

# LIBRARY SERVICES FOR NEO-LITERATES: SOME CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

*This article attempts to draw attention to the need to consider providing services for neo-literates. Neo-literates by virtue of their age belong to the reproductive and productive age group and therefore play a very important role in society. It looks at the illiteracy situation in Ghana, and attempts made by the government to eradicate illiteracy by the establishment of the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. The paper argues that libraries have an essential role to play to help neo-literates sustain literacy skills. It suggests that there should be networking between libraries and adult literacy providers, writers and the media. It is also suggested that librarians should provide proactive services to attract neo-literates to the library.*

**KEYWORDS:** LIBRARY SERVICES, PUBLIC LIBRARIES, NEO-LITERATES, NON-FORMAL EDUCATION, GHANA

## Introduction

Neo-literates are groups of people who have just acquired the skills of reading, writing and some computing. They form the group between the illiterate and the literate. Richardson (1983a) defines a neo-literate as an adult or adolescent who has at some period, acquired the basic techniques of reading but has not yet developed the skill to the point where reading is done fluently and with complete understanding. Witbooi (1995) draws the profile of a neo-literate as adults, 15 years and above, from poor disadvantaged communities, who have very little or no formal schooling, who have managed to attain skills of reading, writing and numeracy at a mature age. Neo-literates normally come from family environments with no reading culture (Bandyopadhyay, 1996) and excluded from information and knowledge sources, but by virtue of attending literacy classes can

be described as people who have just “entered the universe of knowledge”, (Bhatt et al, 1999), and thus breaking away from illiteracy.

Illiteracy, the inability to read, write or count, is a universal problem and no country can claim that it has attained complete literacy amongst its people. The level at which a person could be said to be illiterate varies from place to place, culture to culture and country to country. Historically and traditionally, literacy has been viewed in different ways and in this paper; literacy refers to the basic 3Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) skills for adults.

Illiteracy attracted the attention of the United Nations, prompting it to declare 1990 as the International Literacy Year. One of the goals of the 1990 World Declaration on Education For All, at Jomtien, Thailand was to reduce adult literacy rate to one half of its 1990 level, by the year 2000 with sufficient emphasis on female literacy (UNESCO, 1990). The UN literacy decade (2003-2013) proposed a renewed vision of literacy describing it as a structural phenomenon and a social responsibility of both the state and civil society (UNESCO, 2002). Unfortunately, in developing countries, illiteracy is still high, especially among rural dwellers and women. For these reasons, the United Nations declared 2003-2012 as the Literacy Decade with the aim of extending literacy to over 861 million adults. The Decade focuses on the needs of adults with the goal that people everywhere should be able to use literacy to communicate within their own community, in the wider society and beyond. The Decade aims particularly at the poorest and most marginalised groups of people, under the banner *Literacy for all: voice for all, learning for all* (UNESCO, 2000).

This paper discusses the illiteracy situation in Ghana and the role libraries are playing or are expected to play to help neo-literates sustain literacy skills acquired during training.

### **Illiteracy: current situation in Ghana**

Ghana has a very high illiteracy rate. Table 1 is the illiteracy estimates of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), as assessed in 2002 based on statistics collected during national population censuses.

**Table 1: ILLITERACY POPULATION IN GHANA**

YEAR	Illiteracy rate %			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1970	70.5	57.1	83.4	3,303	1,311	1,992	4,685	2,298	2,387
1980	56.2	42.6	69.4	3,341	1,243	2,098	5,942	2,920	3,022
1990	41.5	29.9	52.8	3,438	1,219	2,218	8,275	4,075	4,200
1995	34.8	24.6	44.7	3,392	1,182	2,209	9,744	4,807	4,937
2000	28.4	19.7	36.8	3,239	1,112	2,125	11,405	5,637	5,768
2005	23.0	15.8	30.0	3,021	1,028	1,990	13,155	6,514	6,642

### **Estimated illiteracy rate and illiterate population aged 15 years and older, by country, 1970-2005**

**Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2002)**

Table 1 shows the actual and projected illiteracy rates and illiterate population of Ghana, between 1970 and 2005. It indicates respectively the proportion and number of persons of 15 years of age and over who cannot with understanding read and write. According to Table 1, by 2005, the illiteracy rate for women had reduced to 30% as compared to 83.4% in 1970. However looking at the population of women, which stood at 6,642,000 in 2005, as compared to 2,387,000 in 1970, one can conclude that there is no significant reduction in female illiteracy in Ghana. To eliminate illiteracy, governments of countries and other bodies have set up organs to initiate and supervise adult literacy programmes.

