RESPONSES**

The following part deals with the responses of the learners, grouped according to their centres (Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland Hospital Learning Centre). This is because the two groups differed in terms of composition and reasons for joining the literacy classes. Learners were interviewed in groups of two or three before and after the classes. Their questions were based on literacy programmes, literacy materials and reading needs. The major interest of the researcher was the literacy materials in both literacy classes and public libraries but it was viewed necessary to include questions that are related to literacy programmes in order to understand their reading needs. The interview schedules of all respondents are attached as appendix A.

### **1. BELLVILLE SOUTH HOME SUPPORT LITERACY**

#### **1.1 REASONS FOR JOINING LITERACY CLASSES**

Learners indicated that they joined literacy classes because they wanted to learn and improve their reading and writing skills in Afrikaans in order to improve their lives, get better jobs, be able to read to their grandchildren and cope with printed materials including the Bible and to be independent. The majority of learners were Afrikaans speakers and wanting to learn their mother tongue before learning English. Learners expected at the end of the programme to be able to communicate and cope with written materials, to solve their daily problems such as reading instructions, filling out a form and communicating better and to improve their lives.

In classes they learned reading, writing and communication skills in Afrikaans, numeracy and life skills. In numeracy, they learned to count and to do basic calculations. They also learned spelling, pronunciation, alphabets and they were able to use alphabets in constructing a sentence. They learned how to write their names, and personal information like addresses and identity document numbers.

Their learning was based on daily activities. They were learning reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills. They were also equipped with necessary skills to deal with everyday information like reading instructions, reading product labels including medical prescription, writing and addressing letters and being able to sign their names. Learners were able to speak and communicate in Afrikaans, therefore during communication they were learning how to voice their opinions, comment on daily topical issues, maintain and initiate conversation.

## 1.2. LITERACY MATERIALS

None of the learners had learning materials in their classes. Learners said they liked materials based on their daily responsibilities like doing shopping, reading a bus/train schedule, use of medical prescriptions, health related issues, cookery books, small business related books and materials about computer use. They also indicated that they liked simple written materials, with colourful pictures, large fonts and attractive binding and covers and materials written in Afrikaans. Their favourite materials included magazines, newspapers, Bibles, love stories and cookery books. The majority of learners liked magazines such as *Die Huisgenoot* and newspapers. There were a few who liked love stories and cookery books.

Out of ten learners, seven learners owned Bible/s, story books, high school learning materials, cookery books, history books and biographies while the remaining three did not have any materials at their homes. The three learners who did not own books were asked the reasons for not owning books and they said they had never thought about buying books as they are expensive and they cannot afford them. Some said they did not see the need of owning books because they were using library materials and they also said that they did not see the need the need of owning books because they do not have time to read them.

Out of ten learners, eight learners were practising their skills at home while the remaining two were not practising their skills at home. Those who were practising their skills were reading newspapers, magazines and library materials and listening to television programmes. These programmes included "Seven de laan". "Seven de laan" is an Afrikaans programme with English subtitles. The two learners who were not practising their skills said that they did not have time because they were working and they had family responsibilities.

### 1.3. LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP AND USE

The majority of learners, that is six learners, were not members of the library and the remaining four were members of the Bellville South Public Library. Those who were not members of the library said that they were unable to read and write and they could not use the library and they did not want to disclose their status to the librarians. Some of them said that they did not have time to go to the library because they are working long hours.

Learners were asked if they were using the library. The question was referring to the general use of library even if the user/ learner did not take out materials. The majority of learners, that is six learners, were using the library while the remaining four were not using the library because they said that they did not have time to go to the library and they did not have time to read at home.

The learners who were using the library said that the materials they liked to read were available in their local library and in Bellville South public library. They indicated that they did not specifically use the literacy collection at the library and that they used newspapers, magazines and children's books.

### 1.4. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The learners experienced a variety of problems and challenges. The major problem was the unavailability of literacy materials to support literacy programmes. Although facilitators were using different sources to shape literacy classes, learners felt that it would be better for them if they had their own materials that they could use in classes during the lessons.

Classes were conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10h00 to 13h00 and from 17h00 to 19h00 but learners indicated that such time was not enough for them to fully acquire literacy skills. Some learners were living with their grandchildren and they were unable to attend classes if the grandchildren were sick. They were also unable to attend on pension day. The family responsibilities included taking care of the family and spending time with the family. Such responsibilities made it difficult for them to attend classes on a regular basis and to practice their skills at home.

Some also had transport related problems that were caused by the public transport and lift clubs. This means that if the lift club was not available for one reason or another they were affected by such issues.

## 2. STIKLAND HOSPITAL LEARNING CENTRE

Out of fifteen learners, nine learners were interviewed at the Stikland Hospital Learning Centre. Both the Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and the Stikland Hospital Learning Centre aimed to teach the adults reading, writing and communication skills in Afrikaans. Therefore learners' responses from these centres are similar because they all wanted to acquire reading, writing and communication skills in Afrikaans. The major difference was that literacy classes in Stikland were considered as skills development training and learners who did not have basic education were expected to attend such classes. Learners were interviewed after classes in groups of two. Their questions were based on literacy programmes, literacy materials and their reading needs

### 2.1 REASONS FOR JOINING THE CLASSES

The learners indicated that they had joined literacy classes because they wanted to learn and improve their reading and writing skills in Afrikaans. They viewed literacy skills as necessary to improve their lives, work performance and to help them get better jobs and promotion. They also indicated that they wanted to be able to read to their grandchildren and to cope with written materials.

### 2.2 LITERACY CLASSES AND LITERACY MATERIALS

The learners expected to be able to cope with basic written materials, follow written instructions and to be able to cope with their daily challenges that are based on written materials. Daily challenges included the ability to fill out a form such as a leave form, to use an ATM and to perform their jobs better. They also expected to be independent learners after they had completed the programme and to improve their lives, to improve their working skills and to get better jobs or promotion. They learned reading, writing, communication and numeracy and this included writing the alphabet, pronunciation, spelling and reading and basic writing skills such as their names, addresses and sentence construction.

Learners were also learning how to communicate with their peers, professionals, colleagues and families. Critical thinking or the ability to analyze information, reading and responding to advertisements, reading newspapers, and short stories were also included. Numeracy skills included calculations and counting. They were also learning basic employment rights such as leave, how to select insurance policies, budgeting, bonuses, pension funds and tax related issues.

