*CHAPTER ONE*
ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

The aim and objective of this chapter is to:

- provide an overview of the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa;

- identify a strategy to alleviate illiteracy in the country;

- layout the aims and objectives of this study;

- present the underlying principles of the method of investigation;

- clarify the concepts used in the study;

- present a summarised layout of the thesis that can serve as an orientation and background against which the research report should be read.

1.1   INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, as in most developing countries, there are large numbers of people who have not had any education. Many people, particularly blacks, have not had any schooling whatsoever. This has been the case historically and current statistics show it to be the same at present. It is estimated that about 12 million adults in South Africa lack a basic education (Department of Education 1999a:69). According to the population census undertaken in October 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2003:43), some 18% of the population aged 20 years or more have had no education at all. About 16% of the people have had some primary education (full or partial), 31% have had some secondary education, and 20% completed grade 12. Only 8% had some form of post-matriculation (higher) education (see Figure 1.1 on p.2). According to these figures 34% of the country's estimated 44 million people are functionally illiterate, that is, they have some basic reading and writing skills, but cannot function efficiently in a job which requires the ability to read and write fluently. Even among those who are functionally literate, a high percentage have dropped out of school before receiving a basic educational grounding which would equip them to function effectively in the labour market (Harley, Aitchison, Lyster & Land 1996:22).

1

FIGURE 1.1:   DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AGED 20 YEARS AND ABOVE BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED
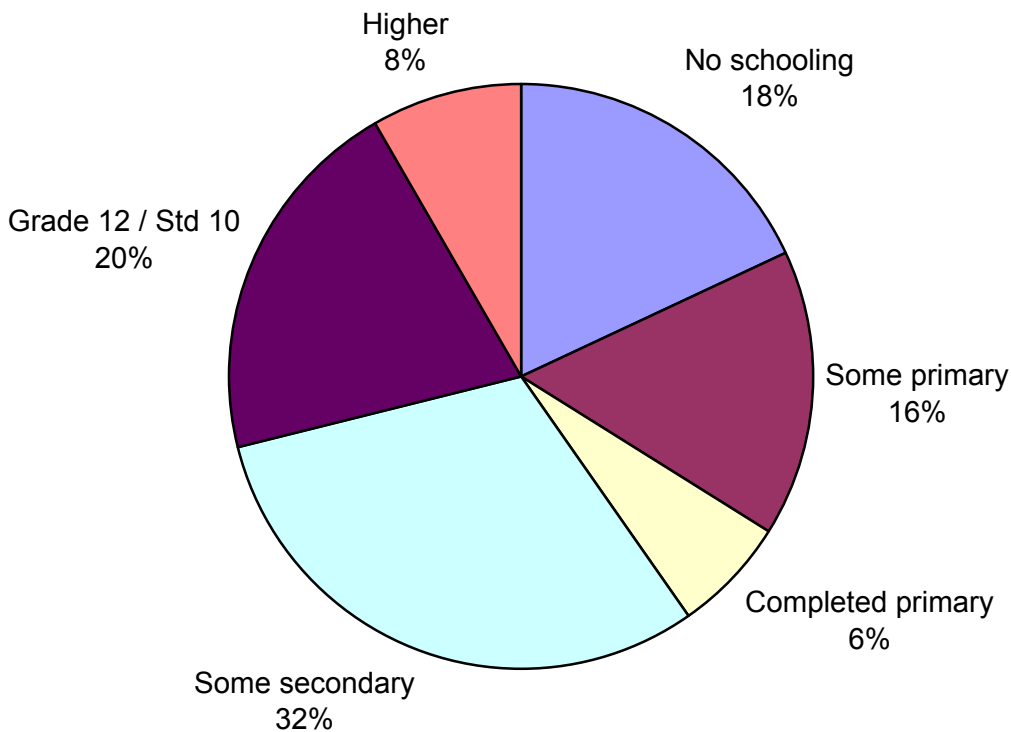
[Source: Statistics South Africa 2003:43]

In response to the high rate of illiteracy in the past, political organisations, churches and non-governmental organisations (hereafter referred to as NGOs) established night schools and literacy classes for blacks in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Pietermaritzburg in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1955 there were approximately 10 000 black students attending these night schools and literacy classes (Horrell 1968:19). However, these night schools and literacy classes were short-lived. They were forced to close down during the 1960s after the enactment of the Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953, which prescribed the terms for registration and admission to night schools. Government subsidies were subsequently drastically reduced. As a result of the reduction in financial assistance and the impossibility of administering the schools in the circumstances, many night schools were closed (Horrell 1964:115).

