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**THE FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS IN A  
MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY**

**A Theoretical Exploration with Special Reference to Fiji**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts in Education  
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**GURMIT SINGH**

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## ABSTRACT

Too often public examinations are left entirely in the hands of test constructors and statisticians. The wide ranging considerations related to examinations call for a change in this trend. Perhaps, those responsible for examining ought to regard themselves less as statisticians and test constructors and more as educationists. There is all the more reason for this in Fiji in light of the fact that it is a multi-cultural society.

The thesis is essentially a theoretical exploration into the major functions of public examinations in Fiji. The whole exercise is based on the maxim that examinations form an integral part of the educative process and on the contention that the behaviour elicited before, during and after an examination from candidates is heavily influenced by their past experiences, nourished within the restraints and limits of their cultural milieu.

By way of introduction, general problems in education in multi-cultural societies are traced and the language-problem dealt with in depth to highlight the complexities of such problems. After a brief look at the composition of the Fiji Society and its education system, the major public examinations are described. Then, the stated functions, purposes and effects of examinations are reviewed and some implications drawn. From the literature reviewed it is clear that examinations need to be validated against the declared and agreed upon educational aims. In the Fiji context, a search for some validating criteria is also discussed. In order to explore the interaction between the public examinations and aims of education attention is focussed upon the specific cultural values and educational aspirations of the three dominant cultural groups in Fiji, viz., Fijians, Indians and Europeans. Examination problems in Fiji, arising from an importation of foreign examinations and the multi-cultural set-up, become the theme for discussion in the final sections of the thesis. The relationship between the long-term effects of both, examinations and a number of socio-political ideologies - integration, assimilation, pluralism - is then outlined. Pluralism proves

attractive as a base for decision-making regarding examinations in Fiji. It is likely that in order to solve tomorrow's problems here, allowances for existing differences in expressions and life-styles will help. It is suggested that examinations in Fiji can be assigned a re-vitalizing role in the educational system if they are, inter alia, multi-modal and accommodate 'originality' and diversity of values, expressions and the like.

With almost a complete dearth of research information on various aspects of education in Fiji, this exploration ends with a note on the necessity for research in the area of examinations.

## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION IN MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETIES

The chapter aims to provide a general background against which Fiji's pluralistic society, its values and aspirations, and its examinations in general, may be discussed. With this in view, the chapter attempts to show some problems of education and examinations in multi-cultural societies, with special reference to Fiji. By its very nature multi-cultural societies pose many and varied educational problems. To illustrate this, the problem of language has been given a somewhat lengthy treatment.

#### A

#### SOCIETY, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Problems in education have, as their base, the 'realities' of a society - its organisation and operation. These 'realities' in turn are primarily influenced by, and to a great extent, are a product of, society's cultural heritage. Before embarking on a discussion of educational problems in multi-cultural societies, a brief look at the concept of 'Culture' in societal and educational contexts is needed to form a backdrop as well as to dispel the notion that in this age of science and technology culture per se is of little significance.

The term 'culture' has been variously defined and has thus collected a considerable amount of ambiguity as to its precise meaning (Davis, 1965). However, the view that culture refers to 'a way of life' seems to be the crux of the issue. Davis subsumes, under the 'a whole way of life' definition all the arts, all the sciences, historical and geographical influences, philosophy, psychology, religion, political and society theory, in fact, the whole body of

learning together with the experience of the human race which is embodied in its institutions, manners, social customs, leisure activities and the like - though much of this will be beneath the level of consciousness. Itzkoff (1969: 93, 125) explores the 'fundamental dualism' in culture, and argues that that the plural dimension of thought and knowledge, which is intrinsic to man, has been grossly undermined in writings on cultural themes. He points out the increasing emphasis on the discursive areas of knowledge - science, technology, politics and economics; which, in turn, has led "inevitably ~~towards~~ towards universality in thought and uniformity in quality" (p 93) (see also Leach 1967 ). However, the more intimate cultural dimensions are said to fall in the "non-discursive symbolic realm: language, ritual, myth, play, sport, religion, personality and character structure, architecture, fine and applied arts, crafts, style, cuisine, music, sculpture, dance, drama, and literature" (P 125). In our discussions later, the above 'dualism' will be taken into account, as it seems that such a categorisation, though not mutually exclusive, does possess much explanatory power and could well help to highlight potentialities and long-range effects of various socio-political 'positions' presently in vogue.

Furthermore, the contention that certain aspects of common way of life are 'held beneath the level of consciousness' by members of a society, makes the impact of culture more subtle and intriguing. A more fruitful study of culture results when both its explicit and implicit aspects are considered adequately (Kluckhohn, 1949). The former consists generally in overt regularities of patterned behaviour, while the latter can only be brought to surface and thus to light, by observer's inference - based on consistencies of thought and action. As cultures do not manifest themselves solely in observable customs and artifacts (at times this fallacious thinking of missionaries sabotaged their genuinely planned evangelical deeds!) a correct understanding calls for working out categories and presuppositions constituting the implicit culture.

As a concept, culture is pivotal in the analysis of any social system or processes, it serves an important role

in understanding and explaining man in his social milieu. Its explanatory power is described by Cuber (in Spindler, 1963): "It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of culture in human life. Neither a single individual, a particular social group nor an entire society can be understood without reference to culture". Such a statement must not, however, be taken to imply cultural determinism or as an antithesis to biological determinism. These two factors are inter-dependent, for culture arises out of human nature, and its forms are restricted both by man's biology and by natural laws. On the other hand, the selective and discriminative use of environment appears to be characteristically cultural. Parsons' (1966) analysis of society as a social system also places culture at the apex. He contends that certain priorities of control are inherent in the linkages between the 'societal subsystems' that relate the society to its environment. The society is dependent upon, "a super-ordinate cultural orientation system, which is above all, the primary source of legitimation for its normative order". (Parsons, 1966) Within this framework, the education system is likely to be an important component of the normative order. Unconscious and normative aspects of culture exert considerable influence upon ones observable behaviour. The incident mentioned below, related and analysed by Kluckhohn (1949: 19) reflects the interplay of conscious and unconscious aspects of culture.

"A highly intelligent teacher with long and successful experience in the public schools of Chicago was finishing her first year in an Indian school. When asked how her Navaho pupils compared in intelligence with Chicago youngsters, she replied, 'Well, I just don't know. Sometimes the Indians seem just as bright. At other times they just act like dumb animals. The other night we had a dance in the high school. I saw a boy who is one of the best students in my English class standing off by himself. So I took him over to a pretty girl and told them to dance. But they just stood there with their heads down. They wouldn't even say anything'. I inquired if she knew whether or not they were members of the same clans. 'What difference would that make?'



'How would you feel about getting into bed with your brother? The teacher walked off in a huff, but, actually, the two cases were quite comparable in principle. To the Indian type of bodily contact involved in our social dancing has a directly sexual connotation. The incest taboos between members of the same clan are as severe as between true brothers and sisters. The shame of the Indians at the suggestion that a clan brother and sister should dance and the indignation of the white teacher at the idea that she should share a bed with an adult brother represent equally nonrational responses, culturally standardized unreason."

Given the complexity of any society and individual differences of its members, one could expect different cultural levels to emerge. It has been suggested that by categorising levels into the Establishment, the Intelligentsia and the Majority group, meaningful interpretations of interaction in a given society can be attempted. (Davis, 1965). A more convincing argument is that a part of culture must be learned by everyone, a part may be selected from alternative patterns, whilst a final part falls into the realm of specialists (LINTON, 1936). Granted that variations in cultural levels can be expected, the point germane to this discussion is that there runs a mainstream of common culture, in which all levels swim, consciously or unconsciously. Henceforth, the term culture will be used as essentially encompassing the main stream of common culture.

In preliterate societies, cultural transmission and providing 'education' referred to the same process. Even the Victorians equated education with culture. In literate societies of today, culture forms the protective shell, within which the educational system functions. It furnishes both the tangible and the intangible inputs. The pervasive role of culture can be illustrated using a system-analysis approach. Fig. 1.

The model illustrates the 'inputs' and the 'outputs' of the system and the influence of culture on both of these. Existing knowledge, values and goals guide the activities of the educational process. Where there prevails a

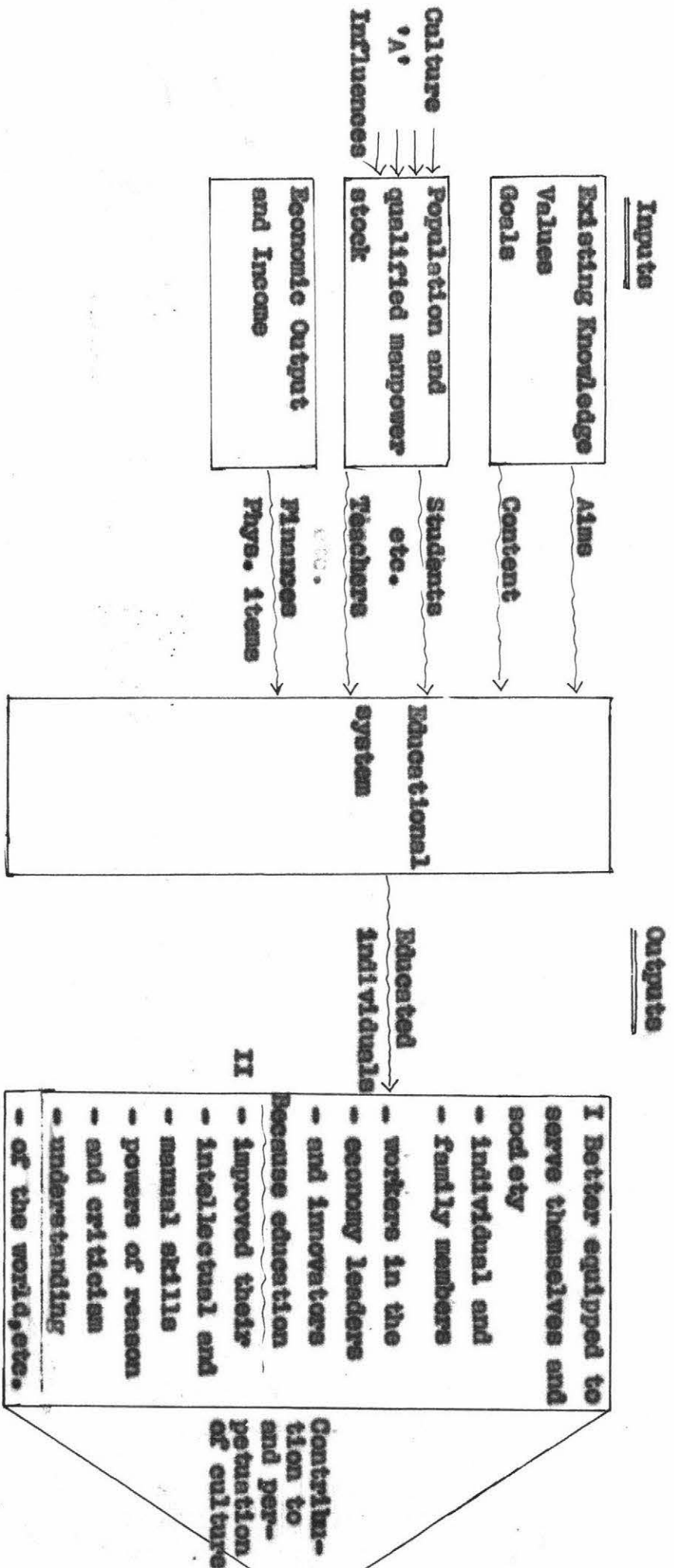


FIG 1

## Interactions between an Educational System and Culture

(Model based on Chart 2 in Coombe's "The World Educational Crisis" 1968)

harmonious consensus (rarely found) on values and goals, the system is fortunate to inherit a comfortable take-off point. Such a possibility exists more so in a culturally homogeneous society than a heterogeneous one. A slight modification of Figure 1 would illustrate this point. As it stands, the inputs in the form of existing knowledge, values, goals etc. are influenced by Culture 'A'. Place cultures B and C alongside A, and the inputs change in perspective and complexity. This is the source of major educational problems in multi-cultural societies.

### **Educational Problems**

Recent years have witnessed educationists signalling the onset of world-wide 'crisis' in education, for example, The 1964 Education Year Book is entitled The Education Explosion, while Coombs' (1968) calls his book - The World Educational Crisis. Multi-cultural societies cannot remain immune to problems arising from the so-called knowledge, population and aspiration 'explosions'; on the contrary, burdened with their own unique problems, they get trapped deeper in the crisis. Moreover, where such societies also fall within the geographers' 'under-developed' category, (and most of them do: Malaysia, Fiji, African States) much more is expected in a much shorter time from the educational enterprise than those in the countries designated 'developed'.

Major problems of education in such societies seem to hinge on the issues of aims and priorities. General exhortations such as education for 'democracy', 'national unity', 'economic viability' do sound honourable but they possess low utility when brought down to gauge the direction and progress of the educational system. The recurrent feature of 'aims' in education is the visibility of a wide gap, on close scrutiny between the rhetoric and the deed as evidenced from what is said to be happening and what actually is happening. There are obviously many hard choices involved in establishing objectives and priorities in the face of heterogeneous cultures from which radiate numerous conflicting values, beliefs and demands. This will be dealt with later in Chapter IV.



Subsumed under the problem of setting aims and priorities are other specific issues of concern viz., content of and differential emphases on curriculum, manner of teaching, quality and type of teacher training, language policy, education measurement and evaluation techniques and the like.

Problems pertaining to language will be dealt with in detail to indicate the complexity of educational problems and various possibilities in multi-cultural societies. Language is seen here as important medium of enculturation i.e. much of the ability of human beings to develop and transmit complex cultural patterns is dependent upon language. It follows then, that the assumptions and the rationale behind the choice of a language has wide educational implications. Furthermore, a statement of various positions taken on the language issue in multi-lingual countries will provide 'anchoring' points for discussions later.

#### Language: Problems and Possibilities

Multi-lingual societies, being products of varying historical conditions, now are faced with a pressing urgency to deal with problems either directly emanating from language issue per se or based on the wider cultural, educational, political and social problems in which language is seen to play a central role. The problems themselves are not new, but the changing contexts have given them a somewhat different perspective. The main reasons seem to be (Wong, 1969:8)

- (1) In the past, the infra-structure for communication over extensive areas was poor or simply did not exist. The little town or village set the limits for social intercourse. Inhabitants of two villages even within the same district could speak quite separate tongues but in the relative absence of contact few problems arose.

The effective multiplication of mass media and their deployment have enhanced the value of communication. In the new perspective multi-lingualism is seen as a barrier to communication.

- (2) Where in the past, distance and poor communication afforded weak support for nationalistic sentiments, today, the establishment of a clear national identity has become an achievable goal. Multi-lingualism, however, is considered suspect because it poses a possible threat to this object and may well represent disassociation and disorientation of groups with differing values, beliefs and objectives.
- (3) We are now in the age of mass education and of technology. The one requires a rapid spread of useful knowledge, the other a rapid attainment of means which make economic viability possible. Multi-lingualism in this context is seen as extremely expensive both in terms of resources required and the time needed to achieve qualitative goals through education. Along with improvements in communication, and the so called knowledge explosion, general attitudes and assumptions regarding the desirability to communicate have also undergone changes: we now think people 'ought' to communicate, whereas previously it was left to groups to be isolated if they so desired.

Whereas one is inclined to accept the reasons why our consciousness of multi-lingualism has heightened, the negative role assigned to it seems to warrant further qualifications. The proper strategy appears to be to view the impact of improved infra-structure of communication, rise of nationalism, technological and educational expansion, not in terms of status quo (which may need urgent overhauling anyway) but in terms of adaptation to the changing social structure accompanied and mainly brought about by changing political and social ideologies. Granted that the problems of multi-lingualism were not 'real' problems in the days of our forefathers, one cannot possibly gain much by consistently looking backwards. However, before the stated problems could be scrutinized, they must receive further elaboration.

## Language and Nationalism

The national language question not only varies contextually from nation to nation, but gains complexity when it is coupled with nuances of the concept of 'nationalism' (Le Page, 1964). The discussion here is based on the assumption that despite the differences in outward expressions of nationalism, there is an underlying common core (Kloss, 1967).

The pervasive effects of the language question and its perceived link with nationalism is based on the functions language is seen to serve for each individual in particular and for the society in general. The human infant, born with innate propensities for language learning (Chomsky 1965, Stern 1969) is gradually socialized as he acquires the speech habits of the group surrounding him. He contributes his responses to the common stock in a manner as being accepted and responded to, and thus further enhancing social intercourse. The need for communion with others seems basic to man as Le Page (1964: 9) puts it, 'a part of his gregarious instinct - most of us crave for speech with our fellow men in the same way that we crave for love'.

Language facilitates both intra-individual and inter-individual communication (Carroll 1964:4). In the former case language provides the individual with a tool for exploring and analysing his thoughts, it helps to organise thoughts coherently despite the fact that it also imposes the thought patterns, attitudes and beliefs of others on to one's thinking. In its inter-individual communication function, language provides access to the experience of others and facilitates exchange of ideas, values, beliefs, thoughts and feelings (Lawton 1968:71). Thus the vital link of communication fostered by language facilitates exchange and perpetuation of cultural elements and common interests.

From a society's point of view, language homogeneity would seem to ease matters pertaining to effective organisation of governmental institutions such as law, education and those dealing with social and economic matters. Because of the supposed benefits of homogeneity of language in a society, multi-lingualism is often held up as a scapegoat when mismanagement of economic, social and political strate-

gies shows negative results. The common argument posing language-loyalty as anti-thetical to nationalism runs as follows: because language carries in its bag, as it were, cultural elements in the forms of values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, feelings and interests representative of its speech community, it leads to in-group identification, acceptability, and such group loyalty enhances its solidarity. The multi-lingual trends within a nation, while strengthening the in-group identification leads<sup>to</sup> a heightening of between-group differences and the resultant diversity is seen as of no help in welding together each language group's loyalty to boost the feelings of nationalism. Prolonged tangential progress of in-group loyalties could lead to the decay and death of a nation. So goes the argument against multi-lingualism and is reflected in such assertions as, "The discovery of the binding force of a common language turned out to be a political dynamite. It brought about the unification of Italy... and Germany... multi-lingual countries like Switzerland had to create a national mystique out of their history and their political traditions so as not to be sucked into the maelstrom of language loyalties" (Kuhn 1965:3).

#### Other Social and Education Problems

In addition to the problem of forging national unity, multi-lingualism could create inter-group communication gap leading to distrust, prejudice or even conflict. Egocentrism and ethnocentrism when manifested in the form of prejudiced behaviour could both be detrimental to the societal well being generally.

Where multilingualism is accompanied by or is the offshoot of multi-cultural set up, there arises the problems of reaching a stable value consensus. Specification of educational aims and objectives in a plural society is thus harassed not only by competing language claims but also by competing value systems. The outcome, very often, takes the form of hazy and diffused educational objectives which in themselves possess little utility in providing the educational system with any direction or coherence.



More specifically, matters pertaining to the designing of a standard curriculum, selection of language(s) to be taught, detailing time allocation for the language(s) and other traditional subjects have to be dealt with. It could be argued (Wong 1969) that there are limited resources available for most educational systems in multi-lingual societies, which, while being taxed by rapid expansion based on the demands of the 'explosions' could be further strained by new demands in respect of languages. (Wong, 1969). Besides, re-adjustment of time-tables to give a relatively high priority to language teaching may perhaps be accomplished at the expense of the traditional subjects.

Obviously, the question of teacher-training comes to the forefront and reflects a greater amount of complexity when compared to the training of teachers for mono-lingual purposes. The need to cope with the heterogeneity of languages calls for training either a greater number of teachers or producing multi-lingual teachers. The latter type need proficiency not only in the traditional teaching techniques but should also possess a thorough knowledge of such concepts as cultural-relativity, functional-relativity of language used and be acquainted with the underlying assumptions of the educational-policy regarding multi-lingualism. Reflecting on the present situation in some of the schools in multi-lingual areas, Wong (1968:11) states, "The shortage of the text-books in the new language helps to reduce life in classroom to a meaningless note-rote diet, with few books available for reference and with the teacher inhibited by his own lack of facility at the language". This statement highlights the problems related to the teaching methods and teaching materials, aids etc. Perhaps, there is more room for improvement in methodology per se in multi-lingual classroom than in the usual mono-lingual one.

Such a cataloguing of problems does seem to paint a fairly grim educational future for multi-lingual societies. That this is not the case can be seen if a balanced picture is presented by analysing some of the strategies adopted in the light of possibilities perhaps not

yet fully actualized. The discussion on the problems, so far, has been mainly predicated upon two assumptions, first, in many societies multi-lingualism is an accepted part of reality that has to be lived with, and, second, although there are problems involved, languages can not simply be ignored. To seek justification for these assumptions two basic questions need to be answered: (1) why preserve the indigenous languages? and, (2) why learn a second language?

### Why Preserve the Indigenous Language?

This may sound a somewhat trivial question, but failure to explore fully the argument for the preservation of indigenous languages has often led to them being labelled as 'primitive', and the quick-remedy of imposing a non-primitive language on the indigenous people advocated. Of late, linguists have taken pains to indicate the fact that in essence all languages possess their own well developed phonological, lexical and syntactic structures (Stern 1969) and that seen in their context no language warrants the label 'primitive'. It has been pointed out (Chomsky, 1965: 118) that most linguists now agree that languages do not differ greatly in their underlying structures and that man has an innate biological capacity for language acquisition device (Lenneberg, 1969). Given such an understanding i.e. the commonality of basic structuring principles on which languages are founded, it becomes difficult to see what a 'primitive' language can be composed of. Hence, it seems legitimate to contend that "there is no such thing as a primitive language, nor is there evidence that primitive languages ever existed" Houston (1970: 947).

