

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the Study

In Fiji, one of the problems faced by the formal education system has been a lack of parental and community involvement and participation in schools, and the consequent lack of support for children's education (Fiji Education Commission, 1969). While such support has been mainly in the physical operation of the schools, such as fund raising for maintenance, new buildings or equipment, participating and making direct impact on the educational development of their children has been minimal. This problem has been more evident in Indigenous Fijian schools than Indo-Fijian schools (Lewaravu, 1988:6). Education for the Indo-Fijians has always been viewed as a principal means of upward social mobility. Many Indo-Fijian parents have made great personal sacrifices to ensure that their children received sound education. Indo-Fijian children are taught from an early age that success at school will bring rewards in adult life. Thus the motivation and support for educational activities among Indo-Fijian parents has been much greater than among the Indigenous Fijians.

By contrast, Indigenous Fijians have been motivated but have not emphasised the importance of educational success to the same degree. The communal and traditional values to a great extent have influenced the direction and their motivation in education. In the village setting, social status is determined largely by lineage, age and sex rather than education and personal wealth (Whitehead, 1986:24). Consequently, most Indigenous Fijian children have believed that their personal effort will

have little influence on their adult role in the village community. For most parents, educating their children through indigenous processes and strategies has been part of everyday life through their communal-based culture. However, when learning became institutionalised in schools, most parents assumed that the education of their children was the full responsibility of the schools and the teachers. There was so much emphasis placed on formal education and on the role of the teachers and school in preparing the children for a life outside the community, that most parents and community members felt that their contribution was no longer valued.

The Fiji Education Commission of Enquiry into the system of formal education in Fiji in 1969 confirmed this problem and recommended the development of educational programmes for parents and community members. For the first time the term 'adult education' was used in an official document. It was suggested in the Commission's Report that:

the education of the children and young people of Fiji will be most productive if at the same time wider educational opportunities are provided for their fathers and mothers. Effective programmes of adult education provide a more favourable environment for a child's intellectual and emotional development and narrow the generation gap

(Fiji Education Commission, 1969)

As a follow up to the above recommendation, a comprehensive report on the structure and strategies of adult education was compiled by Dr. Mercer in the 'Mercer Report' (1972). But not many people were aware of the report and the recommendations were not implemented. It was almost ten years later that the Ministry of Education recruited an officer and started its adult and community education programmes.

These programmes were initially focussed on the education of parents to enable them to understand their role in formal education. This task was evident in the 1980 annual report, of the Ministry of Education which made the following statement:

The Adult and Community Education programmes and activities started this year with an extensive awareness and public relations campaign geared and concentrated towards the communities, specifically parents in their vital role in meeting the educational and development needs of their children. To enable adults and community members to know their roles, responsibilities and contribution, there were organised discussions, seminars and workshops for parents, mothers' groups and school committees. Another important aspect of this awareness was the motivation of teachers through in-service courses and discussions on their responsibilities as innovators of educational programmes for parents and community members. Radio talks highlighting parental responsibilities was also an integral part of this awareness campaign. (Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1980.)

Thus, when non-formal education was first established in some primary schools in 1981, its primary focus was on the education of parents and community members. It was associated with the notion that through educational programmes, parents and community members would be made more aware of their responsibilities in the educational development of their children. The lack of parental and community participation in schools and support for children's education had become a concern for the Ministry of Education.

But the term 'non-formal education' was used for the first time officially in Fiji's Development Plan Seven (DP7 1976 - 1980) to refer to programmes for 'dropouts' from the schooling system. This official

conception was confined to those students who were unable to continue academic studies and had failed the prescribed national examinations. For most parents formal education had been largely perceived as a means of access to regular paid employment, usually in the professional sector of the economy which accorded social recognition and prestige. Many parents had, for their children, aspirations which are neither in line with national policy nor realistic in terms of the national situation. Many parents wanted their children to obtain white collar jobs, and saw schools as a means of achieving this. While they may have supported the school in such activities as fund raising, they tended to show less support in the academic work of the children.

In the last decade a great deal of interest was centred on programmes of non-formal education and its potential contribution to individuals, community and national development. Issues relating to national development such as youth, parents and community participation, the status of women, population growth, health, employment and environment protection become an educational concern. The problems and possibilities created by these issues have led to the discussion and focus on the role and potential of non-formal education. In line with this has been the national recognition that while educational resources have been concentrated on formal education, the demand for access to new skills and knowledge by adults and those who are no longer at school have become more pronounced.

As interest in NFE has continued to grow through discussions, workshops and seminars held at national, regional and international levels, policy makers and those concerned with education have become more interested in its concept, practice and potential benefits.

The rationale to undertake this study was based on the author's interest in the field of non-formal education and the growing interest by some educators in Fiji in the potential for non-formal education as a primary-school-based programme. Non-formal education has become an accepted form of education in Fiji. However, non-formal education in some rural primary schools in Fiji (which is the focus of this study) is an innovation started mainly on the initiative of headteachers with the support of some government and non-government officials. Although there is official recognition of its value and importance, the current efforts are voluntary and spasmodic and rely heavily on the enthusiasm of the headteachers and the support of the staff. Generally, there is lack of empirical knowledge and adequate understanding of the concept of NFE and how programmes at the local community level can be managed over a long period.

1.2 The Choice of Primary School for the Study

The decision to study primary schools rather than community or institution as bases for non-formal education was because the primary school is the one institution in the community that is used by government as a vehicle for education, controlled by the community, accessible and less threatening than other institutions. By studying it, hopefully the data gathered should provide an understanding and insight into the role of government and community in meeting the school and community specific learning needs through non-formal education.

1.3 **The Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study was therefore to determine the potential for non-formal education through primary schools in Fiji by developing a relevant conception of non-formal education, suggesting a possible structure of provision, exploring curriculum content and delivery strategies, and examining alternative resources.

