

EDUCATION IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

by

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Introduction

I have found it useful in looking at the needs of education in the Year 2000 to discuss first the concept of education and its application to the Pacific islands; second, to examine its development with particular emphasis on the development of formal institutions and how these attempted, as they were expected, to meet the changing needs of Pacific societies. In the third and final part of the paper, an attempt is made to discuss some of the major education needs of the next two decades especially those that will have major impact on education in the Year 2000.

It is necessary also to discuss at the outset the particular difficulty that one faces in dealing with a wide and diverse area as the Pacific islands. A Pacific islander of colour, Dr. Farnafi Larkin of Western Samoa, was reported to have remarked that the only thing Pacific islanders have in common is the water around them.

The Pacific islands refer to those islands that lie immediately to the North and South of the equator in the Pacific Ocean which were settled, though not exclusively, by people of Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian descents. Since the settlement of these islands by the Melanesians, Micronesians and Polynesians, a lot of other racial groups have also moved

into them, such as the Indians in Fiji, French Caucasians in New Caledonia, Chinese in Tahiti, Japanese and American Caucasians as well as other Asian groups in Hawaii. This makes the Pacific islands a very diverse region ethnically, culturally, and linguistically.

The Pacific islands may be grouped in terms of their political affiliation and status. First, there are those that are affiliated to or associated with the United States; these are often called the American Pacific and the group includes the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, North Marianas, Guam and Marshalls in the North Pacific and American Samoa in the South Pacific—with a total population of about 294,000.¹ The second group is affiliated to France—the 'French Pacific'—it consisting of the French colonies of New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia, with a total population of about 303,000. The third group consists of the independent and/or self-governing islands of the South Pacific. This group was administered either by United Kingdom, Australia or New Zealand and stretches from Papua New Guinea in the west to Cook Islands in the east; Nauru in the north to Tonga in the south, and has a total population of 4.5 million.

In this paper, one has to make many generalizations about Pacific islanders, and the most common of these either relate to their racial/cultural groupings or their political association and status; these generalizations do not deny the diversity that exists within and between each group. In addition, the generalizations, when made, are intended only to assist the identification of commonalities and/or differences between and within groups.

Education and Change

Education is defined broadly as initiation into the ways of life of a community or society² and includes both the informal initiation that takes place in the home and formal schooling. A great deal of change has taken place in the Pacific islands particularly during this century and the Pacific islanders have had to change correspondingly fast in order to keep pace.

The Pacific islanders, in the words of Papua New Guinea's Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Renagi Lohia, "have had to run in order to remain on the same spot." Because of the rate of change, education itself—its goals, content and form—had to change in order to be effective in initiating people into their communities.

Perhaps the greatest amount of change has taken place in the educational systems of the independent or self-governing islands of the South Pacific, as they have had to meet the required manpower demands of independence for their countries in a very short time and satisfy the rising education aspirations of their populace. The French Pacific group, although gradually moving towards self rule, are still very much in a colonial situation; their schools' curricula and goals are still tied to that of metropolitan France.

The islands which are a part of the American Pacific group are still very much under the influence of the American educational system, but there appears to be a growing realization among them, especially those that have achieved some degree of self independence like Northern Marianas, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, of the importance of developing their own identities in which education must play a significant part.

In order to understand some of the current issues of education in the Pacific Islands and to be in a position to identify some major education needs in the next two decades leading up to the turn of the century, one needs to have a brief look at the development of education in the Pacific islands.

Education Developments

Education for Continuity. Education, unlike schooling, was not introduced to the islands; it was carried out in villages by older members of society prior to the coming of the missionaries.

A number of early studies by anthropologists³ have captured some of the ways in which societies in the islands ensured that their values, skills and attitudes were passed on to the younger generation. This type of education is referred to as 'informal' to differentiate it from 'formal' education which takes place in a school setting.

Informal education was (and is) concerned with the continuity of society in which adult members passed on to the younger generation what they acquired through experience. Much of the learning took place in practical situations in which young members of society would observe and imitate the adults and, with adult supervision, would learn to develop appropriate skills in various fields. Similarly, by observing adults or those older than themselves, the young people would learn appropriate attitudes towards their elders, peers and members of outside groups. The elders of the tribe or group would relate legends and stories to the young which would explain their history, their origins, their value systems and their view of the universe. Learning was

pragmatic and practical; its outcomes were easily observable in terms of the acquisition of food and other necessary materials and comforts for the family, and the demonstration of acceptable attitudes, values and behaviour for community survival.

