

CHAPTER 6

THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the ideal model of primary-school-based NFE is articulated. It was against the background of this ideal that the field data were compared.

In chapter three it was argued that NFE had been evident in Fiji but had not been adequately conceptualised. As NFE has emerged as an international phenomenon (Khawaja and Brennan, 1990), an examination of some concepts of NFE was made to determine a general concept of NFE for the study. However, the importance of the localised nature of the ways in which a specific concept of NFE would develop was recognised. In determining a general ideal of NFE, various definitions, purposes and perspectives that had been developed in relation to the concept were examined.

6.2 Definitions

It has been claimed that there are problems associated with conceptualising NFE because of the diverse uses of the term 'non-formal education' (Grandstaff, 1979; Khawaja and Brennan, 1990) and the lack of agreement about the precise nature of the concept of NFE. The problem is further compounded when other terms in the educational literature are used as alternatives.

In the Asian and the Pacific Region, the term 'non-formal education' is currently used to refer to several inter-related concepts, including adult education, continuing education, lifelong education, recurrent education and community education. However, the usage has rarely been consistent, causing some confusion among practitioners, planners and theoreticians (Unesco, 1987). A research finding of UNESCO in 1980 was that:

There is considerable diversity in the use of the terms referring to the education of adults within the region. Moreover, the terms used and the meanings attached to them are changing..., reflecting change in actual policy, priorities and programmes. The term 'non-formal education' has recently been adopted in several countries and can be used in more than one sense. (p.43)

For example, in Indonesia, 'non-formal education' is used in a very comprehensive way to include community education and apprenticeships for youths. In Bangladesh the term 'non-formal education' is used for supplementary second chance education for youths and adults and the term 'adult education' for literacy and post literacy programmes for the adults. In New Zealand the Task Force for Lifelong Learning defined 'non-formal education' as occurring in a variety of settings, it differs from informal learning in that it is initiated by members of the community perceiving a learning need. (Unesco, 1987:45).

While acknowledging the diversity in the use of the term 'non-formal education', some attempts have been made to develop a better understanding of the concept of NFE by examining it in the light of other education systems. For example Coombs and Ahmed (1974) have clarified the differences between informal, formal and non-formal education, as follows.

Informal Education refers to a lifelong process by means of which the individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge through day to day experience, educative influences and the resources of his or her environment; that is from family and neighbours, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

Formal Education refers to the hierarchically structured and chronologically organised education system extending from primary school to the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialised programmes and full-time technical and vocational training institutions.

Non-formal education is any organised, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children.

This approach has revealed the similarities and the differences in the three types of education.

Informal education, as noted by Coombs and Ahmed, has some similarities with traditional education which was undertaken in Fiji before the advent of formal education (refer. Chapter 3).

NFE and informal education both operate outside the framework of the formal system. Although the term 'non-formal' tends to suggest informality and is sometimes used interchangeably with the term 'informal' the negative of formal, 'non-formal education' appears to be education that is organised and systematic. However, the difference is that, while formal education is rigid and is characterised by uniformity, NFE is flexible in terms of the timing, and duration of learning, the age

groups of learners, content and methodology of instruction. NFE is not confined to those persons who are dropouts from the schooling system or women who are illiterate but to any sub-groups in the community who may have specific needs. Thus NFE is broad in character, extensive in coverage and diverse in content, methods and participants.

While there is diversity in the definitions of NFE, for the purpose of the current study, NFE was taken as identify organised, systematic and deliberately planned education to meet specific purposes for particular participants whether they be adults or children.

6.3 **NFE - Purposes**

NFE has also been conceptualised in terms of its purposes. NFE may fulfil a range of educational purposes. One purpose is in relation to the formal system. In Simkin's (1977:23) view, because of the failure of formal education to provide skills, knowledge and attitudes at an acceptable cost, NFE is seen as a means of providing a cheaper alternative to provide individuals with the skills required by the economic system whenever formal system has failed to do so. The related problems of school leavers and unemployment have led to the expansion of NFE training programmes. For example, the Zambian experience showed that the government made efforts to reduce unemployment through providing skill-training programmes (Alexander, 1983:20). However, NFE's purpose is not confined to the development of skills for employment as it is broader in scope and extensive in coverage. NFE has been used for a remedial purpose, where the formal education system has been unable to educate satisfactorily all its citizens, and illiteracy is a problem. For example, in the Asian and Pacific Region,

NFE is used to support the universalisation of primary education (UPE) and literacy programmes, and has been used to assist children complete primary education and/or to ensure that whatever is learned in primary schools is not lost, but reinforced (UNESCO,1987). Serious as the literacy problem is in many countries in the Region, NFE is not confined to creating a literate population or retaining a level of literacy. The need to ensure that neo-literates do not lapse into illiteracy, has led to NFE being used for functional literacy to enhance skills and competence in job-related activities.

Concerning the rural communities, NFE is seen to meet the needs of these people. According to Evans (1983: 272), NFE may offer for them the opportunity to learn productive skills and a way to participate effectively in the development of their societies. When combined with other inputs, rural NFE may be a strong accelerating factor in the economic and social growth of rural areas.

Another purpose of NFE is as a means to achieve the goal of lifelong education. The concept of lifelong education, is best realised through NFE, as it provides better possibilities to fulfil people's needs (Pena-Berro, 1984) than formal education.

Through NFE everyone is seen as having the opportunity for purposeful learning to keep abreast of technical change not only to fulfil one's role in society but also for self-fulfilment and self-development throughout their lifespan. According to Pena-Borrero (1984:2), whether the purpose for NFE is for social maintenance or social change depends on the objectives and strategies for NFE and the way facilitators and learners perceive themselves, either as active members of a changing society or as 'helpless products' of the established system. Reed (1987)

argues that NFE cannot be neutral and that in terms of its purpose it is used either to maintain society or to change it .

NFE is not confined to a single purpose, but encompasses diverse goals and objectives. In the context of this study NFE can be used either to maintain society or change it in relation to the specific social cultural group to which NFE operates.

6.4 **Three Perspectives on NFE**

NFE has also been conceptualised according to three perspectives. These three perspectives are of NFE as a system, NFE as a process and NFE as setting. They are examined below to broaden the discussion of the general concept of NFE.