In fulfilling the above purpose, an examination of Fiji's socio-economic, cultural and political situation was undertaken, as the context of the study.

It was considered that a generic concept of NFE was required. An examination of literature on western adult education led to the construction of an ideal model of NFE. The ideal model which was constructed contained the key features of NFE in general. These key features were of two types. The first key feature is related to the conceptualisation of NFE while the remaining seven were associated with programme planning at various levels of organisation. These key features were used as a standard against which current practice was assessed.

Through the field study of selected primary-school-based non-formal education in Fiji where these key elements were tested, to gain insights and understanding through interpreting and analysing the perceptions, values and experiences of those interviewed (the government officials, headteachers, assistant headteachers, community members and key persons) of current and past NFE practice.

From the insights and impressions judged against the ideal concept and practice gained, recommendations with respect to the relevant

conception of NFE, its structure of provision, content, delivery strategies and necessary resources were formulated.

1.4 **Significance of the Study**

Non-formal education has become a recognised form of education in Fiji. Thus, the relevance and importance of this research to the general development of non-formal education cannot be over-emphasised. As this will be the first research and formal appraisal of primary-school-based non-formal education in Fiji, there are several ways in which the findings of this study are expected to be of significance.

1. The study is seen as providing data on the feasibility of a more extensive system of primary-school-based non-formal education in Fiji. Such information should assist the officials in the Ministry of Education, Women, Culture, Science and Technology (MEWCST), Ministry of Youth, Employment Opportunities and Sports (MYEOS), principals, teachers and community members in establishing relevant structures and strategies for non-formal education in primary schools.
2. The findings from the study may serve as the foundation for greater awareness and better understanding among various development agencies operating in the communities. They may thereby encourage the development of a more effective and co-ordinated approaches to using the school as a community-based centre for the facilitation of non-formal education programmes. It may thus minimise overlap between and among programmes, the duplication of efforts and the wastage of resources.
3. The study should help in creating awareness and the development of a positive recognition among government departments and other institutions and agencies involved

in development of non-formal education in primary schools.

4. The findings should enhance and improve awareness and understanding of teachers and community workers with respect to school-based non-formal education through training programmes on non-formal education of the University of the South Pacific.
5. Lastly the findings from this study should be applicable to, and could be piloted in, primary schools in other communities in the South Pacific Region.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

The next chapter (2) discusses the setting of this study in terms of its geography, socio-economic, cultural and political contexts. The descriptive setting provides an articulation of the factors which contribute to the strengths, constraints and potential developments of non-formal education, specifically primary-school-based programmes.

Chapter Three provides an historical account of the development of education in Fiji and discusses indigenous or traditional education prior the contact with the Europeans and the introduction of formal education. Within the context of formal education, the rationale, current provision, approaches and the potential for primary-school-based NFE programmes are discussed.

Chapter Four examines the methodology used in the study and justifies the selection of the research approaches used. The sequence of each step followed in the study is briefly articulated.

Chapter Five outlines the selection of techniques used in the study and the criteria by which the five communities were selected as case studies. It also describes and evaluates the use of the data gathering techniques.

Chapter Six examines some concepts of NFE to determine a general conception of NFE for the study. The formulation of the ideal model of NFE, the construction of the model and the selection of the key features of the model and the assumptions derived from the model are outlined.

Chapter Seven discusses the field research and offers a description of the five schools selected as case studies; three of which had programmes still operating and two of which had discontinued their NFE programmes. Similarities and differences in their programmes are first discussed, followed by a description of each school, including its location, enrolment, staffing, community characteristics, and NFE programmes and activities.

In Chapter Eight the assumptions about the ideal, and discrepancies between the ideal and the research data are discussed. Data are presented in terms of eight recurring themes which were developed from the ideal framework. These themes relate directly to the key questions of the study. The themes are:

- (i) the conception of NFE held by those interviewed;
- (ii) the planning and decision-making processes adopted in NFE programmes;
- (iii) the participants in the NFE programmes;
- (iv) the educational needs and the processes in which they were determined;

- (vi) the instructional methods used, the reasons they were used and their appropriateness;
- (vii) the organisation and management of the NFE;
- (viii) the resources used, how they were used and their appropriateness.

Chapter Nine outlines the key findings and implications from the study in relation to: the concept of school-based NFE, the structure of provision at various levels (national, divisional and school), the curriculum content and delivery strategies and, finally, the identification of resources and their management.

The general recommendations take account of the ideal and practical findings of Chapter Eight and the practical implications for primary-school-based NFE programmes in Fiji. In the last part of this chapter issues arising from the study which may offer potential research areas and the conclusions from the study are also discussed.

CHAPTER 2

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN FIJI : ITS GEOGRAPHY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

Non-formal education cannot be adequately discussed in isolation, as it is embedded within its socio-economic, cultural and political context. This chapter outlines the geographical, socio-economic and political contexts in which non-formal education operates.

2.2 Geographical Context

This section describes the geographical context of Fiji and its relation to location, resources and the organisation and monitoring of NFE programmes.

The Republic of Fiji is hardly visible on a world map; a dot in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean. But it is an island nation in the South-West Pacific Ocean comprising 332 islands of which 100 are inhabited (Figure 2.1). It is situated about 1930 kilometres south of the Equator. The island group is located between 15 and 22 degrees South latitude, and between 177 degrees West and 175 East longitude (Pacific Island Monthly, Year-book, 1989). The largest island, Viti Levu, is 10,429 square kilometres and holds 70 percent of the country's population. Fiji's total land area is 18,376 square kilometres. The capital, Suva, is on Viti Levu and is about 3,160 kilometres North-east of Sydney and 2,120 kilometres North of Auckland (Europa World Year Book, 1992).

The climate is tropical, with temperatures ranging from 16 to 32 degrees Celsius (60 - 90 degrees Fahrenheit). Rainfall is heavy on the eastern side of the main islands due to the mountainous relief.