Adult literacy work in Ghana started with the Basel Mission. In 1951, based on a successful experiment of 1948, a literacy programme was approved by the Legislative

Assembly for “mass literacy and mass education”, with the Mass Education Section of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, now known as the Department of Community Development, as the executing agency (Akpebu, 1993). Ever since, literacy programmes have been carried out and during the regime of the Provisional National Defence Council, in 1986, the government announced its commitment to reduce illiteracy significantly, as part of the sweeping educational reform. The aim of the National Functional Literacy Programme was to facilitate the country’s development by addressing the problem of illiteracy and this led to the establishment of the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED).

### **The Non-Formal Education Division (NFED)**

The Non-Formal Education Division was set up in the Ministry of Education in 1987, to coordinate all non-formal education related programmes in the country. Adult literacy programmes offer adults who missed formal education a second chance. The programme started in 1989 with a two-year pilot project in Winneba and Apam in the Central Region as well as Tolon-Vea in the Upper East Region. An expanded phase was launched in 1991 with its second phase being launched in 1999. The purpose of the adult literacy programmes is to help participants attain a certain level of literacy to enable them function effectively in society. Through literacy programmes, illiterates are made literates and according to Walia (1999), half of the literacy-battle is won when illiterates develop the will to become literate. However, there is the need to help neo-literates use and sustain their newly acquired skills to prevent ‘rusting’ by creating a literate environment.

## **Post Literacy**

Creating a literate environment for the sustenance of skills acquired during literacy training is termed the post-literacy stage. This is a delicate transition period for neo-literates, which if not handled carefully, could send the newly literate person relapsing into illiteracy. The description of the post-literacy stage, accepted by The National Literacy Mission (NLM) in India “is the attempt to give interested learners an opportunity to harness and develop their learning potential after completing a course in basic literacy”. However, this should not be limited to interested learners only as the statement says but to all learners. Every learner should be made to take interest in developing the tools to access information all through life. The NLM identifies three basic elements of the post-literacy stage:

- identification of the learning needs of neo-literates;
- provision of learning opportunities to meet the needs; and
- creating a socio-economic, political and cultural ambience to sustain the learning environment (NLM, 2000).

The National Literacy Mission has visualized the post literacy programme as an extension of the Total Literacy Campaigns in the continuum of life-long education. This means the post literacy stage should aim at broader objectives by attempting to identify the needs of neo-literates. It also attempts to provide an environment to support the provision of the necessary structures and facilities to help ingrain the reading habit in neo-literates so that these skills could be put to use in their daily lives.

The post literacy period, which ensures the smooth and successful transition of neo-literates from guided learning to self-learning towards a life-long education, is usually not given the attention it deserves. A 1992 NFED report states that during the first phase of the Functional Literacy and Functional Skills Project, in Ghana, which lasted between 21<sup>st</sup> July 1992 and December 1997, 1.3 million out of the 5.6 million adult illiterates were trained. However, it goes on to say that 40% of those trained neo-literates relapsed into illiteracy due to the lack of appropriate reading materials (NFED, 1992). Completing a literacy programme does not necessarily mean the attainment of full literacy to prevent a relapse. Learning is lifelong and not confined to a particular period in life. Therefore, to sustain literacy skills acquired by neo-literates, there is the need to sensitise them to become information users by making available to them appropriate reading materials in a very comprehensive format and at the right place. This is where the library, especially the public libraries, comes in.

### **The library situation in Ghana**

The establishment of Ghana's library and information services range between the 1950s and 60s. There are about 162 libraries in Ghana, 113 situated in Accra, 11 in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana, and the rest dotted over the country (Ghana Library Association, 2004). Public library services provided by the Ghana Library Board are available in all regional capitals in Ghana. However, structures and services available barely touch or meet the needs of literacy learners or neo-literates. Attempts have been made by a number of libraries to support literacy activities but these services were not sustained. For example in 1977, the Bolgatanga Regional Library used to organise literacy classes in the library. The Gomua Public Library, established specifically to support literacy activities, does not seem to provide such desired services any more (Adjah, 2002).

Kibirige (1977), upon close examination of existing library systems in developing countries reveals that they are elitist. This is a rather unfortunate situation because as Alemna (2000) puts it the library more specifically "public library represents the most economical and constant supply of free reading materials essential to establish fluency

and improve competence”. To support this is the saying by Carl Rowen that the Library is the temple of learning and learning has liberated more people than all the wars in history.

