CHAPTER 1

THEME ANALYSIS, CONCEPTUALISATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

For the past decades attempts have been made to find ways to address the educational and learning needs of millions of South Africans. These attempts were not very successful. It is therefore evident that there is an educational crisis in our country. In fact, there is a mass of people with educational and learning needs outside of the formal education system who were either denied access to education or who might not have used their educational opportunities optimally.

The problem of educational crisis and inadequacies is cited by Pretorius (1990a:512) when he states the following: "The world and also the RSA are at present experiencing a profound educational crisis, due to rapid and radical changes in the ecology of education, educational systems and curriculum being too slow to adapt, disparities in education (e.g between educational provision and learning needs), financial problems, the population explosion, etc."

The above statement by Pretorius therefore suggests that the present systems of education have not been able to provide for the broad spectrum of realistic educational and learning needs of individuals and of communities, and have also not been able to contribute to the real development of communities and to solving the problems of communities.

In recent times, especially in countries such as Britain, the United States of America and Israel, the concept of community education has come to the fore as a concept which can be implemented to provide for the learning needs of individuals and of communities. The practice of community education is not well developed in South Africa. Previous and present education systems have neglected, by design and omission, to address the human resource and learning needs of communities.

With regard to the above-mentioned problem, Pretorius (1990a:513-514) remarks as follows:

"To merely expand formal education provision in an attempt to provide for these basic needs and learning needs and to solve the above-mentioned problems would not be sufficient, because of the following reasons:

- it will lead to the erosion of the quality and relevance of education
- it will merely come to 'more of the same' and 'expanding the wrong systems' (Coombs)
- no single mode of education (e.g. formal education) is able to provide for the full spectrum of the realistic and essential learning needs of all age groups of any learner population
- there is a mass of youths and adults who find themselves outside of the formal education system, and who are not reached by formal education provisions."

From the fore-going arguments it becomes evident that there is a whole range of realistic and essential learning and educational needs among communities which require urgent attention.

As has been previously mentioned, it is possible to provide for the learning needs of individuals and communities by implementing a community education strategy and providing community education programmes.

Before relevant community education programmes can be provided in a given community, the learning needs, basic needs and problems of that community must be identified or assessed. Any community education programme must be provided on the basis of an assessment of learning and educational needs. For this, certain methods and techniques are necessary to assess the learning needs and problems of the community. Assessment or identification of learning needs is an important phase in the community education process.

Therefore, the methods and techniques implemented to assess learning needs require very special attention. Otherwise, the learning needs of a mass of people will remain unfulfilled. The question now arises: What are the methods and techniques that can be implemented in the community education process to assess learning needs, in order to provide relevant community education programmes?

In this study an investigation will be undertaken of the methods and techniques that can be implemented to identify the learning needs and problems of communities, in order to provide relevant community education programmes.

1.2   THEME ANALYSIS

In the following discussion the theme of the present study will be analysed.

1.2.1   LEARNING NEEDS

It is evident that education in the Third World is undergoing a deep crisis. It is unable to respond adequately to the far-reaching attitudinal and value changes that are sweeping these societies. It has neither been able to fulfil the new urges and aspirations of the common man nor has it been able to produce trained capacity that can handle pressing national problems with expertise and commitment (Van der Stoep, 1984:13).

Jarvis (1985:65) defines **learning needs** as follows:
"...where a deficiency can be remedied by the help of some educational process an 'educational need' is established."

With regard to the causes of learning needs, Coombs (1985:57) asserts that the most prolific breeder of new learning needs throughout the world since World War II has been development itself. By development is meant different forms of technological, social, economic and cultural changes and advances.

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In this regard Coombs (1985:57) states the following:

"Although the aggregate increase in the number of learners has clearly had a sizeable impact on world educational requirements, it seems evident that the increase in the lifetime learning needs of the average learner resulting from these dynamic development factors has been an even greater cause of the explosive growth of overall learning needs".

As communities change, learning needs also change. The changed context of education has presented society with new categories of learners, new learning needs, new subject matter and new educational objectives.

Different authors also present varying comments on the existence of learning needs: Coombs (1985:33) remarks as follows:

"All human beings, starting at birth, have diverse learning needs whose form, substance, and utility evolve over the course of a lifetime. By extension, whole societies also have evolving learning needs, many of which extend well beyond the lifetime of any one individual."