Today, informal education exists side by side with formal education and it plays an important role in teaching survival skills, particularly in rural areas where the extended family is still largely intact and the economy predominantly at the subsistence level.

In towns, many functions performed by informal education are passed on to the schools, but because of the inability of schools to perform such tasks much is lost. The parents and elders of the present generation in the South Pacific did not receive as much schooling as their children, but when and if they move from their villages to towns to join their children and relatives who may work there, they might be able to continue to play some role in the informal education of the young people in that setting. At best, they could pass on to the young in the new setting the cultures of their group and thereby maintain some continuity.

Education for Change

Mission Schools. The concept of the school was introduced to most of the islands of the Pacific by the Christian missions. The mission efforts were later followed by government efforts but the objectives of the missions and governments in the education field, at least during the pre-independence period, were different and even contradictory.

The mission schools were primarily concerned with the evangelization of the islanders. Wherever they settled, the missionaries translated the Bible into the local languages and their schools taught the local people how to read and understand their scriptures. The curricula of the mission schools focussed on reading and writing in the local languages and in basic numeracy. They also taught practical skills like agriculture, house building and elementary hygiene. The medium of instruction was usually the vernacular language of the local area.

The missionaries were concerned with total societal changes and both the church and the school played a part in that effort. The islanders were not only converted—which was the main objective of the missions—they were also introduced to new and more "civilized" ways of living, based on Christian principles. The school became an agent of change and it taught the package of skills necessary for living in what was conceived by each mission group as constituting a Christian society. The early schools were conducted in churches or in the compound of the missionary who, in some cases, was also the teacher. Gradually, separate school buildings were built and a separate cadre of teachers came onto the scene.

Government Schools

The government entered the field of education fairly slowly and almost reluctantly, especially in former British or New Zealand territories like Fiji, Western Samoa, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

Government involvement in education preceding independence or self-government of many of the islands may be divided into two phases. During the first phase, colonial governments in the islands were concerned largely with the training of clerks and public servants in order to enhance the effectiveness of their administration. The second phase occurred when the education systems were expected to respond to the needs of self-government or independence, however these needs might be conceived.

The first phase began with the government entry into the field of education and continued until the government recognized the needs for its education system to be preparing citizens for political independence. The duration of this phase varied from one island to another but it did not occur for any of the British colonies (including those in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean) any earlier than the end of World War II when the British Government accepted as its official policy to guide colonies along the path of full responsible government within the Commonwealth.

The government schools emphasized different objectives and content from mission schools. The governments, unlike the missions, were not as interested in total societal change, at least at this stage. Instead, they were concerned with the development of an efficient colonial administration and they needed clerks, administrators and other kinds of public servants. The early government schools were aimed at producing these types of people.

In terms of the content of education, government schools used the language of metropolitan powers, such as English, French and German as the medium of instruction and they also introduced foreign curricula and examinations. This is still the case in some of the independent countries of the South Pacific;

the New Zealand School Certificate and the New Zealand University Entrance Examinations, which are taken at Forms 5 and 6 respectively, are still being taken by most of the secondary schools of the independent countries of the South Pacific. In the past, foreign teachers were brought in to teach at the schools from either New Zealand or Great Britain, and a few came from Australia. The use of Peace Corps teachers in the American Pacific group was aimed at the same purpose. As a result, schooling placed a lot of emphasis on academic and often irrelevant learning for the purpose of passing external examinations.

When technical education was introduced, it did not receive the same status and emphasis as academic education. In time, it became "academic" in orientation through its inclusion as an examinable subject in external examinations and thereby received greater respectability. In cases where this did not happen, such subjects or courses and others like them were earmarked for those who were considered not "bright" academically.