Kibirige (1977) continues by saying that librarians by their professional training and expertise should be aware of the possibilities of the written word in fostering human development. However, Lyman (1979) says that the contribution of librarians, in developing countries, leaves much to be desired. There is therefore the need for a complete overhaul of the present library services (Alemna, 1995). Moulder (1991) calls on librarians to create new libraries to meet the needs of all groups of people concerned with maintaining literacy skills.

Libraries play a very essential role in the society especially where people have very low purchasing capabilities. They provide a learning environment, which otherwise is non-existent to the neo-literate, who most often come from a marginalised group of people in the society. Libraries also provide materials to be read and professionals to help locate pertinent pieces of information. In other words, libraries are institutions that support continuous learning to prevent the relapse into illiteracy.

### **The role of libraries in sustaining literacy skills among neo-literates**

Chopra (1999) argues that librarians should not be silent spectators of the problem of illiteracy. According to Singh and Singh (1999), “The storm of library movement will definitely uproot this tree of illiteracy”. Witbooi (1995), Bandyopadhyay (1996) and Chopra (1999) insist the library is the only institution that could help neo-literates sustain literacy skills acquired during literacy training programmes. Witbooi (1995) recommends that it is imperative that public librarians become aware of the existence of neo-literates so that they could be welcomed into the midst of information services. He goes on to argue that without suitable services and materials, neo-literates usually revert to illiteracy. Kargbo (2001) reiterates this point by stating that most libraries are unprepared to meet the challenges of providing services for neo-literates because of the unavailability of materials and financial resources. It therefore means that there is the need to put

structures in place to make available materials, repackaged to meet the needs of neo-literates.

Neo-literates by virtue of their age belong to the productive and reproductive group. The progress of the nation therefore depends on the rate of literacy of this group of people. The importance of educating this group can be summarised in three points. The impact on the adults themselves expressed in their renewed hope, self-esteem, empowerment and improved life quality. Secondly, the impact on children, since it is the adults who make critical decisions that affect children, especially mothers, who are 'first teachers'. The third point is the impact on the local and the broader community (Torres, 2004).

In Ghana, this set of people constitutes a very important part of the social structure as has already been mentioned, being the productive and reproductive group of the nation. They have voting rights; they are active and strong and play important roles in agricultural, industrial and commercial development of the nation's economy. However due to illiteracy, food sellers, for example, are known to have used non-edible colours to colour food items like pig feet, fried yam etc, not to mention poor hygiene in handling food. The risk at which a nation stands due to the illiteracy level of these groups of people cannot be compared with the benefits of investing in literacy programmes and the establishment of libraries to provide enough reading materials to help neo-literates develop the skill for accessing knowledge and the development of reading habits. Education and access to knowledge is believed to change people's perceptions and behaviour. There is no doubt that if neo-literates gain access to information, the society as a whole would derive enormous benefits from them. The role and possible benefits to be derived from libraries in the eradication of illiteracy can be appreciated from the following suggestions presented under the following themes:

Library networking with adult literacy providers;

Library networking with writers;

Library networking to distribute reading materials;

Library networking with the media;



Follow-ups; and

Improvement upon services, collections and other motivational activities.

### **Library services for neo- literates**

The variety and levels of needs among various clientele, the contradictions and complexity of the problem as well as the absence of a precise meaning of literacy compound the factors librarians must encounter in providing literacy services. Librarians must however rise up to the challenge because as Arnove and Graff (1987) and Bhola, (1999), (quoted in Land, 2003) put it, books are weapons of mass destruction of illiteracy. Libraries therefore ought to implement some of the following strategies.

- **Library networking with adult literacy providers**

It is recommended that librarians and the Non-formal Education Division (NFED) cooperate to brainstorm about the issue of sustaining literacy skills acquired during literacy programmes. As the body responsible for coordinating all literacy activities in the country, the NFED should bring together all organisations interested in making people literate, to create and improve the literate environment in Ghana. This is because illiteracy is no longer the thrust of one organisation. There are consortiums of organisations trying to tackle the problem of illiteracy. There is the need for Government, Non-governmental Organisations as well as individuals to work together to implement literacy activities.

There are examples of success stories of such collaborations, which must be emulated in Ghana. A community-based service in New Brunswick in Canada, “Literacy coordinators in colleges” liaised on a regular basis with communities and Community Academic Services Programme, to train teachers, organise workshops and offer guidance on the day-to-day running of literacy programmes. It is recommended that there should

be a closer collaboration between NFED and librarians to ensure that the latter are involved in all phases of literacy programmes especially the post literacy stage. Reports of failure of literacy programmes have always been blamed on the fact that librarians are left out of the planning and implementation of such programmes.