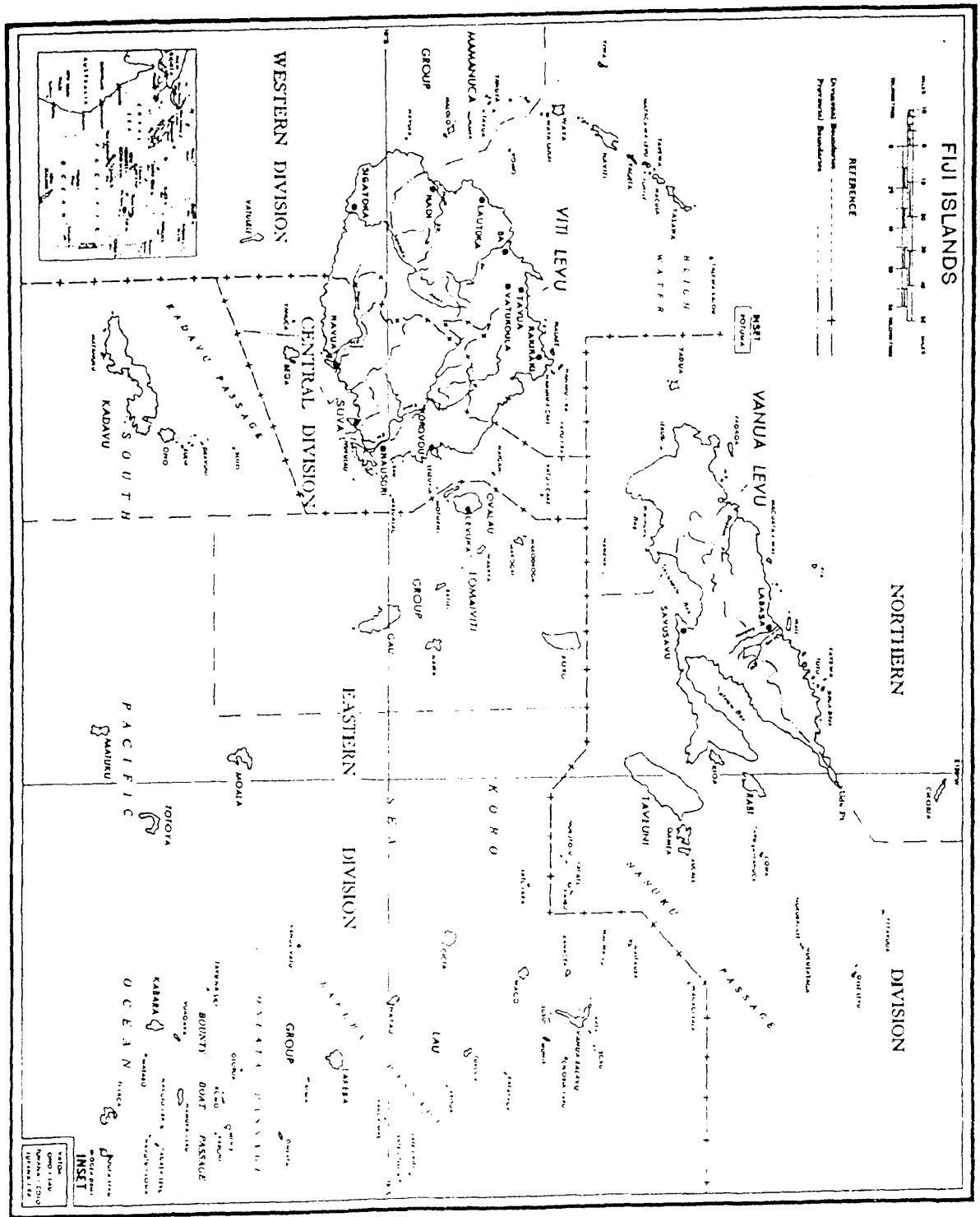


Figure 2.1 : Map of Fiji - showing the distribution of the islands and the government administrative divisions.

The leeward west side has very little rainfall. With the exception of a few coral atolls, Fiji is a group of volcanic islands where mountains and jungle hinterland are uninhabited and inaccessible. The thick, tropical forests to the east, the white beaches and coconut palms in the west are a source of national pride and revenue.

However, lying in the hurricane belt, Fiji suffers continuously from the onslaught of hurricanes which have had devastating effects on the economic and social life of the people.

2.2.1 NFE and Geography

The geographical factors and natural disasters have direct influence on, and implications for, the location, resources and organisation and monitoring of non-formal education programmes.

The first factor is isolation. The scattered nature of the islands and the isolation of villages in the highlands pose communication difficulties. Government and non-government agencies that offer services to the communities have their headquarters in Suva. Personnel from these agencies visit rural communities and outlying islands to facilitate programmes, but such visits are few and irregular because of financial and communication constraints.

The second factor relates to resources which include facilities, cost and personnel. Better facilities and resources are easily available in urban centres where it is also convenient to conduct non-formal education programmes. While this may be the case, the cost for conducting the programmes is usually high for the community members. Although facilities in rural areas may not be as good when compared with those in

urban areas, non-formal education programmes and training organised in the community, may be cheaper because accommodation and food can be provided voluntarily by the community. Moreover, the NFE programme may be more relevant to the community needs. Personnel in terms of experienced local community members and other representatives of agencies working in the community can be invited to participate. But participation may be limited to those persons within that community and their experiences may be confined within their own community

The third factor is the effect of natural disaster in the community. Fiji continuously experience hurricanes and flooding. Their devastating effects on the property and lives of the people require rehabilitation programmes which can respond immediately to the needs of the affected communities whenever there is a disaster. The facilitation of NFE programmes to assist community members during such critical times, is perceived important as the community members can often be left with little faith and self-confidence in their own abilities to rehabilitate themselves.