All learners at the Stikland Learning Centre indicated that they did not have learning materials. However they liked materials that are written in simple language with pictures, bright colours, large fonts and short sentences and these materials should be written in Afrikaans because they were unable to read English materials. They liked materials that are based on their needs and daily responsibilities, short stories, magazines, newspapers and Bible stories. Their daily responsibilities included doing shopping, going to health services, dealing with health issues like how to avoid diseases like cholera, paying bills and financial issues like budgeting and buying the right product.

### 2.3 PRACTISING THE NEWLY ACQUIRED SKILLS AT HOME OR DURING SPARE TIME

The majority of Stikland learners were not practising their skills as they were working long hours and had family responsibilities, therefore they did not have time. Some also indicated that they read newspapers once a week but that they did not read and practise their skills on a regular basis. Out of nine learners, five indicated that they had books such as Bibles, cookery books, history books, short stories, prayer books and high school books at home. All these materials were written in Afrikaans. Those who did not have books at home said books are expensive and as they were illiterate they would not be able to read them.

### 2.4 LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP AND LIBRARY USE

A slim majority of learners, that is five learners, were not members of the library and the remaining four were members of the Kraaifontein and Eerste Rivier libraries. Those who were not members of the library said that they did not have time to go to the library as libraries are far from them and that they view libraries places for the literate people.

All learners were asked if they were using the library. The question was referring to the general use of the library even if the learners did not take out the library materials. Only three learners were using the library. The remaining learners said that they did not have time to go to the library; that the library is far from their homes and some said the library where they had registered did not have the materials they wanted. They also said that they had requested the materials they wanted from the librarian but they had not heard anything from the librarian. They indicated that they requested simple written adult materials that would help them to practise and maintain their newly acquired skills. There were only three learners who were using

the library and they all indicated that their favourite materials were available at the library. They did not specifically use the adult literacy collection but they used a variety of materials such as magazines, newspapers and children's books.

## 2.5. PROBLEMS

The major problem experienced by the learners was the unavailability of learning materials. They viewed this as an obstacle in their classes as they were unable to progress as well as they wished to. They also indicated that the allocated time for literacy classes was not enough. Classes were conducted in Afrikaans and some learners indicated that they also wanted English classes (Some of these learners were in level two and three). They viewed English as the means of communication especially in the work place.

## **F** **4. FACILITATORS' RESPONSES (BELLVILLE AND STIKLAND LEARNING CENTRES)**

All four facilitators were interviewed after classes. The researcher was interested in knowing the general information about the literacy programmes, literacy materials for the literacy programmes. Therefore the facilitators were asked about the literacy programmes and literacy programmes and their views on literacy materials based on their experience in teaching the adults.

### 1. RECRUITMENT

The facilitators were teaching reading, writing and basic communication in Afrikaans and life skills. All classes were based on the ABET curriculum. At Stikland the recruitment was done by the hospital through checking the employees' records and advising those without basic education to join the classes as the skills development. Bellville South Home Literacy Project used word of mouth, community notice boards and community newspapers to recruit the illiterates. At Bellville South there was a fieldworker for door-to-door recruitment. The data showed that learners were recruited in various ways such as door-to-door methods, word of mouth, newspapers and community gatherings. Word of mouth was viewed by the facilitators as the most suitable way of recruiting the illiterates. Recruitment was done at the end and the beginning of the year but for a single intake.

## 2. RETENTION AND MOTIVATION OF LEARNERS TO ATTEND ON A REGULAR BASIS

Learners were motivated through recreational and educational tours, community projects and discussion about the importance of literacy. One of the Bellville South modules deals with life skills. Through this module learners did greeting cards, fabric painting, decorating candles and working with glass and beads. The main aim was to develop life skills and business related skills so that learners can generate profit from their products. This is also motivational as some learners said it kept them busy and developed their creativity.

## 3. ASSESSMENT

In both centres facilitators indicated that there was no formal assessment but learners were assessed in various ways so as to have an idea of their progress. Learners were evaluated through informal procedures as they were expected to write certain exercises and to finish a number of modules before they could proceed to the next level. The assessment was based on the ABET standards provided by the Department of Education. ABET assessment measures the outcomes of the unit standards (ABET literacy materials). Unit Standards are curriculum and assessment materials that allow the facilitators to teach towards and assess against the stated standards. Each Unit standard consists of specific outcomes that learners are expected to achieve in order to be declared competent. There was also continuous assessment and a common task assessment based on presented portfolio tasks in each learning area. Portfolio tasks were provided by the Department of Education. Neither centre had unit standards. The assessment was done through the use of a variety of learning materials considered necessary and relevant for assessment.

## 4. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

The facilitators used different materials according to the requirements of their lessons. They used library materials, materials from Edulis (the Department of Education library), bookshops and any available materials such as newspapers and magazines to support their teaching. They also indicated that suitable Afrikaans and relevant literacy materials were difficult to find. In some cases they had to translate English materials into Afrikaans. They did not have learning and teaching materials such as Unit Standards.

In both centres learners were given work to do at home and they were also encouraged to take library books so that they could read at home for the maintenance of literacy skills. However the Stikland facilitators indicated that it was

difficult for learners to read at home because they worked long hours and they also had family responsibilities.

## 5. THE LEARNERS' READING NEEDS

The Stikland facilitators said they did not know the learners' reading needs because they spent few hours with the learners. The Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project indicated that learners needed simple, suitable, relevant Afrikaans materials with pictures and large fonts. These could be storybooks, cookery books, business related books, religious materials and materials about life issues or informational materials.

H

## Ø. LIBRARIAN'S RESPONSES

The Bellville South librarian is the centre manager for the Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and also a provider for the Stikland Learning Centre. She was the only person at Bellville South Library involved in literacy programmes and materials for the literacy programmes. The librarian was interviewed after classes. The researcher was interested in her role in literacy programmes in Bellville Learning Centre and Stikland Learning Centre. Her questions were based on literacy programmes, literacy materials and the retention of the newly acquired literacy skills. The researcher was also interested in her views on literacy materials based on her experience and involvement in literacy.

Learners were encouraged by the librarian to use libraries that are close to them or the library in which classes are conducted. They were also advised to speak to the facilitators and librarians if they did not get the materials they want. The librarian was the only person who was responsible for the selection of literacy materials.