Government and Christian Mission Relations

The government and mission schools existed side by side serving different functions and different groups in society until the government exerted its influence on the mission school through financial assistance. Gradually, the mission schools were taken over except for a few which preferred to be independent. As part of the conditions of taking over, the governments set certain requirements relating to the medium of instruction, curricula, examinations, and on the minimum qualification of teachers. In other cases, as in the Solomon Islands, the missions were not entirely happy with

government intervention and it led to a period of strained relationships. However, the development of a more coordinated and rationalized education system enhanced the capability of such systems to respond to greater demands such as those associated with self government and independence.

Meeting the Needs of Independence and Self-Government Education for National Development. During the 1950s and 1960s the notion of government involvement had become well established at least in the South Pacific region. Hitherto, increased government involvement had been hampered by lack of financial resources. However, during the 1950s and 1960s, the austerity of the immediate post-war years had passed and a more favourable period of economic growth had set in. The colonial governments in the islands were faced with the need to prepare their countries for their gradual movement towards independence. On the international scene, economists were pointing to education as a critical component for national development and they stressed the importance of developing human resources and manpower, and the need for national planning.⁴

Increased government participation in education marked the second phase of government involvement. In contrast to the first phase, the government was no longer just a participant in the venture; it was expected that it should be coordinating and directing not only education, but also the whole social, economic and political development of the country.

The colonial governments in the islands had envisaged for the school a much broader role in development as they prepared for independence; and they wanted the school to foster a number of broad objectives as for example:

- . The development of national consciousness in Fiji.
- . The development of an appreciation for the limited opportunities of an atoll environment in Kiribati.
- . The countering of the prevailing academic trend in education in the Solomon Islands and Fiji.

The outcomes of schemes designed to bring out the above stated objectives were not encouraging. In each of the above cases, except perhaps in the development of national consciousness in Fiji—the results of which are difficult to quantify—the objective has not been accomplished. On the other hand, in the case of the objective of preparing manpower for independence, the result was an astounding success.

Academic Evaluation

As can be seen from the above, much was expected of the school during preparation for independence and self-government, which previously the school did not have to worry about. Many of the objectives expressed in the education plans and reports contained ideals that education planners and professional educationists desired, but these were new to the teachers, let alone the parents. The latter paid hefty school fees for their children and they expected them to receive the kind of education which would give them good jobs such as those to be found in the public services of the Pacific islands. They knew that these jobs were obtained by people with academic qualifications and hence their desire to have a similar type of education for their children.

The school can be an agent of reform but it cannot of itself be expected to avert or solve certain major problems of society without any program of reform based on some widely held ideology such as the Ujamaa in Tanzania.⁵ The latter was often referred to but not well understood by the public or its teachers. The teachers gave lip service to the new ideas but went on to do what they knew best, which was to teach in the formal and academic way.

Agro-Technical Education

During the 1970s, governments of the South Pacific countries were concerned about the over-emphasis on academic education in their schools and plans were devised for the establishment of practically-oriented schools to be located in the rural areas to serve the needs of the majority of the students. In Fiji, the Education Commission in 1969 endorsed this idea but cautioned that because the schools would necessarily be located in rural areas, they should not be "second best." The Commission urged that they should be of high standard, and careful consideration should be given to their location.⁶

In the Solomon Islands, the Education Policy Review Committee came to a similar conclusion when they recommended the establishment of the (then) Area High School in 1974 (later known as the New Secondary School).

The Community High School in Kiribati—established in 1978—was supposed to be anchored in the community and be a center of community adult education training. It was to rely on the community for the teaching of traditional skills. It was therefore like a halfway house between the school and the community, serving the school leavers and the community. Its anomalous

position created some difficulties because the villagers looked on it as a school trying to teach some of the skills of the village which they thought could be better learnt from living in the village.

In Fiji the number of Junior Secondary Schools mushroomed to about 20 in the first two years of operation, and it was not possible to maintain the level of quality in both facilities and teachers that the Fiji Education Commission recommended. Insidiously, the pressure for academic programs build up and the practical-oriented courses became examinable in the external examinations and the school, in time, became a poor replica of its urban academic counterpart.

The Area High School in the Solomon Islands had a difficult struggle to survive. It lacked the necessary resources and teachers with appropriate orientation, and its role was not well understood by the community. Even if it had the resources and the teachers, it would still have difficulty in surviving in its original form because it lacked the support of the parents.