It follows from the above argument that passing value-judgments on the qualitative nature of another language using one's own as the criterion, is unjustifiable. More explanatory power is inherent in the 'relativity of functional use' notion - with the concomitant obligation of granting parity of prestige to all languages. Such an attitude seems a prerequisite for thinking fairly and effectively regarding preservation and continuity of indigenous languages.

The long and controversial Whorfian hypothesis (Lawton, 1968, Carroll, 1964) best champions the cause of indigenous languages. In brief, Whorf asserts that the language spoken by an individual will affect his perception of the world, his cognitive development and his subsequent behaviour. In his opinion, "we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. We cut nature up, organise it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds through our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language" Whorf<sup>1</sup> (1956). There are degrees of attachment to this view, for example -

von Humboldt:<sup>2</sup> Man lives with the world about him exclusively as language presents it.

Sapir:<sup>3</sup> The real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group...we see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

The Sapir-Whorf view sees language not only as a vehicle of thought but an objective reality which 'completely inter-penetrates experience' (Lawton, 1968:65). Difficulties and gaps in the Whorfian hypothesis have been pointed out by Fishman and others, but to-date it seems to have withstood rebuttals effectively. Even if Whorf's ideas are watered down a little, it stands to reason to argue that language heavily influences our perception of reality, expression of our thoughts, feelings and in the final analysis, our very reactions and behaviour towards the happenings around us. Such a view interlocks language and culture and poses the uneasy question - can indigenous culture survive without the retention of the mother-tongue of the people concerned? It is interesting to note the differing viewpoints 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Lawton (1968:65)

of British and French Colonial administrators on this issue (Ward, 1959). Whereas the British agreed that the indigenous language must form the medium of instruction at the elementary level in order to preserve the child's cultural heritage, the French argued that imposition of French from the beginning would eventually open-up the richer 'world culture' to the child. Hidden in the French position is the assumption that if 'ours' is a better culture, the indigenous one can be neglected. Obviously, very rarely, if ever, such ethnocentric assumptions receive explicit enunciation. Instead, they are usually protected by verbal camouflage. Besides the indigenous people themselves (Fiji Education Commission, 1969:22) the arguments for teaching of native languages have been effectively advanced by Unesco (1953). At the same time, realizing the fact that dogmatic insistence on learning the indigenous language only may prove to be retrogressive from the point of view of modernization, maintaining external relations of the community, and economic development, inclusion of an international language has been welcomed by most of the developing multilingual countries.

Like social groups, it is possible for a language to flourish as well as to die. For example, the Hawaiian language has almost disappeared in Hawaii and has been replaced, particularly among rural Hawaiians, by more or less a sub-standard English (Levy, 1968). In defence of teaching the Tahitian language in the schools of French Polynesia, Levy (1968) points out that, "The Tahitian language is part of Tahitian Culture, and involves much of the pride and identity of being Tahitian". Similar thoughts have been expressed in New Zealand regarding the Maori language since the advent of the Hunn and the Currie reports. The Currie Report states (p.426): "Language is nearer the heart of a culture than action songs, games and handicrafts, endlessly supply it records thought, feeling, attitude, experience of a whole race. A live and vigorous Maori language would no doubt be most conducive to maintaining for the Maori his cultural identity and security that such feelings of identity confer...." Such statements, focussing on the relationship between language and identity do seem to be pointing to some phenomenon which



is supposedly a part of 'reality' and calls for a coming to terms with. It seems that because the indigenous language evolves with the culture of a people, it provides them an adequate means of representing social and psychological experience. Hence, the deprivation of an indigenous language creates an 'identity-crisis'.

Picking the main strands from various arguments for the preserving indigenous languages, one notes:

- a) The idea that language heavily influences one's view of reality and thought processes and has consequently has definite effects on the way a people behave,
- b) The view that since language is inextricably bound up with culture, it provides psycho-social identity and sense of security to its users.

#### Why Learn another Language?

If an indigenous language fulfills the basically essential need for expressing social and psychological experiences of a particular people, then, why agitate for the learning of another language? In some situations learning another language is not a matter of choice while in many others the perceived advantages of bilingualism seem to outweigh the efforts extended. Stern in the Unesco bulletin (1963:13) states, "We face today everywhere in the world the need for a thorough-going bilingualism - or even multi-lingualism - fostered through education.... the demand arises largely from the social, political and economic conditions in which the countries of the world find themselves in the present century". In the same vein, Donoghue (1968:4) claims, "the day is nearly here when every adult will command two languages as a generally accepted part of normal literacy."

The need for second language learning already exists in countries where a) two or several languages are spoken, such as in India, Africa, Russia, and a lingua franca serves the common medium of communication; b) two or more official languages exist for example as in Canada, Ceylon, Wales,

Switzerland; c) the national language is not a language of wide distribution or d) where the national language is one of the world languages but for political cultural or economic reasons learning of foreign language is considered important.

In justifying learning of second languages three reasons are usually advanced. The first is couched in terms of practical necessity; the second is based on the theme of cross-cultural understanding and, the third is based on the assertion that learning a language is worthwhile experience in itself. Although differential emphasis could be placed on each of these justifications, in practice each closely complements the other, for example, learning a language for practical necessity in a multi-lingual set-up, more often than not increases an understanding and tolerance of the other group. The reasons advanced by the National Committee on Maori Education for inclusion of the Maori language in the school curricula is interesting (Te Maori, 1970:9). It has been argued that learning of a second language is a great assistance in learning further languages especially if learnt at a young age; and that there would be greater opportunities to use Maori in New Zealand than French or Latin. It is further argued that since Maori belongs to the Austro-nesian family of languages, it will facilitate grasping other related languages of Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, which would be needed to cope with the expansion of New Zealand's relations in the Asia/Pacific areas.

It can be argued that many adults today, especially monoglots, have gone through a fairly ethnocentrically organised school curricula (Unesco, 1963:15). The resultant myopic outlook limits cross-cultural understanding and tolerance of differences - the fellow in the other group thus seems definitely strange, distant, or perhaps a sort of semi-'real' being! The proponents of second language learning point out that the basic factor that can break such extreme ingroup insulation is a linguistic one. In this sense, learning a second language enhances personality development, freeing the individual not only of his egocentric stage of

development, (in Piagetian terms) but also of his ethnocentricity, enabling him to freely interact in bi-cultural settings. Lambert (1967) using French-Canadian and English Canadian subjects for his research on bilingualism found a group of his sample displaying what he calls, 'a non-ethnocentric mode of discourse'. These youngsters, he argued, had circumvented the conflicts and developed means of becoming members of both cultural groups achieving a comfortable 'bicultural identity'. Lambert's work lends support to a common observation, often expressed as, 'I get on well with so and so because he speaks my language'. Here the emphasis does not seem to be on the language in the literal sense (despite the fact that comprehensibility depends on language being literally the same) but in the metaphorical sense of a community of interests and common pool of cultural responses.

Social ceremonies of different cultures well illustrate the theme of this contention. Take for example, the Fijian yaqona ceremony which is deeply untrenched in the Fijian way of life. As Sikivou (1955:37) explains, "The ceremonies of yaqona and 'tabua' are loved, respected and jealously guarded by the leaders and the led, chiefs and commoners, the educated and the uneducated". In the early days these ceremonies were exclusively reserved for the paramount Fijian chiefs, but of late, 'high officials', especially those representing the Queen, are also accorded the honour. Picture a senior white official (as the guest of honour) accompanied by a few Indian and Fijian government officers arriving at a Fijian village and duly participating in a yaqona ceremony. Some overt characteristics of the ceremony (those usually said by tourists to be most impressive) are clearly observable: the brewing process, the chanting, the cup-bearer approaching the guest of honour in a stooping posture holding the cup with both hands with arms extended, clapping that accompanies the partaking of the drink etc. But the significance of the ceremony is differentially received by various people attending it. Even if one assumes that both the European and the Indian participants could speak (and understand) Fijian language can one infer that this solemn ritual conveyed an identical and/or the intended message to all present?

Depending on the fore knowledge of the participants, the ceremony, possibly, could be seen as:

- (a) a purely social, formal ritual - the equivalent of 'a few words of welcome' at a dinner party, or,
  - (b) a display of the rich Fijian legacy of the past - a mere tourist attraction, or,
  - (c) a ritual full of "deep and sacred meaning".
- (Sikivou, 1955:37).

Interpretation and perception of the same ceremony could thus vary markedly from person to person. Each person extracts, as it were, some meaningful theme out of the ceremony but what is extracted is most likely to be heavily influenced by 'the pre-existing pool of cultural responses'. Or, as Flower (1966: 246) puts it "Communication can only take place if the items in the listeners' repertoire correspond with the items in the speakers' repertoire...the language needs to be backed by experiences common to both parties".

Another noteworthy example is that of Indian, Fijian and European christians attending a church-service. The interpretation of general religious maxims is again coloured by cultural values of each group. 'Live peacefully', 'serve thy fellow-brethren' are, in practice, often seen as being in consonance with corporate living, mutuality and group loyalty on the one hand, while individuality and competition (to help raise 'motivation' of the fellow brethren!) on the other.

Such instances indicate that gaining bicultural identity or even cross-cultural understanding cannot be accomplished by possessing a superficial knowledge of a language. The language has to be 'lived' to facilitate acquiring insights into the basic philosophical assumptions underlying the value-system of that particular culture.

Like learning music, poetry or drama, learning a second language is an intrinsically worthwhile activity in itself (Giles 1971). As no two languages are the same, (not even two speakers of a given speech community use the language in an identical manner - for language is as much an expression



of individuality as a means of communication) their very diversity warrants them to be studied. It is only by learning another language that one comes to realize that his is not the only or the best system of words. Once a person penetrates fairly deeply into a second language, he could find at his disposal a means of expressing his thoughts and feeling, which is not only different but more suited in certain areas of knowledge i.e. English in learning science when compared to an African indigenous language. Such a person could acquire, according to Kuhn (1965:11), "sensory, emotional, and intellectual horizons that he did not possess before.... no individual with a minimum of linguistic sensitivity remains the same man when he uses a foreign language".

It must be noted, however, that usually not all members of a particular speech community would agree as to the precise meaning of the words they use. English speakers, for example, especially in the educational field, use words like 'intelligence', 'creativity', 'needs', 'equality', 'the whole-child' etc. without always knowing how successfully they are putting across the intended message (presupposing, of course, that they know what the intended message is in the first place). Is a layman's interpretation of the term 'needs' for example, the same as that of an educationalist? Do educationalists themselves agree upon a meaning of 'needs'? In everyday life 'need' is used variously, its meaning or denotations rarely stated explicitly. For example we need food, our body needs exercise, pupils need to learn to be clean etc. To help overcome some of the difficulties inherent in the ambiguity of the term, it is suggested (Archambault, 1966) that 'need' needs to be viewed as a 'motivational' concept as well as a 'functional' concept. Attempts have also been made to contrast 'felt' needs with the 'real' or 'genuine' needs of a child. Thayer et al (Komisar 1961:36) state, "a working concept of educational need must always be both personal and social in reference; it must always incorporate both the present desires of the individual and what they should desirably become". Does one then take 'X needs Y' to mean 'X wants Y' or 'X ought to have Y'? Take the case of a rebellious six year old and the assertion 'the child needs education'. Does this mean that the child wants education? Or is it being

asserted that he ought to receive education? Without pushing the above argument to its logical conclusion, the point that emerges and needs emphasis is that even in a monolingual context there lurks constantly the potential problem of a mismatch between the meaning given to a term by two different speakers. Given a multi-lingual context the same problem is most likely to become much more complex.

In the educational field, the relationship between bilingualism and I.Q., creativity and general level of school achievement, has attracted many researches (MacNamara, 1967; Torrance et al, 1970). As yet the whole field is crowded with conflicting research evidences. On the one hand, theories of interference and of developing alternative cognitive sets are propounded, while, on the other, bilingualism is seen to be facilitative of superior performance on both verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests (Peal and Lambert 1962) and on some aspects of creativity, (Torrance et al 1970). The last named researchers, using monolingual and bilingual children in Singapore reached the conclusion that: "The monolinguals excel the bilinguals on fluency and flexibility but the direction of trend is reversed for originality and elaboration". In passing, a point of interest to note is that there appears much support for beginning the teaching of a second language at an early stage of child's education (Donoghue 1968: 13, Unesco 1963:7).

To recapitulate, the reasons for learning another language are couched in terms of political, social, economic and educational factors, with the main justifications given in the form of practical necessity, cross-cultural understanding and worthiness of learning a second language per se. Based on the foregoing argument it can be asserted with some justification that there are equally strong reasons for both retention of indigenous languages and for learning another language(s). Such a decision heightens the potential relevance of multi-lingualism (and the related policy matters) to the general welfare of a multi-racial society.

## Possibilities and likely Consequences

Politically, the question of the national language takes the top priority with concomitant issues of specifying the fate of other competing indigenous languages. Once the choice is made, it becomes the blueprint on which specific linguistic decisions such as teaching in schools, teacher training programmes and the like are based. The Brazzaville Symposium<sup>1</sup> on Multi-lingualism pointed out six major factors which seem to affect the choice of a national question, namely:

- (a) the demography and sociology of the language or languages in question - such aspects as numbers of native speakers, its hold on traditional and educational institutions and the boundaries of occurrence are included here.
- (b) the past history of the linguistic situation i.e. the nature of the past contacts between different language groups, the relationships between social, political and religious pressure groups etc.
- (c) the structural nature of the languages involved - as described linguistically to gauge ease or difficulty of acquisition by different groups.
- (d) the political, economic and social situation of the country i.e. its external relations, trade issues, reliance on foreign aid etc.
- (e) the organisation of the structure of the educational system.
- and(f) the extra cost involved in bringing about change in the existing system.

The nature and intensity of language issues as well as the above factors vary from country to country. Nevertheless, taking the major factors affecting the language-question into consideration, the following possibilities seem to be open for multi-lingual societies generally:-

- 1) To adopt one of the indigenous languages as the national language and specify it as the sole official language of instruction in schools. Depending on the prevalence of the factors a-f, degrees of opposition could be expected from other

language groups. From the nationalistic point of view, such a choice, if accepted by the general populace, could eventually bring about unity among different language groups, or, on the other hand, such a choice could throw a multi-lingual country into perpetual conflict with attendant social chaos.

- ii) To adopt one of the international languages for all purposes. This is also an extreme position and the likely effects depend much on the vigour and strength of the indigenous languages in the society. Given that factors such as economic, political and educational, furnish adequate motivation, perhaps, a unified monolingual society, could emerge. But it will inevitably cut the younger generation off from the culture of their parents provoking resistance, or at later stages give rise to a typical behaviour due to frustration at the knowledge of being culturally alienated.
- iii) To admit an international language as a compulsory secondary language to a stipulated national language, or,
- iv) to give equal status to one or more local languages and an international language. This seems to be a fairly compromising choice, often a result of competing indigenous languages coupled with considerations of being in the 'modernizing' game. Both of these alternatives, i.e. iii or iv, could facilitate the provision of primary education in the main local languages with the international language complementing at the secondary and the tertiary levels. While expansion in primary education could thus be effected, the country could also be kept in touch with the outside world via the use of the international language and literature. However, such a system tends to create an elite - it groups the educated together separating them from those who have received a primary education only. Furthermore, as the acquisition of the international language brings definite economic gains, the impetus to learn and improve the indigenous language weakens relatively.
- v) To use two or more of the indigenous languages for all



purposes i.e. a liberal attitude of allowing certain major indigenous languages as co-official languages. The chief merit of this choice lies in its potential strength in preserving the local cultures. Educationally, there would seem to be little difficulties at the primary level but higher education is likely to suffer and be cut-off from the international scene unless major efforts are made at translating educational literature from an international language and improving teacher training facilities.

Numerous combinations could be worked out once the factors affecting the language issue in a particular context are known, but in general terms, the above five selections seem to cover most of the ground. The language-positions, seen on a continuum range from 'doing away with multi-lingualism' (1 or 11) to liberal attitudes as exemplified by v.

Both, in developing and multi-lingual countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Nigeria, Fiji... as well as in the so called 'developed' nations like Russia and the United States, factors noted by the Brazzaville Symposium could be seen at work; and the decisions taken by various governments illustrate some of the principles underlying the possibilities outlined. Malaysia, for example, lacks a cultural background which is common to all her people and on gaining independence, the choice of a national language was much coloured by the feelings of nationalism and a desire to bring together culturally diverse groups to form a Malaysian Society. Remarks of the 1964 Prime-Minister spell out such feelings, while displaying fear of latent disruptive forces inherent in separate language loyalties, (Hayden, 1967: 228) "It is only right that as a developing nation we should want to have a language of our own...if the national language is not introduced our country will be devoid of a unified character and personality." From among the indigenous languages Malay has been chosen as the national language whilst English and other vernaculars are still permitted to be used in schools. Difficulties are inherent in Malaysia's ambition of pushing Malay up as the only official language especially if it is to be proclaimed the sole

medium of instruction at the university. Such a move, argues Kuhn, (1965:8) would come close to 'intellectual suicide'.

On a smaller scale, similar issues face the newly independent Fiji group. Besides English, Fijian, Hindi, minority languages such as Urdu, Tamil, Gujarati are all recognized and language studies at primary level, at least, include the mother-tongue of the predominating ethnic group plus the compulsory English as a second language.

Other cases from the emerging nations of Africa and Southeast Asia would reveal a somewhat similar picture. Language-decisions reflect background policies regarding race-relations. Obviously a liberal attitude in dealing with the language-question is indicative of a different set of presuppositions on the race-relations issue than inherent in the 'Hitler-type' of thinking, i.e. one must not know the language of the other fellow, otherwise one begins to understand him and sympathize with him. The point to be stressed here is that because decisions on language - problems are very rarely made on the basis of linguistic analysis of some sort, but involve sociological and political aspects, an understanding of the philosophical basis used by the decision-makers throws the conclusions reached into a clearer perspective.

There are many and varied attendant possibilities in the realm of educational problems in multi-cultural societies. The discussion on language-problems above has been used as an example of the complexity of the nature of educational problems.

## B

### A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FIJI AS A MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY

The purpose of this brief historical survey is to sketch how Fiji came to possess the multi-cultural

society now it has. Population statistics reveal a varied racial composition (Table I).

	<u>1966 Census</u>	<u>Estimate as at 31 December 1972</u>
Fijians	202,176	233,638
Indians	240,960	274,404
Europeans	6,590	4,558
Part-Europeans	9,687	9,606
Rotumans	5,797	6,701
Other Pacific Islanders	6,095	7,057
Chinese	5,147	4,726
Others	273	132
	<b>476,727</b>	<b>540,822</b>

TABLE I

1881 Census	Fijian	Indian	European	P/European	Chinese	All Ors.	Total
1881 Census	90	1	2	1	-	6	100
1891 "	88	6	2	1	-	4	"
1901 "	78	14	2	2	-	4	"
1911 "	62	29	2	1	1	5	"
1921 "	54	39	2	2	1	3	"
1936 "	50	32	2	2	1	2	"
1946 "	45	46	2	2	1	3	"
1956 "	43	49	2	2	1	3	"
1966 "	42	51	1	2	1	2	"
End 1967 Estimate	42	51	1	2	1	2	"
End 1968 Estimate	43	51	1	2	1	3	"
End 1969 Estimate	43	51	1	2	1	3	"
Mid 1970 Estimate	43	51	1	2	1	3	"

TABLE II

Population of Fiji by Race 1881-1970 (Percentage).

The dominant cultural groups in Fiji are the  
Fijians, the Indians, the Europeans and the Chinese.

## The Fijians

Theories on the origins and migrations of the indigenous race, the Fijians, vary. This is mainly due to the undocumented past of almost all the peoples of the Pacific. Derrick (1950: v) points out that their early history is to be deduced chiefly from traditions and genealogies; but because "fact is generally fused with legends and myths, one encounters the difficulty of establishing the point where fable ends and history begins."

Attempts have been made to link Fijian place-names to certain names in Africa, mainly around Lake Tanganyika. Some investigators have supposed that they came through Arabia. Others that they came through India and Malaya. Indonesia is generally taken as the melting-pot of South-east Asia and the Pacific as well. (Derrick, p.8). In the face of such varying suppositions, writers generally rely heavily on the more recent, albeit limited, recorded information on the Fijians since the coming of literacy in their islands through missionary endeavours.

The bulk of the Fijian population, especially that of the large islands in the western part of the group, is Melanesian, although, due to the mixing of these people with Polynesians earlier on, they possess a marked but variable Polynesian strain. The 'Fiji Information' (Fiji P.R.O. Newsletter) informs foreigners that, "Fijian legend tells of the great chief Lutunasobasoba leading his people across the seas to the new land of Fiji. Here Polynesian and Melanesian mixed and created a highly developed social system. It was the first mixing of the races. More were to come." And the next to come in substantial numbers were Europeans.

## The Europeans

The white explorers were the first to come in contact with the Fijians - Tasman (1643), Cook (1774), Bligh (1789). But the first whitemen to live among the Fijians were, perhaps, the shipwrecked sailors - mainly from the Arge (1803), and the Eliza (1808). It is believed that



some of them chose to leave Fiji as soon as opportunity was offered by the occasional trading ships. Others, who were attracted by easy licence and freedom from restraints of 'civilized world' decided to stay back. The group gradually swelled as more of its type-deserters, marooned sailors and the like - 'floated' into the shores. Known as 'beach-combers', these Europeans lived on the hospitality and mercy of Fijian chiefs, carving existence in the villages by the shores. Many are believed to have quickly 'gone native'. It is because the group comprised both the bad and the good 'types' their arrival heralded many strong social tremors, some of which were to shake violently the very foundations of the existing Fijian social system.

The dawn of the 19th Century saw an increase in numbers of whitemen who visited Fiji in the form of missionaries, traders, and settlers. Many difficulties were faced by the early missionaries - the language barrier strict adherence of Fijians to their own gods and the interwoven patterns of social practices and taboos, the renunciation of which had a detrimental effect of the whole system. Hence, when the chiefs and their respective peoples were christianised, they little realized that the conversion in turn meant undermining their own authority and hastening the breakup of their way of life.