The available materials (in Bellville South library and Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project collection) are written in a simple language and with pictures. Some are based on learners' needs while others need to be adapted. These materials are available in various languages such as English, Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. There were only a few titles in Afrikaans. The collections consist of short story books, cookery books and books about life skills. The library literacy collection is open to everybody who is interested in using it for internal use but only registered library users may take out materials. Learners get materials through the loan system as any other library user. Literacy materials are arranged and placed in a separate easy accessible area. At Bellville South they are marked with 'L' for literacy. The Stikland Learning Centre

did not use the Bellville South collection because it is far from them and they did not have their own special literacy collection. The librarian indicated that learners responded differently to literacy materials based on their literacy levels and daily responsibilities.

The Bellville South librarian indicated that she did the selection of literacy materials based on the following criteria:

- ❖ ABET curriculum
- ❖ Relevance in terms of content
- ❖ Public library general material selection
- ❖ Needs of the users

The Librarian receives catalogues and the list of recommended materials from the Department of Education and such catalogues are used as the basis for materials selection. There are also other factors that were viewed by librarians as important in selecting literacy materials. These factors are budget and the life period of a book/materials, which is determined by the cover and binding. The librarian indicated that it is difficult to find relevant and suitable literacy materials that are written in Afrikaans and in some cases they buy English materials. Literacy materials are purchased through vendors.

## **6.5 PUBLISHERS' RESPONSES**

Two publishers namely, NRP, Viva Books and one literacy provider (Project Literacy) were interviewed. The researcher was interested in knowing the types and features of the materials they publish for literacy programmes; the learners' reading needs and their marketing strategies for their literacy materials. The marketing skills were considered important because they entail the distribution of literacy materials so that they can reach the targeted audience. The meetings were arranged with various publishers and some were interviewed during the conference (Reading Association Southern Africa, RASA) that the researcher attended.

The researcher wished to include as many publishers as possible. One of the publishers is based in Cape Town; NRP which is based in Durban was selected because it is regarded as one of the best publishers in Adult Education. The libraries (Milnerton in particular) had books that were published by Project Literacy and NRP. It was therefore viewed necessary to include both NRP and Project Literacy.

## **A. NRP (THE NEW READER'S PROJECT)**

One publisher from NRP was interviewed during the Reading Association Southern Africa (RASA) conference that was held in Cape Town (Keyser 2006). The questions were based on literacy materials, that is types and features and the distribution of such materials.

### **1. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION**

The New Reader's Project (also known as New Readers Publishers) is a non-profit organization that was established in 1991 by the School of Adult Education and Higher Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Its major aims are to develop appropriate reading materials for literacy, promote reading culture and to contribute to the increase of adult literacy (Van Gend 1996). NRP materials are suitable for literacy classes, English second language classes, libraries and resource centre uses. They are published in all eleven South African languages in all ABET levels. They are characterized by large print, illustrations and simple language and they are based on daily activities. NRP publishes both fiction and non-fiction (NRP website 2006).

### **2. THE MATERIALS THEY PUBLISH**

NRP has published 87 readers in eleven South African languages namely:

- ❖ 16 readers in IsiZulu
- ❖ 27 in English
- ❖ nine readers in Spedi,
- ❖ five in IsiXhosa
- ❖ five in Sotho
- ❖ three in Tsonga
- ❖ three in Afrikaans
- ❖ three in Tswana
- ❖ three in Venda
- ❖ three in Ndebele
- ❖ three in Swazi
- ❖ three dual texts
- ❖ four teachers' manuals.

NRP publishes both fiction and non-fiction. They have published readers for level one to three, and level four will be available in 2007. Level one readers target beginners and they have one or few sentences per page, with illustrations and large print. Level

two readers have full pages of text in large print with illustrations while level three readers are more advanced with longer and complex sentences and illustrations. All readers are written in simple language. The teachers' guides are mainly used for lessons and assessment; they cover outcomes for communication in English and include worksheets. Their materials are easy to read, interesting and they cover a variety of topics. NRP, with the University of KwaZulu-Natal also publishes *Learn with echo*, a weekly newspaper supplement that appears in *The Witness* (Keyser 2006).

NRP publishes literacy materials based on learners' needs and mother tongue literacy. They are tested in various geographical regions for appropriateness and accessibility. The materials are produced using good paper and durable full colour cover. This means that they produce materials of high quality. NRP materials are sold in bookshops and to provincial and municipal libraries and through government tenders for literacy related programmes.

They market their materials at conferences (such as Reading Association Southern Africa annual conference), book fairs (Cape Town Book Fair), their website (NRP website) and through professional associations such as Publishing Association Southern Africa and in professional magazines and newsletters. NRP sends notices about their materials to various literacy providers.

### 3. NRP AND LIBRARIES

NRP works with various public libraries such as KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Services libraries through suppliers. It also works with the Centre for Book and schools and the defunct Western Cape Literacy Interest Group and schools.

NRP is also involved in promoting reading through workshops and related activities. In 1999 it received funds from UNESCO to conduct workshops for ABET practitioners. Workshops included the awareness about the importance of reading in ABET classes and the importance of mother tongue literacy. The participants were given book packs for use in their classes. Various other workshops were held in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

### **B.VIVA BOOKS**

The publisher was interviewed telephonically because he was too busy to attend a face-to-face interview. Questions were based on features and types of literacy materials and the distribution of such materials (French 2006).

## 1. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION

Viva Books, based in Cape Town, was established in 1991. Its main goals are to develop a reading culture by publishing easy readers. It was established to reduce some of the problems that are associated with the lack of literacy materials. It works with libraries, literacy providers and teachers for the publication of relevant literacy materials. It produces fiction and non-fiction for the ABET curriculum, with illustrations in eight South African languages (Van Gend 1996).

## 2. THE MATERIALS

Viva Books publishes literacy materials for ABET level one to level four. They publish fiction, non-fiction, facilitators' manuals and course manuals as follows:

- ❖ Fiction - mainly republished short stories (adapted for language level and illustrated) from emerging literature. Examples of published authors include Eския Mphahlele, Can Themba and Bessie Head.
- ❖ Non-fiction - commissioned biographies of singers (for example Brenda Fassie), musicians (for example Kippie Moeketsi), artists (for example Gerard Sekoto) and sports people (for example Doctor Khumalo).
- ❖ Facilitators' manuals - to accompany sets of books at each level with worksheets and activities that can be photocopied.
- ❖ Course material - English Literacy Project's course material at levels one and three. Level two is still pending.