For NFE programmes to be accessible and relevant to the needs of the people, they may best be facilitated within the community. The essential elements for this, according to Baba (1992), include the full involvement of the community, the collaboration and co-operation of all involved and an eventual sense of self-reliance and empowerment of the people.

Participation in and control of the community in NFE programmes by the community are important. However, these programmes may not be easy to organise and sustain, as they can require a high degree of co-operation and commitment. To ensure continuity and sustainability it may

be desirable to facilitate NFE programmes in a location which has facilities, resources and is accessible to the community. There are facilities in the communities where NFE programmes may be organised. For example, the school has resources in terms of buildings and teachers who may be mobilised for non-formal education programmes.

2.3 The Economy of Fiji and Economic Needs for the Non-Formal Education Programmes

This section examines the contemporary economic situation in Fiji, for the purpose of identifying the emerging economic needs, particularly rural economic needs, and the role of NFE in relation to these needs.

2.3.1 National Economic Situation

Fiji's economy is predominantly dependent on agrarian production, which is essentially rurally based. Agriculture is the single largest sector of Fiji's economy and accounts for about 20 percent of the Gross Domestic product (GDP) and 80 percent of the employment (National Economic Summit, 1991).

The cultivable land is confined to major river valleys, deltas and coastal flats. Out of Fiji's total area of 18,376 square kilometres, only 16 percent is suitable for agriculture (Buresova, 1992). Sugar cane is the principal cash crop, grown mainly in small holdings by tenant farmers, most of whom are Indo-Fijians. Sugar contributes more than two thirds of Fiji's export earnings; about one quarter of the population depend on it directly for their livelihood. Other important export earners include copra, ginger and gold. The most important subsistence crop is paddy rice, of which Fiji provides about 72 percent of its domestic require-

ments. Efforts are being made to develop the livestock industry to meet local demands and to substitute for mutton imports (Economic Report for National Summit, 1991). Tourism, the second largest source of foreign exchange has suffered a decade of uncertainty because of high oil prices, political and economic instability and natural disasters. However, in 1993 the situation had improved considerably and the industry earned over \$338 million (Pacific Island Monthly, 1994).

Forestry and fisheries are two other rural activities which have developed considerably over the last decade and are the current focus of the government's attention. Manufacturing has figured prominently in Fiji's economy since 1987. It contributed 21 percent of the total export earnings in 1990 (National Economic Report, 1991).

Fiji's economic situation in the 1980s suffered from the world recession and the political instability resulting from the two coups d`etat of 1987. It also suffered considerably from large scale emigration. The population of Fiji fell in 1987 for the first time in fifty years (World Bank Report, 1992). It was estimated that, of the average 5,000 emigrants per year in 1987-89, 30 percent were professional or semi-professional workers (Europa Year Book, 1992).

To address the national economic situation, the Government established new economic policies and strategies from an inward looking, self-sufficient approach toward an export-oriented approach.

At the National Economic Summit of 1989, these new policies were discussed and were expected to accelerate the rate of growth of Fiji's economy in the 1990s. The Fiji Government introduced a series of measures which included the removal of import controls and the

lowering of tariffs and company taxes aimed at broadening the country's industrial base. These measures were an attempt to attract a wide range of manufacturing industries to its tax-free zones. This was designed to reduce economic reliance on the sugar industry and tourism. Another important economic change was the adoption of a 10 percent tax (value added tax -VAT) in July, 1992, and this was expected to provide 6 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. The manufacturing sector is the major sector benefiting from the resulting deregulation and tax reform. Fiji's economy was uplifted in the 1990s as a result of strong sugar prices and increase in the tourist arrivals. The devaluation of the Fiji dollar was a major factor in economic revival, giving the tourist industry and manufacturers a competitive edge in overseas markets.

While Fiji continues to rely on its agricultural resources, the development of new industries mostly in urban areas, is in response to the emerging economic needs of the countries.

2.3.2 Economic Needs for NFE

The shift in economic development strategy has many implications for non-formal education programmes and training. Productivity should lead to more jobs, higher incomes and a more meaningful and satisfying way of life. Fiji is not a poor country by world standards but the problem it faces, is not so much the size of its national income but rather income distribution. Focussing the economy on the manufacturing sector would require new knowledge and skill training, both generic and industry specific.

The introduction of new products and technologies will demand technical and supervisory manpower.

The promise of easy wages in these industries could entice many rural people, particularly young adults, to migrate to urban areas in search of employment. Besides the social problems that would be created by rural-urban migration, many of these people lack the necessary skills needed in such workplaces. The formal education system has not equipped many young people with the necessary skills to enable them to gain employment in these developing industries. While some NFE programmes have been established in urban areas to respond to these needs it is not the concern of this study. School-based NFE in rural areas can contribute to meeting some of the needs for the young people in the community.

2.3.3 Rural NFE for Economic Needs

On the other hand, Fiji may be expected to continue to depend heavily on agricultural production to sustain a livelihood for a large section of the population.

About 62 percent of the population live in rural areas and are involved in agricultural activities, whether for subsistence or for commercial purposes. The sugar and agricultural activities have declined but the livestock products and subsistence sectors' output is likely to grow (Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1 : FIJI'S AGRICULTURAL CONTRIBUTION TO GDP

Item / Year	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Gross Domestic Product	761.9	715.6	721.3	811.2	854.2
Agriculture	21.4	21.3	20.1	20.3	19.6
Sugar	50.3	45.1	41.8	48.1	47.2
Other Crops	16.0	16.8	17.2	16.1	17.1
Livestock Products	4.3	4.9	5.2	5.0	5.3
Subsistence	29.3	33.2	34.8	30.8	30.5

GDP - \$M at 1977 Prices; Agri-product as Percentage of GDP
(Sources : Bureau of Statistics; Central Planning Office, 1991)

In the sectors of Livestock Products and Subsistence, new knowledge and skill training will be required to support the introduction of new crops, new farming techniques and new storage and processing technologies. Sugar cane and rice farmers in various parts of Fiji will need to learn new skills and farming knowledge if they are to increase productivity for commercial as well as family consumption. The awareness of the abundant natural resources in the community and their utilisation for economic and social betterment needs to be emphasised. The inadequacies of the formal education system to equip youth with the necessary skills in these areas has meant that NFE programmes have a role to respond to these needs. While non-formal education programmes may increase a person's knowledge and develop skills, they do not create opportunities for employment. People in the community should be made to appreciate how they can be self-employable as well as acquiring specific skills needed for production. For people to be involved in non-formal education programmes would require the support and cooperation of government and non-government agencies involved in non-formal education various levels - national, divisional and community.