(a) *NFE as a System*

The first perspective is NFE as a system. As the emergence of NFE has often been associated with problems within the formal educational system, NFE has been explained as a system with a particular relationship to the formal educational system. According to Khawaja and Brennan (1990), the approach is of value as it provides some understanding of the new system of NFE from the known system, the formal system to the less well-known, the NFE system. However, the difficulty may occur for those who have experience of the formal system in terms of internalising its assumptions, so that a change of view to understand adequately the special features of NFE may prove difficult (ibid, p.12).

Fordham (1980:152) has contrasted NFE with the formal system using five themes and a diagrammatic representation of his work is reproduced in Figure 6. 1.

FORMAL	NON-FORMAL
	PURPOSES
Long-term and general	Short-term and specific
Credential-based	Non-credential-based
	TIMING
Long cycle	Short cycle
Preparatory	Recurrent
Full-time	Part-time
	CONTENT
Input-centred and standardised	Output-centred and individualised
Academic	Practical
Clientele determined by entry requirements	Entry requirements determined by clientele
	DELIVERY SYSTEM
Institution-based	Environment based
Isolated (from the socio-economic environment and from social action)	Community-related
Rigidly structured	Flexibly structured
Teacher-centred	Learner-centred
Resource-intensive	Resource-saving
	CONTROL
External	Self-governing
Hierarchical	Democratic

Figure 6.1 : Comparison of Formal and Non-Formal Education - of Fordham (1980).

Fordham's description under the five themes has clearly brought out the differences of features in formal education and NFE as systems. When NFE is described as a system in relation to formal education, the differences in the features of the two systems are identified. Fordham

argues that NFE is the direct opposite of the formal system. Fordham's explanation of NFE by reference to the formal means is a quantum leap. It may be viewed that what Fordham is describing is the ideal NFE system. Those who are already familiar with the formal system, for example educational administrators, may be able to better understand NFE through this comparison. However, this may not apply to others who may be less familiar with the formal system. Therefore other emphasis may be required for better understanding of NFE.

(b) *NFE As A Process*

The second perspective is that of NFE as a process. The concept of NFE as a process centres on learning as its central component. Coombs et al. (1973) suggest that the learning-centred view of education emphasises the importance of beginning the analysis with the participants and their needs before considering alternative means of meeting these needs.

The importance of NFE as a process is supported by several writers whose emphasis is on participation and control (Fagan, 1969; Freire, 1972; Thompson, 1981; Gelpi, 1985). Participation as described by Bagnall (1989) is a continuum operating from no more than mere presence at an activity to full control of learning through several stages of active involvement. Presence implies only that the learner is in attendance at the programme. The interests of the learners are not necessarily taken into account. The learners may be entirely passive as learners. Involvement is when the learners, either on individual or group basis, interact with other learners or the facilitator in an NFE programme. Control is the degree of learners' control of the content, aims, objectives and the outcome of the NFE programme. Control is

perceived as the highest form of participation and this can be genuine. In contrast, involvement may be a subtle form of social maintenance. For example, in some developing countries like Fiji, where programmes are centrally planned and government has a high profile, it is often difficult for community members to assert their wishes and rights over government priorities (Baba, 1992:8). When this occurs participation in development programmes become a subtle form of social maintenance.

It is certain that those who are dependent are not in control of their own lives. Movement from dependency to control is perceived as a fundamental element in NFE leading to capacities of self-learning and self-realisation (Dave, Ouane, Sutton, 1989:403). To achieve control Axinn (cited in Barikor, 1985) noted that participants have to participate and influence the decision-making process and planning of programmes. NFE as a process emphasises the active participation of the learners in the decisions-making and planning of their NFE programmes.

(c) *NFE As A Setting*

The third perspective is that of NFE as a setting. This perspective emphasises the importance of an informal climate in NFE activities. NFE programmes are often conducted within formal settings such as classrooms. The problem is not so much the facilities (such as unsuitable furniture) but the lack of informality and flexibility in the way learning is conducted. For example, many people who conduct NFE activities have formal education backgrounds and may not have had much experience and understanding of NFE processes and methods. Teachers from the formal system are often perceived as unsuitable as teachers of NFE, because they are trained to teach children and not equipped to teach adults (Wellings, 1987). Special training may therefore be necessary to

enable them to be better adjusted to the NFE learning setting and able to develop NFE.

A flexible and less structured setting in NFE may enable the use of traditional or indigenous learning processes, methods, strategies and techniques that are otherwise unused and under-valued in the formal settings of the formal system. Such methods include singing and dancing, ceremonials, use of master-apprentice model and games.

The question raised by Khawaja and Brennan in relation to the learning setting of NFE and the approach taken in this study is particularly important. "If the setting of NFE is to be less formal, what teaching, learning and administrative support structures need to be discovered, rediscovered, adapted or developed to facilitate a less formal setting of NFE." (Khawaja and Brennan, 1990, p.12).

6.5 Selection of a General Concept of NFE

The various views on NFE examined have revealed that NFE is not a straight forward concept. However, for the purpose of this study some important features of NFE in terms of definition, purpose and perspectives have been determined.

The first is in relation to the definition. NFE is defined as an educational activity that is organised, systematic and is deliberately planned to meet specific purposes in a particular cultural context.

Secondly, NFE is not confined to a particular purpose, as it may fulfil a range of educational purposes. It can be used either to bring change to the lives of the people or to maintain the existing values.

Thirdly, NFE as system, NFE as a process and NFE as a setting emphasise that NFE can be conceptualised according to the three perspectives. As a system it is contrasted with the formal system to provide a better understanding of its special features. As a system it can be an alternative, complement to the established formal system. As a process it emphasises the participation of the learners in decisions concerning programming. As a setting it emphasises the importance of an informal and flexible learning situation where teaching and learning strategies less structured and familiar to the cultural context may be used.

Bearing in mind the socio-economic and diverse cultures in Fiji, it is suggested that, a generic concept of NFE encompassing some of the key terms described in the definition, purpose and perspectives should be used in the study. It was against this generic concept that the localised concept of NFE was compared.