Regarding this actual problem of the crisis in education and the unfulfilled learning needs of a mass of people, a possible solution could be found in the concept and practice of community education. In this regard Decker et al (1988:xi) remark as follows:

"Since schools alone cannot meet these educational needs, what seems to be called for is a co-operative venture where home, school, and community work together. Increasingly, the framework for such a co-operative venture is community education".

Following the above-mentioned idea, there is a great and urgent need for designing education systems and programmes which will provide for basic needs and learning needs and for solving existing community problems. The drawing of our attention to the possibilities of community education seems to have come at the correct time, when there is rapid and radical scientific, technological and social change which demands for greater educational expansion.

Masses of people outside the education systems have learning needs that have not been provided for and therefore remain unfulfilled, for which the provision of community education programmes can be a solution.

Epstein (1980:40) puts forth the idea that community education can fulfil the learning needs of communities:

"Community education is apparently filling some great needs and providing some obvious benefits for the community. Community educators are enablers or facilitators, they find the need, find a way to meet it, find a place to do it."

Concerning the fulfilment of learning needs, Epstein (1980:40) continues to state the following:

"Because all the people own the school system, and not just those with children in school, the system has an obligation to address the needs of all the people."

In order to address these changing learning needs of communities, community education should be put into practice. However, it is essential to assess the learning needs of individuals and communities, for community education programmes to be relevant.

1.2.2   METHODS FOR ASSESSING LEARNING NEEDS IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

According to Knowles (1971:86), "Need assessment and need identification are mutual inclusive concepts. Need assessment refers to any systematic process for collecting and analysing information about the education needs of individuals, groups or organisations".

With regard to need assessment, Nkosi (1994:67) writes the following:

".... identifying learning needs thus involves assessing the discrepancies or gaps between the competencies and their present level of development."

On the same note, Knowles (1978:117) asserts that:

"According to Andragogy, the critical element ... is the learner's perception of the

discrepancy between where he is now and where he wants to be. So the assessment is essentially a self assessment, with the human resources developer providing the learner with tools and procedures for obtaining data about his level of development of the competencies".

Coombs (1985:95) writes the following concerning methods of assessing learning needs: "Learning needs, being so diverse and changeable by nature, cannot be measured with mathematical precision as if distinctive groups of people in distinctive contexts were like piles of lumber cut to a specified size in a lumberyard. Still, noting what cannot be done is not saying that it is impossible to make informed judgements on the subject. The basis for such judgements can be established by focusing on those forces that define the learning needs of individuals and societies, create new ones, or outstrip the existing educational arrangements of a given society".

Community education attempts to address learning needs of individuals and communities, therefore, of utmost importance are the methods and techniques which can be applied to determine these learning needs. The present study will investigate the methods and techniques that can be implemented in assessing the learning needs of individuals and communities in the community education process.

1.2.3 COMMUNITY EDUCATION

As has been mentioned above, this study will investigate methods and techniques that can be implemented in assessing learning needs of individuals and communities, in order to provide relevant community education programmes. It is therefore important, as a point of departure, to present a brief exposition of the concept of community education since it forms the core of the present study.

This study basically revolves around community education both as a concept and as a practice. Since each community is unique, different communities experience different learning needs. As a result, different communities will require different community

education programmes in order to address their learning needs. It is therefore through community education programmes that existing educational provision can be expanded and adapted. Furthermore, community education programmes can make important inputs in addressing the broad spectrum of realistic educational and learning needs and assist towards developing communities.

The concept of community education is of utmost importance in this study since community education also attempts to help people to learn how to solve their problems. Therefore, community education empowers individuals and communities to be independent in solving their problems.

In community education the emphasis is on creating and extending educational and learning opportunities which provide for the realistic educational and learning needs of individuals and communities.

1.3   CONCEPTUALISATION

The following major concepts will be used in this study, hence they warrant clarification:
-       community
-       community education
-       the modes of education
-       the learning society

The clarification is important for an understanding of the concept of community education as well as the handling of the present study, which in particular focuses on methods and techniques that can be implemented to identify learning needs of communities in order to provide relevant community education programmes.