The traders came in search of sandalwood and bech-de-mer for the Chinese market. The sandalwood trade was short-lived but it did introduce the islands to many Europeans who eventually established settlements. The settlers being desirous of establishing plantations began to seek titles to Fijian land, recruit local labour and strive for some kind of British-type governmental protection. Mutual misunderstanding, trickery and deception on the part of the white settlers in land dealings and trade led to a stiffening of race relations and by 1874 conflicts between, and within, the two races reached dangerous heights. The cession of the islands to Gt. Britain by Fijian chiefs in 1874 marks the onset of an era which saw the white population bulging; in order to help establish the Crown Colony government, administrators, professionals, traders and technologists, Army, Air Force and Services personnel were brought in. Thus,



the Western Culture firmly set roots in this part of the world.

The

### The Indians

The introduction of Indians to Fiji as indentured labourers took place in 1879 when the first group arrived in the *Leonidas* from Calcutta. The first Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, spearheaded the view that a positive policy of economic and social development was needed to guide Fiji towards the conditions of modern life. (Mayer:1963). This implied either extensive recruitment of Fijians from their 'koros' to the plantations or introduction of immigrants to develop the Colony and thereby making it self-supporting through the expansion of crops then under cultivation - cotton, copra, tobacco, coffee and sugar-cane. As the natives were not keen to work in such plantations it was proposed to recruit labourers from India and in 1878 arrangements to this effect were completed.<sup>1</sup>

Under the indenture contract the labourers were to be brought by the Government of Fiji for five years of compulsory labour under government direction. At the completion of the contract they were to be free to return to India at their own expense, though if they chose to remain in Fiji for further five years their passages and those of their children were to be paid by the Fiji Government. They were also given the option to stay in Fiji as 'freemen' after they had served their contracts. The actual working and living conditions of the labourers are viewed, in retrospect, as being not much different from those of the Negro slaves in the cotton fields of America. It was the exploitation of the Indian labourers and the concomittant social abuses of the system which led to its abolition in 1916, and the last contracts were finally cancelled at the beginning of 1920. The present Indian community comprises the last remaining folk who came under the indenture system, the descendents of the original labourers, and those who came as free immigrants from India.

1. Mayer (1963:11) argues that the Fijians had no need for working on plantations and as they did not know the value of money, the chiefs refused to send their subjects for contract labour.

## The Chinese

Unlike Europeans and Indians Chinese immigration into the country was rather spasmodic. Being a closed social group the Chinese have preserved most of their socio-cultural inheritance. Today most Chinese are engaged in commerce and market gardening.

The dominant cultural groups described above have now lived for a century in Fiji and changes and adjustments have inevitably taken place due to culture-contact. Some of these changes will be explored further in chapter III.

## C

### FIJI EDUCATION AND EXAMINATIONS

#### Historical Background

The teaching of literacy began in 1835 when the first two European Missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission arrived from Tonga, bringing with them a book in Fijian and a short catechism. In the Methodist system of circuits each station had its own educational centre called Vuli-ni-Lotu, where teachers were trained to be sent out into the villages to teach the children in reading and writing their own language and some number work. Provisions were made for a district institution for training selected pupils from station-schools as pastors. The work of the Mission was soon to spread widely in the colony.

The Roman Catholic Mission commenced its work in 1844. Whereas the Methodists sent trained teachers out into the villages, the Roman Catholic policy was to gather pupils in central schools to be taught by the European missionary. By 1868 the Mission had established five stations each with its school. After 1867 the development of the Mission's work in educational field was enhanced considerably with the

arrival of Marist Brothers, Marist Sisters, and Sisters of St. Joseph de Chuny.

The other two Christian Missions involved in educational work from the turn of the century are the Seventh Day Adventist and the Anglican Church.

The C.S.R. Company also established a number of schools for Europeans and part-Europeans at its mills and so did the Emperor Gold Mining Co. at its mine.

Some salient points from the 'historical preface' of the 1969 Report of the Education Department (Council Paper Number 19 of 1970) are the following:

1. In 1879, Ordinance No. 10 provided for the establishment of public schools - a common school for Levuka, common schools for other towns, common schools for rural districts and a High School for Fiji.
2. The best known of the Fijian schools, Queen Victoria School, was built in 1906.
3. Uptil 1920 little progress was made in the education of Indian children. Most Indian schools since then have been established on the initiative of locally elected committees. Hindu Organisations such as Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharm encouraged the building of schools as did the T.T.S.I. Sangam and the Muslim League.
4. The foundations of the present educational system were laid in 1926 as a result of recommendations of an Education Commission. A Department of Education under the control of a Director was constituted and a Board of Education, nominated by the Governor, was given, inter alia, the following powers or duties:
  - a) the registration of schools and teachers, including control over the establishment of all schools;
  - b) the payment of grant-in-aid on conditions laid down by the Board;
  - c) the duty of prescribing all syllabuses and the right to approve all text-books;

- d) control of staffing standards and the inspection of schools;
- e) full responsibility for the administration of all Government schools.

Although changes have been brought in the structure and function of the department, it is true that the history of education in Fiji depended largely on private initiative. The present (January 1973) structure of the Education Department and organisation of schools can be summarised as follows:

1. The Minister for Education, Youth and Sport has the responsibility for the formulation and execution of educational policy. The day-to-day control is in the hands of the Permanent Secretary, assisted by two Deputies. Among the other senior headquarters staff are the four chief education officers controlling the Primary, Secondary, Technical and the Research and Development sections.
2. Fiji is divided into four broad educational Divisions each headed by an education officer. The divisions, in turn, are further divided into nine education districts with district education officers in charge.
3. With the exceptions of kindergartens, technical, vocational and teacher training institutions, schools in Fiji have been generally classified as primary or secondary. The present trend, however, is to think in terms of primary (class 1 - 6), junior secondary (Form 1 - IV) and upper secondary. At present the system itself is in transition with most of the primary schools still retaining classes 1 - 8, some twenty six junior secondary schools with Forms I - IV whilst most of the High schools still have Forms III - VI.
4. The primary and post-primary school rolls for the past fourteen years are included in tables III and IV. The tables, besides portraying a picture of multi-racial society, indicate annual progression in enrolment by race.

	FIJIANS	INDIANS	EUROP.	CHINESE	OTHERS
1958	31,251	29,779	2,867	216	5,168
1959	31,805	32,042	2,921	226	5,481
1960	33,058	34,220	2,601	256	6,047
1961	34,954	35,107	2,425	272	6,120
1962	33,287	35,983	1,700	299	8,095
1963	36,270	42,215	2,782	1,115	2,205
1964	37,699	45,020	2,751	1,124	2,255
1965	38,852	48,647	2,799	1,127	2,558
1966	40,639	51,888	2,859	1,126	2,626
1967	42,808	55,247	2,870	1,143	2,903
1968	45,404	58,581	2,945	1,162	2,820
1969	47,257	61,723	3,003	1,190	2,981
1970	49,102	65,004	3,087	1,181	3,000
1971	51,225	67,686	3,162	1,152	3,106

Table III

## ENROLMENT BY RACE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS



YEAR	FIJIANS	INDIANS	EUROP.	CHINESE	OTHERS
1958	642	1,751	324	-	862
1959	679	2,542	314	-	1,000
1960	1,011	3,207	321	-	900
1961	1,135	3,224	352	-	1,032
1962	1,056	3,249	297	-	1,574
1963	1,764	3,734	438	211	231
1964	1,866	4,199	436	229	275
1965	2,031	4,525	407	253	356
1966	2,336	5,066	426	286	352
1967	2,718	6,148	475	318	396
1968	3,356	7,268	511	360	500
1969	3,964	8,330	575	397	529
1970	5,138	9,705	602	397	527
1971	5,800	11,187	628	410	517

Table IV

## ENROLMENT BY RACE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

5. With the help of the University of the South Pacific and the UNDP Curriculum Unit major changes are being effected in the secondary school curriculum whilst the Research and Development Section is also engaged in streamlining examinations and updating the primary curriculum.

A systematic move is being made by the Ministry of Education to bring about changes proposed in the Development Plan Six.

#### Examinations in Fiji and Associated Problems

Public examinations in Fiji have been an integral part of its education system and due to their regular appearances, have had a considerable influence on teaching-styles in schools. There are five major external examinations:

the Intermediate Entrance Examination,  
the Secondary Schools' Entrance Examination,  
the Fiji Junior Certificate Examination,  
the New Zealand (or Cambridge) School  
Certificate Examination  
and the New Zealand University Entrance Examination.

The Intermediate Entrance Examination. This is a selective examination, conducted by the Department of Education, to choose candidates for some sixteen Intermediate schools run solely for the benefit of those Fijian children who come from the Islands and the outlying areas. Thus largely Fijian children from class 6 of the 'contributing' schools at an average age of eleven appear for it. In 1970, children were examined in English, Fijian, Arithmetic and General Subjects.

#### The Secondary Schools' Entrance Examination.

This is another selective examination, conducted by the Department of Education for children of all races in class

8 i.e. in the eighth and last year of primary school. Admission to Form III in both grant-aided and Government schools has been based mainly on the results of this examination. It is only from 1971 that a non-verbal 'General Ability Test' has been introduced to supplement the results of the Secondary Schools' Entrance Examination. The candidates sit a one-day examination comprising papers in English, Mathematics, and General Subjects. In 1971 10,588 candidates appeared for the examination and 6,366 passed it.

The Fiji Junior Examination. This examination is at present both a terminal and a selective examination. It is normally sat for in Form IV and comes two years after the Secondary Schools' Entrance Examination. The Fiji Junior replaced the Overseas (Cambridge) Junior Certificate in 1955 and is controlled and conducted by the Department of Education.

The New Zealand School Certificate Examination and the Cambridge School Certificate Examination - Both of these examinations are taken generally in Form V, in the third or fourth year of secondary school. Again, these examinations serve as predictive devices for further academic work besides giving a 'terminal' certificate for those who wish to leave school. For various reasons more and more schools are choosing to offer candidates for the New Zealand examination in place of the English examination.

The New Zealand University Entrance Examination. Like New Zealand School Certificate, the U.E. is conducted by the authorities in New Zealand and is taken by those students who have gone through the lower examinations successfully. This takes four to five years of secondary schooling.

The table below includes the results of the main examinations over the last ten years.

Year	SSEE		FJE		CAMBRIDGE & SCH. CERT.		NZ U.E	
	No. Sat	Passes	No. Sat	Passes	No. Sat	Passes	No. Sat	Passes
1961	3912	719	1572	525	499	247	110	55
1962	3393	821	1704	497	520	263	114	64
1963	3360	1079	1653	713	633	387	122	53
1964	4084	1223	1912	746	722	492	124	52
1965	4861	1896	2051	844	794	539	145	84
1966	5719	2341	2488	1366	934	615	216	111
1967	6488	3434	3315	1832	1220	622	374	139
1968	7256	3704	3960	2094	1622	845	455	162
1969	8300	4083	4965	3158	2395	1009	665	240
1970	9565	5593	5440	3042	2493	858	870	278
1971	10588	6366	6030	3646	3220	1040	951	255

Table V

The above table reveals a picture in which the numbers of candidates appearing for each examination increases every year with resultant increase in both the number of passes and failures at each examination. However, a breakdown of the examination results of the last few years brings out details regarding the performance of candidates of the major cultural groups i.e. Fijians, Indians and 'Others' - the 'Others' include Chinese, Europeans and Part-Europeans. It is suggested that there are 'problems' hidden behind the statistical tables and that more searching questions need to be asked to explain the trends indicated from an analysis of the examination results. See tables VI, VII, VIII, IX and X.

YEAR	F I J I A N S			I N D I A N S			O T H E R S			T O T A L		
	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Number of Candidates	Number who gained 50%	Pass %
1958	786	180	22.9	1,431	259	18.1	239	88	36.8	2,456	527	21.5
1959	983	216	22.0	1,481	334	22.6	246	114	46.3	2,710	664	24.5
1960	1,246	341	27.4	1,260	433	34.4	252	145	57.5	2,758	919	33.3
1961	1,395	180	12.9	1,345	424	31.5	272	115	42.3	3,012	719	23.9
1962	1,558	213	13.7	1,533	480	31.3	302	131	43.4	3,393	824	24.3
1963	1,698	288	17.0	1,609	618	38.4	323	175	54.2	3,630	1,074	29.6
1964	1,905	338	17.7	1,814	701	38.6	365	184	50.4	4,084	1,223	29.9
1965	2,262	709	31.3	2,098	862	41.1	501	325	64.9	4,861	1,896	39.0
1966	2,535	669	26.4	2,603	1,315	50.5	581	357	61.4	4,719	2,341	40.9
1967	2,785	1,106	39.7	3,062	1,895	61.9	641	433	67.6	6,488	3,434	52.9
1968	3,202	1,176	36.7	3,354	2,102	62.7	700	426	60.9	7,256	3,704	51.0
1969	3,664	1,283	35.0	3,920	2,363	60.3	716	437	61.0	8,300	4,083	49.2
1970	4,181	1,857	44.4	4,671	3,257	69.7	713	479	67.2	9,565	5,593	58.5
1971	4,572	2,357	51.6	5,386	3,544	65.8	630	465	73.8	10,588	6,366	60.1

Table VI

SECONDARY SCHOOLS' ENTRANCE EXAMINATION RESULTS BY RACE



YEAR	F I J I A N S			I N D I A N S			O T H E R S			T O T A L		
	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %
1958	227	148	65.2	726	334	46.0	152	109	71.7	1,105	591	53.5
1959	325	129	39.7	930	216	23.2	159	95	59.4	1,414	440	31.1
1960	311	108	34.7	1,071	258	24.1	203	87	42.9	1,585	453	28.6
1961	312	119	38.1	1,067	327	30.6	193	79	40.9	1,572	525	33.4
1962	435	101	23.2	1,060	333	31.4	209	63	30.1	1,704	497	29.2
1963	426	159	37.3	1,019	452	44.4	208	102	49.0	1,653	713	43.1
1964	435	135	31.0	1,182	455	38.5	295	150	50.8	1,912	740	38.7
1965	576	166	28.8	1,201	520	43.3	274	158	57.7	2,051	844	41.2
1966	718	289	40.3	1,462	880	60.2	304	197	64.8	2,484	1,366	55.0
1967	902	432	47.9	2,036	1,125	55.3	377	275	72.9	3,315	1,832	55.3
1968	1,182	525	44.4	2,369	1,256	53.0	409	313	76.5	3,960	3,094	52.9
1969	1,534	917	59.8	2,965	1,865	62.9	466	377	80.9	4,965	3,158	63.6
1970	1,698	890	52.4	3,268	1,803	55.2	474	349	73.6	5,440	3,042	55.9
1971	1,942	1,055	54.3	3,598	2,180	60.6	490	411	83.9	6,030	3,646	60.5

Table VII

FIJI JUNIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION RESULTS BY RACE

YEAR	FIJIANS			INDIANS			OTHERS			TOTAL		
	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %
1958	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	32	71.1	45	32	71.1
1959	10	6	60.0	1	-	-	50	34	68.0	61	40	65.6
1960	20	18	90.0	3	1	33.3	64	34	53.1	87	53	60.9
1961	16	13	81.3	3	1	33.3	67	28	41.8	86	42	48.8
1962	26	19	73.1	2	2	100	54	32	59.3	82	53	64.6
1963	22	14	63.6	1	-	-	68	30	44.1	91	44	48.4
1964	76	56	73.7	28	23	82.1	66	47	71.2	170	126	74.1
1965	100	64	64.0	65	32	49.2	80	68	85.0	245	164	66.9
1966	100	64	58.2	157	96	61.1	84	61	72.6	351	221	63.0
1967	158	77	48.7	504	186	36.9	97	51	52.6	759	314	41.4
1968	272	133	48.9	757	378	49.9	230	154	66.9	1,259	665	52.8
1969	487	223	45.8	1,414	545	38.5	255	160	62.7	2,156	928	43.0
1970	528	210	39.8	1,604	484	30.2	247	135	54.7	2,379	829	34.8
1971	765	243	31.8	2,017	618	30.6	316	160	50.6	3,097	1,021	33.0

Table VIII

NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION RESULTS BY RACE

YEAR	F I J I A N S			I N D I A N S			O T H E R S			T O T A L		
	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %
1958	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	352	202	57.4
1959	65	32	49.2	273	124	45.4	43	34	-	381	190	49.9
1960	103	65	63.1	323	153	47.4	62	43	-	488	261	53.5
1961	85	27	31.8	276	141	51.1	52	37	-	413	205	49.6
1962	85	41	48.2	293	135	46.1	60	34	56.7	438	210	47.9
1963	83	53	63.9	401	246	61.3	58	44	75.9	542	343	63.3
1964	96	60	62.5	394	262	66.5	62	44	71.0	552	366	66.3
1965	39	19	48.7	451	313	69.4	59	41	69.5	549	373	67.9
1966	62	49	79.0	450	288	64.0	71	57	80.3	583	394	67.6
1967	29	13	44.8	376	246	65.4	61	41	67.2	466	300	64.4
1968	52	25	40.1	297	159	53.5	14	6	42.8	363	190	52.3
1969	14	4	28.5	205	72	35.1	20	5	25.0	239	81	33.8
1970	25	7	28.0	67	16	23.9	22	6	27.3	114	29	25.4
1971	31	7	22.6	78	8	10.3	14	4	28.6	123	19	15.4

Table IX

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION RESULTS BY RACE

YEAR	FIJIANS			INDIANS			OTHERS			TOTAL		
	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %	Sat	Passed	Pass %
1958	22	17	77.0	17	3	17.6	22	22	100.0	61	41	67.2
1959	20	12	60.0	23	12	52.2	16	12	75.0	59	36	61.0
1960	16	9	5.3	24	15	62.5	26	23	88.5	66	46	69.7
1961	40	16	40.0	36	16	44.4	30	22	73.3	106	54	50.9
1962	29	14	48.3	62	31	50.0	31	19	61.3	122	64	52.5
1963	31	8	25.8	59	29	49.2	32	16	50	122	53	43.4
1964	32	12	37.5	59	24	40.7	33	16	48.5	124	52	41.9
1965	41	17	41.5	68	45	66.2	36	22	61.1	145	84	57.9
1966	45	16	35.6	106	64	60.4	63	29	46.0	214	109	50.9
1967	88	22	25.0	200	78	39.0	85	38	44.7	373	138	37.0
1968	80	23	28.8	281	87	31.0	89	47	52.8	450	157	34.9
1969	131	44	33.6	404	132	32.7	130	64	49.2	665	240	36.1
1970	202	45	22.3	501	167	33.3	167	66	39.5	870	278	32.0
1971	224	55	24.6	585	146	25.0	142	54	38.0	951	255	26.8

Table X

## NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION RESULTS

The main problem areas in the field of examination seem to be related to (a) the disproportionate number of candidates passing the examinations from different cultural groups, (b) the effect on both the schools and those engaged in the teaching-learning process, and, (c) the possible nullifying effects on the espoused educational objectives and aspirations of existing cultural groups. In this context the Fiji Education Commission (1969: 67) notes, "....the proportion of Fijians passing the Secondary Schools' Entrance Examination rises slowly and erratically, the Indian pass rate being now almost double the Fijians. Wastage from secondary schools is much higher for Fijians than for Indians." And at the New Zealand and Cambridge School Certificate Examinations, the Commission notes, "there is not much disparity in the percentage of passes gained by those who sit, but there is a large disparity in the absolute numbers of passes, since many fewer Fijians actually take the examination."

Obviously, the crucial issue then is the differences in the proportions of racial groups sitting for and passing the main public examinations. Socio-cultural background of pupils, parents and teachers seem to be an important contributing factor.

Further, there are the 'universal' criticisms of public examinations like the constraints they place on the techniques of teaching and learning, the emphasis on rote learning and memorising of, at times, futile snippets of information. In the next chapter the so-called 'universal' criticisms will be discussed while the problem-areas in the context of Fiji examinations will be dealt with in Chapter V.

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## Chapter II

### EXAMINATION: REVIEW OF STATED FUNCTIONS, PURPOSES AND EFFECTS

Any attempted survey of the more relevant literature on 'Examinations' confronts a novice with the problem of grappling with the meanings and educational implications of words such as 'uses', 'aims', 'purposes', 'functions' and 'effects' of examinations. The ongoing dialogue on this issue, as exemplified among others by Wiseman (ed) (1961) - Examinations and English Education, the 1969 Education Yearbook entitled 'Examinations' 1969 N.S.S.E. Yearbook entitled 'Educational Evaluation - New Roles, New Means', reveals a great deal of ambiguity, variability and inconsistency in the usage of various key words.