Having identified a general concept for NFE, the next stage is to determine some key features for NFE programme operation.

6.6 Programme Planning Process

In this section adult education literature is reviewed to identify the meaning of programme planning, examine models of programme planning and select some key features for NFE programme.

6.6.1 Definition and Description of Programme Planning

The term 'programme' as defined by Boyle (1981) refers to the 'product' resulting from all programming activities in which the professional educator and the learner are involved. Some see programme

as curriculum or learning and teaching conditions (Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980). As used in this study programme refers to a structured activity of learning and/or teaching activity with a positive purpose.

Programme planning refers to a deliberate, rational and precise planning of educational activities by adult educators operating from an organisational base in their roles as change agents and programmers (Boone, 1985, p. 64).

Ideally, in NFE in the Fiji context, programme planning should be undertaken with the co-operation of the learners. The goal of programme planning always has been to nurture the conditions that ideally might be brought about by education. Programme planning has been considered an administrative function, democratically determined and educationally sound that responds to changing conditions and provides for decentralised responsibility (Boone, 1985, p.43).

Programme planning may occur at different administrative and institutional levels and there are different types. They may be developmental, institutional or informational (Boyle, 1981), and are categorised according to specific programme goals and objectives. The above classification was not necessarily used in this study but noted here because programme planning may be classified under any of the three types.

6.6.2 Programme Planning Models

Much of the literature on programme planning is based on western literature concerning adult education programme development. According to Khawaja and Brennan (1990: 62) the assumptions of much of the literature on adult education programming coincide closely with NFE as a process and setting. This is important because the concept of NFE considered appropriate for the socio-economic and cultural context of the study emphasise process and setting

Literature on adult education provides a range of programme planning models useful for adaptation in NFE programming and depending upon purposes and the particular cultural context.

Boone (1985) analysed a wide range of programming models for adult education and his approach is system oriented and interdisciplinary. The emphasis is on collaboration among all parts of the system in carrying out the process. He asserts that the purpose of adult education is to produce behaviour in individuals, learning groups and systems resulting in change in society.

Various programming models have been reviewed in a variety of settings for a wide range of adult education programmes. The review provides a useful introduction to the various approaches and also has value because it is focussed on the purposes of the models. It was noted in this study that in NFE there are two main purposes, social maintenance or social change. Langenbach's contribution (cited in Khawaja and Brennan, 1990) is useful in NFE programme planning because it relates purposes to content. There are examples in the models for examining not simply the question of social maintenance or social change but rather

models that exemplify degrees of change that may be planned into the programme (Khawaja and Brennan, 1990).

There is no single programming model that will be appropriate for all NFE activities. However, for the purpose of this study and the decision to select key features and their assumptions as a basis for the NFE ideal model, several programming features from Boone's (1985) and Boyle's (1981) were identified but with some adaptations, as follows

- Key feature 1: The identification of the basis for programming
- Key feature 2: The identification of the participants
- Key feature 3: The identification of educational needs
- Key feature 4: The formulation of the curriculum content
- Key feature 5: The selection of instructional methods
- Key feature 6: The organisation and management of programmes
- Key feature 7: The identification of resources

These are elaborated in the following subsection.

1. *Identification of the Basis for Programming*

The basis of any educational programme planning is the socio-economic and cultural base of the culture in which the programme will operate. However, the political realities of NFE should be first recognised. If the national planning objectives indicate that NFE's purpose is to serve social maintenance then this should be understood by programmers. If change is advocated, then the nature and degree of change should be understood. The recognition of the political realities of the people does not mean that NFE must always be a means of social maintenance. As Khawaja and Brennan (1990:64) assert, the interpretation of the degrees of freedom available for NFE planners to increase participation, to introduce change, becomes a vital step in the programming process.

It is important to recognise also that providers of NFE programmes are part of the national system and thus their functions are directly influenced by the national political objectives. The political realities do not mean that NFE has to be confined to social maintenance. NFE programme planners have the capacity and the freedom to decide by translating objectives into programmes whether they believe in the capacity of the learners to participate in the process of learning to bring about change in their lives and community.

But in addition to this, as was noted in the discussion of NFE as a process, it is inherent in that process that people are to be involved in the decisions and planning concerning their learning programme. This is important in the context of this study because it is suggested here that only when people participate in the decisions and plans concerning their learning programmes then they would understand the purpose and the value in relation to their individual and community living.

To understand the socio-economic and cultural context it is important that the programmer must first study, analyse and map the area where the provider functions to determine and understand the social groupings in the provider's environment. A thorough knowledge of the social and cultural contexts of the people intended to be served is vital. Even within a country there are differences between and among people with regard to lifestyles, heritage, socio-economic status, culture, pattern of interaction, and normative standards. Lippitt, Watson and Westley (1958 cited in Boone, 1985) indicate that adult educators must understand patterns of interaction, social differentiation, leadership and power, values and values systems, and the information base of a particular public. This knowledge is important in relation to understanding how needs are socially and culturally linked.

As the basis of programming is the people and their socio-economic and cultural realities, NFE programmers must understand the importance of involving the learners in the process of making decisions as to what programmes are relevant and important to individual and community groups.

2. *Identification of the Participants*

As noted in the definition of NFE identified for this study, participants in NFE programmes can be any particular sub-group in the population, whether they be children or adults. To be specifically participants for NFE programmes is important for effective programming and allocation of resources. Identifying participants may present difficulty as potential participants may not be aware of or perceive the need for an NFE programme. However, there are several ways in which potential participants may be identified. The provider's (be an organisation or an institution) structure and the availability of its learning resources may determine the particular potential members of the community who can be served. Also the particular area of expertise of the non-formal educator may define the participants with whom they are likely to work. There must nevertheless, be thorough understanding of the social and cultural contexts of the environment in which the NFE provider functions.

Information about potential participants can be obtained from government officers and non-government organisations representatives who work in the area or have had some experience with the potential participants. Print sources - for example reports or statistics on health and literacy - can also give information on potential participants. Repre-

sentatives of the participants, such as community leaders or the members themselves can be consulted.