1.3.1   COMMUNITY

It is imperative to define the concept of **community** because the present study is about educating the community.

According to Brookfield (1983:62) the concept of **community** refers "... to a geographical locale in which people live and work, in which they develop relationships based on common concerns, and in which expressions of mutual assistance reflect the dominant social mores. Underpinning this sense of interrelatedness is the cohesion afforded by all members of the group subscribing to shared norms, moral codes, beliefs and attitudes. This subscription is enforced by the socialization process which ensures that new members to the group are initiated into its moral and behavioural codes".

Teather (1982:27) views the concept of community in relation to the community school or college by stating as follows:

"'**Community**' is a constituency upon which the community school or college depends and to which the community school or college might be reasonably expected to be responsive."

According to Witty (1967:263), "... a '**community**' should be more than a mailing address, a seat of government, a place where the people sleep and carry on family responsibilities ... it should mean a setting in which human beings interact with members of their family, neighbours and close friends, in which all are participating, responding, dynamically active in interaction and thus gaining an education, whether they wish to do so or not".

Bloomer and Shaw (1979:94) view a community in its social context when they write the following:

"A community is part of a wider social context both formally in the sense of a local education authority and informally in the value orientation of the people who live or work there. It is an interest community, geographically defined, and in need of special help

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with a maximum physical participation of residents. In such a community, the community schools and colleges can play a major role towards community regeneration".

Roberts (1979:27) points out that there is a factor of commonness in a community when he asserts that: "...the community exists when a group of people perceive common needs and problems, acquire a sense of identity, and have a common sense of objectives. Thus a profession may be a community despite its lack of a physical locus".

Fletcher et al (1980:177) present the following definition: "By **community** one can read either neighbourhood, town, or single class residential area. The term is used as a keep-net of all sorts of activities where there is more than a slight participation between people living close by each other. It may, in fact, be better just to call community education local education and so convey the essential premise that people should be able to control and use public resources".

In expatiating on the concept of 'community' further, Boyle (Kamper 1987:2) writes that: "A **community** is based on the social interdependence that arises from the association of people in some geographical location. Depending on the nature of the problem to be addressed and the extent of inter-dependence, a community may be a small neighbourhood or the entire world".

On the basis of the above-mentioned definitions the concept of **community** can be summarized as follows:

- Geographical definition: Community education involves the coming together of a group of people situated geographically in the same vicinity, for example, a town, village, location, district.
- Community refers to a group of people involved in similar activities.
- A group of people who perceive common needs and problems.
- People interact socially, dynamically active in interaction and thus gaining an education.
- People acquire a sense of identity

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- People subscribe to shared norms, moral codes, beliefs and attitudes.
- People develop relationships based on common concerns.
- People have a common sense of objectives.
- A community may be a small neighbourhood or the entire world.

1.3.2 COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Since **community education** is a relatively new concept in our country, it is of utmost importance to present definitions of this concept for purposes of clarification. Of significance is the fact that the present study mainly deals with the concept of **community education**, particularly with the assessment of learning needs for which community education programmes can be designed.

The history of **community education** indicates that various authors and practitioners of community education give differing views when defining **community education**. Therefore, it would be difficult to agree on one specific definition of community education. However, the basis is that community education programmes should serve learning needs, develop the community and solve the problems of a given community. The following two definitions express the idea that community needs must be identified in the community education process:

Fellenz and Coker (1980:319) define **community education** as "....the process of identification of community needs and the marshalling of resources to meet those needs so that the community and all its members can grow through social and educational programmes".

The definition of **community education** by the Massachussetts Department of Education (1979:4) is the following:

(a)   Partnerships between educational agencies and the community.
(b)   Identifying community needs
(c)   Using all available resources
(d)   Democratizing educational decision-making

(e)   Recognizing learning as a life-long activity

(f)   Encouraging full access to all facilities (cultural, recreational, educational) for all
        members of a community.

According to Clark (1977:6), **"Community education,** simply stated, is an operational
philosophy of education and system for community development."

With regard to the concept of **community education** Nisbet et al (1980:1) state the
following: "The last twenty years have seen a rapid growth of enthusiasm for the idea
of **community education** - an educational structure which serves the educational, social
and recreational needs of the whole population, adults as well as children. In the past,
community education has often made use of school facilities, for meetings, for adult
classes and lectures, for social functions and for recreation."