As illustrations, let us look at the following statements on examinations:

- (a) "The foregoing pages have dealt with four main categories (examinations to maintain standards, to provide incentives, to help administrators, and to assist with the structuring of society) but it must be re-emphasised that these are not classifications of examinations; they are types of use to which examinations can be put and any one examination can, of course, have more than one purpose." (Morris, 1961:25);
- (b) "The Proper use of Secondary Examinations...
  - (1) An important function of an examination in a school system is to be a goal, and if that goal is to be worthwhile, it must be suited to the capacities of the individual.... (Currie Report, 1962: 321);
  - (11) Examinations may serve another important purpose in secondary schools...a powerful aid in keeping pace with growth in the content of knowledge." (Currie, *ibid*);

- (c) "A number of purposes can be ascribed to examinations - a fact which gives rise to several problems. J.L. Bereton (1969: 34) suggests three aims, all of which have been advocated by theorists for many years with differing emphasis. They test achievement, they provide goals or incentives for students, and they are competitive. Examinees, of course, may regard one or more of these objectives as inadmissible. Examinees may see the purpose of an examination in quite a different light... A distinction, therefore, should be drawn between the stated aims of an examination or test and the functions they very evidently serve," and again, "Multiple purposes and functions imply a variety of techniques." (Holmes, 1969:32)

Firstly one notes that there lurks a considerable amount of uncertainty in these passages regarding the specific purposes of examinations. This could be due to the fact that much of the research in this field is being done into the actual mechanics of some of the examinations rather than in probing the fundamental reasons for having them. (Montgomery, 1965) This in turn appears to push those working on this issue into 'defence-mechanisms' such as a passive acceptance of the assumption that since examinations have multiple purposes and functions, it suffices to acknowledge this and proceed comfortably elaborating the one selected as important. From such thinking emanates variations in terminology such as 'uses', 'purposes' and 'functions' of examinations. Thus, a synthesis of such varied attempts, to justify the stated purposes (functions) proves not only difficult but would seem somewhat presumptuous. To this effect, the editors of the 1969 Education Yearbook in their introductory remarks, (P.XI) state: "...the whole situation is very confused. Everyone agrees that things could be and should be improved but no one is quite sure of what should be done." If this be taken as a reasonable verdict on the discussions on examinations at this stage (and the literature reviewed supports this) then the confused utterances of many newcomers merely heighten the chaos.

Both Morris (a) and the Currie Report (b) discuss the 'uses' of examinations: the former emphasizes the "types of use the examinations can be put to" whilst the latter calls for "the proper use of Secondary Examinations." This instrumental view of examinations has survived since the days of the Chinese Imperial Examinations. After drawing a succinct analogy between examinations and the tools Morris (1969:27) asserts, "the application of a tool in an event and all events have consequences, perhaps desirable, perhaps not." The advocates of 'use' of examinations are evidently worried about the fact that this tool called examinations can be mishandled. Granted that this could happen, cautious remarks like those of the Currie Report are perhaps quite legitimate. But if 'use' of a tool has consequences 'perhaps desirable, perhaps not' it follows that one cannot justifiably select the consequences one was looking for in the first place and attribute them to the 'use' of the examination and ignore the rest. This is what seems to be actually being done by many who talk about 'uses' of examinations. Talk about 'uses' and 'purposes' of examinations (as exemplified in passages (a), (b) and (c) perhaps, narrows one's outlook to the preconceived consequences of examinations. Such an outlook could lead to gravely undermining the effects of 'backwash', anxiety and pressure of examinations and the significance of the principle of the "All-factor Effect". (Stenhouse, 1969) Literature on this issue (Wiseman 1969, Stenhouse, 1969) indicates that such an attitude does lead to a passive acceptance of the negative effects of examinations as "a sort of educational 'act of God'" (Wiseman, 1968: 58).

### The Principle of the "All-factor Effect"

This principle, first enunciated by Stenhouse (1969) calls into question the adequacy of the widely accepted Bloom's (1956) classification of types of 'skill' or 'ability' assessable by examinations, namely Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation. Stenhouse argues that, "Neglecting for the moment the question of whether or not all the types of 'behaviour' which ought to be measured have indeed been listed, notable deficiency is that the list

fails to include all of the types of behaviour which are in fact measured by examinations." It is further suggested by Stenhouse that:

- (a) it must be taken as axiomatic that any behavioural factor which does affect the score achieved by a candidate in an examination is being measured by that examination,
- (b) some long-established principles, such as that of the aegrotat pass, do presuppose for their justification a principle very close to this. (p.222)

Three of the obvious implications of this principle for examinations are:

- (a) caution needs to be exercised in delineating the roles of examinations, taking due cognisance of the fact that examinations measure numerous behavioural factors, and their interaction, simultaneously.
- (b) since such factors as those falling in the 'affective domain' cannot be measured, genuine attempts must be made to eliminate or control them.
- (c) for both planning techniques of measurement and later evaluation (a) and (b) must be taken into consideration.

So far, difficulties in assigning 'purposes' and 'uses' to examinations have been considered; and the content and implications of the principle of the 'All-factor Effect' for examinations described. Before tracing some of the functions examinations served and are said to be serving, perhaps it will prove fruitful to look briefly at a definition of an examination and some distinctions between examinations proper and tests.

#### A Definition of an Examination

Various contributors to the 1969 Educational Yearbook, for example, Tibble, Bowles, seem to accept Bereton's definition of an examination and the distinction he draws



between examinations and tests. An examination, according to Bereton, (1969:34) is "a certain kind of task, to be performed as well as possible by the examinee, at some determined future date." This definition comprises three distinct characteristics of an examination. Firstly "it is a certain kind of task" and this is typified usually by essay questions, multiple-choice, oral, written etc. Secondly, "it needs to be performed as well as possible" - hence rewarded on pre-determined criteria, i.e. pass/fail, grades, certificates, etc. And thirdly, it needs to be "performed at some determined future date" - this exerts an influence on the behaviour of the examinee during the period of preparation for the final event.

On the distinction between examinations and tests, Bereton says that the latter are "designed to provide an accurate standardised measurement of certain abilities or skills without influencing teacher or student and without creating any tension in the student (p.34)". The main point that emerges from such a distinction seems to be that examinations exert much more influence on the behaviour of the examinee (and teachers) than the tests.

Although Bereton's definition seems convincing, once again, one is led to doubt the utility of such attempts in the face of the usual many and varied use of the concept of 'examination'. For instance, Bloom (1969: 42) asserts, "Examinations which are regarded as measuring important and relatively stable characteristics of the individual have the greatest effect. Thus, the I.Q. score is regarded as so important... Other tests which may be regarded in the same way are aptitude tests, personality measures, vocational interest tests and, sometimes, tests of reading ability." Are all these tests 'examinations' in Bereton's terms? It appears that between Bloom's apparently loose usage, and Bereton's sharp distinction between examinations and tests, lies a wide area which can be said to be covered by other educationists who are happy to use these concepts without explicating differences and similarities. For the discussion that follows, Bereton's definition of an examination and distinctions between examinations and tests will be accepted.



And now a look at some of the functions examinations evidently served in the past and are being said to be serving at the present time.

#### **Expediency first - Principle later**

Both in China (supposedly the birthplace of competitive examinations) and England, the beginnings of public examinations took place essentially as a matter of expediency. The examinations were instituted to select the right type of people for civil service. It was believed that examinations would facilitate overcoming the evils of nepotism and all kinds of favouritism, and corruption connected with civil service appointment. The function of these early examinations besides selection, came also to be seen as encouraging the right sort of people to prepare themselves for government service.

Selection meant competition. As certain government posts were earmarked for those who passed high in specific examinations, a competitive spirit was engendered. Politicians hailed the competitive aspect on the grounds that it stimulated effort. The idea that the ablest should be given opportunity to develop their talents came to be linked closely with the use of competitive examinations. As this principle gained a wider currency, the administrative purposes of examinations became obscured and examinations came to be seen as instruments for grading a large number of candidates.

In institutions of higher education, for example in Oxford and Cambridge examinations were instituted to sustain raised standards. But such a function of examinations inevitably had much wider repercussions on the society: for those who went through the system and managed to survive the competition tended to perpetuate the system. Montgomery (1965: 243) likens the Oxford and Cambridge of the 19th Century to "islands of culture in a sea of ignorance...(whose) influence spread far beyond their shores, for the graduates acted as colonists...frequently using examinations to achieve their ends."

The principle of placing the 'able' and 'well-educated' (usually those successful in competitive examinations) at the helm of various institutions had far-reaching effects. Such a principle, in practice, carried advantages as well as disadvantages in the same bag. Whereas the society began to be acclaimed as being run by 'meritocracy' or a 'managerial class' the results of selection pressures eventually began to disclose numerous ill-effects - such as high failure rates, diminution of cultural richness amongst the meritocracy, etc.

A summary of various functions seen to be performed by examinations is illustrated by Fig.2.

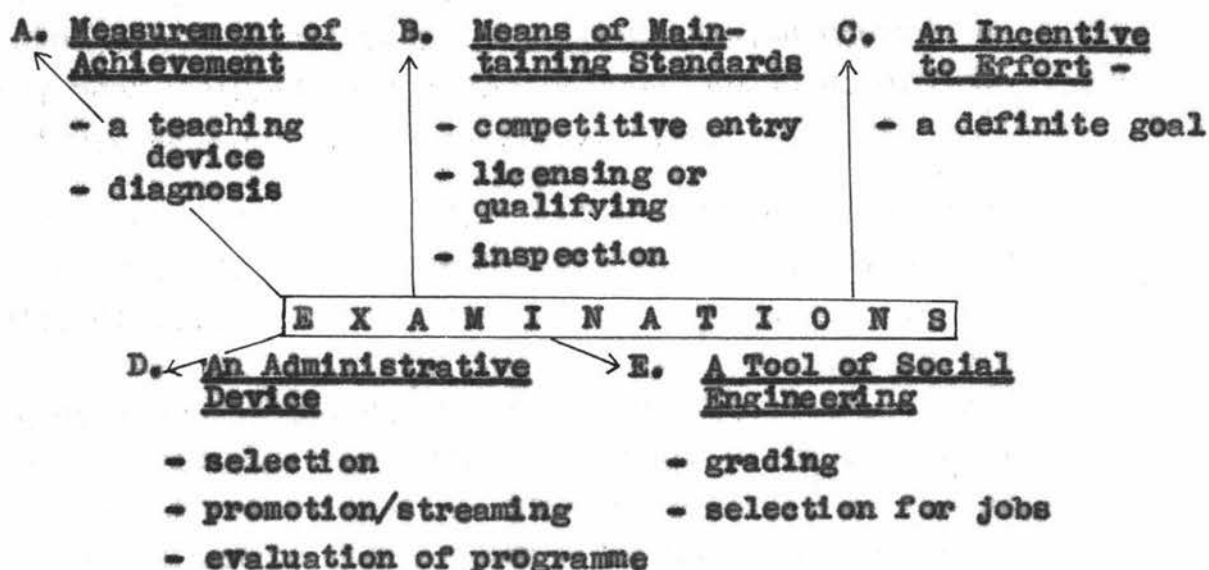


FIG. 2

#### **A. Measurement of Achievement**

This is perhaps, the most obvious reason for having examinations. It is highly probable that the simplest forms of tests took root in classrooms when the teachers wanted to find out how much their students had learned. For, after all, the central problem of all educational endeavour is learning.

Besides acting as a measuring instrument, examinations also function as a teaching and diagnostic device.

For instance, objective tests can be used profitably in teaching large classes at secondary and tertiary levels. Its effectiveness lies in having 'built-in' relevance to the particular course of study and needs of students. Follow-up discussions on objective-type tests of the above nature could form the basis of a fruitful learning situation, allowing the class to embark on some 'critico-creative' activity (Stenhouse, 1969), backed by the aroused motivational forces due to the testing episode. Maximum benefits can be derived from such explanatory discussions if the intervening period is not too long - for too delayed feedback dampens interest. Examinations, especially if multi-modal in character, i.e. comprising an essay-type, objective-type, practical work etc., do help a teacher in getting acquainted with strengths and weaknesses of his classes of his students thereby facilitating remedial work. Obviously, decision making becomes much easier once relevant information is available; examinations can serve this diagnostic function.

#### B. A Means of Maintaining Standards

As pointed out earlier educational institutions have for long attributed the functions of maintaining standards to examinations. This is exemplified by three of the widely accepted features of examinations, namely they encourage competition, they act as licensing or qualifying instruments, and they aid inspection. Examinations are usually 'used' in reality in many countries to eliminate the majority of candidates and allocate the remainder to certain known vacancies in, for example, the Civil Service, in secondary schools, in colleges or universities.

Certain skills and occupations use examinations as a pre-requisite, a necessary step to be passed before one is qualified to become a practitioner of the skill concerned. This is evident in examinations set up for lawyers, doctors and teachers. To use examinations as a method of qualifying those who reach a pre-conceived standard carries with it the corollary that a certain number are usually rejected. Hence, examinations can be seen as a device for screening 'undesirables' as well.

Then again, examinations have been said to maintain standards when they are used as adjuncts to inspection. This is perhaps not a widely accepted function. However, while licensing or inspecting, competition can be engendered with a view to maintaining standards.

### C. An Incentive to Effort

One of the widely-used arguments for keeping examinations flourishing is that they provide a much-needed incentive to effort. (Gurrie P.962) Examinations are seen as providing a definite goal, something that both students and teachers work towards. Wong (1969: 361) illustrates the point well using the Malaysian secondary selection entrance examinations (M.S.S.E.E.) "In 1964 the M.S.S.E.E. was abolished, opening the way to a place in a secondary school for three years for any pupil who wished to pursue his studies beyond the primary school. Almost, immediately, there came a general complaint from primary schoolteachers that pupils would not work because the examinations had been removed. Presumably the laissez-faire attitude which came to be associated with automatic promotion, discounted the need to read or study until the next examination came into sight. Presumably, too, the teachers had become so used to being praised and blamed on the results of an examination that they could not proceed without the examination incentive. As a result the public examination at primary level was re-instated for 1967".

The case quoted above is intriguing for it raises questions central to the whole process of education. If these teachers could not teach without the examination-incentive, just how important do the stated educational objectives remain? Surely the objective in this case, as seen by teachers and students, is to pass M.S.S.E.E. The equating of examinations with education, and placing too high a premium on the examination as the 'energizer' of the teaching/learning process, clearly calls for a close match between the educational aims on the one hand and what examinations actually measure on the other.



#### D. An Administrative Device

Historically, this appears to have been an important role of examinations. Today, streaming and grouping of children in some cases is based on examination results. The 11-plus examination is seen as performing this function by sorting students into supposedly homogeneous groups for secondary schools. Annual examinations in many classrooms of Malaya and Fiji help the administrator in classification and grading of the school population.

#### E. Examination as a tool of Social Engineering

Examinations are often compared with the 'initiation' ceremonies of the preliterate societies. Their function is seen in this context as selecting an examinee for some task or role in society. Obviously this implies rejection of the undersirables as judged according to predetermined criteria embodied in the examination system. It is evident that even the so-called egalitarian society bases its decisions on the assumption that not all people can reach the same levels of achievement hence societal roles are differentiated and specialised.

Examinations to be functional in this sense need to reflect changes taking place in 'climates of opinion' as well as in socio-economic and political institutions. Where those who are 'initiated' into various roles of society by examinations dogmatically perpetuate the system that 'worked for them', there is likelihood of conflict being generated between those who are inside the 'citadel' and those yet in the process of being admitted. Examinations have, in certain cases, eased the path of social mobility; but at the same time, by placing indelible stamps of 'acceptance' or 'rejection', they helped make or ruin lives of many students and eventually shape the structure of society.

An attempt has been made elsewhere (Morris, 1969) to demonstrate that an examination such as the 11-plus can serve various functions at once. Such an analysis is equally applicable to other examinations. Applying it to the U.E. examination, for example, we can say that -



- (1) Its stated primary purpose is to select undergraduates, but perhaps to maintain standards and due to the limited number of places available it is also a competitive entry examination. If it is asserted that all those reaching a stipulated standard pass, then it is a qualifying or licensing examination. This implies, in principle, that it has considerable predictive power. Schools do tend to compare results, thus the examination functions as a device for 'self-inspection,' too.
- (2) For many parents, teachers, and students the U.E. examination provides an educational goal and an incentive to effort.
- (3) It can be seen as providing universities with homogeneous groups of students - thus it is an administrative device.
- (4) As a social tool, it allows entry of 'able' people into other occupations, the Public Service for example, and supposedly selects the undergraduates who could, in the final analysis, contribute more towards the welfare of society than those who had failed. (What it does to the 'failures' is not a stated purpose!)

It is little wonder then that an examination like U.E. which covers so many functions, has withstood years of haggling regarding its value in the N.Z. educational system. (See D'ath, 1969).

Functions of examinations can legitimately be evaluated only when one is aware of (a) the effects of such functions on the parties directly involved, i.e. teachers and students; and (b) the reasons given for having a particular examination.

#### Examination: Good and Bad Effects on Teachers and Pupils

A thorough summary of both 'good' and 'bad' effects of examinations on teachers and pupils is presented in "The Report of the Consultative Committee on Examinations

in Secondary Schools" (quoted from Wiseman, 1969). The list of effects has received somewhat unprecedented support from Wiseman, Tibble and Bereton who, writing in different places, all quote it verbatim, asserting it 'could not be bettered'. Before reproducing the relevant section of this report, it must be noted that such effects of examinations will vary in importance and intensity according to differing educational situations; and that some effects as stated are debatable (as much as the content of a 'good' or a 'bad' effect is) for example, 1 (f) reads: "Examinations may have a bad effect upon the pupil's mind by stimulating the competitive (and, at its worst, a mercenary) spirit in the acquisition of knowledge." This sounds plausible, yet where examinations are seen as incentives or goals and are undergirded by the assumption that not all can achieve this goal, nothing short of a competitive spirit is deliberately fostered. The report states:

- (1) the good effect of examinations on the pupil are
  - (a) that they make him work up to time by requiring him to reach a stated degree of knowledge by a fixed date;
  - (b) that they incite him to get his knowledge into reproducible form and to lessen the risk of vagueness;
  - (c) that they make him work at parts of a study which, though important may be uninteresting or repugnant to him personally;
  - (d) that they train the power of getting up a subject for a definite purpose, even though it may not appear necessary to remember it afterwards - a training which is useful for parts of the professional duty of the lawyer, the administrator, the journalist, and the man of business;
  - (e) that in some cases they encourage a certain steadiness of work over a long period of time; and

(f) that they enable the pupil to measure his real attainment:

- i. by the standard required by outside examiners,
- ii. by comparison with the attainment of his fellow-pupils, and
- iii. by comparison with the attainments of his contemporaries in other schools.

On the other hand, examinations may have a bad effect upon the pupil's mind

- (a) by setting a premium on the power of merely reproducing other people's ideas and other people's methods of presentment, thus diverting energy from the creative process;
- (b) by rewarding evanescent forms of knowledge;
- (c) by favouring a somewhat passive type of mind;
- (d) by giving an undue advantage to those who, in answering questions on paper, can cleverly make the best use of, perhaps, slender attainments;
- (e) by inducing the pupil, in his preparation for an examination to aim rather at absorbing information imparted to him by the teacher than at forming an independent judgment upon the subjects in which he receives instruction; and
- (f) by stimulating the competitive (and, at its worst, a mercenary) spirit in the acquisition of knowledge.

(2) The good effects of well-conducted examinations upon the teacher are

- (a) that they induce him to treat his subject thoroughly;
- (b) that they make him so arrange his lessons as to cover with intellectual thoroughness a prescribed course of study within appointed limits of time;

- (c) that they impel him to pay attention not only to his best pupils, but also to the backward and the slower amongst those who are being prepared for the examination; and
- (d) that they make him acquainted with the standard which other teachers and their pupils are able to reach in the same subject in other places of education.

On the other hand, the effects of examinations on the teacher are bad

- (a) insofar as they constrain him to watch the examiner's foibles and to note his idiosyncrasies (or the tradition of the examination) in order that he may arm his pupils with the kind of knowledge required for dealing successfully with the questions that will probably be put to them;
- (b) insofar as they limit the freedom of the teacher in choosing the way in which he shall treat his subject;
- (c) insofar as they encourage him to take upon himself work which had better be left to the largely unaided efforts of his pupils, causing him to impart information to them in too digested a form or to select for them groups of facts or aspects of the subject which each pupil should properly be left to collect or envisage for himself;
- (d) insofar as they predispose the teacher to overvalue among his pupils that type of mental development which secures success in examinations;
- (e) insofar as they make it the teacher's interest to excel in the purely examinable side of his professional work and divert his attention from those parts of education which cannot be tested by the process of examination."

Such a summary of effects brings into focus the questions of the 'efficiency' of examinations and the justification of the stated functions performed by them.

## Justification of the Stated Functions of Examinations

Granted that examinations are said to perform different functions, and that while 'functioning' examinations give rise to numerous good and bad effects, then the legitimacy of attributing such functions to examinations must be justified. Only on analysing reasons or objectives for delineating various functions can evaluation of effects take place, and if the cons seem to heavily outweigh the pros then a critical look at the measurement device or even the objectives striven for is warranted. Thus it all goes back to the aims of the curriculum; or even further back as, argues Atiyah, (1969: 375) "What provides the basis for exam validity is not textbook content but the way in which that content is to be utilized in teaching. An examination thus ought to be validated against the philosophy of education."

This is the core of the matter. Examinations have, unfortunately, come to be seen by many as an end in themselves; as 'distinct entities' for the achievement of which education is being used. Such thoughts have prevailed for long despite the often repeated exhortations that examinations should attempt to measure 'desirable products' and reflect "declared and agreed educational aims." (Wall, 1962: 16) It appears, then, that in the final analysis, any functions attributable to examinations, must firmly be grounded in the aims of education - those goals which are either implicitly or explicitly given as the whole raison d'être for education.

While relating the nature of examinations and the aims of education, Gasking (1945) proposes that educational aims should be tested not indirectly but directly. Taking the aim of education as developing certain capacities of the individual to make him 'an educated person' (one who is 'master of certain skills, cultured and the possessor of a trained mind') Gasking concludes - "the examination should be such as will demand a display of these attributes... if it is impossible to measure any given capacity directly, then either the capacity which is used as an indirect measure should be one that is distinctly harder to acquire and to



impart than that for which it is used as a measure; or else there should be no examination aimed at assessing it."

Psychometricians would express the problem inherent in Gasking's comments as that of content validation. The point that needs stressing here is that a thorough knowledge of 'what' capacities are to be measured is a prerequisite for efficiently evaluating the results of examining.