It is imperative that non-formal education programmes for income-generation are integrated with an understanding of land systems, markets for products, credit facilities and technical advice and assistance for participants. There are established institutions which have facilities and offer skill training, such as the Navuso and Tutu Adult Training Centres. But not everyone has the resources, opportunity and time to attend the courses offered by them. There are those in the communities who need to learn new skills to improve their productivity for example subsistence farmers. Increased production could be beneficial for individual, family and community. For such groups, it is preferable to

learn in their community because of family commitments and responsibilities. They cannot afford to be away for a long time, even if it is only for two weeks.

The role of non-formal education programmes in the development of skills, knowledge and a general understanding of the changes being introduced at the macro-level and their effect in the community life is perceived to be important. People need to understand these changes so that they may be able to understand the importance and value of acquiring new knowledge and skills needed for production. Improving their productivity would mean gaining enough income to provide for their financial needs. Such programmes may be facilitated within the community where it is accessible.

The Acting-Permanent Secretary for Primary Industry suggests that adult training centres which are strategically placed around Fiji should be used to their maximum to offer training programmes for the community in relation to their identified areas of needs. But they will require support from central Government in terms of resources and personnel (Buresova, 1992). Such centres would include not only those which are currently been used for NFE programmes but those who may also have potential use.

Different agencies, both government and non-government, offer NFE programmes at the community level to seek to address rural economic needs. There is relative independence of each agency in terms of operation due to lack of co-ordination. For example, an income-generation project co-ordinated by the Ministry of Women can be offered to a group of women who are also participants in a women's sewing club facilitated by the YWCA. As a result there is overlapping of

programmes and duplication of effort. Each agency tries to set up its own programme to justify its existence in the community.

The need for collaboration to ensure sharing of resources as well as effective service can receive both support and sceptical comment. The relative autonomy that most agencies have, especially the non-government agencies, has allowed them freedom in choice of learning materials, external resources and target groups. But efforts have been made at national and community levels to co-ordinate non-formal education. The Fijian Council of Social Services (F.C.O.S.S.) and the Fijian Association of Non-Formal Educators (F.A.N.F.E.) were formed to co-ordinate non-formal education programmes. However, even at this national co-ordinating level there is the problem of competitiveness and programmes overlap among agencies. This suggests the need for a co-ordinating base not only at the national but also community levels.

2.4 Social Structure In Fiji And Its Implications For Non-Formal Education Programmes

This section describes the various socio-cultural groups in Fiji to determine their cultural and traditional way of life and how they may affect NFE programmes. These groups include the Indigenous Fijians, the Indo-Fijians, the Europeans, the Part-Europeans and the Chinese.

2.4.1 The Multi-Racial Component

Fiji is a multi-cultural society and its population in the last population census of 1986 was 715,375 people. The 1986 total indicated the following breakdown- :

Fijians	329,309	(46.0 percent):
Indians	348,704	(48.7 percent): and
Others	37,366	(5.3 percent).

(Bureau of Statistics Quarterly Survey, 1991)

In 1987, the population fell for the first time in fifty years. This was attributed to the migration of people overseas due to the political instability caused by the coups d'etat. But growth resumed in 1988 and the population in 1990 was approximately 733,450. It is estimated that the population could be 850,000 in the year 2001 (National Economic Summit Report, 1991). The component groupings within the population are not evenly distributed. The urban areas are relatively multi-racial in composition while the rural areas are predominantly populated with Indigenous Fijians who live in villages on communal land and Indo-Fijian farm settlements concentrated in rice and sugar growing areas.

2.4.2. The Indigenous Fijians

The Indigenous Fijians live mainly in rural villages and communities scattered along coastal fringes, along river valleys and in some interior parts of the main islands. Indigenous Fijians live largely on their tribal land which is communally owned. In recent years they have been encouraged to lease as individuals some of their land to encourage more productivity. The Indigenous Fijians constitute a highly organised and complex social group whose behavioural patterns are the result of a long standing socio-cultural system. The origin of the Indigenous Fijian has not been determined but they are a mix of Melanesian and Polynesian race.

The core of the Indigenous Fijian community is the extended family. The village is the primary unit of local organisation in the Indigenous-Fijian society. Its population varies but the usual range is from 150 to 300. A village community generally consists of a number of extended families which form a clan (mataqali) headed by the chief of the clan (turaga ni mataqali). Depending on the size of the village community, there can be just one or several clans in it. Several clans form a tribe (yavusa). Each tribe holds an historical title to a certain land area, which is not inherited but belongs to the tribe in perpetuity.

2.4.3 The Communal Social Structure

The communal life is structured and administered along traditional patterns of community organisation. The chief rules both economic and social affairs of the tribe. Indigenous Fijians to a large extent operate their lives within the parameters of this social system, both as individuals and as members of the social system. Each community member is differentiated through its traditional roles and tasks. The established role clearly outlines the duties and obligations of each member within the extended family and towards the community. Another important aspect in the communal life is the relationship within the extended family.

Respect is important in the social system of the Fijians. Older people are respected and not called by their names but referred to in relation to their biological role, such as the father of the eldest child. Sisters and brothers are not encouraged to talk to each other. Daughters-in-law do not talk to their respective father-in-laws and vice-versa. People either demonstrate mutual respect or tease one another depending on the nature of the relationship. Children while growing up learn the nature of the relationships with their many kin, those with whom they

have informal joking relationships and those with whom they have avoidance relationships (Tavola, 1991).