The attitude of the parents in Kiribati towards the Community High School was aptly described by its Minister for Education Training and Culture in a statement on August 26, 1980, when he announced the results of an investigation on this project and plans for its winding up. The Minister said,

"They (the parents) want an academic type of education which would pave the way for paid employment. So Government has been trying to develop a type of schooling which concentrates on practical skills considered to be relevant to pupils who will live in the rural areas and not obtain cash employment. While all the time the people desire an education with an academic bias designed to prepare children for employment in the urban areas."⁷

The statements of the Minister for Education from Kiribati probably echo the sentiments of the parents in the South Pacific, particularly in the rural areas, in their expectation of the school to provide their children with modern skills and the knowledge to enable them to get a good job. It has always been the function of the school, since the government entered the field of education, to train people for the public service. Employment opportunities of educated people have widened with the opening up of other sectors of employment, but the parents' view still holds true that education leads to employment in the modern sector. Any change in the function or form of the school will be difficult to sell to the parents unless it can be demonstrated that those graduating from it can gain comparable, if not better, financial rewards than those graduating from academic institutions. Only then will they see the school as worth their investment and support.

Education, Manpower and Employment

One of the things that the school has done very effectively has been the production of manpower to meet the needs for independence or self-government for the islands, particularly those needs pertaining to posts in the public services. Most of the islands, except for the few remaining colonies of France and the United States, have now become self-governing or independent, and the transfer of responsibilities of governance to the local people has been remarkably smooth. Most of the critical positions in the public services have been taken over by the local people and the process of localization has been largely successful. In some cases, the pace of localization has been

thought to be too rapid and that local people without the necessary qualifications and experience have been placed in responsible positions leading to a drop in the quality of the public service.

Most of the posts in the public services in the islands have been filled, but the education system continues to turn out academically trained people who cannot continue to be absorbed. The number of people that can be absorbed by the private sector—which in the Pacific islands is necessarily small—is limited. As a result, a lot of school leavers become unemployed. In the case of Fiji only about half of the 15,000 annual school leavers can be expected to find jobs, the others will have to find alternative occupations or join the ranks of the unemployed—running at about 10 percent. Even university graduates are not finding it easy to find employment; the hunger strike in Fiji in 1984, by students who had completed their teacher-education qualifications at the University of the South Pacific but were not offered teaching positions, has brought this problem to the fore.

The relationship between employment and education has now become very apparent in the islands. One of the factors of islandness—limited size and population—puts a constraint on the size of the public service and, more particularly, on the extent to which the private sector can expand to absorb the ever increasing number of school leavers. This highlights the need for rapid job creation, especially in islands with a high proportion of youthful population as in the Melanesian and Micronesian island groups.

Delayed Problems for Non-Independent Islands

Many of the problems faced by the independent countries of the South Pacific group, as discussed above, have not been faced to the same extent by

the French Pacific group, as the countries involved are colonies of France and as such are not at the stage where they have to be wholly responsible for funding their education system. Similarly, the American Pacific group of islands, including those under the Compact, are still receiving a lot of American funds and support and consequently do not feel the full brunt of the problems that independent island countries have had to face or are facing. It is only a matter of time before the French Pacific group of islands will become independent and at that stage, they will have to face up to similar education problems which their South Pacific independent neighbours have faced over the last two and a half decades. The Compact countries of the American Pacific group will have to face up to similar problems soon, perhaps theirs will be worse in that the U.S. cultivated policy of dependence conceived in the 1960s will undermine not only the islanders' will for greater independence but also their very ability to cope with resultant problems.

Education in the Eighties and Beyond

In looking at the major educational needs and directions of the Pacific Islands in the next two decades and beyond, I have relied on four assumptions which I feel would exert some influence on education in varying degrees.

These are:

- that certain major changes in the educational system will continue by virtue of built-in educational traditions and institutional pressures;
- that continuing demands on basic education services will continue to be exerted as part of democratic changes occurring in the Pacific countries;

- that greater pressure for involvement in the affairs of Pacific people will continue to be exerted by Pacific rim metropolitan powers in the light of the increasing importance of the region; and that
- the development in science especially in the information technology area will have major impacts on education, language and culture and these will also have wider political and socio-economic ramifications.