It is recommended that during orientations or workshops for literacy facilitators, librarians could be invited to educate facilitators about libraries, so that they in turn would help introduce the library services to neo-literates. Again, librarians who have the flair for teaching could be invited to help teach neo-literates. The Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon could also run short courses for facilitators, at a small fee, to help them introduce libraries to neo-literates.

- **Library networking with writers**

It is recommended that librarians organise workshops for writers, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports and come out with guidelines for writers to publish books, in English and in Ghanaian languages, bearing in mind the practical needs of neo-literates. This could be advertised using the electronic and print media, inviting well-known writers and aspiring writers to produce such materials. Well-known authors could then be asked to help add the finesse to stories produced during such workshops. Materials such as slides, cassettes, photographs, video recordings, illustrated cards, which appeal to the eye and ear of the neo-literates, could also be produced through such workshops. ‘Graduates’ from literacy classes could also be invited to recount their experiences to writers who could help put these into a simple book form for neo-literates. In New Zealand, a book by a former student of a literacy class made an impact on public opinion and inspired many adults to take up literacy classes by its demonstration of how much could be achieved given the right motivation and the will to succeed.

- **Library networking to distribute reading materials**

Materials produced from such workshops could be sold at reduced prices or where funding has been sought and received, such materials could be distributed free of charge at least during the initial stages of the project. Materials produced for low-level literates could be exhibited during book fairs, and at a discount for neo-literates to purchase. Multiple and diverse channels should be used to reach the maximum number of neo-literates and the strategy should be to spread these materials as widely as possible to increase access and frequent utilization.

Here in Ghana, agencies involved in literacy work could network and distribute such materials. Copies could be left in churches, mosques, political party offices, farmers associations, public provisions shops, bookshops, street hawkers, women's and youth clubs and with influential people in communities. Slips to acknowledge receipt could be filled and left at such distribution centres for collection by a designated person or persons. Where classes are run, literacy facilitators could distribute such materials to neo-literates as well. This would serve as a very useful channel because facilitators are usually members of communities in which they teach and can therefore identify neo-literates who must benefit from the service. Publications could also be distributed through a bell-bicycle, which a number of literacy facilitators possess as motivational packages from the government. Where possible, materials could be mailed to neo-literates, however in this case, slips acknowledging receipt must be pre-paid to ensure that the body responsible receives its feedback. To ensure a successful distribution of these materials it is essential that a reliable timetable be scheduled to keep neo-literates waiting and ready at points of distribution. The library could also make provisions for a sales

counter where some of the specially designed books and materials could be made available at nominal cost for purchase by the neo-literates. This will make learning a joy forever for the neo-literates.

The rural newspaper usually published by NFED, in 15 Ghanaian local languages, keeps learners abreast with current issues. It also serves as a mirror through which various communities see their shortcomings. Learners translate their ideas in the form of articles, features, poems, riddles and human-interest stories in the local language. It would be ideal if this could be published in simple English to be kept in and distributed by libraries. The rural newspaper could also carry regular columns discussing new books of interest to neo-literates.

- **Library networking with the media**

It is recommended that librarians network with print and electronic media to promote books in order to encourage the cultivation of reading habits and purchase of reading materials. Librarians could encourage the increase of coverage in the various media of issues relating to books by, for example, having weekly slots of talk shows specifically for neo-literates. An innovative method in India, which could be recommended, is the language subtitling of films and songs (Noronha, 1999). Subtitling the numerous Ghanaian and Nigerian movies viewed on television, for neo-literates, could be a technique to provide a regular reading practice in an entertaining way. When the networking is put into place, the work of the librarian does not end. The library must then engage in extension programmes by ensuring that this targeted group of people are watched closely, by follow-ups.

- **Follow-up**

To do an effective follow-up, libraries must have a recognised list of patrons i.e. neo-literates and this could be produced by liaising with facilitators in communities. Librarians could then monitor what is borrowed at each time, and find out if the neo-literate could read a portion of books they borrow or tell the story in their own words. This would mean an improvement upon the services provided by librarians, from being passive to proactive service.