A survey of the literature on the development of Adult Basic Education (hereafter referred to as ABE) for blacks from the declaration of the Union of South Africa in 1910 until 1994, when South Africans voted for the first democratically elected government, reveals that there was very little ABE provided during the era of the Nationalist Party Government. This was largely the result of the National Party government's policies which were deliberately designed to eradicate night schools and literacy programmes (Bird 1984:205 - 210).

In 1975 the former Department of Education and Training (hereafter referred to as DET) established a Division of Adult Education within the Department. Since then, however, various education departments for blacks have become major providers of ABE. During the 1980s the liberation struggle highlighted the plight of millions of illiterate and semi-literate people. Labour unions drew attention to the poor opportunities available for workers who lacked the necessary skills and they began demanding worker education on behalf of the workers. The demand for worker education led to an expansion of the scope of ABE within industrial contexts (Millar in Husen, Neville & Postlethwaite 1989:59).

The dawn of a new political dispensation in 1994 made possible the transformation of Adult Basic Education and Training (hereafter referred to as ABET) under the Ministry of Education. Within the newly declared democracy in 1994, one of the first obligations the then Government of National Unity (hereafter referred to as GNU) felt compelled to fulfil the election promise of expanding access to basic education to all people. The new government's commitment to providing basic education to all South Africans is revealed in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, Act No 108 of 1996, Section 29(1), which states that: "*Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible*" (Republic of South Africa 1996:13).

Further, this constitutional obligation is expanded in the *White Paper on Education*. This document makes clear that the right to basic education applies to all children, youths and adults and it is a legal entitlement to which every person has a claim (Department of Education 1995:40).

The vision of the Department of Education for ABET in South Africa is of the alleviation of illiteracy through the development of and recognition of a skilled and knowledgeable adult learner population (Department of Education 1997a:9). In 1999 the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, identified as one of the nine priorities for his department, the start of a massive effort to overcome illiteracy, labelled "*Breaking the back of illiteracy in five years.*" He said, "*No adult South African citizen should be illiterate in the 21st century*" (Department of Education 1999b:9). However, within the context of competing demands for government resources, the resources required to alleviate illiteracy successfully in South Africa have to compete and be prioritised against other educational needs as well as a host of other developmental needs, such as housing and job creation. The government does not seem to have adequate resources to assume complete responsibility for the alleviation of illiteracy (Aitchison 2001:25).

The provision of ABET in South Africa has to be reformed if it is to address the problem of illiteracy.   The legacy of inequality in education has left many blacks illiterate. Demands for the improvement of the provision of ABET to alleviate illiteracy, are on the increase.

It is within the context of a new dispensation, government promises and massive illiteracy, that a suitable strategy to address the problem among blacks in South Africa will have to be found. There is a need for an investigation such as this present study to give in-depth consideration as to what might be done to help solve the problem.

Following the above brief overview of the history of ABET for blacks in South Africa in the past and present, it is useful to state the problem within the parameters of this present study.

1.2   POSING OF THE PROBLEM

The urgency to attend to difficulties in the field of ABE in the Republic of South Africa (hereafter referred to as RSA) has increased in the past few years. According to the Report of the National Education Policy Initiative (hereafter referred to as NEPI), a project initiated by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (1993:1) (hereafter referred to as NECC), several compelling factors have influenced the renewed interest in ABE in South Africa. These factors include:

◊   The historical inadequacy of school education, especially for black communities, and its failure to provide adequate initial education and functional literacy for a majority of the adult population.

◊   The rapid technological change in society and the need for training and retraining, together with the growing awareness of the relationship between levels of training and productivity and economic growth.