Minzey and Le Tarte (Seay et al, 1974:126) also view community education as a
philosophical concept when they state that: **"Community education** is a philosophical
concept which serves the entire community by providing for all of the educational needs
of its community members. It uses the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing
community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive
community, improve community living, and develop the community process toward the
end of self-actualization."

Seay et al (1974:3) give the following definition: **"Community education** - the process
that achieves a balance and a use of all institutional forces in the education of all the
people of a community."

Nisbet et al (1980:111) further explain **community education** in terms of the contrast
between formal and informal education. They remark that: "...formal education as
exemplified in the conventional school system, informal as exemplified in community
education. Immediately one can point to obvious differences. School is compulsory,
community education voluntary. School tends to be seen as an institution for children,

community education for all age groups. Schools are staffed by a long-established profession, with a recognized hierarchical authority structure, directed by experienced older persons; community education is a young and still inexperienced service, developing a different authority structure, or even questioning the appropriateness of authority structures."

Pretorius (1990a:515) defines **community education** as an integrated community-based strategy when he remarks that: "Community education comprises a community-based infrastructure and an integrated community based strategy in which learning opportunities are expanded and made relevant; community education is a comprehensive, co-ordinated delivery system for community development and a process of comprehensive ecological intervention."

Decker (Poster, 1982:99) describes community education in terms of community improvement when he writes that: "**...community education** is a concept that stresses an expanded role for public education and provides a dynamic approach to individual and community improvement. Community education encourages the development of a comprehensive and co-ordinated delivery system for providing educational, recreational, social and cultural services for all people in a community".

With regard to **community education,** Decker et al (1988:27) remark as follows: "...the circle that defines **community education** in the learning society: schools using community resources and communities, in turn, using school resources. To put it in the words of community educators: 'The goal is a society where everyone teaches, everyone learns'."

Taylor (1988:41) views community education as a strategy for enhancing community involvement for community change when he comments as follows:

"The process aspects of community education refer to the structure, procedures, and intent of interaction among individuals, organisations, agencies, and institutions in a community. More specifically, this interaction process involves the joint collaboration of community members and professionals - both educators and representatives of other

service agencies - in the identification of local problems and subsequently in the selection of appropriate strategies for tackling them. Although, initially, the focus of this process is restricted to problems of an educational nature, eventually it will address the needs which arise in relation to all dimensions of community life".

Taylor (1988:41) further gives an exposition of the concept of **community education** in terms of community action when he states that:

"... community education constitutes a self-help approach to community development and it offers the added bonus of rekindling our sense of community ... as people proceed, step by step, through co-operative ventures, they are able to recapture the feelings of involvement and a sense of community which tends to motivate them toward further joint efforts with like-minded persons".

Cohen and Brawer (1982:257) give the following definition of **community education:**
"... courses and activities for credit or noncredit, formal classroom of nontraditional programmes, cultural, recreational offerings specifically designed to meet the needs of the surrounding community and using school, college, and other facilities."

Boone et al (1981:229) extend the concept of **community education** into **community education for development,** which they define as follows:

"...community education for development (CED): a process whereby community members come together to identify their problems and needs, seek solutions among themselves, mobilize the necessary resources, and execute a plan of action or learning or both. This educative approach is one in which community is seen as both agent and objective, education is the process, and leaders are the facilitators in inducing change for the better".

Allen et al (1987:142) link their definition to the Third World situation when they define **community education** as follows:

"...community education in the Third World ... is largely concerned with ways in which we may meet the whole range of educational needs of all members of the community,

irrespective of age, sex, ethnic origin or social status. ...community education in its informal variety provides instruction in values, traditions, relationships and technologies sufficient for the needs of relative small-scale, largely self-sufficient, and often insecure, societies in which the emphasis is on continuity and stability. In short, informal education in the emerging nations of the Third World is concerned with learning through everyday living and doing and with providing a basis for socializing new members into the norms, customs and values of traditional societies."

According to Lovett (Bloomer and Shaw, 1979:118) the essence of community education may be viewed in the following manner:

"...community education can be seen as a means of ensuring the widening of (educational) opportunities through a more effective delivery and co-ordination of educational resources. It can provide more effectively than traditional methods for the wide range of individual needs and interests and also provide an educational backup service for groups engaged in the process of community action."