- **Services**

According to Gianforte (2003), proactive service is giving answers to customers before they ask questions. He goes on to say that those answers must exist in a well-designed, easily accessible knowledge base. The knowledge base should be driven by customers' actual questions and should always remain relevant to customers' primary needs. In the library, future and current needs of users should be anticipated and structures put into place to satisfy and keep library patrons. This would also call for review of utilities available and an examination of the ability of the library staff to satisfy customers. In the provision of proactive service, the library has to go out of its way to meet the needs of customers, sometimes at its expense. Proactive services could be provided especially by public libraries, by responding to customers' demands for a greater diversity of services and efficient delivery of service, value for the taxpayers' money. There is the need for the Ghana Library Board to rise up to meet new and changing demands of readers by being in a position to provide materials to support adult education programmes in the country. It is essential that libraries meet the needs of neo-literates by adopting new services to suit this group of customers. The collection housed in libraries must also reflect the new change in the libraries.

- **Collection**

Rusting could only be avoided if enough and pertinent materials are provided for the post-literacy stage. Books are useful tools of communicating information and it is a

useful influential weapon of the librarian to achieve this objective of maintenance of literacy skills. Libraries are the only institutions that can provide books free of charge to new readers. A key observation in the existing literature concerning adult learning shows that adult learning is problem-centred and not subject-centred. They want practical solutions to real-life problems and they want it soon (Muller, 2000).

In a study by Adjah (2002), information needs expressed by neo-literates consisted primarily of a desire for information to solve day-to-day problems, learn basic literacy skills in English to enable them read and write their own letters, read and write their own names, read signposts and prescription for drugs especially for their children. Other needs identified are the need to acquire basic conversational skills, in English, to communicate with customers they meet in their trade and profession, to function effectively in the home by helping their children with school work, to communicate with their partners' educated friends and visitors, introduce new dishes at home, receive phone calls and record messages accurately. Neo-literate dressmakers, for example, would be comfortable with books depicting a dialogue between a customer and a dressmaker. It is therefore recommended that collection development should aim at acquiring materials that are problem-centred and not subject centred. According to Richardson (1983b), the emphasis should be on providing appropriate materials.

In the case of adult learners, it is imperative to select books with adult themes but with low-level range of vocabulary, with large prints that relate to the everyday environment of neo-literates. Among the Aborigines youth, it was observed that a project, to teach how to learn about life through books, was successful because materials were mostly presented visually through pictures, characters spoke the kind of English spoken by the Aborigines, dressed and cooked like them, had similar backgrounds and authentic scenery. The story lines were down to earth, humorous with subtle messages and most of all they were cheap to print and circulate (Veramu, 1994). Again, in New Zealand, the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education puts out *The School Journal*,

a periodical written by local authors, who are able to reflect the surrounding environment. The journal, which aims at instilling a love of reading by means of stories, poems and articles, is reported to have made an important contribution to the development of literacy among children over many years (UNESCO, 1999). According to NFED (2000), neo-literates showed more interest in materials that depict the everyday life they could identify with. Neo-literates could be introduced to a similar world of books, however it is imperative that they are motivated to use the collections made available to them.

- **Motivation**

The literates can and will only make maximum use of services and materials provided by libraries, if they are motivated. Motivation could be ensured when librarians provide the environment that allows for adequate access to those structures which help reinforce and maintain skills acquired, make neo-literates enjoy being literate to the point that they will seek to be more literate. Otherwise, low literacy levels are to a great degree maintained by frequent relapse into illiteracy or stagnation of skills of semi-and neo-literates. Someone who has recently picked up a skill will have an innate drive to practise it. Librarians must ensure that once the interest of the neo-literate is captured, their motivation is maintained at a high level to keep them coming back to use the library. According to Muller (2000), any attempt to motivate new readers, must provide satisfaction, usefulness and fun. This is because to adults, learning is autonomous and they have well defined learning needs. Even though they learn what is of interest to them, to impart knowledge to this group, librarians must ‘fashion’ information to be filtered through their ‘felt needs’. It is only then that neo-literates could be motivated to read and in the process retain skills acquired.

- **Promotional Activities**

In the attempt to make neo-literates aware of the potentials of the library and to motivate them to use the library to increase the level of their literacy and numeracy skills, it is important that libraries engage in an aggressive marketing and promotional campaign. To engage in an effective promotional campaign, it is essential that interpersonal sources of information, popular amongst neo-literates, be employed. As much as possible librarians must capitalise on the sources and mode of communication common or more popular in the Ghanaian society. These tools of communication, which suit their perception and reflect their history of contact, should be incorporated in an aggressive marketing strategy to attract and keep neo-literates to the library. The radio and television, sources of information that appeal to the ear and the eye and would arouse interest must be used in marketing activities in the library.