Academic Education

One thing clearly emerges from the previous section. Parents and pupils will continue to demand an academic type of education and will continue to be reluctant to accept non-academic alternatives, as for example agro-technical education. This is because academic-type education yields better jobs than do the other types of education in the Pacific islands setting, and so long as this situation exists, it would be reasonable to expect such demand to continue. An academic type of education normally prepares people for the public sector; this is the major avenue for wage employment in the islands. Usually, the smaller the country, the greater is the proportion of people employed in the public sector. So despite the efforts of the governments to diversify education and build technical, agricultural and other forms of non-academic institutions, existing demands for academic type of institutions both at the secondary and tertiary levels will continue to grow at least in the next two decades.

As a consequence of this, a lot of school leavers prepared only for general skills will continue to be produced every year, of which only a small proportion might be absorbed into the workforce. This trend will exacerbate the growing unemployment and underemployment especially in the urban centres and will generate other associated problems. Such a situation would raise

questions relating to what the value and aims of education should be especially for those countries that have not faced the full brunt of this issue. This would pose a major problem in many of the islands in the Year 2000.

Agro-technical Education

The conventional remedy of education planners to the increasing unemployment of school leavers, that of developing agricultural and technical schools, is hardly an answer in all the islands because the employment of the graduates of these schools would continue to be problematic. Evidences not only from African experience, but also from experience of some Pacific countries⁸ indicate that despite expectations, technical and agricultural school leavers tend to seek out 'white collar' jobs instead of those that would require people to 'soil their hands', so to speak. It seems that it cannot be assumed that just because they received training in skills which predominantly involve the use of their hands, apart from their heads, that they should automatically prefer jobs relating to such skills within the public sector, let alone generate their own jobs in their respective skill areas in the business or private sectors.

The critical factor to the solution of this problem lies in the creation of a structure of incentives within the economic system, generating the need for skills to which such agro-technical institutions could respond. Unless such institutions are responding to identifiable marketable skills, there will always be a danger of training people who cannot be employed.

In the Pacific islands, there is likely to be a greater demand for more specialized agricultural and technical skills in the bigger island groups of Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands and probably New Caledonia; these countries are in a better position to support a system of technical and agricultural schools. These islands have a sufficient resource base to support a comparatively large population and would also have a greater potential for the development of their private sectors than small island groups. For these reasons, one would expect to see the development of a comprehensive network of agro-technical schools in the above islands over the next two decades.

Non-Formal Education

In the smaller island groups of the Pacific where the development potential of the private sectors is limited as in the case of Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Western Samoa, the American group, etc., a greater emphasis would be placed on non-formal education. This type of education is aimed at developing various types of skills using the resources in the community, to assist people generate their own employment. There is already a wide acceptance of this type of education as it tends to attract young and no so young adults who know the kind of skills they need. Non-formal education and training can be used to develop basic practical mechanical and technical skills without reliance on the expensive resources of formal institutions; this is being attempted fairly successfully in Fiji.⁹ Not only is the development of non-formal education and training critical, equally critical is the need to coordinate formal and non-formal education and to rationalise these activities. Only a few

countries in the Pacific include non-formal education in their education planning considerations. Non-formal education is particularly pertinent in a region where many of the countries cannot afford to commit much more of their limited government funds to formal education. Non-formal education could assume a much greater importance in the next two decades particularly for the smaller island groups.

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education

One of the things that is difficult to satisfy, especially for newly independent countries, is the demand for more education. The independent countries of the South Pacific except those in Melanesia have a comparatively high rate of literacy. A great push for universal primary education is therefore likely to be exerted by the Melanesian islands such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and on independence, French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

Those islands whose basic primary education needs have stabilised would be looking towards providing more secondary—and tertiary—level education. Secondary education is expected to be met locally by most countries but tertiary education is not as easily available for the islands except perhaps for Papua New Guinea. To date, two regional groupings exist in the Pacific region either to provide or coordinate the provision of tertiary education: the eleven independent or self-governing countries (except for Tokelau) of the South Pacific group that support the University of the South Pacific (USP), and the Pacific Post Secondary Education Council, membership of which comprises all the American Pacific group and which coordinates post-secondary

education for the American Pacific islands. Without such co-operation it would be inconceivable for any of the Pacific islands given its population base apart from Papua New Guinea, to support a full-fledged university from its own resources.¹⁰