One of the common strategies for identifying the potential participant is to isolate those in the community who are 'disadvantaged' as individuals or groups. According to Wellings (1987), they may be a particular social, demographic or geographic group, and some examples are rural youth, low income families, female parents, out of school youth, people who live in a village, families without adequate housing. However, the 'disadvantage' the participants have, for example unemployment or illiteracy, is often emphasised without taking cognisance of the other roles that the participants may have. Their disadvantage may be the starting point for an NFE activity, but it should not be the only focus.

There is a danger when target groups are labelled as 'disadvantaged' by governments and their bureaucracies. According to Griffin (1983) and Gelpi (1985) when the disadvantaged are viewed as one-dimensional, control is with the officials and there is no authentic development. Their disadvantage is often the prime focus in the programme and the other roles they play are not considered. Thompson (1981: 86) also pointed out that notions of disadvantage are often uncritically related to a wide range of physical, personal defects and social conditions in which diverse groups were linked together, and by which complex social, economic and political manifestations are not challenged. In Thompson's view NFE is about aiding the individual towards self-fulfilment, self-confidence and a more capable involvement in family and community. In addition NFE must be concerned with people as human beings and provide a tool to enable people to live in a

more informed and contented way as members of the community (Thompson, 1981, p.88).

Brennan (1989) proposes what he terms a 'schema' in which educational planning can be related in a way that does not focus only on the area of disadvantage but views people as fully contributing members in the community they live. The schema focuses on the roles adults play in the society or community in which they live. According to him the five major roles and subsidiary roles should be the basis for the educational provision and learning to assist adults fulfil their roles effectively in their community. The five major roles and the accompanying pairs of subsidiary roles are as follows:-

- (a) the economic functional role - the adult as a producer and consumer of foods and services.
- (b) the family role - the adult as a procreator and career leader.
- (c) the political/civic role - the adult as leader and follower.
- (d) the cultural role - as conservator and innovator.
- (e) the educational role - as teacher and learner.

Brennan's schema is useful in the discussion of participants for NFE, as it highlights the point made earlier that participants, particularly those labelled as disadvantaged, should not be viewed as one-dimensional. To focus only on the disadvantage limits the other roles of the learner. On the other hand, to begin with focussing on the disadvantage in a learner or community group can be a start in NFE programmes as adults are usually motivated to be involved in NFE programme, if they have a need or problem.

Ideally everyone should be seen as a potential participant in NFE programmes. Their identification or selection should not be confined to a particular method, but be undertaken in consultation with community leaders, government officials, non-government workers and potential participants themselves. 'Disadvantaged' individuals or groups may be the starting point of NFE activity but every community member is a potential participant and their multi-dimensional roles should be recognised.

3. *Identification of Educational Needs*

It is important to begin an NFE programme with an analysis of the participants and their needs, before considering alternative means of meeting these needs. According to Boyle's (1981) programme development model, central issues are those of needs and their assessment, both relate the provider of NFE to the clientele.

In discussing NFE programming Brennan (1988) defines need as "a condition in which someone perceives there is a deficiency". There is an assumption in this definition that anyone, for example a friend or a member of the family and not only experts, can determine needs. But to perceive implies seeing and thinking and then interpreting in abstraction the situation. The perception of need therefore involves opinions and values because it is based on people's perceptions. To provide a reliable base for programme objectives requires a wide range of perceptions which may include those of the psychologist, the economist, the demographer and also potential participants within a target group.

Literature reviewed on the definition of need (Scissors, 1982; Boone, 1985; Brookfield, 1986; Upadhyaya, 1991) suggests that the term

'need' is best defined as the deficiency, imbalance, or a gap between the present condition and a set of societal norms believed to be most desirable. The gap between where the learners are and the desired state of affairs as in relation to relevant social norms. For example, a social norm in parents' education may be that parents will know their role and responsibilities in the educational development of their children and possess the skills needed to communicate effectively with their children. An analysis of parents knowledge and skills reveals that they lack knowledge and understanding of child development and communication skills. Thus, there is a gap in their role as parents according to society's norm. According to Boone (1985: 115) needs imply a gap between what ought to be and what is which is illustrated as follows:

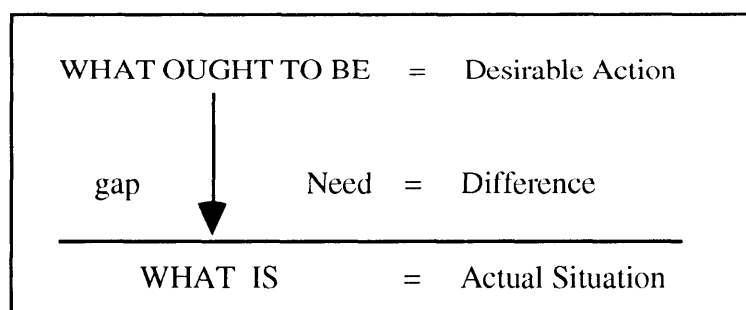


Figure 6.2 : The Nature of Educational Needs.

(a) *Classification of Needs*

According to Upadhyaya (1991: 5) need is multifaceted; it is economical, social, physical, mental, intellectual, cultural, etc. Different approaches to the process of classifying needs and correspondingly diverse classification systems have been developed. Boyle (1981), Scissons (1982), and Wellings (1987) describe four categories of needs: normative need, felt need, expressed need and comparative need. Normative need is what the experts or institutions believe is needed in the

community or for an individual. For example family planning may be a normative need perceived by the NFE planner. Felt need is what the people or community express as their needs or wants. For example, the need for security in the old age is a felt need by the community. Expressed need is a felt need turned into action. Comparative need is the measurement of one need compared with another for example the need for security was greater than the need for family planning.

Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, developed a model of a hierarchy of needs to indicate the needs human beings have.