They do not publish newspapers or newspaper supplements. The process of publishing their materials is based on the following:

- ❖ Users' needs
- ❖ Curriculum/ Unit standards
- ❖ Reading interests of adults

Viva Books sells their materials directly to education departments, bookstores (which only plays a small role) and to all provincial and municipal libraries. They mainly market their materials through response to tenders but also telephonic follow ups. Their main problem is that the target readers either cannot afford the books or they do not see the need or importance of owning reading materials. So their (target audience) access books in libraries. However, some libraries are unable to provide and buy such materials because of financial limitations.

## C. PROJECT LITERACY

The researcher interviewed the project manager for the Western Cape branch (Carbutt 2006). All Project Literacy materials are published in Johannesburg however all branch project managers were involved in some aspects publishing literacy materials such as the planning, evaluating and marketing such materials. The Project manager was interviewed through the use of face-to-face interviews and follow up telephone interviews. The questions in the interviews were based on features and types of literacy materials and the distribution of literacy materials.

### 1. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION

Project Literacy was founded by Jenny Nesor in 1973. It started at St Francis Church in Pretoria. By 1988 it had various schools in Pretoria, Johannesburg and two in Middleburg. In 1994 Project Literacy offices were opened in Arcadia, Pretoria. Currently, Project Literacy has offices in all provinces (Project Literacy website 2005). It is involved in various other projects that provide literacy classes to various groups. Such projects include the following:

- Ikhwelo project provides practical literacy skills to adults
- National lottery project. Project Literacy was contracted in 2003 by the National Lottery Distribution Trust to train volunteer educators in Limpopo and Western Cape
- Project Literacy also won a tender to provide prisoners with ABET learning materials (Project Literacy website 2005)

It originally offered classes in mother tongue in Pretoria and Johannesburg. It is currently the biggest provider of ABET in South Africa with offices in all nine South African provinces. It is involved in curriculum design and in selection of literacy materials

Project Literacy has been supported by various companies such as De Beers, Nampark, People's Bank, Vodacom and Pick 'n Pay.

### 2. THE MATERIALS

Project Literacy publishes a variety of materials including the following:

- ❖ *Maths Matters* for level one to four and it meets all the unit standards for numeracy and mathematics. The educator's guide with a solution guide accompanies it.
- ❖ *English matters* for level one and three and educators guide

- ❖ Materials for agriculture include *Seeds for learning for level one to three* with workbooks and course books.
- ❖ They have also published 20 readers in Sepedi, Setswana, IsiZulu and IsiXhosa which were developed in conjunction with the Easy Reading for Adults (ERA) initiative.
- ❖ Materials on HIV/AIDS, tourism, SMMEs, economic and management sciences, life orientation and materials to fight poverty have been published to meet the different needs of the adults.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

The research showed that the three centres differed in the following:

- ❖ resources (materials)
- ❖ communication and support from the providers
- ❖ learner motivation
- ❖ learner participation and attendance

Milnerton Learning Centre had better resources than Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland Hospital Learning Centre. This is based on the findings that the majority of learners in Milnerton Learning Centre had literacy materials to support the acquisition of literacy skills (both teaching and assessment). In fact all levels in Milnerton had literacy materials. Only learners at basic level had no materials because they had to learn basic English first. All learners in Bellville South and Stikland had no literacy materials for their classes. Facilitators for both Bellville South and Stikland had to collect exercises from different materials and make copies for their lessons and in some cases they also had to translate English materials into Afrikaans for their lessons. The availability of literacy materials in literacy classes plays an important role in motivating learners and facilitators and it is regarded as a prerequisite for the success of any literacy programmes.

Although Bellville South Home Support Literacy Programme and Stikland were partly funded and provided by the Department of Health and the Department of Education, the case studies showed that such providers were not providing the full support for the literacy programmes because they (literacy programmes) both operated on limited budget that restricted them in providing necessary prerequisites such as materials for literacy programmes. The availability of literacy materials is a critical requirement for any literacy programme as various authors such as Rogers (1994); Cisse (2001); Mabomba (1992); Thomas (1993) and Ahrends (1984) state that

literacy programmes are not likely to change and improve the learners' lives without the availability of literacy materials to support the acquisition and maintenance of the literacy skills. Through the availability of literacy materials learners practise, develop and maintain their skills so that they can improve their lives and be familiar with the printed materials. The literature also showed that the lack of resources, literacy materials in particular, in literacy programmes contribute to learner motivation, absenteeism and drop out levels. It is therefore the role of the providers (both the departments and the library) to fully support the literacy programmes through the provision of resources that are necessary for the success of literacy programmes.

The learners had different motives in joining the literacy programmes. There were those who joined literacy programmes because they wanted to learn English as both communication and survival skill (majority were foreigners and they were struggling to get employment since they were unable to communicate in English), some were advised by their employers to join literacy programmes as skills development programmes (Stikland learners) and the minority wanted to learn their home language so that they can cope with their daily needs including getting jobs and some of them only wanted to be able to read their medical prescriptions and read for their grandchildren. The research showed that motives for joining literacy programmes had an impact on learner attendance and participation in literacy programmes because learners in Milnerton were eager to learn and very participative in classes. However, Milnerton also had problems such as absenteeism and drop out levels but the learners were better motivated to attend literacy programmes because they were struggling to cope with daily activities such as reading urban signs and communicating in English. Although the reasons for poor attendance in Bellville South was not clearly identified by learners, facilitators and the librarian it is possible that the learners did not consider the acquisition of literacy skills as the major need for survival because the minority of them were pensioners who only wanted to be able to read to their grandchildren. The motives for joining literacy classes are important because they determine the level of commitment and success for the learners. The research showed that the learners who were unemployed for various reasons including illiteracy were very enthusiastic and participative in classes. The majority of these learners were in Milnerton. Milnerton Learning Centre also had courses on business skills and basic computer skills since their materials were based on computers. Such benefits also contributed to learners' participation and attendance in classes.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

This Chapter deals with the interpretation of the findings, the conclusion and the recommendations. The recommendations are based on the findings of the study. It is arranged as follows:

- ❖ The interpretation of the findings
- ❖ Research questions
- ❖ Recommendations
- ❖ Conclusion

#### **7.2 THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS**

Common themes, patterns and trends emerging from the data are presented using the following analytical framework:

- ❖ The literacy programmes
- ❖ The literacy materials
- ❖ The public libraries' role in literacy

##### **7.2.1 THE LITERACY PROGRAMMES**

The selected centres provided literacy programmes to equip the adults with basic learning needs and life skills. Basic learning needs according to UNESCO (2005) include 'literacy, oral expression, numeracy, problem solving skills, knowledge, values and attitudes'. Such skills are regarded as prerequisites for survival, developing personal capacities, prerequisites for living and working in dignity, to improve quality of life, to participate in development and in a continuous learning process. Aitchison (2006) states that 'life skills are important individual assets that include psycho-social, interpersonal skills and livelihood skills that are necessary for participation in personal, family and social life, at work place, in informal income generation, in institutional setting and in community issues'. The learners therefore joined the literacy programmes to acquire the basic learning needs that are necessary to improve their lives. Their basic needs included the need to improve one's life (including employment seeking skills), the need to cope, to deal with written materials or/and to further education including the ability to read for their grandchildren, the ability to read medical prescriptions and practical numeracy skills and English/ Afrikaans speaking skills.

In the literacy programmes the learners were taught different survival and functional skills including writing basic information such as names, addresses and identity numbers, spelling, use of verbs, punctuation, using dictionaries, phone directories, calendars and diaries, map reading, basic business writing skills, responding to a newspaper advertisement and basic computer skills (Milnerton only). Communication skills were also included. Such skills are viewed by different authors such as Aitchison (2006) and UNESCO (2005) as examples of training that are relevant and needed by illiterate people. The learners therefore viewed literacy as an important prerequisite for survival, functionality and participation in a modern society because they all indicated that they wanted to improve their lives in various ways such as the ability to get employment or better jobs or to communicate better in their mother tongue (Afrikaans, in the case of Stikland and Bellville).

In Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project literacy and Stikland Learning Centre classes were conducted in Afrikaans while they were conducted in English in Milnerton Learning Centre. The use of mother tongue in both literacy classes and literacy materials is viewed as a foundation for successful literacy programmes because local languages reflect the learners' cultural needs and in most cases the learners are familiar with their local languages (Knuth 1998; Arnold 1982; Dugmore 2006). Therefore the language for literacy programmes can be a functional language (English in South Africa) or/and a local language. It is necessary to note that although local languages are viewed as an important foundation for literacy programmes it is important to introduce English at a later stage because in South Africa it is used for functionality, communication and survival especially in job related matters. However the use of either a mother tongue or a national language is determined by the needs of the adults and the objectives of the centre. The case studies demonstrated that Afrikaans-speaking learners at Stikland Learning Centre and Bellville Home Support Literacy Centre wanted the instruction in Afrikaans before learning another language. However Milnerton Learning Centre adults viewed English as the main prerequisite for functionality and survival. The majority of learners in Milnerton had already acquired some education (basic education and tertiary education) in their countries of origin. This also means that they had already acquired literacy in their home languages. The research showed that learners have different needs in terms of language instruction based on their needs, literacy levels (including being literate in one's language) and reasons for joining literacy classes. For example Afrikaans speakers wanted literacy classes in Afrikaans while the Milnerton learners wanted English classes.

Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project was funded by the Department of Education. The funding was used to support and maintain the programmes and its personnel including the facilitators. The programme at Stikland Hospital was partly funded by the Department of Health. The library provided Milnerton Learning Centre with financial support from sponsors such as the Rotary Club. The facilitators were assisting on a voluntary basis while in Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland Hospital Learning Centre the facilitators were paid by the providers of literacy programmes (Department of Education, Department of Health and the library). In all centres, classes were free of charge. All centres complained about the lack of funds and that they were not financially supported by the City of Cape Town Libraries, their parent organisation. Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland Hospital Learning Centre in particular did not have literacy materials for the learners for various reasons including their financial limitations. The research shows that the literacy programmes operate on limited funds. It was difficult for literacy providers therefore to make all the necessary resources available to support literacy programmes. The research also showed that their parent bodies do not support some of the library literacy programmes such as Bellville South Home Support Literacy Programme and Milnerton Learning Centre. The financial constraints that are experienced by the librarians in providing literacy programmes make it difficult for them to provide effective and efficient literacy programmes and relevant resources such as literacy materials for both literacy programmes and post literacy programmes. The reviewed literature also showed that in many cases the funding for literacy programmes is an obstacle. Rule (2005: 13) states that the budget for adult education in South Africa is very limited and that it does not meet the financial needs of the literacy programmes. Public libraries in particular have limited funds for libraries activities including literacy programmes (Cole 2000). The literacy providers therefore are struggling to meet all the needs of learners because they operate on limited budgets.

The inclusion of income generation skills, livelihood skills, occupational training and other business related skills training in literacy programmes is also important to motivate the learners and to provide them with skills that are necessary to earn a living other than getting employment (Aitchison 2006). At Bellville Home Support Literacy Project the learners were offered a life skills course. The life skills course included a variety of income generation skills such as fabric painting, decorating candles, making greeting cards and working with beads and candles. The main aim

of the course was to teach the adults creativity and income generation skills. Milnerton Learning Centre had basic computer skills and a business course for their learners who were taught various topics such as business writing skills, using banks and basic business concepts. Income generation skills and other business related courses are very important to prepare the adults with the necessary skills to participate in or initiate income related projects either for the community or themselves. Through these projects and similar training the adults are able to start their own business and make profit. The research shows that the income generation skills training were included in literacy programmes to equip the learners with business related skills.

### 7.2.2 LITERACY MATERIALS

The learning and reading materials that were available in the literacy programmes and the public libraries were used to support the teaching of literacy skills and to sustain and maintain the newly acquired skills. Without the materials in literacy programmes and libraries, literacy programmes are unlikely to be effective and successful (Tronbacke 1997; Sinha 1998; Pather 1995). Although the availability of literacy materials for learners in both literacy and post literacy programmes is regarded as the crucial prerequisite for the success of literacy programmes, the research showed that Bellville South Home Support Literacy Programmes and Stikland Learning Centre did not have enough literacy materials to support their literacy programmes. The literature has also shown that the lack of literacy materials in literacy classes is problematic for both teachers and learners (Mulaudzi 1992; Mabomba 1992).