It would not, however, be out of the reach of many of the island groups, to have colleges of higher education that might meet the needs of middle level manpower requirements. In certain cases, the establishment of such colleges have involved substantial aid from metropolitan sources. Some of the big islands will see it politically desirable for them to have a national college of higher education which could provide for various courses in needed areas and at the same time, ensure that its services are rationalised with its associated regional university (e.g, USP) or with an outside metropolitan university. A similar rationalisation of efforts is expected to occur in the American Pacific group under the coordination of the Pacific Post Secondary Education Council.

There is a greater potential for increased coordination between the various island groups particularly between the American Pacific group and the South Pacific group especially in the provision of tertiary education. Most of the doctors currently practising on the American Pacific group of islands were graduates of the former regional Medical School in Suva, now known as the Fiji School of Medicine. In October 1984, the University of Guam signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the South Pacific and this could enhance greater co-operation in the field of education between the two regions. The University of the South Pacific and the University of Papua New Guinea are represented on one another's Council and they have already

identified areas of possible co-operation including an exchange scheme for their respective students. Even the idea of the development of a confederation of universities in the South Pacific involving the two universities in Papua New Guinea and the USP has been raised by Dr. James Maraj, the previous Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific.¹¹

There is much to be gained in co-operative efforts and indications are that this will be much stronger in the Year 2000; such co-operation will contribute to a greater Pacific consciousness, provided, of course, that metropolitan pressures through bilateral aid arrangements do not undermine such co-operation.

New Colonialism in Education

For a variety of reasons, a number of metropolitan powers in the Pacific rim are exerting increasing influence on Pacific islands. Some of the influences are traditional and long standing as is the case with New Zealand and its neighbours like the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Western Samoa; the United States with its Micronesian states and American Samoa; Australia with Papua New Guinea; and France with its Pacific colonies. Increasing efforts have been undertaken, both by Australia and the United States to exert their influences in the independent countries of the South Pacific; with promise of increasing aid and assistance, they are beginning to develop affiliations that could influence education significantly in the islands. In a recent Foreign Affairs report for example, it has been suggested that Australia should accept workers from Tuvalu and Kiribati as part of its development assistance scheme.¹² If this is implemented the goal of education in these two countries would shift to preparing people not only for working but also for living in Australia.

New Zealand has already been influencing the national curricula of many of the South Pacific countries through its examinations; it has also allowed many Polynesians to work and migrate to its shores, thus reducing unemployment in the islands somewhat. It also admits island students to study there and many of them do not return to the islands. This situation has often been referred to as aid to New Zealand by the Pacific Islands.¹³

The United States takes in people from the American Pacific group for education, employment and also gives them citizenship after a period of residency, not to mention the high level of aid or 'handouts' it gives them. The same is happening with respect to islanders in the French Pacific group.

The end result of all this is, of course, a greater degree of dependence, a new colonialism. While it may have beneficial effects, it is bound to undermine the development of a coherent national educational system of the respective groups of islands and to encourage the loss of needed skills and manpower. This problem is bound to continue well into the Year 2000. Perhaps, the Pacific islanders need to work out very urgently the form of assistance they can get without putting themselves in a irreversible situation which is now more evident in some of the American Pacific group of islands.

Science and Information Technology

The impact of the development of science and technology cannot be ignored, although much of the technology is inappropriate to small island states. The fact that such high technology is available and that it is in the interest of metropolitan powers to have it accepted by the Pacific island states in itself helps to perpetuate an incongruent situation between island needs and

technological supply. This situation highlights the need to generate a greater consciousness for more appropriate technologies especially those that depend on renewable energy sources for which the Pacific has a rich resource base such as the sun, the wind and ocean currents.

The availability of modern information technology can be used to enhance education developments especially in the area of computers, video cassettes, television and satellite. This of course calls for careful identification of needs in terms of knowledge and skills, the development of appropriate curricula and the choice of suitable media to be used in respective areas.¹⁴ Apart from the use of satellite in distance education in the University of the South Pacific region, and the abortive attempt to introduce education television in American Samoa in the 1960s,¹⁵ the Pacific Islands have been generally slow in making appropriate use of these technologies more particularly in the field of education. This is going to lead to the wholesale use of imported overseas programmes as is currently the case with video programmes in countries like Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The availability of satellite television would also mean that the Pacific islands could be exposed to overseas television (usually American) programmes at the touch of a switch.