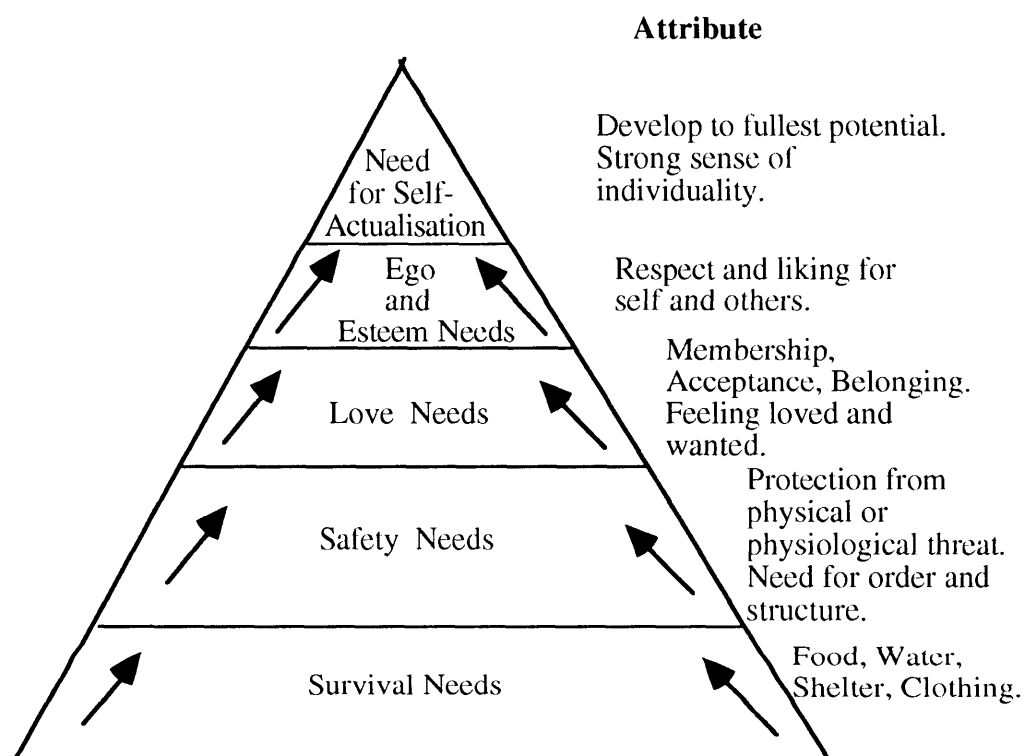


Figure 6.3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Need

Maslow asserts that our primary needs are for survival and when these are met, then we can think of safety, love and self esteem and finally self-actualisation(Fig. 6.3). For example, learners cannot devote their energy to inner growth and an understanding of their situation until their basic needs are met. However, a person's position in the hierarchy

may change constantly to suit his/her needs at that particular time. Only when all these needs are fully met, are people able to fully realise their own potential and this realisation is termed 'self-actualisation'. According to Fox (1989 :37), this involves the release of an inner tendency for good, an increase in understanding of others and of self, an awareness of inner growth, an increase in autonomy and finally, a greater potential to change and shape one's environment. All these involve active and expressive behaviours; exploring, experiencing, choosing, enjoying, transforming and doing. They are not just coping but embracing possibility. The above hierarchy of needs tends to emphasise the individual needs which in Upadhaya's (1991: 6) view are the same in all societies, except that the strategies and approaches taken for the fulfilment of these needs differ and are very much related to the cultural context and resources. Within the cultural context of this study the fulfilment of individual needs requires the support of the family and community.

(b) *Educational Needs Assessment*

A critical factor in NFE is the accurate determination of the needs of the learners. To determine the needs of individuals, a group of learners or community is not an easy task. According to Hall (1982) the term 'needs assessment' refers to a process for identifying discrepancies between existing conditions and desired results of a target group and setting those identified discrepancies in priority order. The information determined from the needs assessment process may be used in several ways. First, as baseline information to assist planners and administrators to make decisions in planning new programmes, either on a long term or a short term basis. Second, the information may be used as follow-up data to assist programme participants to determine whether their

educational needs are actually met. Third, it can be a basis for a set of learning requirements for a special group(s) who are ethnically, culturally or mentally different from others in the same community (Boyle, 1981; Hunt, 1982). There are various strategies for determining educational needs and it is wise to use more than one method for a particular programme (Uppadhaya, 1991). These methods may be grouped into traditional and non-traditional methods.

According to Wellings(1987, p.9) traditional methods of needs assessment have been used by planners for a long time and may be divided into unobtrusive and obtrusive methods. Unobtrusive methods which include observation, studying media reports, records, official reports and work samples, involve the examination of samples of work, community life or documentation. Inferences about needs are made without disruption to the daily activity of the target group. The advantages of these methods are their delivery of quick results and the low cost involved, and also their sensitivity to the concerns of sensitive groups. The major disadvantage is the absence of participation of the target group which can give arise to inaccurate needs being determined.

Obtrusive methods involve questionnaires, consultations, interviews and skill tests. These methods involve the learners in gathering information about their learning needs. This is the advantage because the learners are in the best position to determine their own learning needs. The disadvantages are the amount of time involved and the expenditure. In the use of the questionnaire only the literate can be involved. The participants' daily activities will be disturbed and their expectations may be raised inappropriately.

There are also non-traditional methods, which include participatory research, future searches, critical incident analyses and village theatre discussions. The advantages of these methods are that they provide opportunities to negotiate ownership by the learners and the weighting of priorities. The disadvantages are that they are expensive in time and skilled facilitation.

The role of the teacher or resource person as a 'facilitator' to assist the learners in the identification of their learning needs is emphasised by Freire (1972), Knowles (1980), and Rogers (1983). As a facilitator there is a trust that the learners, with the right conditions, will demonstrate the will and capacity to take responsibility for their needs analysis. For this to occur the facilitator is required to establish a relationship with the learners as peers. Rogers (1983) contends that the teacher or resource person as a facilitator is also a flexible operational leader responsible for providing some structure. But he/she is a member of the group.

Such a participative approach to needs analysis assumes that there will be little motivation for learning unless the participants realise that the educational programme is related to needs they identify themselves (Freire, 1972). It may also be argued that it would be a waste of resources to offer a programme if it does not relate to real individual and community needs. Needs so identified are then used as the basis for developing learning goals and objectives. When the group members have determined their needs and decided what they want to accomplish, their learning goals and objectives should be formulated.

The process that is adopted here is that of an active partnership between the facilitator and participants in a collaborative effort to identify, assess, and analyse the learners' needs and to develop an

educational programme or learning activity that is intended to help the learners meet those needs.