The traditional way of life in which the Indigenous Fijians take pride provides food, shelter, security, and values. Permeating and deeply influencing the way of life is the spirit of Christianity. It cements the social structure in a system of mutual obligation and care for others. The spirit of voluntarism where everyone contributes their time and resources for the benefit of individual, family and community as a whole is part of their culture. Co-operation and support within the family and community are valued. When decisions are made consensus is always maintained although individuals may express their views. However, over the years, the colonial effects and the Western emphasis of individualistic development has resulted in the individual becoming more important than the group or family. As a result some of the communal values like caring and sharing have been undervalued (Lewaravu, 1986 : 13).

However, some values still exist and influence the attitudes and motivation of almost every Fijian, although the manner and direction of this influence has changed in some instances in recent years. For example in relation to funerals, according to tradition the length of days of mourning is four to ten days where the relatives of the deceased contribute voluntarily in feeding the mourners. However, in recent years the length of days has come to be determined by the financial capacity of the immediate family of the deceased and their ability to feed the mourners. Moreover, when relatives assist or contribute there is an expectation for some return either in money or in kind.

The communal structure and traditional way of life provide essential elements which have to be understood and considered in relation to non-formal education programming practice. The traditional way of life demands that programmes in non-formal education must focus on the community and the chiefs and not be in conflict with their interests. To determine needs in the community is a time consuming process. It requires sensitivity, careful negotiation, and understanding of the network of relationships and the associated protocol, ensuring that the learning environment accommodates traditional behaviour and differences. Non-formal education programmes for Indigenous Fijians must take into consideration the demands of the Indigenous Fijian way of life in their planning.

Understanding the traditional way of life and structure is thus important in NFE planning. This may be perceived to support the 'status quo' in the community. However, if NFE is to facilitate change, it has to begin with what the people are familiar with such as the structure which organises their everyday life and their own experiences. Once their confidence and trust are built, then they may be directed to other changes that are required in their individual or communal lives.

The success of future non-formal education programmes may depend on the community support and how the programme is integrated effectively into communal life. If there are to be changes they have to occur from within the community.

2.4.4. **The Indo-Fijians**

The Indo-Fijians also have a wide - ranging family structure with traditional obligations and relationships and a very strong religious culture. There are various groups of Indo-Fijians who are differentiated according to their religion. The Indo-Fijians have to be understood not only in their cultural and religious groupings but also in their stages of arrival in Fiji.

In 1879, the first group of Indo-Fijians came to Fiji under the Girit or Indentured System. It was during the colonial rule and they had been recruited in India to work on the sugar cane plantations. Most of them were Hindus but there were also some Muslims. The hard work and difficult conditions that they encountered on the sugar cane plantations put an immense premium on individual effort. According to Ali (1980: 7), one of the problems they faced was the poor conditions aggravated generally by poor labour-employer relations. Life on the plantations where the master was white and servant black was characterised by turbulence and misery for most of the labourers (Ali, p. 6).

Unlike the Indigenous Fijians, Indo-Fijians who came under this system have had to cope and adjust to changes through their struggle and hardships as individual labourers. The importance of the sugar industry in the current national economy has been attributed largely to the commitment and sacrifice made by these girit labourers.

In contrast to the Indigenous Fijians, they generally live in separate homesteads on individual farms. Indo-Fijians live either in and around urban areas or in fairly closely settled farming areas. These settlements are usually well-served with community services, schools and commu-

nications and with good access to many of the areas in which development of the advanced sector of the economy exists. Indo-Fijians often have friends or relatives in business or in skilled trades by whom they could be assisted to set up business or gain employment.

Following the *girit* was another group of Indo-Fijians immigrants, the merchants and traders. They originated mainly from Bombay, India. Although their arrival to Fiji has not been well documented, according to some oral evidence they came as free traders to serve the needs of the indentured labourers. These Indo-Fijians (Gujeratis) were skilled and very shrewd business people and much of the Fijian commerce and industry is controlled efficiently by their enterprise and capital. Like the other Indo-Fijian groups, they have strong religious beliefs and family relations and obligations. Businesses are family owned. Gujeratis often marry within their own group to strengthen their family and business ties. They live mainly in the business centres in Fiji.

The third group of Indo-Fijians, the sheiks or commonly known as "Punjabis" came from the Punjab state in North India. They came about the same time as the Gujeratis and they are also merchants who have set up shops and other businesses in various urban areas in Fiji. They too have strong family ties and religious beliefs.

Generally the motivation of all the Indo-Fijian groups is biased towards economic activities. While some are successful farmers, merchants and professional people, a fairly large part of the population is much closer to the poverty line. For them, the urgency to earn money is more desperate. Every Indo-Fijian family must succeed in establishing at least one or two of its members in employment because of the lack of communal support.

Education is seen as a means of gaining employment and hence providing security. So many families save and work hard for years to provide the capital needed for the education of their children. Indigenous Fijians are motivated towards education, but to a lesser extent or in different ways from the Indo- Fijians.

Indo-Fijians do not have easy access to land or the communal way of life which provides security. When an Indo-Fijian is not successful with commercial enterprise or securing employment, the result could be poverty and hunger for himself and the family.

But for an Indigenous Fijian, it would just mean abandoning the city life and returning to the extended family in the village which provides security and a reasonably comfortable way of life.

In the context of the Indo-Fijian community, because of their motivations and aspirations, formal education programmes are usually well-supported.

In the Indo-Fijian community understanding the cultural and religious way of life is important in NFE planning. Like in the Indigenous Fijian community, sensitivity, careful negotiation, and understanding of the network of relationships and associated protocol are important in NFE programmes. NFE programme planning must take into account the Indo-Fijian cultural and religious values as the success of NFE programmes depend on the community.