There is a functional relationship between the philosophies of education and educational objectives on the one hand and instructional objectives on the other. Educational objectives usually refer to the broad goals and values which educational systems embrace and which philosophies of education include. (De Cecco, 1968) Instructional objectives are specific performances students acquire through particular instructional procedures. In a classroom situation one may find the following relationship:

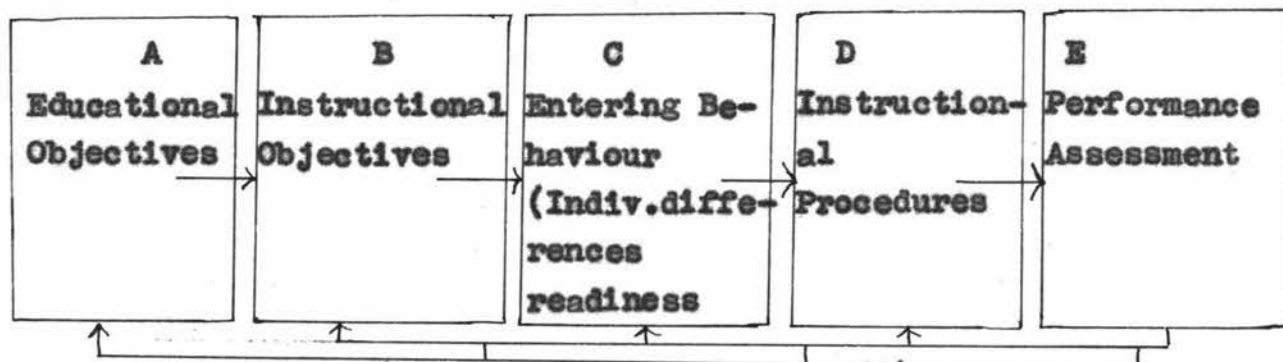


FIG. 3 (adapted from De Cecco 1968)

Performance Assessment, if carried out at the end of a unit of teaching, feeds back into the other components of the model. Examinations are usually taken at the end of a completed course or a series of units of work. It could thus be argued that in such an analysis, certain conditions need to be met to justify the functions of an examination:

Firstly the instructional objectives must be direct derivatives of the educational objectives and each teaching episode must have a legitimate place in the overall system.

Secondly - a necessary corollary to the first condition - that periodical performance assessment must validly

assess the instructional objectives.

Thirdly, then, the final examination must be consonant with the educational objectives; which rightly must subsume the instructional objectives. Theoretically it follows that the measurement function of examinations can be detailed by an analysis of the educative process. It seems that such an analysis is heavily dependent upon two factors:

- (a) arriving at a consensus regarding aims of education, and
- (b) their specific operational equivalents in teaching.

That such attempts are being widely made is attested by the lively controversy on the issue of pre-specification of instructional objectives in terms of measurable learner behaviour. (Popham, 1968) Whereas examinations do generally promote instructional objectives, they can at times be anti-thetical to the educational objectives. This disconcerting disparity is reflected in 'the triumph of achievement over inquiry' (Thelen, 1966) in our schools. Thelen's observation of what actually happens in many schools is as follows:

1. Pupils feel that testing puts them in competition with one another, but the teacher wants them to co-operate with one another.
2. Tests teach pupils that academic status, not learning, is the goal of education.
3. Pupils work for marks rather than in response to the challenge of the subject.
4. Pupils study the teacher rather than the subject.
5. Learning becomes a kind of academic hit-and-run. The class hits the test and runs on to a new unit.
6. Pupils learn that specific information is an end in itself, rather than the means to broad understanding of universal principles.
7. Pupils learn from experience with tests that all questions have clear-cut answers certified by authority.
8. Schools is rapidly being turned into a processing plant rather than a place for inquiry.

9. The pupil is being taught to escape from freedom for the sake of material reward and social approval.

Such factors highlight the plea for a return to the educational objectives and goals.

In sum, it has been noted that the literature reviewed on examinations indicates that although there appears to be a general consensus regarding the need for improving the examination systems, no one is sure as to how this could be done. Examinations have been pointed out as highly flexible tools, having multiple purposes and functions. It has been argued that confusion and disagreement concerning objectives makes it difficult to reach consensus. Consequently validation of examinations and justifications for functions attributed to them become problematic. It is, perhaps, reasonable to end this chapter with a note that objectives in the main are culture-bound, at least in terms of specific purposes.

The purposes and functions of examinations discussed above become more complex in Fiji, mainly due to:

- a) Importation of foreign examinations;
- b) Problems unique to Fiji arising from the multicultural, multi-lingual, and multi-aspirational society.

In the next two chapters attention will be focused on the (b) above i.e.

- detailing some specific cultural values and
- aspirations of the various ethnic groups in Fiji.
- 'Imported' examinations can then be evaluated
- profitably.

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### CHAPTER III

#### SOME SPECIFIC CULTURAL VALUES OF FIJIANS, INDIANS AND EUROPEANS

Very few facets of life are immune from the rather explosive nature of changes that take place around us. Because of the complex and subtle nature of forces effecting these changes we are neither fully aware of them nor are we generally permitted by the rigours of "modern" living to spare time to isolate, appraise, predict/or control these forces. Despite the fact that the number of research bodies is increasing daily the results produced by them are minimal and have limited practical value. Obviously if seeking explanation for changes is difficult, then justifying deliberate support for the changes - as evidenced in various development plans - becomes almost impossible.

Educational discourse is full of pointers towards the complexity and subtlety of the forces mentioned above.

The obvious one in Fiji deals with the diversity of cultures and their educational implications. If one were to make a collection of educational slogans to-day, one would easily recognise - inter alia - "Education for modern Fiji, Education for unity in diversity, Education for cultural identity, Education for cross-cultural understanding and above all: Education for progress, peace and prosperity." Fiji could well lead many countries in portraying richness of rallying symbols - richness alluded to by the repetitive use of the word 'culture'. Unfortunately, as yet little has been done in the way of specifying various elements of culture which could help in educational decision - making and planning.

Grocombe (1972:1) while referring to the dearth of careful analysis in this field, states:

".....few if any have spelled out precisely what they mean by indigenous culture. Some who strongly advocate its resurgence devote much of

their own time and resources to acquiring the commodities, skills, arts and institutions of other cultures. This is not necessarily incompatible, but more thought is needed about the criteria on which, and ways in which, people wish to retain aspects of existing cultures, revive aspects of former cultures, adopt aspects of other cultures, develop some amalgam of local and exotic cultures, or create entirely new cultural patterns."

The analysis of cultural values that follows is an attempt to move in the direction being suggested by Crocombe.

#### On values

That values have distinct effects upon thought and behaviour of people, has been indicated by field researchers, among others, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). Their research included communities of five different cultural traditions - Zuni and Navaho Indians, Mormons, Catholic, Spanish Americans, and Protestant American homesteaders from Texas - all from the same climatic environment. A few of their conclusions would suffice to show variation in value orientation -

- (a) For the members of the Spanish American family the present is what counts - there is no point in working too hard or worrying about the future.
- (b) Texans are future oriented - passive acceptance of what comes is a lazy way out,
- and (c) Zuni live in the present but gaze when their ancestors came out of the wombs of the earth....

Such studies lend support to Northrop's contention that cultures can be conceived as philosophies and values as ".....the fruits of living according to the basic philosophical assumptions used by a people in conceptualizing the raw data of their experience." (in - Spindler, 1963).

#### Values and Multi-Cultural Interaction

If values are thus conceptualized, then a number of probable dimensions are likely to emerge from cultural



interaction. It must be stressed, that although two cultures may have almost identical values (when such an abstraction is performed), they are bound to be extremely different when viewed in their relationship to the elements of culture. Their true significance is revealed only by placing them in the complex web of total matrix of cultural elements. If, then, such inventories were compiled for Society A, assuming it to be homogeneous culturally, the list would comprise a,b,c,.....nth values. Similar lists could also be drawn for Societies B and C. Given that values of each of these societies are not identical, when viewed in the total cultural matrix as suggested, it could be argued that -

- (a) When these societies live apart territorially with little interaction, the set of values as held would continue being 'normal', functional and would keep their prominent position guarded in the pool of cultural heritage.
- (b) Where, due to political, economic or social exigencies, the societies are brought to interact constantly, the divergence in values held, is likely to exert some friction and dissonance initially, and may even remain a barrier in promoting mutual understanding and tolerance of diverse views. On the other hand it could enrich the multi-cultural society by providing diversity of values, leading to healthy adaptiveness.
- (c) Where one of these societies (either A B or C) assumes a super-ordinate role in political and economic affairs, it is likely that the values of the other two societies will eventually be relegated to the backyard to wither away.

Numerous other possibilities can be conceptualized such as complete diffusion of values among Societies A,B,C giving rise to a new order of living, perhaps, a knowledge of the content of which is likely to vary markedly from person to person, but the society may still survive under the aegis of legal codes; or certain uneasy compromises may be worked out and held in equilibrium rather precariously. With

these general remarks in the background, some specific cultural values of Fijians, Indians and Europeans will be viewed.

#### SOME SPECIFIC VALUES OF FIJIAN

Cavalevu (1971: 31), in his attempt to compare and contrast the Fijian and European traditional way of life, came up with the following table:

	FIJIAN	EUROPEAN
Family	Extended (dependent) Kinship ties strengthened and offers security	Nucleus (independent) Kinship ties weakened. State provides security.
Religion	Ancestral worship	Christianity
Economy	Subsistence economy free gifts, economic motive weak	Cash economy, $\$$ cents, strong economic motive
Politics	Headship hereditary, ascribed through blood, age and sex	Leaders elected. Perceived through function and usefulness.
Education	Achievement of physical skills and development tasks	Academic pursuits of abstract.
Agriculture	Subsistence. Food surplus. Gardening a way of life.	Food grown for profit. Farm a business
Orientation	Generally oriented toward congenial socio-emotions, essentially rural, primary groups prominent	Generally task oriented, essentially urban, secondary groups develop.

Table XI

The above table portrays a rather brave attempt by Cavalevu to compartmentalize elements of the two value systems. However, there appears to be two major difficulties here. Firstly, Cavalevu over simplifies the extremely intricate nature of value systems, and secondly, no value system remains static.

During the last century and a half the Fijian society has undergone considerable changes. Some of these changes have been inevitable due to international social currents, others have been sought after by the Fijians and in some cases deliberately imposed upon them. However, in spite of socio-economic and political changes that have already taken place, certain dominant features of the society still stand out and one of these is its value-system. What follows is an attempt at recognising and briefly examining some Fijian values.

### Work-ethics

The traditional Fijian idea of work does not entail work for monetary profit, individual enterprise or the fruits of labour. Fijian labour has often been designated as unsuited for the type of jobs found in various sectors of western-type economy. For instance, as early as the 1860s, when sugar was first introduced into Fiji, Fijian work-ethics did not fit in with the demands of the western philosophy behind work. As a result labour for the sugar industry was sought in other quarters. Even to-day, it is being claimed that the morality of work with the Fijians is somewhat incompatible with that of traditional western societies. The Fiji Education Commission (1969:69) asserts: "Most observers of Fijian life (and this includes Fijian observers) seem to agree that the people are much better, indeed often first class, at bursts of energy in the face of some exciting task or emergency than they are at long-continued steady slogging at hum-drum jobs".

In the same vein Fisk (1970:39) comments: "It still remains true that most Fijian villages have sufficient land to maintain their traditional, rather easy-going, level of living, and to accept back into the village community without undue strain people who have failed at, or have merely tired of, labour or other commitment to the advanced, exchange type of economic activity outside the village." One notes in passing the rather unfortunate use of the expression 'slogging at hum-drum jobs' for, on the one hand, the Fijian is being introduced by the western economic man to fully participate in western economy, and on the other hand, a well disciplined work-pattern is labelled 'humdrum' - a glaring paradox. Again, the Fijian is generally praised for his easy going,

uninhibited and 'sane' attitude towards life yet he is condemned for his inability and/or apparent refusal to engage fully in modern economic trends. For an ethnic group which depended on a wholly subsistence type of economy until a few decades ago, the dilemma is obvious.

It is clear from the above that because the western type exchange economy has been only recently introduced to the Fijian, he has not fully come to terms with it. A vast majority are not fully convinced of the desirability of the work-ethics of the western man. Of those who have ventured into the area some have found the shock of adjustment both demoralizing and painful in terms of expectations. Yet a very small number who have managed to acquire some form of formal education live in a state of uneasy compromise between traditional life patterns and the rigours of modern living. (The above statements are based mainly on conclusions drawn from the discussion at the Third South Pacific Seminar, U.S.P. 1972, following a paper by Bole entitled: "The Possible conflicts which may arise as a result of Individual Expectations and Communal Demands.")

However, for the present it is sufficient to note that traditionally the work-ethics of the Fijian has been a function of the communal way of life. It can only be explained in detail in the context of his entire life pattern, taking into account such values as group-loyalty, conformism and time-orientation.

#### Group-Loyalty

A characteristic feature of the Fijian way of life is what may be called 'Communal living'. Life in a 'koro' is fairly well regulated where each member knows his social role - his rights and obligations within the social set-up. The highest authority in a koro rests in its chief - in matters social and political. It is true that to-day a Fijian chief no longer wields that considerable power and status that he did until recently. However, a chief in a village is still its figurehead and spokesman. Much of the group cohesion and the effectiveness of traditional institutions that is left is still undergirded by such values as in-group loyalty and



conformism. The functional nature of these values has withstood to a large extent eroding forces emanating from culture-contact and technological innovations. In a communal type of living, behaviours which manifest loyalty, and conformity to norms are readily reinforced. Inevitably, this heightens an individual's psychological satisfaction, of course, within the communal context.

However, during recent times there have been signs of slight deviations from the behaviour pattern outlined above. One has in mind the case of a young Fijian who has begun to emulate the other two dominant racial groups, which are basically non-communal. Rapid urbanisation and planned governmental encouragement to Fijians to participate in agricultural, commercial and wage-based work is subtly undermining the communal values. Now and again, traditional chiefly authority is being questioned by advocates of the view that the leadership be based on merit and not on rank only. One reason for such view could be that traditional chiefly administrators (rokos and bulis) "cannot efficiently cope with the problems of modern Fiji" (Sikivou, 1955:47). Further evidence of this questioning attitude can be seen in activities of such Fijians as the trade unionists. For example a prominent figure in trade union movement, (Apesai Tora), being a commoner by birth, has not only questioned traditional authority but has also disappointed the majority of Fijians by actively participating for and within a fundamentally non-Fijian political group.

Perhaps, instances of this nature, form a fore-warning of the eventual disintegration of traditional communal life; nevertheless, the essence of the values, may be modified forms, needs to be preserved to protect the people during the transition from being 'rootless'.

#### Time Orientation

Closely allied to the value of work-ethics is the differing emphases placed on time factor by various societies. Researchers have found the simple scheme of dividing time factor into past, present and future categories useful. Using this schema, Strodbeck & Kluchkohn tell us that tradi-



tional Chinese society gave high preference to the past time orientation in that it glorifies ancestor worship and the golden past and were convinced that nothing new ever happens in the present or the future. At the other end of the continuum they assert, "Americans, more strongly than most peoples of the world, place an emphasis upon the future - a future which is anticipated to be bigger and better" (P.15).

In the absence of any research one may only attempt to place the Fijian society at some point/s on the continuum based on general observation of the Fijian participation in economic realm, their attitude towards work and manifestation of such behaviours that reveal planning, budgeting etc.

It seems likely that a wide range will be covered by the distribution of Fijians on time orientation scale. However, by circling the scatter three distinct groups may emerge, namely:

- a) A minority comprising the older people having a distinctly heavy emphasis on the past. Among this group are those who see little need for change and cherish the traditional cultural patterns. This group claims only small numbers. Among some of the generally accepted reasons that provide motivation for this emphasis on the past orientation seems to be the following; first, genuine conviction that the past was golden; second, possibly a psychological satisfaction deriving from intimate associations and identification with the past by way of migration, discovery, in the face of rapid erosion of identification; third, incessant encouragement by Europeans, ever since the days of Governor Gordon, to preserve the past; fourth, possibly a desire to catch up with the 'cultures' of western nations by demanding a recognition of traditional cultural elements such as music, dancing, painting, sculpture, pottery etc. in terms of richness and expanse; fifth, possibly an inevitable corollary to the emerging nationalism

- among the so-called developing nations; sixth, the lack of any real cultural mobility between the Fijians and the other two dominant cultural groups.
- b) A numerically large group, comprising largely the post-World War I generation, displaying little awareness of the future. Members of this group are largely present-oriented. (Present orientation subsumes the lack of 'delayed gratification' and 'achievement motivation' syndromes). The following two may be seen as the main contributing factors;
    - a) the relative intricacy of modern economics,
    - and b) the lingering effects of the fundamentally secure (psysiologically and psychologically) communal way of life.
  - c) A minority, perhaps not much different in numerical strength from (a) being fully aware of the past and the present and at the same time future oriented. In this group, one would find, in the main, the young politician, school teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers and other professionals with some degree of training. (Perhaps, from this group will emerge a 'creative minority'). The members of this group realize their importance in the face of rather awesome economic convulsions, or as the Spate Report (1959) puts it: "a people cannot contract out of the century it lives in, nor can it be the sole judge of the terms on which it enters, for modern economic life has also its own logic.

### Religious Values

According to the last Census report (1966:56) nearly 100% of all Fijians are declared christians - 83% being Methodists, 12.8 percent Roman Catholic and 2.6% Seventh Day Adventists. Writing on the Fijian stand on religion, Sikivou (1955: 42) draws the following to our attention:

- (a) the success of early conversion efforts hinged directly on the Fijians' "awe for the powers of the whites (warships and guns) and efficacy of the missionaries' medicine rather than a change of hearts",

- (b) where once traditional religious offered restraints through fear of God, the change of religion without thorough understanding of its tenets and beliefs proved 'detrimental to [their] moral and spiritual welfare'.
- (c) attempts have been made by certain Fijians to restore the old religion in various parts of the group, without much success.

In the light of the above, Fijian to-day seem to have made a satisfactory compromise between Methodism and traditional religions. While on the one hand we have Fijians who are regular church goers, at the same time they openly appeal to traditional Gods. This can be seen in their appeasement of the shark-god (Dakuwaga) and the snake-god (Degei). Basically the Fijian seems to be very religious and he invokes the name of a God before meals, meetings, and at various ceremonies, including birth and death. They value the sanctity of places of worship and burial grounds. Norms have been developed around religious tenets and are being strictly adhered to, such as 'Siga-Tabu' on Sundays - i.e. no work for no notary reward. In general terms, specific values inherent in christian religion such as love, generosity, industry and worship have not eroded the basic fabric of the society as has been the case in New Zealand (Sinclair 1959). On the other hand christianity has not helped the Fijian to keep pace with the changing socio-economic patterns of to-day.

#### SOME SPECIFIC VALUES OF INDIANS

It has been noted in chapter two that the first Indians to come to Fiji were indentured labourers. During migration and the indenture period itself many traditional values, of necessity, had to be abandoned or watered down. For example, the very rigid caste system that was present in India at that time could not survive because of the circumstances under which Indians were transported and quartered. However, it may be safely said that the core values and institutions have remained reasonably stable. Since the Indian labourers came before the partition of the sub-continent of India, the

term 'Indian' had been used to cover people of both Hindu and Islamic faiths. However, the partition has, inter alia, accentuated the differences between the two religious sectors, so much so, that both Hindus and Muslims play a significant role in Fiji's educational context. Consequently separate treatment of each group is deemed necessary here. First, the Hindus.

### Religious Values

Hindus generally claim that religion has for ages satisfied some deeply felt inner need of human nature, besides providing a set of values that formed the foundation of morality and ethics. Radhakrishnan (1960:13) asserts that, "while fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself no such limits. Intellect is subordinated to intuition, dogma to experience, outer experience to inward realization. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstractions or the celebration of ceremonies, but a kind of life or experience.....Religion is a specific attitude of the self, itself and no other, though it is mixed up generally with intellectual views, aesthetic forms, and moral valuations." Radhakrishnan talks of the ideal in Hinduism. Although in Fiji a handful of Hindus, in the true sense of the word, continue with the Hindu way of life, of the majority one can talk only in terms of degrees of Hinduism. Variations in Hinduism may be due to a number of factors, some of which are:-

- (a) With the aid of hindsight one notes that the 'take-off' for Hinduism in Fiji was weak and potentially unfruitful. In the first place the harshness and limitations of the indenture system curtailed the efforts of the few Hindu religious leaders who found their way into Fiji. Secondly, many of these leaders were only couriers of Hinduism.
- (b) The 'flow' of Hinduism from India is often spasmodic.
- (c) Consequently, the transfer of Hinduism has not been total. Furthermore, the effects of culture-contact, relative affluence, the insular nature of the country and the reluctance of many young Hindus to continue with the true Hindu traditions -



for example, a reluctance of many young Hindus to enter priesthood - have all contributed towards the shedding of the various concomitants of Hinduism and thus only preserving the minimal. As Munshi (1965: 9) asserts:

"The vitality of a culture lasts only so long as the best men in the dominant minority of each generation find self-fulfilment by living up to its fundamental values afresh. These values cannot be handed down from father to son as if it were a legacy. Every generation must recapture it afresh by trying to live up to it."

In India it is difficult to delineate various aspects of religion - religion permeates human existence as a whole. In fact, it is a way of life. In Fiji on the other hand, one can only talk in terms of the obvious in religion in relation to the Hindu society. Some of the values noted below are readily observable and fairly consistent.

One can say that Hindus value the preservation and continuation of the various Indian sub-cultural groups. For example, most sub-cultural groups - Sikhs, Gujaratis, Tamils, Sanathanists, the Arya Samajis - generally insist on intra - group marriage. Again these groups disseminate religious knowledge through a select few - who are generally considered to be active religious members of the sub-group.

For Indian forefathers religion and 'knowledge' were often synonymous. However, due to their diminishing numbers and the full impact of western pragmatism, the acquisition of 'knowledge' is now very much controlled and directed. Very few parents, if any, look upon acquisition of knowledge as fulfilling a religious duty.