4. *The Formulation of Curriculum Content*

In the general concept of NFE examined earlier it was determined that content of NFE is diverse as it would depend on the goals and objectives of NFE. 'Content' refers to the topics or subjects to be covered during the programme implementation. It is focussed on the goals and objectives. The process of formulating the content areas depends on the approach taken by the NFE programmer. It may involve a large representative or a small group of experts. The content determined may involve either a general thrust or particular interests of the group. Brennan's (1990) schema is useful as it offers a wide range of content areas which relates to the various roles adults are required to play in society.

It is suggested that the approach taken to the formulation of learning content of learning or programme should seek to identify needs in the areas of cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills) and affective (values and attitude) knowledge (Knowles, 1980). Ideally the content of a programme should be based on the needs of the learners and should be formulated collaboratively by the learners and the facilitator. Subject content perceived by facilitators to be relevant in terms of vocational and social roles relevant to the cultural context should be integrated into the programme.

5. *Development of Instructional Methods*

The importance of an informal climate and less structured setting was identified in the perspective of NFE as a setting. The informal climate and less structured setting should inform the choice of instructional methods.

The term 'instruction' is usually associated with formal teaching or pedagogy. To instruct is to teach someone and this approach assumes that the person instructing has the knowledge which has to be transmitted to the person who is being instructed. Tyler's (1971) contribution in the field of education has been focussed on instruction and the setting of objectives for educational activities by the instructor for the students to achieve. Bloom (1956) and Skinner (1971) both view education as the production of behaviour prescribed by the teacher. Central in the instructional tradition is the dominant role of the teacher who prescribes pre-determined objectives to be achieved by the students through a learning strategy of programmed instruction.

Insofar as instruction was considered in the present study, the question that was examined was what are the ideal instructional methods for NFE? The works of Rogers (1969), Freire (1976), and Knowles (1980) did however, focus much more on communication in which the role of the teacher is not so much that of an instructor but of a facilitator or resource person. The focus of learning then no longer centres on the teacher but on the learners. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning process whereby the learners actively participate to achieve their objectives.

While instruction emphasises the teacher, Srinivasan (1989), in her four approaches emphasise the active participation of learners. She states that a wide range of instructional design and techniques are used in NFE. She outlines four approaches which are as follows:

- (a) The content-centred approach or institutional approach emphasises knowledge, identified by the specialists to be transferred to the learners and examples are family planning, nutrition and agricultural programmes. However, the difference with the instructional approach is that the teacher acts as a technical and process resource (Tyler, 1971). Such a person facilitates the process whereby the learners assess their own levels of competency, identify their own understanding, attitudes and capabilities, select content, select activities and direct their own learning. The content is broken down into small units and delivered through various means such as lectures, discussion, personal counselling and demonstrations. Participatory techniques are used to reinforce learning.
- (b) In the problem-focussed approach there are two purposes: to enable participants to become skilled in problem-solving and to generate information useful for the solution of everyday problems. The problem-solving process needs to be both a mental process as well as related to practical activity whereby the content is planned as a sequence of small units focussing on the immediate problems faced by the participants. The cultural approach to problem-solving needs to be recognised and content delivered in ways which are non-threatening and sensitive to the participants. Some techniques which may be used include visual materials, case studies, open ended problems, drama, puppetry, parables and proverbs.

- (c) The conscientisation approach in NFE focuses on social change. In some situations there is an exploitative power imbalance because of vested interests by one group which exploits or oppresses another. Conscientisation methods and materials are planned and sequenced in ways which enable the participants to analyse critically their present situation. Materials used are relevant to the situation and are used to stimulate dialogue. The visual materials are presented with themes with meaning-loaded words elicited from the participants' vocabulary. Through dialogue between them and the facilitators and reflection on that dialogue, they are able to have a better understanding of their situation and the power relationships in which they exist. Through group action skills they may then be able to challenge existing power structures.
- (d) The human development and creative planning approach focuses on developing the participants' creative and planning capacities so as to enable them to function more dynamically and effectively as decision makers, planners and change agents. The approach emphasises the deliberate nurturing of creativity in order to encourage openness to innovation, to enable people to improve their capabilities for critical examination, self-awareness of their strengths and potential. Audio-visual aids, role playing, critical incidents, simulation games, discussion and other participatory instructional techniques may be used to arouse consciousness of self in relation to problems.

The four approaches developed by Srinivasan are useful and, depending on whether the objectives are general or specific, they can serve as the parts of a screening mechanism for NFE planners or facilitators in the selection of specific and appropriate methodologies. The four approaches developed by Srinivasan emphasise participation of the learners in the learning process.

However, whatever methods are selected or have possibilities for NFE, they must be considered in terms of the cultural context in which they are used. Identified in NFE as a setting and important in the cultural context of this study are the traditional or indigenous processes, methods and strategies which include singing, ceremonial and games which may also be used for NFE programmes.

The NFE ideal instructional methods, should emphasise active participation of the learners, flexibility and cultural acceptability. Indigenous learning strategies, methods and techniques familiar to the learners should be also considered.

6. The Organisation and Management of Programmes

In the examination of the concept of NFE it was identified that NFE could serve several purposes. As NFE's role is essentially instrumental, that is serving to assist in the achievement of objectives beyond educational development, its organisation and management of programmes in relation to those ends are important. The organisation and management of NFE as a system and its relationships with the formal systems and other system government and non-government sectors are also important.

In relation to the organisational structure of NFE the emphasis has been on decentralisation and initiation by the village people. This is often referred to as the 'bottom up' approach as opposed to the 'top-down' approach (Khawaja and Brennan, 1990). The 'bottom-up' approach emphasises the participation of the potential learners in NFE in those decisions which are critical to their well-being. However, it is asserted by Bock and Bock (1989) that if NFE is going to be employed broadly as an

instrument of national development, it requires a well organised central administration and funding base. Such an assertion implies that central organisation and management are necessary to achieve maximum planned effect. The 'top-down' approach has often been criticised by some educators because the bureaucracy is too rigid and inflexible to respond to the needs of the participants. Furthermore, the bulk of the resources are used for staff and vehicles resulting in insufficient funding for materials for programmes (Brennan and Kwaja p. 108). To reduce the consequences of over bureaucratization, a significant participatory element in management and organisation is expected.