2.4.5 The Europeans

The European group, like the Indo-Fijians, has to be understood in relation to the stages of its arrival in Fiji and its cultural background. Within the European group there are those families who were in Fiji during the colonial era (mainly British) and those who are recent immigrants.

At the end of the colonial era, some English people remained in Fiji. Since then they have influenced the political and social life of Fiji. Some who have bought land from Indigenous Fijians have estates and live on various islands. Recent immigrants are those who came between the 1960s and 1980s as business people, consultants, social and religious workers. Apart from the British, there are Australians, New Zealanders, Americans and others. They live mainly in urban areas. This group has retained the cultural and economic attitudes of the commercial sophisticated society from which it has originated. Those of its members who are in business own most of the large scale corporate organisations. The average member of this group is strongly motivated to succeed in economic activities that produce high incomes. The group is self-sufficient in terms of economic and social betterment. They are influential in the way of life in Fiji as a whole. They live mainly in Suva and other main towns which are centres for business.

In recent years the government's economic policy on export-oriented strategy has encouraged investors to set up business in Fiji. A dominant group of Anglo-Saxons, mostly Australians, has established various co-operate businesses. However, not all are entrepreneurs and many work as consultants or experts in various organisations. Some within this group work for social, charitable or religious organisations.

Most of the religious institutions are headed by Europeans. Many of these institutions offer NFE programmes for youth and community members.

Another group, the American Peace Corps, is involved in NFE programmes in various communities in Fiji. Their induction training to the work and life in the communities has made them the most culturally adaptable of the immigrant groups from the 'Western' communities. Some of them live in Indigenous villages and Indo-Fijian settlements and assist the people in their community development projects. They are required to learn the language and culture of the community in which they live and work and they have interacted well with the community members and are effective in their work.

Understanding the potential of the European group as a resource for NFE is important in NFE programme planning. For example, business people within this group may be identified and approached to provide materials or equipment for rural NFE programmes.

2.4.6 The Part- European

The part-European is best understood in relation to their maternal and cultural link with the Indigenous Fijians. During the colonial era, there were inter-marriages among the Europeans and the local women. This resulted in a group called part-European. Some members of this group live on estates and settlements in various islands. However most live in urban centres. This group is very visible in Fiji and influential in business, politics and social life. Their maternal link obligates them to their Fijian relationships and way of life. In the Fijian tradition, the kin through maternal lineage acquire certain privileges in their maternal community. For example, they have the freedom to take or say anything

without offending their closest relatives. However, the contemporary situation in politics and the emphasis on economic values has undermined some of these traditions. An example of these changing values, is the question of this group's right and claim to its maternal lineage has become questioned a topic of debate in Parliament. Like the European community the potential for this group in NFE programme planning is as a resource for advice and finance. The latter resource is particularly for those who are business people.

2.4.7. **The Chinese**

The Chinese came from mainland China in the 1800s. Although their historical migration has not been well documented, according to some oral evidence they were the first immigrants to Fiji and they came as traders and business people. When they first arrived in Fiji they settled mainly in rural communities where they set up their market gardens or consumer shops.

Some Chinese had inter-married with Indigenous Fijians and later into the other races. The Chinese are the most successful of all races in terms of assimilation, culturally and racially. They are now largely involved economically as restaurant proprietors, shopkeepers or market gardeners. farmers. While most live in urban centres, some live in rural areas and outlying islands and have been successfully integrated into the communal way of life of the Indigenous Fijians.

Again like the European and part-European societies the potential for this group in NFE programme planning is particularly as a resource. Especially the business people they can be approached to contribute, material, equipment or as resources in some of the NFE programmes.

2.4.8 NFE In A Multi-Racial Fiji

In Fiji, as in many other Pacific countries, the cultural and social relationships have undergone transformation. These changes are portrayed in language, dress, inter-marriage, food and lifestyle. Fiji, as multicultural society consists of various racial groups. These groups have values, attitudes and motivations which have to be understood and considered in non-formal education programme planning for the work with these different groups and the nation as a whole.

Even within various groups there are differences, for example in the Indo-Fijian group there are religious differences such as Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), Methodist which have to be considered in NFE programmes. Cultural sensitivity is important especially when one is working in a multi-cultural society like Fiji.

If non-formal education programmers are to be relevant to the various cultural groups, it is critical that activities are congruent with the participants' way of life. Equally important is a general understanding of the structure and way of life of the various races to enable a better understanding of each others' cultures and values. The coup of 1987 could have instigated suspicion, hatred and intolerance among the people, particularly between the Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. The perception of nationalism, ethnicity and religious supremacy has created tensions and encouraged conflicts and divisions. It is therefore important that non-formal education programmes are sensitive to the effects of the coup and the issues which causes tension, and that steps were taken to encourage the facilitation of activities which foster greater cultural understanding and tolerance. The school could be used as a centre within the community where cultural and educational activities are encouraged

and facilitated not only for children but also adults. NFE programmes may be organised not only for the two major groups but also for inter-groups.

2.5 The Constitution and Government Structure in Fiji

This section describes the Fijian constitution prior to the 1987 military coup, the contemporary constitution, and government structure, with the aim of providing an understanding of the political and administrative mechanisms and how they influence NFE programmes in the community.

2.5.1 The Fijian Constitution Prior to the Military Coup

Since 1874, Fiji was under British rule for almost a hundred years, before it re-acquired its independence in 1970. Its democratic system of constitutional government was based on the Westminster model. It was a member of the Commonwealth and maintained close ties with Great Britain.

The Parliament consisted of two chambers, one elected called the House of Representatives with 52 members, and the other appointed, called the Senate with 22 members. Under the 1966 constitution the population was divided into three racial groups : Fijians; Indians; and others. The electoral system of 'communal` and 'cross-voting` which was thereby adopted ensured that a governing majority could not be secured by the representatives of any racial group operating on communal lines. It could only be secured by an inter-racial party or two communal parties operating together (Fiji Ministry of Information, 1980).