Hindu families prefer to participate in the mysticism of Hinduism every so often. Hence there is no regular attendance at temples - like the Sunday church services in Christianity. The older Hindus are somewhat distressed to learn that many young Hindus are rapidly abandoning fundamental religious values of Hinduism. They are also disturbed to note cases where young Hindus are either participating



actively in other religions or becoming religiously inactive. On the other hand, a few young Hindus show an awareness of this and periodically make some effort to revitalize Hinduism among the young.

### The Muslims

Whereas, as a religion, Hinduism is accommodating, the Islamic religion remains credal, dogmatic and closed. Its adherents are very thorough and vigorous in their attempts to maintain and propagate all that is Islamic. Evidence of all these can be seen in instilling the teachings of the Koran and the Arabic language to the very young, wearing of traditional costumes, and regular religious meetings, strict food habits, deep reverence for their dead (burial ground are spotlessly clean) and almost universal fasting during the month of Ramzan. Almost every action in a Muslim's life has strong religious justification - from circumcision to polygamy. That the Muslim community continues to clamour for separate representation in the House of Representatives is an indication of their religious-based separatism. Consequently, all these have a noticeable educational implication which will be discussed later.

### Time-Orientation and Work-Ethics

Like most other dominant Asiatic cultural groups, the Indians are generally past-oriented. But the present generation of Indians in Fiji do not quite fit into this category. That most of the present generation Indians in Fiji are future-oriented is essentially due on intricate interplay of a number of factors.

The indentured labourers, proud to be Indians, have to this day remained a disillusioned people. Many regard themselves as the proverbial 'lost tribe'. They have lost all real ties with India and see the present generation Indians becoming almost strangers. Although the young Indian would like to follow the footsteps of his grandfather and claim a very rich cultural heritage, various circumstances impede this desire. For example, India is a strange land and it is difficult to trace family ties. The reverse is

also true; the Indians in India regard Fiji-Indians as strays and find it discomfoting to learn that seven thousand miles away there is a people who claim to be Indians. It is only now that any concerted attempt is being made to recognize the Indian in Fiji by the Indian in India - as may be witnessed by the recent cultural, trade and political exchanges. However, circumstances both external and internal make the Indianness in Fiji Indians to take its own cause as has happened in countries like Trinidad and Mauritius.

It would be safe to assert that Indians in Fiji are generally future-oriented and in their day to day activities reveal values that reflect an acquisitive zeal for money and property. Perhaps the truth of the matter is that the Indian either has to work hard or be reduced to abject poverty and destitution. It is also true that only a small minority of Indians, especially those in commerce, has managed to acquire reasonable wealth; the average Indian would like to acquire property and wealth but circumstances have become such that he barely manages to make ends meet.

Some explanation for the above may be offered. In the first place there is little security of land tenure. The law makes it virtually impossible to acquire native land which comprises 80% of the total (Ward 1971:208). The situation is further aggravated by international inflationary trends. Consequently many Indian parents are forced to keep their children in school in the hope that <sup>they</sup> may acquire some kind of qualification so that they would hopefully fit into the wage earning sector of the dominion.

Many Indians feel that since Independence the policy of 'localisation' is providing more opportunities for Fijian appointments and that they are not being accorded a fair treatment. It has been declared government policy to bring about a semblance of racial balance in the upper ranks of the Fiji Civil Service.

Generally speaking, the Indian tradition envisages a society where some kind of political stability and security for its members is maintained. It will also be true to say that politically the Indians are very trusting in that

expect full and active representation on their behalf by those who represent them in government. So political maturity in the Western sense is yet to appear in Fiji. With the present constitutional set up, many Indians feel that they are doomed to eternal opposition in parliament.

The above, to some extent explains the oft-painted picture of an Indian in Fiji and his attitude to other races and a fairly well summarised by Ward (1971: 34): "The present descendants of the Indian indentured labourers, are hard workers and diligent citizens. Although frequently generous, they nevertheless possess an acquisitive zeal for land and money which often makes their presence resented. Many, in turn, are just as resentful of the Fijians, whom they usually regard as being dumb and indolent. Others are particularly jealous of the status and wealth of Europeans whom they feel are unworthily rich and arrogant."

The younger Indians who are slowly getting estranged from values that are very Indian are quick to imitate the pragmatic and the 'progressive' in the westerner. In Fiji at least, the European has set a certain standard in housing, education and day-to-day living habits.

### Kinship

When the Indians were once again able to restore a degree of social equilibrium after the convulsions of the indenture period, they revived the joint family structure to which they were so accustomed to back 'home'. Briefly, the joint family structure is a family unit<sup>in</sup> which members are joint sharers in the family property, inheritance goes by survivorship and the father or some elder acts as the head. The unit as a whole is supposed to provide for its members - both workers as well as non-workers. There are some relatively desirable features of such set up. In the first place it allows for the care of the aged and the infirm. Secondly it facilitates socialization of the members of the family. Thirdly, as one of the consequences of the above factors, such a set up supposedly enhances and maintains the psychosocial health of its members.

Indian in rural areas still live within this structure but with the rapid increase in numbers, and the rather inadequate nature of the properties, (10 acre farm plots, a retail shop etc.) the joint family is becoming less functional each day.

#### SOME SPECIFIC VALUES OF EUROPEANS

Although the Europeans form a relatively smaller cultural group than the Indians and the Fijians the forces of history have allowed them to exert tremendous socio-economic and political influences on the peoples of Fiji. These influences continue to snowball and they are here to stay. Whereas until the early sixties there were only three major white communities, namely the Britons, the New Zealanders and the Australian, today Americans and continentals are also present. Generally speaking, the English manned the Civil Service, the New Zealanders came to staff schools, hospitals, and banks and the Australians ran the sugar industry. To-day with great tourist 'boom' that the country is experiencing Europeans in the form of entrepreneurs are coming in. European community in Fiji even to this day is a very close-knit society. To the Fijian or the Indian all whites are 'Europeans' irrespective of their country of origin, and because of the very formal lines of interaction between Europeans and 'others' western values have been seen as emanating from and applicable to all Europeans in Fiji. The European in Fiji is seen as a kind of superior being with extra-ordinary talent for administrative and business efficiency.

#### Religion

To the uninitiated it is fairly difficult to talk of Christianity and the European in Fiji. It appears that they have one brand of Christianity for themselves and another for the converts. This tempts one to talk of religious exclusivism. Apart from the missionaries and those directly involved in teaching the Word of the God, who seem to live up to the teachings in the Bible, the majority of Europeans are closed religiously to the outsider. Admittedly,



there are fine church buildings and choirs. Working on the assumption that the Protestant ethic is universal as far as European Christians are concerned, we can only hope to describe those values which form an integral part of Protestantism.

It is true to say that the European in Fiji has brought with him the Judaic idea of God's chosen people, and a definite plan to show that his model of the Godly pursuit was the only one worth emulating. Such a plan epitomized the Protestant ethic of predestination, hard work, and individual merit, signified often by worldly success.

#### Work ethics

Most Europeans in Fiji value a rather productive life-time. They do not appear to be victims of either defeatism or fatalism. At least when they first arrive in Fiji they seem to cherish, like other whitemen in other parts of the world, the Hellenistic tradition of consciousness, precision, explicitness and, science and technology. But it appears that such ideals are very quickly frustrated. The entire life-pattern in Islands somehow seems incongruous to these ideals.

There is a class of European who came out here with the explicit duty of serving his master loyally. One has in mind the large number of Europeans who worked for the foreign firms operating in Fiji - Morris Hedstrom, Burns Philp, the Carpenters; C.S.R. (now the S.P.S.M.). Such a European 'braved' high temperatures, and humidities, relative isolation and maids and garden-boys with whom they could hardly communicate. Their task was to produce as much profit as possible for their masters. Again this epitomized the Protestant ethics. Yet there are other Europeans who display elements of zeal and dedication in their attempt to 'uplift an unfortunate people'. These Europeans are cast in a slightly Schweitzerian mould. Many of them have sacrificed relative affluence, status, and undergone a degree of social estrangement to put into effect their desires. Most of them have become an integral part of the Fiji Social Scene and have chosen to opt for Fiji citizenship.

The third big group of Europeans are those who came to Fiji for short terms for various reasons. Many of them



are under the age of forty and have completed some kind of professional training at home. They do not seem to wish to live in Fiji permanently. It seems that they are eager to offer their skills to the country in return for a change of 'habitat' and a chance to prolong the re-entry into the oft-quoted western-style 'rat-race'.

### Life-style and Value Implications

Concentrations of European population are found in larger towns like Suva, Nadi, Lautoka. However, there are small pockets of Europeans living in tourist centres, engaged mainly in the hotel and catering service. Europeans seem to prefer homes in areas that are well-served with modern amenities like electricity, piped-water, shopping centres, places of entertainment and schools. It is also true that in the past Europeans in choosing residence have preferred areas which excluded other ethnic groups e.g. the Domain, Muanikau and Tamavua in Suva. Reasons for their so doing fall outside the scope of this discussion. However, observations may be made.

Firstly, the fact that Europeans generally had separate areas of residence, helped to preserve a kind of 'neighbour-purity'. Europeans had European neighbours; their children had playmates of the same cultural group. Secondly, as a result of the above, they were able to maintain and continue norms and values related to the familiar life-pattern based on the nuclear family units.

Europeans generally value day to day life that is very rigidly controlled by the clock. The Islands have a reputation as a place where time stands still. In many ways it is akin to Tennyson's Lotus land. The whole notion of a timeless existence is incompatible with the western man's desire to lead as much a productive life as possible. The Europeans in Fiji often get disturbed at the indigenous people's rather lax attitude towards work. It may be observed that only by living in an exclusively European suburb a strict adherence to schedules and times is possible.

This value placed by Europeans on a rigidly regulated day to day existence is closely related to the values implied

by the concept of future time-orientation. It is interesting to note that on the time orientation continuum Fijians and Europeans are at polar extremes. The present state of western technological and scientific advancement is a direct result of a society which is planned well into the future. Pointers can be easily discerned in the lives of Europeans in Fiji which show definite indications of future time-orientation e.g. saving as security for old-age; investment in businesses possessing long-term economic viability; planning for pragmatic education for their children and having in reserve home, citizenship and financial security in the place of their origin.

Although the European in Fiji seems racially arrogant and confident (W.H. Oliver's Analysis (1960) of European behaviour in N.Z. reveals the Maori is useful reading in this context. One cannot fail to see the value placed on actions that reflect strongly characteristics like initiative, decisiveness of action, confidence pragmatism, proposition and impersonality at practical level. All these epitomize the individual. Consequently such a value system often leads to a state of affairs where there is ruthless competition and the individual who is unable to fit into the system falls by the wayside.

Independence and individualism as desirable ends in a personality are fostered and cultivated since infancy. It is a way of life wherein an individual becomes gradually alienated in many ways if he fails to maintain the discipline and standards set by society. In Fiji, perhaps, it is a fear of such alienation that gives rise to social conformity generally disguised as social cohesion.

The Cession meant that there was a direct transfer of British institution to Fiji. Perhaps the most remarkable of these is the British legal system. The British judicial system symbolizes value the British people placed on disinterested justice. Another point to note is that such wholesale transfer of institutions reflects a belief in them that these institutions are perfect entities and serve as models for other peoples. Those Europeans who have

inherited the British cultural tradition would generally like to live in a society which reflects an acute sense of civil responsibility. Such a society provides services at a civil level where a degree of pride and consciousness is instilled in its members. They are somewhat shocked to see public property like parks, road side seats and street lamps fall prey to the whims of vandals.

Given the above intricacy of value systems in Fiji, there are some decisive inferences to be made with regard to examinations here. Some attempt will be made to examine these in the chapters following.

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## CHAPTER IV

### GENERAL CULTURAL ASPIRATIONS - 'AIMS OF EDUCATION', 'NEEDS OF SOCIETY'

It has been asserted in the previous chapter that isolating and examining fundamental values of a cultural group provide an insight into the behaviour patterns readily observable. Values by implication also reflect a great deal of what a people desire to get out of 'education' and consequently from public examinations. In other words, the general cultural aspirations of the peoples of Fiji regarding education will be greatly coloured by the values they hold - jointly and separately.

The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the stated national educational objectives in order to gauge the extent to which they genuinely reflect the aspirations of people. To do this satisfactorily, an analysis of general cultural aspirations of Fijians, Indians and Europeans is warranted.

#### The Educational Objectives - Who Decides?

Today, like other supposedly democratic countries - U.K., N.Z., U.S.A. - Fiji, in its own small way, permits all concerned with the cause of education to express their views on important issues. Unfortunately there was little attention, to educational matters in early Fiji. In 1944, Stephens (1944:93) wrote - "The present investigation has shown that the chaotic conditions which have emerged over the past 15 years have been largely due to the absence of a plan for the administration to follow. Perhaps it can be best described in the words of Topsy in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'; (it) 'just grewed!' " This picture did not improve within the next decade or so. Summing up the situation in 1955 a Fijian scholar Sikivou (1955:67) was led to say, "An examination of the Education system in Fiji will reveal - the absence of any well-defined aims, the presence of racial discrimination, totally

inadequate facilities for primary education, poor staffing and the provision of secondary education for the selected few...."

However, the last two decades, besides receiving the visitation of the Education Commission, saw developing a *knen* awareness of educational problems in the people of Fiji as a whole. Unfortunately again, the role played by educationists recently can be likened to the 'play-it-safe' attitude of the hero in this story:

An officer found a considerably intoxicated man searching for his watch under a street lamp. After kindly helping for a while the officer had some doubts about the situation so he asked the man if he was sure he had lost a watch. Assured in the affirmative, the officer asked where and was told by the searcher that the watch has been lost in the nearby alley. Asked why, with the watch lost in the dark alley, he was searching under the street lamp, he replied that the light was much better there.

Recent educational developments in Fiji not only reveal this unconscious evasive behaviour on the part of the educational administrators but an overwhelming portion of Fiji's educational luggage seems to be 'imported' from the 'well-lit' developed countries, mainly the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Little effort has been made to get at the 'potentialities' of the local scene. The 1969 Education Commission Report has generally presented 'blanket' statements to acknowledge its awareness of educational aspirations of the people of Fiji. Witness the following:

- (a) (Page 8) "Educational objectives should be related to the aspirations of the people. From the representations made to the Commission, and from the discussions held, it is clear that there exists in Fiji a common and strong desire to see established a system of education that will promote the cultural, social, economic and political development of the several races as a single nation."



- (b) (Page 12) "The conclusion is that the existing system does not, and cannot without change, meet these three major objectives.... The Commission's recommendations are designed to help the people to establish a system of education which is relevant to local needs and aspirations and worthy of their deep faith in education."

The Report covers a wide spectrum of educational issues and many of its recommendations are educationally sound indeed. However, by the very virtue of its brevity of treatment of such a large number of issues, it has actually created more problems and dilemmas than solved. The commission is guilty of having left many unsubstantiated comments and many key words - needs, relevant - undefined. Thus leaving much room for distortion of the intended meaning. One sympathizes with the local who makes valiant yet not always successful attempts at interpreting implications of the following for planning learning situations: "...the reformed curriculum should be orientated to the Fiji environment and to the needs of the people of Fiji, but should at the same time relate to the needs for international understanding and co-operation..... It should be Fiji-orientated in form but universal in value....widen and diversify the existing curriculum so that the potentiality of each and every pupil may be developed as fully as possible." However, some very fundamental aspects are left untouched. For example: What criteria does one use to ascertain Fiji-orientation? Is it to be based on the aspirations of different cultural groups? If so then 'Fiji-orientation' gets split into at least three components namely the 'Fijian, the Indian and the European orientations. What weighting is to be given to each of the above components? Similarly, the question of defining local 'needs' and 'universality' of value in education are fairly problematic and again, ought we to develop all the 'potentialities' of a child as fully as possible, even if the child has the 'potentiality' of becoming a first class criminal?

## The Three Fijis

Thoughts at variance to the Education Commission's contention that there is a strong desire among various racial groups to establish a system of education leading to racial unity and creation of a single nation, are inherent in the Fiskian analysis (1970: 36) of Fiji's economic and social set-up. In his words, 'The three groups are distinct not only in race and political representation - they also have distinct historical backgrounds, different cultures, different motivation and social values'. He further asserts that because of great differences in economic opportunity accorded to different racial groups, there exists a potentially dangerous situation as far as the race-relations in Fiji are concerned. A contemporary of Fisk, Ward (1971: 1) writing again on matters related to the economy of Fiji re-affirms the Fiskian analysis - "Fiji is a plural society.....lacking any natural internal social cohesion.....the underlying appeal to communalism and local interests is often far stronger than an overall sense of nationalism. Many in Fiji recognise that ethnic differences are a potential source of conflict." And, again, years ago Mayer (1963: 135) pointed out that, "No-body can predict future events in Fiji, there are far too many variables involved."

While one appreciates the limitations imposed on the Education Commission by its terms of reference, one also needs to recognize that educational problems in Fiji are too complex and urgent to be discussed in general terms only. Antecedents as well as the present 'facts' of life inevitably give shape and content to the educational aspirations of various cultural groups. And as illustrated by writers describing the Fiji situation - Mayer, Fisk, Ward and others education is inevitably affected by and in turn affects economic, political and social developments. Overly simplified treatment given to complex issues, (besides being mentally irritating) points to the urgency of sorting out educational matters. Before exploring cultural aspirations, perhaps, the picture portrayed by the sub-head, 'The 3 Three Fijis', need to be further detailed and one way of doing so seems to be to outline some underlying assumptions in education in Fiji -

especially those related to the 'needs' of people and 'aims' of education. That our assumptions colour our thinking and decision-making has been indicated by Mitchell (1968) and Stenhouse (1972). It is also true that most of the fundamental assumptions are largely unconscious. Hence, while they give direction and intensity to our behaviour (mental and physical) we are seldom aware of their existence. It follows then, that only by a considerable effort on one's part one can bring to surface and light fundamental 'hidden' assumptions and while appraising them critically, gain insight into the problem or issue under discussion.

Perhaps, the most fundamental and forceful assumption, prevalent among the various cultural groups in Fiji, is that the Europeans are most knowledgeable in matters educational and hence they need to be emulated and listened to.

While the ancestry of this assumption can be traced through the colonial days to the early missionary endeavours, it has been receiving reinforcement and nourishment from the well organised and catered for 'European' schools and from the fact that the education department has had, till recently, mainly expatriate and seemingly omnipotent officers. Among the other assumptions, relevant to this discussion, are:

1. That preferential treatment (emanating from a system of educational apartheid - (Hopkin 1972:8) is desirable at present since there is a gap between the cultural groups in economy and education, especially between Fijians and other groups. Among the measures advocated (DP VI, 1970: 205) to reduce the gap are the following:
  - a) the award of scholarships to all deserving Fijian applicants;
  - b) the opening of strategically placed Junior Secondary Schools, the great majority of which will be established in areas - predominantly Fijian-inhabited - which at present have few or no day secondary schools;
  - c) the inauguration of a vigorous, and probably prolonged, 'public relations' campaign designed

- to encourage in Fijian parents, particularly in rural areas, a greater appreciation of the educational needs of their children;
- d) a more generous provision for remission of fees in primary, and for free and partly free places in secondary schools for Fijian students.
2. That local initiative is necessary to help cope with the provision of educational facilities since the government cannot yet afford to do so. This is reflected in fact that ownerships of schools range from socio-religious organisations to locally elected school committees.
  3. That examination passes serve as a good criterion of success in education and that 'overseas' exams like the N.Z. U.E. and the School Certificate are as valid for Fiji as they are for the country they are primarily designed for; though in recent times this has been questioned.
  4. Closely related to (3) are the numerous assumptions underlying the whole range of practices in schools which are in common with the practices 'overseas', mainly New Zealand (Mitchell, 1962) and the United Kingdom (Niblett, 1965). The two noteworthy assumptions are:
    - (i) That schools serve special 'economic' functions, in the sense, that they sort out students to fit them into the requirements predicted by Man Power Planning reports.
    - (ii) That 'education' and 'modernization' are interchangeable concepts and both signify the same contents, thoughts and values. For the pursuit of 'knowledge' more and more people these days look to the cinema houses and other mass commercial facilities.

Assumptions relating to the learning of English and mother-tongue need brief enunciation. First, English, "as a world language, is necessary for all, if Fiji Islanders are to understand the world they live in and take their proper place in it." (Fiji Comm. Report 1969: 22). Consequently



the value of other vernaculars is seldom even thought of, resulting in little research into the benefits accruing to an indigenous person from being competent at his mother tongue. Another significant effect of such thinking is that even those vernaculars - Fijian, Hindi and Urdu - which have been allotted time on school time-tables are not treated as examinable subjects at the S.S.E.E. level. As a result, English, which also permeates other examinable subjects, gains great prominence at the expense of pupils' mother-tongues.

The reason for explicating the above assumptions is not to seek justification for them but to fill in the details in the present educational objectives. And now a look at the cultural aspirations of various groups.

The 'educated' Fijian as well as the villager are looking up to the educational institutions to help their people to progress in the economic, social and political spheres. Despite the numerous exhortations from eminent socio-economic advisers - Spate, Burns, Ward - for a reappraisal of that which gives rise to conservatism in Fijian culture, the Fijians view preservation of their cultural values, beliefs, traditions and customs as vitally important indeed. It seems true that many Fijians are now becoming desirous of acquiring those capacities which enable the entrepreneur to maximize economic opportunity. To them the Indian is born with these capacities. Nevertheless, they also expect the education system and the result of schooling to enhance their existence in Fiji as the true 'owners' of land. This implies rejecting some of the basic values which underline the progress in modern economy; values such as aggressive individualism, impersonality at business level and to some extent, exclusivism.

Being a product of the communalistic living, a Fijian parent strongly resists attempts at getting his son/or daughter alienated from the Fijian way of life. Furthermore, youth problems resulting from rapid urbanisation are driving more and more of the Fijian leaders into believing that the 'town should go to village' and not vice versa. It follows then, that the Fijians would like the education system to help curtail and drastically underplay the glamour and false



attractions of city life. It seems that the Fijians are expecting the type of 'educated' persons who, while still valuing the communal way of life and appreciating its psycho-social strengths, make due allowances and adjustments to the demands of modern socio-economic trends. What, then, are the 'needs' of Fijian youngsters?