Accordingly, Bock and Papagiannis (1989) suggest a combination of the 'upward' and 'downward' approach to organisation and management, which may be better able to respond and accommodate unique geographical and cultural differences. It may also empower the participants of NFE to contribute to decisions which affect them. Supporting this approach, Townsend-Coles (1982) suggests an organisational mechanism which exists at the local, middle and national levels and which can bring all the providers of NFE together for joint planning, and where the voices of the participants or consumers are also heard. But he emphasises that such a mechanism must be under-pinned by legislation to ensure that whatever is agreed has legal sanction.

(a) *The National Organisation and Structure*

Various views have been expressed in relation to the national structure for NFE. One such view is stated here,

At the national level the co-ordinating machinery most likely to be successful is a structure that is an extension of the government's own administration. A national agency on which all the relevant government and non-government agencies are represented can facilitate integration and quality control of non-formal education.... National boards, however, should not dominate programmes.... co-ordinating structures are needed. Thus at the village level there should be co-ordinating machinery where workers from different agencies are involved .

(Mobilising Human Resources: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1979 : 54-55)

In relation to the above statement it is evident that clear policy is required to establish by legislation a framework for NFE and to direct the agencies involved to plan their activities co-operatively. A national forum approved and supported by government provides an arena where various agencies can come together for consultation and financial decisions. According to Townsend-Coles (1982), the responsibility for the task is best assumed by an umbrella Ministry such as the Ministry of Finance or the Prime Minister's Department, rather than one of the operational Ministries.

The rationale behind this view is the avoidance of conflict among operational Ministries of Primary Industry, Education, Health, etc and the belief that they have been placed in a subservient position to any one of them, and to encourage them to work together harmoniously.

Another form of legislation that is often necessary is to ensure that the resources of government in terms of personnel and facilities such as schools, libraries, training centres etc. are available for NFE activities when the premises are not being used for their primary purposes. This ensures the fullest use of existing capital resources before plans are made

for the construction of new premises. NFE is undertaken by almost every government department and non-government agency, and it is vital that there should be a means at every level for the various bodies to come together. Some countries for example Thailand, have adopted these policies but whether they function effectively is another question (Unesco, 1987). For a national organisational structure, Townsend-Coles (1981) suggested the followings:

- (a) A Council for NFE of the highest standing and vested with executive powers which are binding on the agencies which form its membership. To have legal rights is important as it can inject into NFE the dynamism which is essential if it is to perform what has to be done. National Councils or Committees which have no legal powers become purely advisory bodies and thus unable to maintain the dynamism and interest in its tasks.
- (b) Its location is vital for reasons already mentioned. It should be located in the most appropriate umbrella Ministry of government and to fulfil its tasks regular meetings are required to submit an account of its work to Cabinet and Parliament.
- (c) Such a co-ordinated approach will enable the government to have the authority to plan action on an inter-ministerial basis with added ability of requiring each Ministry to comply with what is decided.
- (d) For NFE to be recognised as a coherent entity, able to act collectively in the best interests of the nation, it is essential that within each of the operational Ministries, a Department, or initially an officer, be responsible for its share of the work. In this way the National Body will have ministerial representatives who recognise themselves as being equal partners in NFE.

The other four constituents that are suggested to be part of the National Body are the local authorities, universities, non-government organisations and the public and the consumers of NFE. For the best results to be achieved, each of the constituents should have a means at the national level of voicing their views and sharing in decision making. Local governments, or in some developing countries what are called regions or division, are the arm of government nearest to the public, and it will be largely through them that programmes of NFE will retain their flexibility by making allowances for regional and local needs. It is important that their wisdom and understanding should be reflected on the national body.

Universities have a responsibility to the wider community and this is sometimes shown by the establishment of Departments of Adult, Continuing or Non-Formal Education. The tasks assigned to these departments vary considerably between universities. However, three tasks are common: the training of people to enter the professional cadre of NFE, the provision of appropriate programmes for the public, and research that will assist those actively engaged in the work. Universities should be represented at the national level of NFE organisation.

Non-Government Organisations' (NGOs) contribution to development and to NFE is significant because it is being recognised that their system of operation is flexible, human-centred and are responsive to changing needs (Townsend-Coles,1981). They have the ability to identify with the culture and values of the participants. The problem with which they are often faced is insufficient resources and therefore they rely heavily on government and outside sources. Nevertheless, they provide an important service and should be recognised as a partner with government in the planning, delivery and evaluation of NFE. Thus, their

involvement in the National Council of NFE is important (Coles, 1981, Unesco, 1986, Khawaja and Brennan, 1990).

Participation in NFE should be voluntary and the decision to participate should rest with the individual. However, in some cases, particularly in developing nations where the national planning objectives are presumed to be of socio-economic benefit to all the people, everyone in the community is expected to participate. The communal life and structure also enforces participation so that sometimes it is difficult for the individual to make a choice. At the local level it is important that the representatives of the community are on planning committees. At the national level, such representation is best effected through local authorities or in some developing countries through divisional or provincial heads and non-government organisations.

It is assumed that the national body suggested above can tackle the national planning of NFE and can contribute to the national plans of development. However, as already stated, plans developed must be based on the real needs as perceived by the people. The participants must be consulted; this is the central precept of NFE. This is best achieved at the divisional level and at the levels of towns, villages and communities.

(b) *The Regional or Divisional Organisation*

The second level of organisation is at the regional or divisional level. This level is at the fulcrum of NFE and its significance cannot be over-emphasised. It is at this level that the various arms of government - central and local - meet and effect the essential transference of ideas from policy to action. Through the second level the national body can translate its decisions into actions. Equally important is that through the regional

or divisional organisation the national body is able to identify the problems, needs and issues from those working in NFE at the local level and is thus able to base its decisions on what is, and not on what they assume is, the situation. The 'downward' and 'upward' flow of ideas between the regional and central government is important if NFE is to be maintained within the bounds of government policy as well as retaining its relevance to the participants.