Lovett (Bloomer and Shaw, 1979:124) comments on the concept of **community education** as follows:

"Community education is, without doubt, a workable and relevant educational process even if more limited in scope than the rhetoric implies. The emphasis on working in the community; identifying with local people and their problems; opening up access to resources tied up in institutions; recognising the wide range of educational needs and interests; utilising popular and working class culture; as well as making use of the best of middle class culture; using people's lives, hopes, dreams, problems as the basis for their own education, utilising the skills of local people to run their own community education programme, all this does build up to a distinct 'community' approach".

Lovett et al (1983:31) state the following with regard to **community education**:

"**Community education** is a means to reach a broad bulk of the working class, assisting individual growth and development and providing support for those engaged in the process of community action".

Epstein (1980:iii) emphasizes the idea that community members must be involved in assessing the needs and problems of communities when he states the following concerning the concept of **community education**:

"Community education is a philosophy holding that education is for everyone, that education goes on at all times, that education happens everywhere. It is a process by which community members, through direct participation in a representative body, identify the needs and problems of the community and determine ways of meeting them with programs and services delivered through co-operative efforts of community groups (agencies, organizations, institutions), using all the resources available in the community".

In accordance with Epstein, Taylor (1988:40) presents the following definition:

"...**community education** is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all the educational needs of all its members."

In the same note, Clark (1977:5) defines Community Education as follows:

"...**community education** is an operational philosophy ... it provides for the learning opportunities of a vast majority of the members of the community."

From the fore-going definitions of community education the following deductions can be made, as presented by Poster (1982:2) and Pretorius (1990a:515-516):

- community education is a process
- community education is a philosophical concept
- community education is a system for community development (in the community education process, education and learning are aimed at community development - community education for development)
- the provisions of all the educational agencies in a community are utilised in a co-ordinated manner
- as far as possible, community education provides for all the educational, welfare and recreational needs of all the members of a community (all age groups). "Nor does community education confine itself to any age span. It is often described as education' from the cradle to the grave'" (Poster, 1982:2).

- community resources are utilized to solve the problems of the community (relevance)
- the facilities of the school (college) are used for a variety of activities (the community school concept); the community uses the facilities of the school, and vice versa
- community education includes the provision of formal, non-formal and informal education
- the community members are intensely involved in decision-making with regard to education, in identifying community needs and problems, in the solution of problems, in mobilizing and utilizing resources and in operating action and learning programmes
- community education is a delivery system for providing various services in the community - educational, recreational, social and cultural services.

These definitions can be summarized as follows:

"Community education can be defined as the educational process in which the provisions (services, programmes, resources) of all the educational agencies in a community are utilized in a co-operative and co-ordinated manner, to provide for all of the learning needs of all the people of a community, to develop the community and to solve the problems of the community" (Pretorius, 1990a:515).

1.3.3   THE MODES OF EDUCATION

In the past years education has been equated to learning, irrespective of where, when and how it occurs. Whatever the case may be in dealing with education, even community education, three modes of education are distinguished, namely formal, informal and non-formal education. In the following section, definitions of the three modes of education will be undertaken. All community education programmes that are provided will be in the form of one of the three modes. Some community education programmes will be formal, some will be non-formal and others informal.

FORMAL EDUCATION

According to Fourie (1978:45), "Formal education can be defined as the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded full-time educational system, running from the primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, also a variety of specialised programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training".

The HSRC Report (1981:93) defines **formal education** as education that takes place in a planned way at recognised institutions such as schools, colleges, technikons, universities, et cetera. These institutions are graded chronologically and arranged in a hierarchy from primary school to university.

In his definition Coombs (1985:24) states that: "Formal education involves full time, sequential study extending over a period of years, within the framework of a relatively fixed curriculum."

Formal education, according to Boone et al (1981:284) is ordinary schooling. They assert that formal education can be related to community education in two ways, namely, that through it, the concept of 'community' can be brought into the classroom for study and analysis and that it helps towards developing children's awareness and knowledge of their own community.