The Indian parent seems to think at two distinct levels. The Indian parent as an individual expects his children to receive education of the 'whiteman's' type and quality, so that on completion of their studies, the children can compete successfully for jobs in the open market. Often, one finds the Indian parent and his close kith and kin showing genuine concern at the progress of a child from within the family group at school. There are a few strong motivating forces underlying a child's performance and parents generally provide most of these. An Indian child is generally well provided for, by way of uniforms, text books and the like - at times after considerable sacrifice by parents especially in some cases where family resources are meagre.

However, the story of their thinking at the group level is different. From the early days Indians have grouped themselves in socio-religious organisations; each harbouring, understandably, its own specific educational aspirations. Among the more active organisation are the following:

- a) The Arya Samaj Pratinidhi Sabha.
- b) The Sanatan Dharm Maha Mandal.
- c) The Gujerat Education Society of Fiji.
- d) Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam (recently sub-divided to form: Fiji Samarasa Sutha Sanmarga Sangam)
- e) The Fiji Muslim League and The Fiji Muslim Association. (Both catering for the 'Needs' of Muslims in Fiji).
- f) The Fiji Sikh Society.
- g) While the Methodist Mission has at least one institution (Dilkusha) set aside for Indian children, other Christian denominations allow a large number of Indian children to attend their schools.

The historical forces that led to the emergence of the above 'bodies' are fascinating in themselves and worth re-capitulating. (Ref. Chapt.1) The post-indenture Indian community comprised immigrants, most of whom, according to Mayer, (1971:29) were uneducated. And for many years there was no provision for Indian education at all. 1898 saw the opening of the first schools by the Catholic and Methodist Missions. As the numbers grew and as more 'enlightened' immigrants came from India the educational grievances of the Indian community were brought to light and various sections of the community began organising themselves for 'self-help'. Although all emerging bodies concerned themselves with the general welfare of the community, they were formed on a variety of bases. Some had religious basis, like the Arya Samaj, the Sanatan Dharm, the Muslim League, and lately, the Sikh Society; others like the two Sangams and the Gujerat Society have largely a regional base. Perhaps, it is the lack of a common basis for these groups, that has led to frustrations when it came to extending a united front in educational (and also socio-political) matters. As early as 1909, an education commission faced the 'language problem' which re-appeared, in not too different a form, before the 1969 education commission. The problem is still not solved to the satisfaction of various groups within the community.

The problem, as Mayer (197: 44) noted was (and still is): 'should efforts be made to teach in a single language, and thereby work towards a lingua franca for the community; or should parents be free to choose their mother tongue as medium of instruction for their children and if so, which Indian languages should be recognised as worthy of official support.' The argument advanced then is equally relevant to-day i.e. the linguistic differences are worth retaining, especially when the script and language are connected with religion, which to Indians, is the core of culture, influencing and regulating almost all facets of life.

One notes that today the Indian bodies are making the following educational demands:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>No. of schools owned</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Religion and Cultural Values emphasized</u>
1.The Arya Samaj	15	Hindi	Hinduism - values as advocated by Swami Dayanand Saraswati.
2.Sanatan Dharm	20	Hindi	Hinduism - values drawn from 'Vedas' and 'Purans'.
3.The Sangams	31	Dravidian languages - Tamil Telugu	Hinduism - values as for (2) above, with emphasis on worshipping 'gods' and goddesses).
4.The Fiji Muslim League (Muslim Association)	28	Urdu/Arabic	Islam - values as advocated by Mohammed, the Prophet.
5.The Sikh Society	4	Gurmukhi	Sikhism - values as preached by Guru Nanak.
6.The Gujerat Society	14	Gujerati	Hinduism - mostly Sanatanis - see (2) above.
7.The Indian 'Committee' Schools	115	Hindi	Religion - generally Hinduism.

That Indians run <sup>some</sup> 217 schools to-day, often at the expense of considerable personal sacrifice, indicates strong sectional aspirations. This is also be seen in the explicitly stated aims of Hindu organisations. For example, the Constitution of the Sanatan Dharm Maha Mandal, (1972: 1) lists the following, inter alia, as its objectives -

- to safeguard and to teach, preach and promote the Hindu Scriptures and culture.
- to organise its members and endeavour to unite all the Sanatanists and the Hindus of Fiji.

And among the 'objects' of The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji (1972: 1) are the following -

- to obtain the services of the preachers of the Vedic religion,
- to safeguard the present and future interests of the Arya Samajis and the Arya Samaj institutions,
- to establish and organise Arya Samajs.....

Similarly, constitutions of other organisations convey sectional aspirations on educational matters generally.

As stated earlier, Europeans in Fiji have held the reins of power and provided for their children education of the type and standard that they would have received in their 'mother country'. They had, for years, kept their schools closed to pupils of other races. The educational aspirations of the majority of Europeans in Fiji seem to be underlined by a desire to maintain continuity in education so that on eventual return to their homeland, the children could fit into the educational system with comparative ease. This desire is reinforced by their frequent 'trips home' and by the belief that local people, can not adequately meet their expectations.

Summarising the argument so far, then, one notes that both Fijians and Indians aspire to procure for their children a western type education in the hope of guaranteeing future economic security for them. At the same time they zealously preserve their basic socio-religious values. Obviously there is much variance in these aspects within their life pattern and the consequent aspirations. The Europeans generally faced little conflict as their aspirations per force matched the results of the institutions they themselves set up and controlled.

#### Education for What?

Various answers to this question have been given in the past. Platonic stratification of society had its own aims of education. The Deweyan argument that (1916:53) 'education is all one with growing, it has no end beyond itself... [and].... The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making it effective in fact,' has been in vogue for a long time. Then again, Skinners 'Walden Two' (1948) takes no chances with an individual's unique qualities while Peters (1967) poses the theory defining educations as involving essentially processes which intentionally transmit what is valuable in an intelligible and voluntary manner, and which create in the learner a desire to achieve these worthwhile



things and an ability to co-ordinate them into a cognitive perspective. He suggests the term 'initiation' as one which adequately covers these processes. Discourse on 'aims' of education rarely commands general consensus in a democratic country. As hidden assumptions play a significant role and as the meaning of words/phrases used remain vague and elusive, it is little surprising to hear Peters (1967) ask: "Must an educator have an aim?"

This is perhaps not the best place to embark on a lengthy discussion of the philosophical bases of each writer. However, two points must be made. Firstly that, educational philosophers, like Dewey and Peters, have at the back of their thoughts and writing a 'Western' view of education and as such their writings reflect values closely allied to the ideals of democracy. It will be rather far-fetched to expect Dewey and Peters to recognise and entertain the view that in some societies education was more of a matter of socialization in an informal manner, rather than that which one gets, hopefully, by formally passing grades, forms and 'Units'. In the Fiji-context one has to give content to Peters' 'worthwhile activities' into which the young need to be initiated. And to Dewey's dictum: Education for 'growth', one inevitably poses the question - What type of 'growth'? The second point, actually a corollary to the above discussion, is that any discourse about 'aims' boils down to a detailed treatise on matters moral and ethical. In words of Max Black (1969: 284):

All serious discussion of educational problems, no matter how specific, soon leads to consideration of educational aims, and becomes a conversation about the good life, the nature of man, the varieties of experience. But these are perennial themes of philosophical investigation. It might seem a hard thing to expect educators to be philosophers. But can they be anything else? If the don't try to think for themselves about philosophical questions, will they not run the risk of being directed by philosophical slogans they can scarcely be expected to understand?



The problem of not being on the same 'wavelength' is prevalent in the South Pacific region, as a whole. Black's comment implies that both the philosopher and the educator share at least a similar ecological environment, whereas in the South Pacific the picture gets complicated because the chain of communication gets further lengthened i.e. a foreign philosopher (or philosophy of education) with an 'intervening variable' in the form of the expatriate educator trying to communicate to the local educator. Assuming that the expatriate educator combines in himself the philosopher as well, a break in communication could still occur between the expatriate's 'aims' of education and the local's comprehension of such 'aims'. Furthermore, it is not uncommon to find expatriates displaying 'escape mechanisms' (by leaving conclusions from their sayings to be drawn by others, by coating their preaching with phrases indicating impartiality etc.) to overcome the feelings of guilt that uncontrollably accompany an illegitimate imposition of one's values and life-style on others. A good example of the above is given by Distroff (1971: 39) thus:

To achieve higher living standards and the ability to control your own destiny, dear villager, you must pursue education and you should embrace 20th century technology, Christianity, British law, commercial agriculture, book-keeping and the 40-hour week. If you want your own future government to be effective, you must produce for export and pay income tax. But we are not suggesting for one moment that in the process of adopting these revolutionary changes you should abandon the customs and values of your fore-fathers - excepting, of course, those that are repugnant to nice people. Don't try to be a brown-skinned Amstralian. Veer discretely West, young man, but work out your own identity.

Taylor (1969) also questions the value of the type of education offered to the indigenous people by the Metropolitan Powers in the Pacific.

It is perhaps due to the confusion arising from the culture-contact that the balance between the demands of economy and the role of educational institutions has been grossly tipped in one direction, giving rise to such fallacious thinking as:

- a) education ought to be closely regulated by the requirements/trends as shown in the Man Power Planning Reports, and,
- b) those values that promote (a) assume a greater weight, hence should enjoy a wider acceptability, in comparison to other values.

It can be shown that restricting education to serve the whims of economic planners is not only impracticable but also harmful and dangerous to both the individual and the society:

Firstly - in view of the rapid changes taking place in the economic sphere generally - automation and computers for ever on the increase - it is reasonable to expect that job forecasts, in terms of both numbers and nature, possess little predictive accuracy.

Secondly the rate of skill-redundancy can steadily increase where rigid adherence is practised to the presently known job-characteristics and requisite skills. Purely from an utilitarian point of view i.e. education seen in terms of economic returns, can be fairly wasteful. Besides, even if the slots indicated by the Man Power Planning reports are amply filled in by trained personnel (skilled, or semi-skilled) the process not only undermines the qualities of each person as a unique individual but also gradually rots the base of the good half of the culture - the so-called 'non-discursive' elements which include language, religion, fine arts etc. (See Chapter 1 Page 2).

It appears that one needs not only to match the aspirations of the people of Fiji with the stated objectives but also to see clearly the extent to which stated objectives and aspirations are reflected in what happens at the operational level. A study of examinations in Fiji provides a suitable view-finder for this.

## CHAPTER V

## EXAMINATIONS IN FIJI

It is, perhaps, necessary to preface the appraisal of public examinations in Fiji with a brief summary of the main themes covered so far. It has been noted that:

- a) Multi-cultural societies, besides being harassed by the rapid changes taking place the world-over such as knowledge, population, and aspiration 'explosions', face a unique problem of their own viz., establishing objectives and priorities in the face of numerous conflicting values, beliefs and demands. Multi-lingualism and related issues were discussed in Chapter I to illustrate this theme.
- b) The stated purpose and functions of examinations need to be grounded in and validated against the declared and agreed educational aims which, by definition, subsume 'needs' of the country and 'aspirations' of the people.
- c) In the Fiji context, a real picture of multi-culturalism emerges when specific values of Fijians, Indians and Europeans are enunciated and a probe is made into the aspirations of the main cultural groups. (See Chapters III and IV). This Chapter attempts to seek answer to questions such as: 'What values and skills are being measured and reinforced by the examinations?' 'What values and skills ought to be measured and reinforced?', 'How 'relevant' are the values, skills or capacities which are being measured when viewed in the context of Fiji's multi-cultural society?', 'Are there signs of different 'selection' pressures on various

cultural groups?', These questions are closely related to the 'problems' discussed in Chapter I. Some of the main ones were:

- a) Fewer Fijians pass the examinations than the Indians.
- b) The 'others' (Europeans, Part Europeans and Chinese) generally gain a higher percentage of passes than both the Indians and Fijians.
- c) A fairly large percentage of overall failure rate.
- d) The stultification of teaching-learning activities in the classroom due to the 'backwash' of examinations on schools, teachers and pupils.

All the above problems jointly and severally have had considerable impact on the society as a whole. (Ref: the 'social engineering function' discussed in Chapter II).

#### Some Characteristics of Public Examinations in Fiji

- 1. Generally, every examination in Fiji fits in with the definition of an examination by Bereton, (1969:) "An examination is a kind of task to be performed as well as possible by the examinee, at some determined future date."
- 2. All the five main examinations - Intermediate Entrance, SSEE, FJE, Sch. Cert. U.E.) are essentially written, paper-pencil type, with pre-specified time allocation for papers.
- 3. They are all, in the main, selective examinations. The Intermediate Examination and the SSEE 'pass' those deemed of reasonable standard to continue with further schooling in Junior and the usual four-form secondary schools respectively, whilst the FJE, Sch. Cert and UE

form a progressive hierarchy - a student normally passes the lower one to be selected for the next examination up the hierarchy.

4. Because of their selective nature, the examinations are competitive as well.
5. All the above examinations are seen as inherently 'predictive' devices.
6. The examinations, in the main, are undergirded by values which have remained virtually intact ever since the 'Chinese' days - values like competitiveness, individualism, impersonality and arbitrariness. Edmund Leach's words on the English school sound equally true of the Fiji situation (197:65): "The overt values of English formal schooling are that the individual should be self-reliant and show initiative. From the age of ten upwards the whole system becomes viciously competitive."
7. The main skills that examinations are said to be measuring can be conveniently traced using Bloom's taxonomy. (Ref. Chap. II). However, the emphasis seems to decrease as one goes higher in the hierarchy of the listed "processes" and remains mostly in the lower levels of the cognitive domain. The affective domain although exerting a considerable influence on an examinee is rarely taken account of.

The characteristics noted above are some of the more common ones. However, the two special features of the Fiji-examination situation seem to be:

- a) The presence of a deep confusion regarding validating criteria.



- b) The operation of differential 'selection pressures' on the candidates appearing for examinations.

### A Search for Validating Criteria

Examinations can be validated against educational objectives. In practice, however, the educational objectives usually refer to the broad goals and values which an education system embraces whereas the day-to-day classroom activities emanate from the so-called 'instructional objectives' Fig. Chap II. With the recent 'positivist' trend in educational Measurement and Evaluation 'micro-analysis' is given prominence. For example, it is being argued that as classroom situations are so very complex - pupils working as individuals, interacting among themselves, with the teacher, with the materials - that learning episodes and teacher-behaviour need to be broken down into smaller time episodes and studied using sophisticated and possibly, mechanised research tools. Such a trend has had, no doubt, some positive effects on test construction, especially in bringing about 'objectivity'.

It is also true that the practice of preparing detailed blue-prints to specify weightings to be given to various themes to be tested in particular subject is also widespread. It is generally accepted that a tallying of items included in a question paper with the themes (or skills) listed in the blue-print, provides one with the necessary evidence in terms of 'content' validity of an examination. The exercise could provide a validation of an examination if the blue-prints meaningfully reflected the main educational goals and values. There are two distinct problems in this process of seeking exam validity, which in most cases, render the exercise null and void.

Firstly, due to the complexity of the educational enterprise itself, it is perhaps easier to draw instructional objectives from the educational objectives, but not synthesising

the parts to re-make the initial whole. Hence, such a synthesis for the purposes of assessing the extent to which the parts reflect the rationale behind the subject is rarely undertaken.

Secondly, as Gasking (1945) notes that where values, skills or capacities as stated in educational objectives are difficult to measure directly, they are measured indirectly i.e. candidates are measured in skills and capacities that are thought of fairly good signs of those aimed at, for example, knowledge about music or literature as indirect indication of developed taste and appreciation. Understandably, such 'secondary' capacities are both easier to measure and easier for teachers to teach. Unless both the examiners and the teachers remain conscious of this 'indirect' tests of the major skills, values and capacities, very soon the examination and the teaching shift from their main purpose. With the increase in examination pressure the indirect capacities tend to receive intensive treatment and 'education' gets diverted from its true objectives.

It can be argued that the problems discussed above harass examination in general irrespective of the differences in the socio-cultural situations. However, they do add complexity to Fiji's own problems related to examinations.

#### Anchoring Examinations in the 'Realities' of Fiji

In the South Pacific region there exists a general clamour for making Curriculum relevant to the 'needs' of people.

It is also true that 'contents' of various Curricula are being revised and even methods of teaching are being enriched and enlivened by attempts at understanding the culture of the pupils being taught. Assuming for the moment that the relevance of the new curriculum is genuine in that it reflects local needs, and aspirations of the people, one can easily detect a flaw in the thinking of educationists and administrators concerning the role of examinations. If the Curriculum is made relevant where values of the local people are taken account of and teaching methods take due cognizance of the children's experiences and other environmental factors, it is futile to use "criterial values of success that are largely ecologically and culturally alien." (Bennett 1972: 7). Simply revising Curriculum but leaving examinations and the criterial values of success intact, is indeed a complete mismatch. What seems to be happening in Fiji is that there is "no questioning of the rightness of using the same system for ranking citizens as is used in the United States, Britain or Australia. Consequently, educational measurement is being used almost exclusively to decide what individuals can be fitted best into existing educational institution, educational institutions which, in the main, have not emerged naturally. No attempt is being made to use educational measurement to assess the particular abilities people have and then to try to adapt the structure of educational institutions or the dominant learning experiences to these abilities." (Bennett 1972: 8).

If it is accepted for the moment that

examinations do serve multifarious functions - some intended ones like measurement of achievement, selection of candidates for promotion/streaming, licensing or qualifying people - and others not always explicitly stated, such as, maintenance of standards and provision of an incentive to effort. And that examinations in Fiji at least, exert a great influence on what teachers and pupils do in the classroom. Then, 'good' examinations can do much to uplift the quality of education provided while poorly constructed and conducted examinations can gradually erode the base of the educational enterprise by negating the 'spirit' of educational objectives. However, the above argument can be switched around to take objectives as the basic premise, the starting point. If the 'goodness' of examinations is taken to be directly proportionate to the degree to which they measure what the education is all about, then it follows that the chances of producing 'good' examination is circumscribed by the limits demarcated by the educational objectives. An illustration may help. Society A has, as its main objective of education, to train students to fit into a number of pre-specified jobs in the country. The school curriculum lays emphasis on the training of pre-determined skills. The examiner in such a society is thus forced to prepare an examination which measures how effective the training programme has been in order to grade candidates for deployment. It is easy to see how teachers in such situations 'watch the examiners foibles and note his idiosyncrasies in order that he may arm his pupils with the kind of knowledge required for dealing successfully with the questions that will probably be put to them'

The above discussion suggests the necessity for continual dialogue between the examiner and the curriculum developer at a practical level. Curriculum and examinations can be seen as 'two sides of the same coin' (Matys 1970: 13) and in order to enhance the necessary liaison between the curriculum developer and the examiner, Matys, suggests the following as pre-requisites;

1. that curriculum makers must build into the original curriculum evaluation and testing goals and objectives, and
2. see to it that they reach the examiners who actually make up the tests;
3. that the examiners must keep themselves fully informed at all stages of curriculum planning and defining objectives, and
4. become conscious of the spirit, aims and implications of the written syllabus;
5. that both curriculum planners and examiners, working as a team, appreciate where they are leading and heading from the earliest stages in terms of what will be measured and how.

In the Fiji-situation it is the last stated pre-requisite that is of immediate significance. Given the



obvious divergence in values, aspirations and expectations of the major cultural groups, one then needs to inquire into the nature of the socio-political ideology which could throw light on decisions taken in Fiji. Here we need to digress to elaborate on this important theme.

Pluralism: 'Salad-bowl' or integration?

Various approaches to solve 'conflicts' are based on the deliberate choice of the type of society envisaged to be 'desirable'. The expectations, be they explicitly stated or not, are manifested in a particular form of behaviour, and labels such as democratic, communist, socialist etc. are then proposed to cover different categories of ideologies and expectations.

Democracy, as a concept, has been variously interpreted in modern times by different governments to accommodate their idiosyncratic political manoeuvres. The changes in the constitution of Malaysia, (Evening Standard, 1971) April 20th) originally based on the 'Westminster Model' is a recent happening. The stated aim of the February 1971 legislation of the Malaysian Parliament is to remove certain 'Sensitive' issues out of the body politic, recognizing 'the need for the form of government and democracy to evolve to a system more suited to the environment of the new nation'. (Page 2 of Ev. Standard - April 20, 1971). Paradoxically, to enhance democracy certain issues are banned from open discussion! However, the concept of democracy still persists to cover

'equality, equality of opportunity, freedom of speech' etc. and is often described in as general a term as Dewey's contention that, "The democratic society is a society in which each individual is able, through the freely capacitated use of his faculties, to fulfill his potentialities" (1916 : 101). Lack of specificity is, perhaps, the greatest weakness of such statements, hence variations in interpretations.

Faced with conflicting values, beliefs and aspiration, multi-cultural societies have usually engulfed the issues by adopting policies which reflect either pluralism, integration or assimilation.

The theories of social and cultural pluralism have been widely used by writers dealing with the cultural and ethnic complexity of heterogenous societies, especially the Carribean Societies (Rex 1959, Smith 1965, McKenzie 1966, Despres 1967, Bucchus 1969). In Andra, the theories of cultural pluralism are being appraised and evaluated within the contexts of contemporary sociological theory (Cross 1968). However, while the sociologists are occupied in their search for a model or theory to deal with the societies of extreme heterogeneity, social philosophers like Itzkoff (1969) uphold the concept of 'Pluralism in Democracy', drawing heavily on the works of Dewey, Kallen and Cassirer. 'Pluralism' is generally taken to mean the socio-cultural set up of a society which is characterised by cultural sections, where, "each section displays its own relatively distinct pattern of socio-cultural integration" (Despres 1967: 15) and one which allows continuance of unique identities of cultural groups, involving limited integration and interaction in political and economic avenues of life.