This was done primarily to guarantee multi-racial harmony in a country where the original inhabitants were outnumbered by the immigrants. The government, through its multi-racial policy administered by its various departments, ensured that various economic, social and educational programs were geared for the betterment of all people in Fiji.

In April, 1987, Fiji held its fifth general election which was won by a coalition of the National Federation Party and Labour, predominantly of Indo-Fijian membership. It was in government for a brief period of seven months when the nation experienced two military interventions. There have been varying interpretations of why the coups took place (Pacific Island Monthly, 1993). They are generally believed to have been staged to give indigenous Fijians political dominance and greater economic participation.

The constitution was formally revoked on 1 October 1987, after the second military coup of 25 September 1987. Fiji was declared a Republic. An interim constitution recognised the late Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau as President and vested executive authority in him.

2.5.2 The Republic of Fiji

A new constitution was promulgated by the President in July 1990, after the Great Council of Chiefs (Bose Levu Vakaturaga, a traditional body of every hereditary chief or 'Ratu' of each Fijian clan) had approved the draft. The Constitution declares Fiji to be a sovereign democratic republic, guarantees fundamental human rights, a universal secret ballot and equality before the law for all Fijian citizens (Europa Year Book, 1992).

Indigenous Fijians and the Polynesian inhabitants of Rotuma receive a special constitutional consideration including positive discrimination for employment, on the judiciary and by the government (no less than 50 percent of those employed - although provision is made for exceptions).

The Great Council of Chiefs acquires its authority from the status of its members and their chiefly lineage. It appoints the President of the Republic for a five year term and selects 24 Fijian nominees for appointment to the Senate, the upper chamber of the Parliament.

The Senate has 34 members appointed by the President. Twenty four senators are ethnic Fijians, nominated by the Great Council of Chiefs; one Rotuman is appointed on the advice of the Rotuman Island Council; the remaining nine senators are appointed at the President's discretion from among other groups, particularly minority communities.

The Senate in particular safeguards ethnic Fijian interests. Its consent is essential to any attempt to amend or repeal any provisions in terms of their land tenure, customs or traditions. The Senate is also a house of review with some powers to initiate legislation but with limited influence in financial matters (Europa Year Book, 1992).

The House of Representatives has 70 elected members who may elect their presiding officials from outside the membership of the House. Voting for the House of Representatives is communal, with universal suffrage for all citizens aged over 21 years. For a general election to the House of Representatives, Indigenous Fijians vote in five single-member urban constituencies and 14 rural constituencies, to elect 37 representatives. There are 27 seats for the Indo-Fijians, one seat for

Rotumans and five seats for other races. Elections are held every five years and administered by an independent Supervisor of Elections.

The President is guided by the Cabinet which is led by the Prime Minister. He must be an ethnic Fijian and is appointed by the President from among members of Parliament. The Prime Minister selects the other members of the Cabinet from either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

2.5.3. **Local Government**

For administrative purposes, Fiji is divided into four divisions (Fig. 2.1). The Western Division is the largest and covers the western side of Viti Levu and the islands to the north west. The Central Division covers the eastern half of Viti Levu including Suva, the capital. The Northern Division includes the second largest island Vanua Levu, Taveuni and other smaller islands nearby. The Eastern Division includes the Lomaiviti, Lau Group, Kadavu and Rotuma.

Each division has a commissioner and district offices in the main centres of the divisions. The Commissioners, as heads of the government's administrative structure in each division, co-ordinate the overall development programmes and activities of all government ministries. Commissioners operate from one single ministry, the Ministry of Regional Development (Dubsky, 1988).

This structure restricts the scope of the commissioners' activities as most of their time is spent in administration of the rural development programmes. Such projects are narrowly focussed on self-help schemes and small projects. Ideally, the commissioners should be fully involved in

the planning and decision making of development programmes in each ministry. In practice, the planning is administered by each ministry and discussed at a Regional Development Meeting held twice every year and chaired by the Commissioner. At these meetings, the development projects are prioritised and budgeting allocations determined. However, these development projects have to be referred to the central headquarters for final approval (Dubsky, p.97).

The Indigenous Fijian community is under a separate administration known as the Fijian Administration, headed by the Fijian Affairs Board. The Fijian Administration comprises 14 'yasanas' or communal provinces, each with its own partially appointed and partially elected councils. Each council has powers to make by-laws and draw up its own budgets. Members are elected for a two-year term and the council elects a chairman from among the members. At the apex of the Fijian Administration is the Great Council of Chiefs, presided over by the Minister of Fijian Affairs and Regional Development.

Understanding the government structure and its administrative mechanisms is essential when one is working in the community. Planning and policy making are centralised in the capital Suva within the Ministries. The system at headquarters determines how decisions and budgeting provisions are distributed to the divisions and then to the communities. It is very much a centralised system where decisions are determined at the top. While at the divisional level, every government department such as education, health and forestry is represented, most decisions have to be referred to central headquarters. The bureaucracy often delays decisions so that when assistance finally comes, the people in the community may have lost their trust and enthusiasm.

2.6 Conclusions

Recent changes in the economic policy and strategy in Fiji demand training in various skills. It is both in urban as well as rural areas where the majority of the people live where skill training is needed. The need for skill training activities that are relevant to these communities demands a base which is accessible and has facilities and resources. In this respect the primary school offers the potential not only in terms of facilities and resources but it also can facilitate and co-ordinate between various agencies and the community in terms of time, resources and needs. Policies determined at the macro level affect the lives of the people at the micro level. Understanding these issues as well as the values, attitudes, motivations and aspirations of the various racial groups are considered essential in non-formal education programmes.

Fiji is experiencing socio-economic, cultural and political changes. The education systems need to deal with these changes for the nation as a whole and the groups within its multi-racial context. NFE perhaps has a role to contribute to these changes.