Van Rensburg and Landman (1986:382) define formal education as follows:
Formal education is any organized, systematic teaching activity inside a formal education system (school, teachers' training college, technikon, university)".

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

According to Fourie (1978:45) **non-formal education** refers to "... any organized or semi organized educational activity **outside** the established structure of the formal system and

is 'aimed at serving a great variety of learning needs of different groups in the population, both young and old', relating i.e. to health, nutrition, agriculture, arts and crafts, out-of-school vocational training, family planning etc. and aimed at benefiting particular groups of the local population such as farmers, craftsmen and entrepreneurs, also unemployed out-of school youth".

Paul Fordham (1983:46) writes the following about the concept of **non-formal education**" ... part of a widespread search for alternatives in education which is itself intimately bound up with changing conceptions of development. The term 'non-formal' was given currently by development planners rather than educators. Existing terminology was seen as too narrow, while many of the more important programmes (e.g farmer training) were sometimes not seen as education at all, even by practitioners themselves. What was needed was an all-embracing term for ... educative services. As it gained currency, the term also came to include provision for the school age dropouts and left outs of the formal system."

Lowe (1975:24) differentiates between non-formal and informal learning by stating that informal education means the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires knowledge from daily experiences. Non-formal education is any organised educational activity outside the established formal system whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.

Sheffield and Diejomaoh (1972:xi) report that the interest in non-formal education has increased in Africa today, many African governments and aid agencies being desirous of exploring alternative measures for upgrading the productivity and skills of the majority of their populations that enjoyed very little or no formal schooling, and primarily regards those non-formal education programmes either as an alternative to non-formal schooling or an extension of the formal schooling for those who are in need of being upgraded for more productive employment by means of additional (on-the-job) training.

Non-formal education being less expensive per trainee than formal education, there seems to be merit in King's (1976:13) strong plea for innovation in the form of a 'movement from traditional schools ... towards non-formal community training centres' for developing countries with limited resources: that is, a 'movement from schools towards communities' ... 'From academic subjects to development areas, from single-use buildings to shared use', from full time to part-time education, etc.

With regard to **non-formal education**, Djiwandono (1979:45) states the following: "Non-formal education assumes that learning is a lifelong process, starting from infancy and continuing through adulthood. It includes the acquisition of skills as well as the adoption of attitudes, values, and behaviour. It includes receptivity to productivity change."

Van der Stoep (1983:7) states that **non-formal education** embraces all activities in every field of knowledge and action carried out by the community using methods whose worth has been demonstrated.

Coombs (1985:23) defines non-formal education as follows: "... non-formal education, contrary impressions not withstanding, does not constitute a distinct and separate educational system, parallel to the formal education system. Non-formal education is simply a handy generic label covering: any organised, systematic, educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined non-formal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programs, adult literacy programs, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes, and various community programs of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, co-operatives, and the like".

INFORMAL EDUCATION

Van Schalkwyk (1988:108) defines informal education as " .... the life-long process whereby each person is able to acquire insight and understanding spontaneously and incidentally. It is also the way in which attitudes and patterns of behaviour can be learnt from everyday experiences with the environment, for example by reading a book, watching television and talking to people."

According to Coombs (1985:24), informal education is "... the life-long process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insight from daily experiences and exposure to the environment at home, at work, at play, from the example and attitudes of family and friends, from travel, reading newspapers and books, or by listening to radio or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganized, unsystematic and even unintentional at times, yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person's total life time learning - including that of even a highly 'schooled' person".

In analysing the concept **informal education,** Wain (1987:48) writes that: In general, informal learning is distinguished from other kinds of learning by the fact that it is non-intentional. The usual tendency is therefore to distinguish it from education which is commonly taken to refer to intentional learning activities.

In his concluding remarks on the subject, Wain (1987:51) states the following: By informal education is meant that planned or deliberate instruction a tutor may provide, or a parent may give a child, or a master impart to an apprentice. But more than that, it includes the self-education a person may seek through a planned course of reading in the library, or secure through conversation with friends or obtain by travel or general observation or by use of one or more of several mass media now so freely at hand. Thus informal education may be planned or deliberately imposed on another, or it may result from self-motivation and be self-imposed. Sometimes it may result more from chance than from design. What distinguishes it from schooling is that there is no institution

especially provided in which it takes place, although informal education may occur in school even during regular class time.