Bellville South and Stikland Learning Centre had no literacy materials. Facilitators collected and used different sources such as newspapers, story books, selected lessons from Unit Standards and ad hoc library materials. Although the process of gathering information from different sources, translation process and making copies of needed sections was viewed by facilitators as time consuming and labour intensive, it had its advantages because the facilitators selected and gathered relevant and useful exercises for the classes. They collected such information based on specific lessons and learners' needs. The literature shows that if the literacy programmes do not have the specific literacy materials to support the classes, the librarians, facilitators and providers could adapt different materials and use them for literacy programmes (Thumbadoo 2006). The process of adapting literacy materials could include collecting different sections from different materials to support literacy

programmes. Therefore both centres collected relevant materials for the learners based on learners' needs and ABET curriculum and learners were allowed to take home the exercises and use them at home when practising their skills. The major disadvantage with this method of materials provision (collecting different materials and doing translation) is that it is very strenuous and time consuming for the facilitators, especially the translation process.

Even though the facilitators and the librarian were giving the learners the necessary specific exercises to be done for assessment, they were given only limited sections of the materials that were designed to deliver curriculum and this could have an impact on the process of fully acquiring literacy skills.

At Milnerton Learning Centre the facilitators used *Media Works Communication in English* and they were available to support face-to-face classes through the facilitator teaching method and Computer Assisted Learning. Only the basic level class did not have literacy materials because they were still learning basic English that was viewed as necessary before they could use *Media Works*. *Media Works* were useful for literacy skills but they did not reflect learners' cultural needs. It is specifically difficult for literacy materials to reflect the needs of the non-South Africans in the literacy programmes as most of the materials are based on South African cultures.

Levels of book ownership in all centres show that some learners were eager to learn, improve and maintain their literacy skills. It is also important to note that some learners did not have any materials in their homes and they indicated that they did not see the need of owning books since they are illiterate and that books are expensive. The research showed that the majority of learners practised and maintained their newly acquired skills at home during their spare time while a few did not practise their skills at all. The majority of those who were not practising their skills were working long hours and they argued that they did not have time to read at home. The reluctance to practise the newly acquired skills at home or in the library is a major obstacle in fighting illiteracy because the newly acquired skills need to be used and maintained to avoid relapse into illiteracy.

In Milnerton Learning Centre, the provider, who was also a librarian selected literacy materials with facilitators. They were selected based on learners' needs. The librarians stated that it was not easy to select literacy materials according to learners' needs as they changed every semester based on their intake and it was not

financially viable to purchase literacy materials every semester. In Bellville and Stikland the literacy materials were selected by the librarian. Although the literature shows that in order to provide materials that are based on learners' needs all concerned groups (learners, librarians, literacy providers and facilitators) should be involved in material selection, it was found that none of the learners were included in material selection at any of the centres. However, librarians and facilitators had regular communication with learners regarding their reading needs.

The research showed that publishers such as NRP, Viva Books and Project Literacy (literacy provider and publisher) consider the needs of the learners, learners' cultural background, and learners' local language and ABET curriculum in their publishing programmes. Although these publishers publish relevant and suitable literacy materials some literacy providers such as Bellville South are unable to purchase them because of financial constraints. This also shows that even if the suitable and relevant literacy materials are published they do not reach their intended audience because the providers and libraries have a limited budget to support literacy programmes.

### 7.2.3 THE ROLE OF MILNERTON AND BELLVILLE SOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

The literature shows that public libraries can fight illiteracy through:

- ❖ the provision of literacy classes and venues for literacy programmes (Quezada 1996, May and Nassimbeni 2005)
- ❖ the provision of literacy materials (Tronbacke 1997, Johnson 1997, Frylinck 1994 and Harley et al 1996)
- ❖ the provision of the necessary support and recruiting the illiterates (Clarke 1989)

Milnerton Public Library and Bellville South Public Library were involved in most of these activities. Both libraries provided literacy classes on their premises. In Milnerton Learning Centre the librarian was the provider while the Bellville South librarian was the centre manager for the Bellville Home Support Literacy programme. The provision of literacy materials in both libraries included the selection, evaluation and circulation of literacy materials including newspapers and magazines. The learners were also encouraged to use the library to maintain and sustain the newly acquired skills. They were encouraged in various ways, for example in Milnerton they were given library membership after three months of attendance. They were also

motivated to use any other library that was close to them. Although librarians and facilitators encouraged the learners to use the libraries, learners (especially those in level one in Milnerton Learning class and Stikland learners) were reluctant to use the libraries and they were not willing to disclose their literacy status to the library personnel. Literacy programmes were supported by the library collection and the learners' collection. The recruitment was also done by the library through the field worker (Bellville) and by word of mouth, in community gatherings and through community notice boards including the library notice boards. The librarians also worked with various literacy stakeholders such as publishers, literacy providers and facilitators. However their major challenge was the reluctance of learners to use the library to maintain their newly acquired skills. Some learners did not see the need of using the library because they argued that they are illiterate and the library is for the educated people.

Both libraries, that is Milnerton Library and Bellville South Library had literacy materials that were written in different South African languages, with pictures and illustrations. Such materials were placed in a separate area for easy access. Authors like Tronbacke (1997) and Johnson (1997) also recommend that literacy materials should be placed in a separate easily accessible place and they should be marked. Stikland learners were using libraries such as Kraaifontein library and they were unable to use the Bellville South Library because it was far from them. Those that were using the libraries were not specifically using the adult literacy collection; they used any collection such as the children's collection, magazines and newspapers.

### **7.3 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The objectives of the study were to investigate the types of literacy materials that are used in literacy programmes and public libraries. The research questions were derived from the objectives of the study. The research questions were as follows:

- ❖ How available are locally produced literacy materials for use in literacy programmes in public libraries?
- ❖ What are the types and features of these literacy materials?
- ❖ How suitable are the literacy materials in the adult learners' acquisition of literacy?

The research questions were answered through the use of case studies.

## RESEARCH QUESTION 1

- ❖ How available are locally produced literacy materials for use in literacy programmes in public libraries?

The responses of the publishers showed that they publish literacy materials to support the acquisition of literacy skills and to maintain the newly acquired skills. These materials are published in all South African languages including Afrikaans and they reflect South African cultures. The Milnerton Learning Centre used Media Works for the acquisition of literacy skills and they also had reading materials at the library for maintenance of literacy skills. However their materials were written in South African languages and they were based on South African cultures and the majority their learners were foreigners. The available literacy materials are also unable to meet the cultural needs of non-South Africans that are in literacy programmes because they do not reflect their cultural background and needs. They only reflect South African cultures because they are written based on South African learners' reading assessments. It is concluded that the available literacy materials were not sufficient in literacy programmes studied in order to meet the learning needs of the learners.