It is at the second level that the representatives of various departments meet the practitioners, those who work in the villages and communities and experience the daily difficulties which arise from the practical application of the ideas of the planners. Furthermore, it is at this level that a wide range of operating agencies in NFE can be represented. The national body has to be largely confined to central government and regional or divisional heads as the size has to be kept within bounds, whereas at the second level, various NGOs active in the field, as well as smaller communities, can be represented. Thereby, a much wider range of interests is reflected. To ensure that decisions are acted upon and the second level does not degenerate into a talking shop, it needs to have legal power.

It has to be pointed out that there is a difficulty in striking a balance between preserving the individuality of NFE and its central precept, namely that the learner is paramount, with the other necessity of ensuring that the resources which are available should be used to the best of advantage for the communities and nation. NFE must be related to the needs of the communities and the nation and the programme must be effective. For these to eventuate there needs to be an effective way in which all the agencies are encouraged to work together. They can no longer operate on an ad hoc approach.

(c) *The Community Organisation Structure*

The third level of organisational structure is at the community. This level has to relate to the second level if the participants are to know that their needs are being given adequate attention. If NFE is to make its desired impact it is important that strenuous efforts are made to ensure that the structural framework within which it operates has its co-ordinating base in the community. It is from the community that the 'upward' thrust of needs, problems and issues will originate to determine the policies and strategies to be worked out in the national, regional, provincial or districts contexts. The formation of village or community NFE committees is to provide the possibility that decisions concerning the community are made by the people themselves. But this may present difficulties if these bodies have certain powers vested in them, including the control of limited financial resources. It is necessary therefore at the community level to have officials and the community working together for mutual purposes. Equally important at the community level is a centre or base which co-ordinates needs, problems and issues of the community as well as facilitating their immediate solution. The centre has to be accessible to the community as well as the representatives of various agencies who work in the community.

The foregoing discussion on the organisational structure of NFE has assumed that NFE can function effectively only where there is a known, accepted and respected mechanism whereby at every level, national, middle and local, the various providers are brought together for joint planning, and in which the views of the participants are not suppressed.

7. The Identification of Resources

In Fordham's description of NFE as a system, resource saving is emphasised. The term 'resources,' as used in this study refers to personnel, funds and facilities used in NFE. According to Tandon and Fernandes (1986:5) possession of resources is a source of power and control. This view has implications for who identifies and controls the resources used in NFE programming.

The top-down approach in organisation and management mentioned above relies heavily on resources external to the social setting on which they are focusing. Whether it is a government or voluntary agency programme, rely heavily on external expertise, funding, equipment and material used. Such an approach can create heavy dependence on the external input in terms of personnel, materials equipment and funds. While the local community may not be heavily endowed with resources, it is vital that local expertise and resources are first identified and mobilised. The NFE programmer begins with the faith that the people can solve most of their own problems by utilising skills, experiences and available local resources. External resources play only a supporting role and should not be a source of domination and control.

On the other hand the value and importance of NFE to individuals and community groups should be the basis on which a share of the national resources is allocated to the implementation of NFE programmes.

In the ideal, the identified local resources (which include personnel and facilities) should be known and used first before external resources are sought as a supplement.

6.6.3 Selection of Key Features In Programme Planning For NFE

From the study of select literature on adult education and NFE the key features identified and selected to be used for the study are embraced by the following terms: decision making, participants, educational need, curriculum content, instructional methods, organisation and resources. These key features are combined with the general concept of NFE, and their assumptions are the basis for the ideal model of NFE.

6.7 Model of Non-Formal Education

The model of NFE that is presented here is based on the key terms identified from the literature and considered to be ideal in terms of NFE. The assumptions drawn from these key features are the basis upon which field practice primary-school-based NFE programmes are assessed.

The ideal of NFE is based on the assumption that NFE is an organised educational activity that is deliberately planned and facilitated to meet specific purposes in a cultural context. In terms of purpose it is either used to bring change or to maintain values. As a system it has special features which can be contrasted with formal education, so that NFE can be an alternative, complement or supplement to the established formal system. As a process the participation of the learners in decisions concerning programmes is central. As a setting an informal and less structured learning climate is necessary.

The second assumption is that, in decisions concerning every stage of the programme, the facilitator and the learners co-operatively plan and decide every stage of the programme, from initiation, identification of needs, formulation of content, selecting of methods and concepts of learning relevant to their identified needs and problems and the cultural context.

The third assumption is that everyone is a potential participant in non-formal education activities and they should be engaged through consultation with the community leaders, government and non-government workers. While the 'disadvantaged' individual or groups should be the starting point of NFE activity, it should not be the only focus, as every community member is a potential participant and their multi-dimensional roles should be recognised.

The fourth assumption is that the identification of educational needs and problems is a co-operative action between the facilitator and the learners. Initially the facilitators, facilitate, guide the process and set up a structure whereby the participants are involved as equals and perceived as capable of identifying their own needs and problems through various processes.

The fifth assumption is the ideal formulation of curriculum content on the basis of the needs of the learners, formulated collaboratively by the learners and facilitator. However, subject content perceived to be relevant in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge and attitudes important in vocational and social roles is also integrated into the curriculum.

The sixth assumption is that people tend to remember what they discover and do for themselves, and it is this process which generates learning and meaning. Therefore the instructional methods that induce active participation of the learners and are culturally acceptable are seen as being important. In addition, indigenous learning strategies, methods and techniques familiar to the learners and which encourage an informal and flexible setting should be considered.

The seventh assumption is that the ideal with respect to organisation and management of NFE programme is for decentralisation with a well-defined mechanism established at every level: national, regional and local, and where providers of NFE are brought together for joint planning and consultation and where the views of the community and potential participants is not suppressed. The structures should be better able to respond to and accommodate the geographical and cultural differences and to empower the participants in decisions which affect them.

The ideal identified for resources is that local resources in terms of personnel and facilities should be identified and mobilised for the programmes and only when not available locally should external resources be sought to supplement local resources.

The above assumptions were the basis on which field practice of primary school-based NFE were assessed in relation to the perceptions of the government officials, headteachers, assistant headteachers, community members and selected key persons in Fiji.