Hargreaves (1981:200) writes the following about **informal education**: "It includes education as leisure and education for leisure."

In summary, it is evident that community education cannot be divorced from the three modes of education, namely, formal, non-formal and informal education. This is true because community education programmes can be presented in any of the three modes of education.

1.3.4   THE LEARNING SOCIETY

The following section will focus attention on defining and explaining the concept of **the learning society.**

Decker et al (1988:v) remark as follows with regard to the **learning society** "... educational reform should focus on the goal of creating a learning society. At the heart of such a society is the commitment to a set of values and to a system of education that affords all members the opportunity to stretch their minds to full capacity. from early childhood through adulthood, learning more as the world changes.

With regard to the learning society, Decker et al (1988:xi-xii) further state that the learning community is a way of looking at public education as a total community enterprise. It provides a framework for local citizens and a community's schools, agencies, and institutions to become active partners in addressing many of the problems and quality-of-life concerns prevalent in the community today. Sometimes this takes the form of a school using the community's resources in some way - from parent volunteers, perhaps, to an 'adoption' by a local business or industry. Sometimes, instead. it is the community that uses the school's resources. Senior citizens may eat in the school cafeteria, a nearby business might use the gymnasium before school hours for gymnastic

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routines, or a local club might borrow the school computer in the evening. The ideal situation is when the sharing of resources is mutual, when those elderly citizens read to children or tutor them for a time following the lunch hour or the gymnasts organize student teams on weekends. However it works, the end result is to get the community involved in the schools and the schools involved with the community for mutual benefits. Therein lies the learning community's strength.

Still in connection with the concept of the **learning community**, Decker et al (1988:24-40) interpret this concept as follows: "Our goal is to make the community one classroom. We want to get as many people involved in learning as we possibly can".

According to Jarvis (1985:52), the **learning society** is learner based, has no barriers of access and provides a flexible but life-long system of education. It is society organized in such a manner as to make all kinds of learning available to everyone on a full-time or part time basis.

Wain (1987:43) argues that learning within a learning society occurs at intervals throughout life, alternating with normal life activities, unifying all stages of education, accepting formal and non-formal patterns of education and embracing education as an integral but not pheripheral or separate part of life. The learning society can be seen as the embodiment of the programme's determination to so conceptualise education that at operational level lifelong education is an organising principle providing a total system for all education. Following this idea, it is apparent that a learning society will eventually achieve lifelong learning.

According to Hussein (1988:136), the following are broad assumptions in relation to the concept of the **learning society**:
The learning society is:
- an educative society
- the individualisation of society
- the consequence of the influx of manpower from rural to urban areas

-     the dynamics of industrial society involving the move from one place to another, embarking upon new occupations and changing status.

In addition, Hussein (1988:136) states that in the educative society, climbing up the social ladder depends very much on the opportunity and ability to do so.

Nkosi (1994:22) remarks as follows on the concept of the **learning society:**
"The challenge of a learning community is the development of educational programmes for all, for example, recreation, career retraining, family life, day care, pre-school education, et cetera."

Wain (1987:202-203) argues that the **learning society** or an education-centred society has to do with life-long education. He asserts that the learning society, in short, is a society designed to be supportive of individual lifelong education. ...the **learning society** is therefore one that is exceedingly self-conscious about education in its total sense; that is conscious of the educational relevance and potential of its own institutions and of the general environment that is its own way of life, and is determined to maximize its resources in these respects, to the utmost.

From the fore-going arguments it is clear that the **learning society** should look to all its institutions not merely for their efficiency and productivity but also, and more especially, for their educative potential.

Furthermore, it is not an accidental fact that thinkers who have theorized about and advocated the **learning society**, like those mentioned above, have also thought of it as community, because it cannot be thought of in any other way that is morally acceptable.

According to Wain (1987:229) the concept '**learning society**' features prominently in the lifelong education programme, but equal prominence is given to the idea that education should be one with self-realization and with self-directedness.

The **learning society** should therefore be one that believes in the Deweyian dictum that 'Living together educates'. From a more formal point of view, it is a society that, in Illich's terms, is mobilized for learning (Wain, 1987:203).