The facilitators (Bellville South and Stikland) argued that relevant and suitable literacy materials were very scarce in their local libraries including EDULIS and bookshops.

Although publishers such as NRP, Project Literacy and the Department of Education are producing literacy materials in eleven South African languages (including Afrikaans) some public libraries and literacy programmes are unable to buy such materials because they operate on limited budget. The Unit Standard in particular is produced in the Department of Education which is also a provider of literacy programme in Bellville but the centre did not have such materials because of the limited budget. This also shows that even if the relevant materials are produced by various publishers, they do not reach the intended audience in literacy programmes because literacy programmes operate on limited budgets.

The case studies showed that learning materials were not sufficient in the literacy programmes to support the literacy classes. However informational and materials for leisure were available in public libraries but some of them needed to be adapted for the needs of the users.

## RESEARCH QUESTION 2

- ❖ What are the types and features of these literacy materials?

The case studies showed that there are two main types of literacy materials. These two types of materials are as follows:

- ❖ Learning materials or instructional materials. Such materials were used in literacy classes for the acquisition of literacy skills. They were also used for assessment. They include workbooks, worksheets and manuals for facilitators and learners. Learning materials are based on ABET curriculum and they consist of various exercises that were used for teaching and assessment.
- ❖ Reading or informational materials were used to maintain the newly acquired skills and they were accessible in public libraries and learning centres. Reading materials include story books, comics, fiction and materials on cultural issues, history and social issues. These materials are determined by the needs of the users.

Literacy materials are published by various publishers such as NRP, Viva Books and Project Literacy (literacy provider) and government departments such as the Department of Education. Such materials are available in various South African languages.

The features of both learning and reading materials were similar in that they were all written in simple languages, with pictures and large fonts. Study materials in particular also consisted of exercises used for assessment purposes. The research has shown that the language in such materials is important because learners usually prefer materials in their local languages. The use of mother tongue in literacy materials is important because local languages reflect one's culture and learners usually prefer materials that reflect their cultures and lives. However the language is also determined by the needs of learners and the language that is used in literacy programmes.

Literacy materials (learning and reading materials) were used in literacy programmes to support the acquisition of literacy skills and to maintain and sustain the newly acquired skills. Based on the findings of research, literacy materials that were used to support literacy programmes were usually provided by the literacy providers while the libraries mainly provided the materials that are used to sustain the newly acquired skills.

The case studies showed that learners liked easy written materials, with pictures and illustration and exercises, with medium size fonts and bright colours. Such materials should be based on their functional and survival needs and they should reflect their daily activities, lives and culture. The language preference was mainly determined by the learners' needs and by their instructional language in literacy programmes. Stikland and Bellville learners were Afrikaans speakers and they were in Afrikaans literacy programmes therefore they preferred Afrikaans materials while Milnerton learners preferred English materials as they were in the English literacy programme.

#### **7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following part deals with the recommendations.

Based on the findings of the research the researcher recommends the following:

1. The current literacy programmes need continuous evaluation because the needs of learners are continuously changing on a semester or yearly basis based on the centres' intake. This can be done by the librarians, literacy providers, facilitators and learners. Through this process the learners and facilitators can be given the chance to identify their needs, expectations and problems and the provider in turn (librarian or other) can specify the objectives of the programmes. Through evaluation and continuous communication among learners, librarians, providers and learners, various problems such as high level of dropouts, absenteeism and irrelevant programmes can be eliminated.

The programmes of Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland Learning Centre, in particular, need to be reviewed to determine the needs of the learners and the objectives of the centre. This recommendation is based on a variety of problems such high levels of drop out, lack of literacy materials and high level of absenteeism in both centres. Although the causes of such problems were not clearly identified by learners, facilitators and librarians the evaluation of both centres can help to eliminate such problems through identifying the needs of the learners.

2. The insufficiency of literacy materials is a major obstacle in any literacy programmes. Bellville South Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland Hospital Learning Centre programmes were partly funded and provided by the Department of Health and the Department of Education. The Department of Education in particular, expected learners to be assessed based on Unit Standards while learners did not have such materials. Unit Standards are published by the Department of Education to support their literacy programmes. It is recommended therefore that the librarian

and the Department of Education should consider the provision of literacy materials as a major prerequisite for any literacy programme. Therefore they should provide such materials for the learners if they want their programmes to be successful in changing the illiterates' lives. Literacy materials are important for teaching, assessment and in some cases they act as motivational tools to learners; therefore their availability plays an important role to the success of the literacy programmes.

3. All centres had high levels of drop out and absenteeism which may be attributed to various causes such as the lack of learner motivation and lack of commitment from the learners. It is recommended that learners need to be motivated in various ways such as the inclusion of income generation programmes that are based on their interests. Such motivation is important for learner participation and retention. Learners can also be motivated through regular communication with the literacy providers and the facilitators. Through such communication learners can discuss their problems and challenges that they are facing in literacy programmes. The communication with the literacy providers, facilitators and learners can reduce problems such as absenteeism because it can help the providers to improve and address learners' problems and their diverse needs. Absenteeism and dropout levels need to be monitored and figures to be collected and kept. Such information can be helpful during the evaluation of literacy programmes and identifying possible problems and solutions for better literacy classes.

4. Although learners were encouraged to use the library and their reading materials at home the majority of them (especially those working at Stikland Hospital and learners in level one in all centres) were reluctant to use the library and to practise their skills at home. It is recommended that the literacy providers, that is the librarians of all centres should include library related programmes in literacy programmes for all learners irrespective of their levels. Such programmes can include library visits, story telling, and family literacy offered on a regular basis. During the library visits the librarians can show the learners the different sections in the library and areas that they can find their materials. Library visits can help the learners to be familiar with the library and be able to speak with the librarians about their needs, thus growing in confidence. In story telling sessions, the librarians can read different stories for the learners and also ask the learners to read to each other. This can help them to practise their newly acquired skills and it can also improve their communication skills and self esteem. In family literacy programmes, parents can come with their children and share information with the help of facilitators. This recommendation is based on

the findings that some learners indicated they were illiterate, unable to use the library and did not want to disclose their status to the librarians and to talk about their reading needs.