(Friesen (1971 : 56) reviewing the Indian Education and/or cultural alternatives in Canada presents the following model:-

Model 1

A	B	C	D	E
Totally managed Indian education complex	Federally controlled all-Indian education system	Integrated schools systems on reservations; both elem and high schools	Indian elem. schools on reserves and integrated high schools off reserves	All-integrated schools off reserves
PLURALISM  IDEAL	UNIQUE CULTURAL IDENTITY MERGING CULTURAL IDENTITY	CULTURAL INTERACTION AND EXCHANGE  ASSIMILATION-CULTURAL GENOCIDE		VANISHING INDIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY

The alternatives range from pluralism to assimilation - in other words from unique cultural identity to a vanishing one. Friesen points out that the great wish of Indians to retain their identity appears possible "only to the extent that cultural interaction and exchange exceed the influence of assimilation, which ultimately may result in cultural genocide" (P.60).

Integration seems to occupy a reconciled position in the controversy between pluralism and the 'melting-pot' ideologies. In the United States context, three traditional ideologies have been identified, (Itzkoff, 1969) namely 'Anglo-conformity', 'melting pot' and 'cultural pluralism'. The first is seen as commanding the complete renunciation of the immigrants' past culture in favour of the Anglo-Saxon group; the second term implies a biological and sociological merger of cultural groups leading to a unique 'American-type' and the cultural pluralism as stated earlier allows continuance of

unique identities of cultural groups. The Canadian concept of a 'salad-bowl' society is perhaps a softened form of pluralism; for, while keeping safely in between total integration and complete segregation it implies that culturally unique groups could maintain their identity yet function in the mainstream of society.

Semantic attractiveness of these terms is one thing, the practical consequences of adopting such ideologies is another. The United States seems to have vigorously advocated Anglo-conformity during and between the wars, thereafter supplementing it with the 'melting-pot' concept. Cultural pluralism has not received a particularly warm reception (Itzkoff 1969). In retrospect, consequences of 'Anglo-conformity' and 'melting-pot' policies do not seem all that encouraging. Granted that such policies have been instrumental in effecting fantastic improvements in the scientific, technological and economic fields, these achievements do not even touch the 'non-discursive' areas of knowledge. Ref Chap I. If culture be taken to include the way of life of a people in totality, then it seems irrational to bifurcate it between scientific, technological and economic observables on the one hand and the subtle, complex yet pervasive, aesthetic, religious, ethical and the like on the other. It is often the case that proponents of 'melting-pot' ideology use the observable half of the culture in support of their arguments. If the non-discursive, forming perhaps the major section of the symbolic expression of a culture, is difficult to communicate precisely, it should not, on this score alone, be neglected.

Conformity is usually achieved at the expense of diversity. Multi-culturalism presents a fair game upon which the adherents of uniformity could exercise their conforming mechanisms, in the form of a monolithic rewarding system. This is evident in countries where a particular language is endorsed and economic and social rewards are made accessible for the users of that particular language only. In such

situations diversity in thinking and symbolic expression gradually withers. Speculating on the overwhelming control the environment has over an individual in societies which have specific principles to govern each type of behaviour, Fromm comments, "All he can do is to fall into step like a marching soldier or a worker on an endless belt. He can act; but the sense of independence, significance has gone". (Itzkoff 1969: 21).

Much of the confusion over issues such as values and language in multi-cultural societies is due to the conflicting evidence on advantages in yearning for monolingual mass society, based on mass culture. Whereas the mass production with economic and technological gains is positively attractive, the fact that the whole enterprise is erected on the pillars of conformity and subtle authoritarianism, grossly undermining the individual per se, is somewhat repelling. Where a particular culture or language is sacrificed in the name of 'modernity', 'rootless individuals' (Levy 1968: 81) are produced who often tend to suffer great personal stress and become potential neurotics and delinquents. MacDonald (1953: 1-17) argues that mass culture is not and can never be any good because people lose their human identity and quality. He likens the mass man to 'a solitary atom, uniform with and undifferentiated from thousands and millions of other atoms who go to make 'the lonely crowd'. It is suggested that communalism provides a small enough scale where it matters what an individual does, 'his creativity is nourished by a rich combination of individualism and communalism'.

**Note:** 'Non-discursive' knowledges include language, ritual, myth, play, sport, religion, personality and character structure, architecture, fine arts, crafts, cuisine, music, sculpture, dance, drama and literature.' (Itzkoff, 1969).



Those inhabiting the flourishing fields of multi-culturalism, view the assets and liabilities of mass culture with ambivalence. May be, the liberal attitude, akin to pluralism, regarding language issues of many developing countries is a pointer to the fact that the negative effects of conformity, massiveness and general monistic trends inherent in mass culture have been perceived and hence, 'avoidance behaviour' is being exhibited.

Numerous educational implications may be drawn from the alternative racial/cultural policies i.e. pluralism, integration, assimilation etc. There also appears to be a distinct relationship between the effects of examinations and possible outcomes of the above named policies. Successful integration will demand, inter alia, a general re-shuffling of existing cultural patterns of Fijians, Indians, Europeans, Chinese and 'Others'. It calls for an agreement among the various cultural groups on the values, beliefs, customs and aspirations to be shared and advocated uniformly.

If such a process were successfully carried out in Fiji, then the examinations based on the values will reinforce universality of ideas, beliefs, values etc, and while maintaining uniformity in standards will pass those students who show promise of fitting in "nicely" in the existing 'integrated' society. It was noted in Chapter II that one of the subtle effects of examinations on society is the perpetuation of the system by those who pass examinations and then act as 'colonists'. The long term effects of an integrated policy supported by an examination system which reinforces the values, language or 'subjects' which reflect the above policy seem rather negative (Witness problems which have arisen regarding the Maori language in New Zealand - Bender 1971 : XV). Greater are the effects of an assimilationist policy, mainly because it deliberately places one cultural group (the assimilation group) in an unduly elevated position and those to be assimilated are virtually shorn of their cultural richness.

Long-term benefits of pluralism can be illustrated using the 'law of social variety'.

The law, in essence, states, "that a society is strong in proportion as its members are allowed diversity of self-expression" (Stenhouse 1969: 59). The law is pointed out as being 'analogous to the concept of 'evolutionary potential' in biology; the strong species in an evolutionary sense being that which possesses a large reservoir of individual variation (genetic and phenotypic) upon which to draw when change is needed' (P 49). Multi-culturalism certainly provides diversity of self-expression and in considerations of long-term goals (in the evolutionary sense) on the basis of the law of social variety, culturalism seems to come off very favourably. The antithetical stance of using a 'law of uniformity' may possess immediate attraction, but not long-term durability; and the possibility of such a limited 'pool' (of behaviours, expressions etc.) to be exhausted eventually by 'natural selection pressures' seems high.

Pluralism seems to be a natural cultural condition through which man must have lived from the early days. It is within this condition that man has developed and accumulated cultural richness, in both discursive and non-discursive realms, and continues to do so. Thus pluralism provides only a natural extension of enhancing qualitative differences. The folly of 'neutralizing' differences is being reflected in the malaise of the mass society.

The problems created by rapid changes taking place around us are many. Some of the 'innovatory' projects also bring ill-effects. For instance, rigorous promotion of tourism in Fiji is enthusiastically backed up by reports indicating the increasing in-flow of foreign investments and the steadily rising graph-line of tourists' spending on 'duty-free'

goods. What is being sadly missed is the loss incurred by the Dominion in such things as lowering the morale and confidence of those who 'perform' for the tourists; cheapening the non-discursive parts of culture for gains in monetary terms and above all, gradual transformation of a society in which each person was accorded warmth and security by its community into one in which each person is learning to commercialize even personal factors like warmth and love. Ill-effects of recent changes and innovation cannot be solved using orthodox ideas and plans.

Originality of thoughts and symbolic expressions, synthesised creatively into functional entities, seem to be the hope. Pluralism, therefore, is necessary to provide each individual the environment for healthy growth (Erikson 1951:289) while at the same time helping to nourish his innovative and creative powers. It stands to reason that if most of the youth problems, cases of social alienation and despair are essentially culture - based (Higginson, 1972) then the solution lies in improving the socio-cultural environment. Plurastic outlook could nurture toleration for intra - and inter-cultural differences and if such variants are explored further, there seem possibilities for cultural development and innovation.

The education enterprise in Fiji is at cross roads. The British Colonial Government allowed free development of various cultures and this meant that major cultural groups which administered schools founded on ethnic lines insisted on the teaching of their own language and associated values. For example, during the thirties and forties different Indian languages - Tamil, Telugu, Gurmukhi, Urdu - as optional subjects. The main languages, of course, have been English, Hindi in Indian schools and Fijian in Fijian schools. However, when the Education Department introduced F.S.S.E.E. vernaculars from the list of examinable subjects were dropped.

The result has been rather sad. The teaching of Hindi, Fijian and other languages have been grossly neglected and children have been made the most with English. Again, English has been taught in a rather unimaginative manner, with more emphasis on 'remedial' work than enrichment of children's power of expression. Deprived of using their mother tongues effectively and nourished on a slender diet of 'remedial' English course, the growth of children's capacities to create original symbolic synthesis/extensions have reduced significantly. When one notes that an average, about 4,000 children have failed S.S.E.E. during the last five years, the diminishing returns from language impoverishment looks gloomy from both the individual's as well as the society's point of view. The irrelevance of much that has been used in the of English Literature in Fiji has been pointed out by Reddy (1971 : 3). He suggests that a school boy ought to be given literature, inter alia, which is nearer his sensibility. He questions: "Why should, for instance, an Indian or a Fijian pupil be thrown into the cauldron of Victorian literature when his grasp of the English literature is very text-bookish?" It seems true that the Indian or Fijian schoolboy who reads English literature finds it necessary to shed his cultural assumptions and preconceptions, both of thought and language so as to assimilate that of an Englishman's. In examinations he probably fails because the ideas he tries to express sound too uncouth. His limited facility with English curtails the range of associations from which original thinking arises. Along with minimizing the educational value of vernaculars, examination as a concept, carried somewhat different meaning for Fijians in contrast to Indians and Europeans. Social values of Fijians and their non-competitive life-style have not proved as powerful motivating factors. Besides, low performance by Fijians in the early stages, has given rise to the self-fulfilling prophecy which has proved influential till to-day.

The obvious need here is to adjust educational 'diet' first then the methodology of examination.



To recapitulate, a critical appraisal of such ideologies as integration and assimilation indicated deadening effects on divergent symbolic expressions and life-styles of various cultural groups.

Pluralistic racial and cultural policy has been noted to be supported by the 'law of social variety'. Furthermore, pluralism was seen as possessing the following 'merits':

(a) It seems a natural condition through which man must have lived from early days.

(b) It enhances qualitative differences, which in turn fosters innovative and creative dimensions of human thought.

(c) It provides for toleration of differences and while opening up new vistas for cultural development augurs well for finding 'new' answers to persistent social problems like alienation, despair and suppression of minorities. A brief look at the education enterprise in Fiji, indicated the desirability of adopting a pluralistic racial and cultural policy.

At this stage a number of proposals can be put forward which could help anchor exams solidly in the Fiji 'educational waters.'

(a) Research into the particular abilities, and skills (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) that the peoples of Fiji have developed and the related criterial values of success.

(b) Examiners to foster and reward the findings in (a), besides accommodating 'originality' 'creativity' in candidates answers.

(c) Examinations should be multi-modal and the range of subjects diversified.



All the three proposals are inter-related and to some extent inter-dependent. A few comments on the proposals. The need for research into the particular abilities and skills of the peoples of Fiji (as well as the Pacific) has been pointed out earlier. What seems to happen in cases where such information is sadly lacking is that a particular group of people develop a set of values, skills and customs, and criterial values of success that have developed 'naturally' i.e. have been found of adaptive value. At the same time, the children from the same group are confronted with unfamiliar and differing set of values, skills and so on and almost alien criterial values of success in the form of examinations. It is the conflicting 'selection pressures' that accounts for the problems related to the disparity in the numbers of Fijian, Indian, and others passing examinations in Fiji.

A very comprehensive list of extremely searching questions for tertiary educators in a Pacific setting, has been prepared by Harvey (1972: 2) It contains:

1. How much do we really know about our Island students? Are we able to evaluate them from other than the ethnocentricity of "western European" middle-class values?
2. If island students for the most part find great difficulty (if not an impossibility for some) in thinking inductively and analytically (Barnsley, n.d.) do we understand why and do we know the most efficient and helpful way of erasing this difficulty?
3. Are we experienced enough in the cultural lives of our students to be aware that by teaching a man from a heirarchicly authoritative and passive society to ask questions and to analyze and to act on his own conclusions is to turn loose agents of revolution within the culture of the people whom the student is to serve?
4. Are we to encourage and develop creative activity

among students? If so what of the great passivity one meets in many students? Does our classroom approach and examination system not promote the very passiveness which stifles developmental and innovative creativity?

5. Are we sufficiently aware of the dynamics of perception, understanding and learning within Polynesian, Micronesian, Melanesian (and island Indian) cultures so that we can meaningfully facilitate learning of the students from these cultures and unleash maximum potential for growth and development of the student and his field of study?

6. With the Islanders acute understanding of social relationship and group living ought we not be fostering group learning, peer teaching and teamwork in learning rather than a 'foreign' concentration on individual examination success and scholastic achievement?

7. Are we prepared to deal with explosive interpersonal factors of colour sensitivity, feelings of cultural inferiority and personal inadequacy and the emotions set in operation by condescension and paternalism (how ever enlightened) operating between "Europeans" and "Islanders" and dividing Islander from Islander. Are we aware that these must be dealt with before learning can take place?

8. Are we prepared to take the necessary time and resources to develop studies or courses to enable tertiary educators (the most notoriously untrained teachers in the educational profession) to learn about how Islanders learn and how best to facilitate learning among them? Cannot the USP pioneer in an island cultural psychology so that we can learn how various island groups develop concepts, pass on learning and foster intelligence, creativity and insight which has enriched the living cultures from which our students come and which can provide the student with experience and learning vital to the adaption and survival of his people and culture?

One could, obviously, debate on the issues raised by Harvey. However, Harvey's questions, besides supporting proposal (a) draws a number of factors together, which in the final analysis may call for changes in the very methodology and techniques of examining. His questions 4, 5, 6 and 8 need special emphasis. It seems very likely that much of the present attempts at teaching the Pacific peoples are ill-conceived. Little use is made of the Islanders' understanding and appreciation of group mechanisms. Do we need to administer 'group examinations'? A possibility which could be dismissed lightly, in ignorance. Surely, the 'need' of Island students should be interpreted within the context of their own culture. It is, therefore, suggested that a multi-faceted approach be taken to clarify educational objectives in Fiji i.e. information from research be interpreted only after various theoretical issues related to the desirability of adopting particular positions are worked out. Research data alone will possess little utility.

Comments on the details of the second proposal are dependent upon the findings in (a). However, a few general remarks on the concepts of 'originality' and 'creativity' are called for. The concepts, 'creativity', 'originality' and 'convergent - divergent' thinkers, are widely used by psychologists and are mostly explained in terms of 'operational' definitions. (White 1968; Parsons, 1971). Akin to the dangers implicit in ignoring the message entailed in the 'law of social variety' stifling of creative urge among individuals can have detrimental effects on both the individual concerned and the society as a whole. An Examination serves an educationally useful purpose, if it does not stifle 'original' thinking in the candidates who are preparing to appear for it. Since an examination is a kind of task which is to be 'performed as well as possible at some determined future time', Ref. Chap II <sup>page 47</sup> it naturally influences the behaviour of the examinee during the period of preparation. It is at this stage, then the so-called 'backwash' effect on the candidate is most pronounced. Where an examination demands and rewards regurgitation of learned facts and figures, and where the examiner has not prepared 'good'

questions, the students with 'creative' powers gradually 'normalize' themselves and thus lose the creative-potentialities. Or, in some cases they refuse to conform and get duly labelled as failures. Hence, if an examiner feels that certain qualities and capacities cannot be measured by a particular examination, the message should be promptly shared with the teacher and the student. It may then be possible to 'assess' such qualities on a subjective basis by more than one assessor. If not, at least, the teacher and student, realizing the limits of examinations will not undermine the importance of indulging in "critico-creative" activity in their daily teaching-learning activities.

Again, an examination is purposeful if it measures as far as possible not only recall of information and overlearned 'facts' but also higher cognitive skills (Bloom's-synthesis and evaluation) and entertains 'original' ideas, theories and the like.

Once proposals (a) and (b) are adequately attended to then the follow up work falls much in the realm of the techniques of examining, but this is outside the scope of the thesis. However, the third proposal i.e. examinations should be multi-modal inevitably calls for some comments on examination techniques.

#### Multi-Modal Examination in Fiji

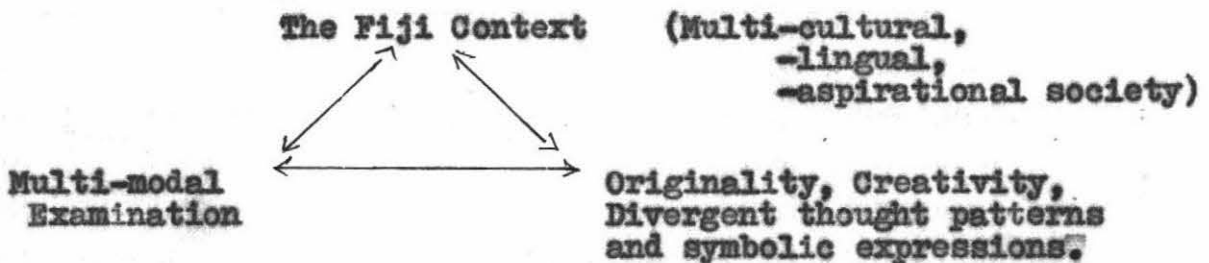


Fig. 4.

The above figure portrays the links between the multi-modal examination and the unique Fijian problems as well as the link between two aspects and 'originality', 'creativity',



divergent thought patterns and symbolic expressions.

A multi-modal examination should incorporate a number of techniques from among those used widely at present, for example, essay tests, objective tests, controlled experiments, untimed but supervised tests, independently produced thesis and essays, practical work and others. Admittedly, the nature of the examination and the level it is pitched at will bring variations in the various forms accommodated in a particular examination. The multi-modal approach is based on the principle of the 'All factor effect' (Chapter II: 45) and the assumption that no one approach can cover the multi-variable situation of examining (there may be a number of 'significant' factors which are yet not known to us). The multi-modal approach has another attractive dimension, when viewed in relation to specifically Fijian problems.

Test constructors and educationists have variously appraised merits of different forms of examinations. (Hoffman 1962, Ingenkamp 1969, Wong, 1969). Gardener (1969: 345) presenting a comprehensive summary of strengths and alleged limitations of essay and objective type of tests, concludes: "Despite the many valid criticism of both objective and essay tests, they provide important information ~~the~~... the objective test provides the pupil with a highly structured task, which limits the pupil's response to recall or making discriminations between given responses. The essay test permits the pupil to respond by selecting, organising and presenting those facts he considers most relevant". Similarly, the pros and cons of other forms of testing can be amassed. The point germane to our discussion is that various forms of examinations tap, in varying degrees, both different sense modalities as in items heavily biased towards cognitive or psychomotor skills, as well as various characteristic ways of behaviour among the candidates. In the statistical sense multi-modal examination will reveal not one 'peak' but 'peaks' in a frequency curve.



It follows from the above argument that multi-modal examining is desirable for allowing greater play to individual differences among the candidates, which is tantamount to allowing for socio-cultural differences in expression of values, ideas, theories and the like.

The relevance and advantages of proper teaching and examining of vernaculars in this context come to the fore. As has been pointed out earlier, vernaculars have not received adequate attention in the classroom. They are not examined in the first major 'screening' examination i.e. F.S.S.E.E. Further, since it is difficult to use a foreign language as a medium for the exchange and development of pupils' 'ideational resourcefulness' the case for inclusion of vernaculars, - Fijian and Hindi at least - in all examinations in Fiji seems a strong and legitimate one, indeed. Making allowances for differences and divergent thinking encourages 'originality' and 'creativity' which, undoubtedly will be needed for solving the complex problems of multi-cultural, - lingual, - aspirational Fiji society. It is felt that a carefully organised interplay of the 'three corners' of figure IV along with the implementation of the proposals (a) and (b) discussed earlier could well provide long-term suitability and stability to examinations in Fiji, and at the same time enhance the effectiveness of the education system. Such a move will inevitably call for examiners who are prepared to think more as educationists than as test constructors and statisticians.

## CONCLUSION

Examinations have a subtle but powerful influence on any society. Emergent societies which have cast their traditional moulds are in the act of doing so and generally accept the western life-styles tend to forget that the latter has a long history of educational evolution. Any over enthusiastic attempt to graft a foreign examination system without taking into account its suitability and effectiveness may prove educationally unwise. In Fiji at least, little, if any, empirical work has been undertaken to assess the effects examinations have had on the peoples of Fiji. Some of the more lasting effects of examinations on a society often take years to make themselves apparent. What may now seem desirable and practical could in the long term prove to be detrimental. Many are quite content with the present system of a fixed pass/failure rate; often justified in terms of national interest.

Much of this thesis has been a plea for salvaging the diverse richness of a multi-cultural society expressed generally in different languages, values, aspirations and life-patterns. It seems that for the sake of national conformity (if nothing else) educationists tend to cherish normalcy vis a vis statistics, in almost all aspects of the learning - teaching process. The end result in a society where examinations are narrow, restrictive, mechanical and monolithic could be the perpetration<sup>of</sup> mediocrity. It not only stultifies the non-discursive areas of culture but also dampens the intrinsic creative urge of its members. An extended range of examinations incorporating multi-modal examination techniques, based on a careful appraisal of their functions inside a given society may offer some solutions.

Research into Fiji examinations and related issues has been long overdue.

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