It also becomes clear at this stage, that, when providing community education in a given community, one is also establishing a **learning society.**

On the basis of the above-mentioned definitions the concept of **the learning society** can be summarized as follows:

- an educative society
- leadership is the joint responsibility of all members
- supportive of individual life-long education
- active partners in addressing problems and quality of life concerns.
- community involved in the schools and the schools involved with the community for mutual benefits.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the light of the preceeding introduction, theme analysis, conceptualisation and demarcation of the field of investigation, the problem of the present study can be formulated as follows:

What methods and techniques can be implemented in the community education process to assess the learning needs of individuals and communities, in order to provide relevant community education programmes?

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

The researcher will attempt to verify the following central theoretical statement in this study:

The methods and techniques implemented to assess learning needs of individuals and communities in the community education process can significantly contribute towards

providing relevant community education programmes.

1.6   RESEARCH METHOD

This research project can be regarded as an exploratory-descriptive study.

It is an exploratory study in the sense that the aim of the study is the exploration of a relatively unknown research area. The aims of exploratory studies may vary quite considerably. They may be:

-    to gain new insights into a phenomenon: In this study new insights into the phenomenon of community education will be gained, but more in particular methods for assessing learning needs in the community education process will be investigated.

-    to explicate the central concepts and constructs: In particular, the concepts of **community education** and **needs assessment** will be dealt with.

-    to determine priorities for future research;

-    to develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon, (Mouton and Marais, 1988:43).

According to Mouton and Marais (1988:43), the best guarantee for the completion of an exploratory study is to be found in the researcher's willingness to examine new ideas and suggestions and to be open to new stimuli. The major pitfall to avoid is allowing preconceived ideas or hypotheses to exercise a determining influence on the direction or nature of the research.

On the other hand this research can also be regarded as a descriptive study.

Mouton and Marais (1988:43) write the following with regard to descriptive studies:

"The spectrum of descriptive studies includes a large variety of types of research. On the one hand, it is possible to emphasize the in-depth description of a specific individual, situation, group, organisation, tribe, sub-culture, interaction, or social object. On the other hand, one may emphasize the frequency with which a specific characteristic or variable occurs in a sample. A distinction may also be drawn between descriptive studies

with contextual interest and descriptive studies with a more general interest. This distinction is also closely related to the distinction which may be drawn between qualitative and quantitative research."

According to Mouton and Marais (1988:44), the term 'description' has developed into an umbrella term used in many different types of research. The single common element in all of these types of research is the researcher's goal, which is to describe that which exists as accurately as possible. Depending upon the researcher's preference for qualitative or quantitative research methodologies, and his or her choice of either ideographic or nomothetic strategies, the meaning of the phrase 'to describe accurately' would vary with the context.

One of the most important considerations in descriptive studies is to collect accurate information or data on the domain phenomena which are under investigation (Mouton and Marais, 1988:44).

This research is also a descriptive study in the sense that it aims at describing and defining community education, the community education process, phases in the community education process and methods and techniques that can be implemented in assessing learning needs in the community education process.
This research is thus a basic, theoretical study based on a review of relevant literature. Any research includes a study of relevant literature, because no research can be undertaken without first gaining a thorough knowledge of research that has already been completed in the specific field of research.

1.7   AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the present study is to explore the concept of community education and to investigate methods and techniques that can be implemented to assess the learning needs of individuals and communities in the community education process, in order to provide relevant community education programmes.

1.8   PROGRAMME OF STUDY

After the preceeding orientation and statement of the problem in connection with the investigation, the programme of the study is as follows:

In chapter 2 the nature and extent of community education will be outlined, particularly in relation to the aims, components, infrastructure, agencies and provisions thereof. Attention will also be given to the concepts of community development, community learning centre, the community school and the community college.

In Chapter 3 the community education process will be described and analyzed. In particular, the phases in the community education process will receive attention.

Furthermore, an introduction into learning need structures will be done in order to give an indication of the broad spectrum of learning needs that exist among socially disadvantaged individuals and groups in a community.

In Chapter 4 the researcher is going to investigate methods and techniques that can be implemented in assessing the learning needs of individuals and communities in the community education process.

In chapter 5 the findings of the study will be summarized and distinct recommendations resulting from the study will be made.