Some learners did not know the requirements or conditions of using the library and some did not have time. Library programmes can eliminate these problems and they can help the learners to be familiar with the library and use it on regular basis and after they have completed literacy classes. The practising of the newly acquired skills is essential for the retention of the newly acquired skills. If the newly acquired literacy skills are not constantly used through reading and writing the newly literates are in danger of relapsing into illiteracy. The nature of the library literacy programmes can be discussed by the librarians, facilitators, providers and learners so that they can be based on learners' needs. Through such programmes the learners can identify their reading needs and the materials they like. Such information can help the librarian to select the materials based on learners' needs. The learners' requests for materials and any information needs need to be followed up by the librarians. Such requests include the request for relevant literacy materials because some learners indicated that they had requested literacy materials from their local librarians and they had not heard anything from the librarians. If learners are not provided with the materials they like they are unlikely to have confidence in using their local libraries for the maintenance of literacy skills

5. The factors such as the availability of literacy materials, cooperation and communication between stakeholders and strong commitment from them (stakeholders including the learners) and strong financial support from the government and library's parent bodies are necessary for a fully functioning literacy programme. Through such commitment libraries will be in a better position to meet the needs of the adults in literacy programmes and so be active partners in nation building and economic and social development.

## **7.5 CONCLUSION**

The case studies show that literacy is regarded as the necessary skill for survival and functionality because all the interviewed learners indicated that they had joined literacy programmes because they wanted to be able to function properly and to improve their functional skills. Literacy programmes therefore aims to equip the adults with the functional and survival skill. The language that is used in literacy programmes is determined by various factors such as one's mother tongue and

functional purposes. The selected literacy centres used two broad types of literacy materials to support the teaching and maintenance of literacy skills. Such materials are usually provided by the libraries and literacy providers.

Although literacy materials play a major role in acquisition of literacy skills some of the literacy programmes do not have literacy materials because they operate on limited budget. The case studies also showed that the majority of learners are reluctant to use the library, to practice their skills and to reveal their illiteracy status to the librarians. The case studies also showed that few learners are practising their skills and they are willing to use the libraries but their local libraries do not have the materials they need. The availability of learners' reading materials in literacy classes and libraries is a critical important issue in acquisition of literacy skills and developing the reading habits and if the libraries do not have such materials the newly literates are unable to maintain their newly acquired skills.

The case studies also show that literacy programmes need a strong commitment from the literacy providers, learners, librarians and facilitators and they also need strong financial support so that the libraries can provide all the necessary resources such as literacy materials and motivational tools for the literacy programmes. Although both libraries had various problems and challenges, the research also shows that the libraries were supporting community needs such as acquisition of literacy skills.

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## **APPENDIXES**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

#### **A. LEARNERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Reasons for joining literacy programs

Expectations of a person

What have you learnt from the programmes?

What are you learning?

Are there any learning materials in your classes?

- If yes describe their types, language, characteristics and your reaction to these materials and your opinions about them
- How does this affect your learning?

What types of materials would you like to use in literacy classes?  
Why?

How do you practise your skills (at home, during your spare time)

Do you have books at home?

Are you a member of any library?

What materials do you like to read?

Describe the types, language and characteristics of the materials that you like.

What do you like to read about?

Can you find your favourite materials at the library?

Are there any ways that you can request these materials?

General comments about these materials

Are you a member of any reading club?

What happens in a reading club?

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **B. FACILITATORS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

What are you teaching the adults?

How do you recruit the illiterates to join literacy classes?

Retention and motivation of learners

Assessment of learners

What type of literacy materials are you using for the classes (learning and teaching materials)

Language, types and characteristics of literacy materials

Where do you get these materials?

What are general views about these materials?

How do you encourage the learners to practise and maintain their newly acquired skills?

What do you know about the learner's reading needs?

Are they being met?

Are you a member of any library?

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## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **C. LIBRARIANS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

How do you encourage the newly literates to sustain and maintain their newly acquired literacy?

Do you work with the local literacy providers and tutors in relation with learning and reading materials?

If yes how

Can you describe the types, characteristics and the language of literacy materials that are available at your library? (teaching and reading materials)

Who can use the literacy materials (learners, any adults, registered library users)

How do learners/ adults get materials (for example block loans)

Are the literacy materials placed at special collection and arrangement such as literacy corner or adult corner?

How do learners respond to reading materials?

Are these materials relevant to the users needs?

How

How are they selected? Are they selected in consultation with learners, tutors and literacy providers?

Do you have a selection policy for literacy materials (reading and learning materials)?

If yes, briefly explain

Are they easily accessible from the publishers?

How do know about the literacy materials

How do you get literacy materials?

Are you working with the local publishers?

General views about literacy materials

Do you have any programmes for the literacy tutors?

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **D LITERACY PROVIDERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

Brief history and the involvement of the organisation in literacy programs

The planning of literacy programmes

Literacy materials for classes

Assessment of learners

How do you encourage the learners to maintain and practise their newly acquired skills outside the classes?

Follow up programmes

Relationship with libraries

Relationship with publishers

General comments on  
literacy programmes,  
learners' responses  
libraries  
literacy materials.

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## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **E. PUBLISHERS**

Brief history of the organisation and its involvement in publishing adult literacy materials

Basic features of literacy materials

Describe types of literacy materials, their content and levels

Briefly explain the process of publishing these materials based on following

- ❖ Users' needs
- ❖ Curriculum/ Units standards
- ❖ Reading interests of adults

How do you distribute your materials?

How do you market these materials?

Do you work with libraries and literacy providers? If yes How? If No Why?  
Give the examples of libraries

Challenges of literacy materials?

General comments

Publication of Newspapers? (The SA Adult reader)

ADD Any other information like general involvement of the organisation in literacy programmes, challenges, problems and achievements

f.

### **8. INTERVIEW DATES**

Milnerton Learning Centre was visited on Tuesdays while Bellville Home Support Literacy Project and Stikland were visited on Thursdays.

**JUNE:** 06, 09, 13, 15, 20, 23, 27, 29

**JULY:** 04, 06, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27

**AUGUST:** 01, 03, 08, 11, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29

**SEPTEMBER:** 05, 07, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28

**OCTOBER:** 03, 05, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31

**NOVEMBER:** 02, 07, 09, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30

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