The continual exposure of the Pacific islanders to imported programmes through video and or satellite television cannot be without its effects on their values, cultures and traditions. This would exacerbate a cosmopolitan orientation and undermine the development of a stronger Pacific consciousness.

Language and Culture

As the Pacific increasingly becomes an area of competing powers, great stress will be placed on technology science and generally on developments in the modern sector. While it is desirable and perhaps timely that the Pacific should move into the 21st century, it is hoped that it will not do so at the expense of its unique Pacific cultures and traditions which have given it a distinctive lifestyle. In order to do this, its cultures, languages and traditions need to be fostered and developed through various avenues including the schools and through whatever modern information technology is used.

Conclusions

The school traditions of the Pacific islands were derived from exported varieties from metropolitan countries. The schools were set up to support imposed systems and were relied upon to produce the necessary manpower particularly during the transition of the islands from a colonial to a self-governing and/or an independent status. The school systems generated their own sets of problems, and attempts made to re-direct their orientation, form and content did not meet much success.

The above problems continue to bedevil the Pacific islanders and they are bound to affect their educational developments in the near and distant future. These are going to be compounded by other developments such as the increasing demand for basic education by new nations achieving greater self-determination, the pressure by metropolitan powers to have greater involvement in Pacific affairs, and recent developments in science and information technology. The directions which Pacific islands education are going to take in the Year 2000 are going to depend on the extent to which these considerations are utilised by Pacific islanders to their advantage.

Notes

1. This excludes Hawaii which geographically can be regarded as Pacific islands but politically is an integral part of the United States of America.
2. See R. S. Peters, Ethics and Education (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), p. 65.
3. See M. Mead Growing up in New Guinea (New York: Blue Ribbon Book, 1930); M. Mead Coming of Age in Samoa: A Study of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1943); R. Firth We the Tikopia: A Sociological Study of Kinship in Primitive Polynesia (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1936).
4. See for example, M. J. Bowman et al. (Ed). Readings in the Economics of Education (Paris: UNESCO, 1968); C. Anderson and M. J. Bowman (Eds.). Education and Economic Development (Chicago: Aldine, 1965); E. A. G. Robinson and J. E. Vaizey (Eds.). The Economics of Education (London: McMillan, 1966).
5. See J. K. Nyerere, Ujaama: Essays on Socialism (Dar es Salaam: East Africa Publishing House, 1968).
6. Education for Modern Fiji: Report of the 1969 Fiji Education Commission (Suva: Fiji Government Printer, 1969), p. 52.
7. Minister for Education, Training and Culture 'New Priorities for Classes 7, 8, and 9 Primary Schools' (Tarawa, mimeographed, August 27, 1980), p. 2.
8. An example of this is the Navuso Agricultural School in Fiji which was primarily set up to train village farmers. The majority of Navuso graduates—about 80%—do not take up farming; the majority of its graduates seek government jobs in the Fiji public service.
9. An example of this is the Fiji National Training Scheme which is concerned with the training of workers in the field.
10. Francois Doumenge, (Viability of Small Island States: Report to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, TD/B/950, July 1983) argues that a population of about 1 million is necessary to support a full-fledged university.
11. See Fiji Times article 'Maraj Moots Federal USP' 26 May, 1982, p. 1; see also 'Statement of the Vice-Chancellor' The University of the South Pacific Bulletin, vol. 15, 4, p. 15, 28 May, 1982.

12. Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Programme: The Jackson Commission (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1984).
13. For example, Joris de Bres How Tonga Aids New Zealand: A Report on Migration and Education (South Pacific Action Network, 1974); Joris de Bres Worth Their Weight in Gold (Auckland Resource Center for World Development, 1975).
14. Dr. Lasarusa Vusoniwailala, personal communication, 18 October, 1984.
15. See Wilbur Schramm et al Bold Experiment: The Story of Educational Television in American Samoa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981).