In recent times an Accra FM station, Peace FM carried adverts for literacy classes. It started by asking listeners if they would want to speak and write English? Of course this would attract the attention of an educationally disadvantaged person desiring to be literate. If yes, they were invited to a literacy class at Banana Inn, a suburb in Accra. It goes on to encourage persons of any age to enrol for literacy classes. Another advert begins with a series of questions like: Is your husband planning to divorce you because you cannot read and write English? Are you being cheated because you cannot read? Then it goes on to invite such people to join literacy classes at Mamprobi. Both adverts go into details giving location and telephone numbers. The interesting aspect of these adverts is that it uses the radio and an FM station noted for



the use of local languages. If libraries could use similar modes of advertisement, using both print and electronic media, it would go a long way to promote the library.

- **Reading Clubs**

Reading Clubs could be formed as is found in the Accra Central Library, but then purposely, for neo-literates. An association of old students or past students could be formed and encouraged to join this club. Reading centres could be set up in communities where well-trained librarians could go and help neo-literates to read to maintain skills developed. From that stage, national quizzes, spelling competitions, essay competitions and reading competitions could be organised to serve as a powerful motivation tool for both learners and teachers. In Jamaica, these competitions are generously sponsored by the private sector and broadcast on the national television service. Prizes are donated in the form of funding for vocational training scholarships and all scholarship winners are made to obtain jobs (UNESCO, 1999). Through these, neo-literates could be encouraged to develop reading habits, to read, continue to read and maintain their literacy and numeracy skills.

- **Training**

To perform all these duties effectively, it is recommended that there should be a drive for improved efficiency and performance thus making training crucial in achieving quality services. Customers' perception of an organisation, in other words, neo-literates' perception of a library is held in the hands of its staff. High standards of training are therefore a major contributing factor to quality customer relationship. Librarians in the teaching field in the Department of Information Studies, of the University of Ghana, could intensify programmes to train students to better meet this challenge. They could be trained to make the library a positive, welcoming and humane environment, and support neo-literates to expand their horizon. They must be

sensitive to the needs of people with lower literacy levels, should be well informed to act as literacy teachers, introduce library programmes and policies to neo-literates so that they could be less intimidated and be prepared to make independent efforts to use the library. If professionals are trained to do this effectively, the trust of such targeted group of customers, of the library, will be won without much effort.

- **Appointment of librarians**

There is the need to appoint competent staff to enhance the quality of service and image of the library. This is because library staff that work day-to-day with the public, it must be reiterated here, are the public face of the library service and make or mar the neo-literates' perception of the library. Most institutions, in this country, often opt for cheap labour especially in the library field where it is believed that any persons could perform the same functions. Even when a trained staff is appointed, it is mandatory that the person is given the opportunity to be refreshed periodically. This is because needs of customers and society continue to change and the professional must keep abreast with changes and adapt services to meet changing demands. For the development of new and different skills to cope with new responsibilities, it requires the imaginative response from senior managers i.e. senior librarians. This is because refresher courses should be a priority to every library. In-service training must be a constant and continuous strengthening process throughout the professional's career. It is imperative that libraries adopt this system so that it would leave the professional staff and even the supporting staff better equipped to cope with the many changes the library service needs to undergo.

Libraries must identify their training needs and address them. It is recommended that libraries must re-organise their services, and re-train their staff members to take up this challenge. This is because libraries especially the public library system have a unique challenge of meeting the needs of all strata of society. Accessibility to these services must be looked at again and it should be possible to have libraries opened in the evenings for workers to use after working hours.

### **Conclusion**

Bhola (1982) observes that there are positive changes in the attitudes of neo-literates when they are taught to use literacy skills in their everyday life. They have a higher level of individual modernity and are consequently better adopters of innovation and more effective handlers of information. The question is how can the government ensure that these large numbers of neo-literates, produced at the end of each literacy training programme, do not relapse into illiteracy without libraries? What is the point in spending money on literacy campaigns only to leave 'graduates' to relapse into illiteracy due to the absence of appropriate reading materials and institutions to provide appropriate materials, to see to the sustenance of skills acquired? If the population growth rate continues without a corresponding increase in educational facilities, including libraries, Ghana will have a much higher rate of illiteracy by the year 2020. It is strongly recommended that NFED provides in its programmes, a clear place for libraries in the non-formal educational development process so that they can work hand in hand to help neo-literates learn to read and read to learn.

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