◊   The rapid political and social change in South Africa, including the recent recognition that society and its institutions and organisations play a vital role in the development of an informed citizenry.

◊   New opportunities for development in South Africa and the impact of theories which stress the importance of the adult education processes and collaborative approaches to development.

◊   An increased awareness of the enormous and growing number of people living in great misery.

◊   The growing recognition of the need to redress apartheid's wrongs and for redress of past and present discrimination against women, as well as against rural and poor people.

The single most compelling factor influencing interest in ABE mentioned above, however, is the fact that South Africa, like many other developing countries, is faced with a vast number of illiterate citizens. There are about 12 million blacks in South Africa who have had very little or no access to school education in a population of 44 million (Statistics South Africa 2003:43). Samuel (1992:119) gives the following categories of blacks in the RSA who are victims of the former system of black education:

◊   Those who have had no schooling whatsoever.
◊   Those who have had a very limited schooling and are unemployed.
◊   Those who have had very limited schooling and are employed, but who will not have another chance to be involved in education, except for what their employers may provide.

Although the former DET created an infrastructure to provide education for as many black adults as possible (Department of Education and Training 1991:107), ABE for blacks in the RSA was poorly conceptualised and limited in its development until 1994 (Walters 1989:115). It also suffered from many problems and weaknesses. There was for instance, no legislative base; the resource base, whether of institutions, professionals, money, research, or associations, was also poor (NEPI 1993:1). ABE was also not an integral part of the entire education system (Hartshorne in McGregor & McGregor 1992:7).

The government developed a Multi-year Plan in an attempt to alleviate illiteracy. The Plan aimed at reaching and enrolling some 2,5 million learners between 1998 and 2001 (Department of Education 1997a:xi). However, the government has not fulfilled its promises of enrolling some 2,5 million learners between 1998 and 2001. The provision of ABET by the state, NGOs and other stakeholders scarcely reaches 1% of the population of illiterate adults in South Africa. The Department of Education acknowledges that the number of adults who are illiterate is unacceptably high and that efforts to improve literacy should be intensified (Department of Education 2002:24).

In the light of the above facts the primary question of this thesis can therefore be formulated as follows: What is a suitable strategy for alleviating illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa? In an attempt to answer the primary question of this study the following secondary questions facilitate the demarcation of the problem more clearly:

◊   What attempts were made to alleviate illiteracy amongst black adults during the era of white missionaries and the Nationalist Party Government?

◊   What are the current developments in the South African education system regarding the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa?

◊   How do other developing countries address the problem of illiteracy? What are some of the international trends and advances in the alleviation of illiteracy? What types of problems did these countries encounter and what solutions did they apply to alleviate the problem of illiteracy? What potential model(s) could be adapted for use in South Africa?

◊   Should South Africa consider a large-scale, once-off programme or an ongoing series of campaigns? Is there a possible strategic direction for the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa?

1.3   THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study comprises both primary and secondary aims. The primary aim of the research is to identify a suitable strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy amongst black adults in South Africa. To fulfil the primary aim, the following secondary aims need to be considered:

◊   To engage in a profound and substantial analysis of the current provision of ABET by the Department of Education in South Africa.

◊   To provide the historical background of ABE for black people in South Africa during the traditional period (before 1652) and after colonisation in 1652.

◊   To undertake a historical-educational study into illiteracy and its alleviation in other developing countries to extract, adapt and formulate guiding principles for a South African national literacy campaign.

◊   To propose a model of how best to plan and implement a mass literacy campaign.

1.4   DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF RESEARCH

The present study is confined to the historical-educational analysis of the problem of illiteracy and its alleviation amongst blacks in South Africa. The study will identify a suitable strategy for the amelioration of illiteracy amongst the black adults from a time perspective. In view of this, the researcher limited his investigation to the strategies used to alleviate illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa by the various governments and interest groups between 1652 and 2003.

Research will also be limited to specific developing countries which implemented various strategies to alleviate illiteracy after achieving independence from their respective

colonisers. The case studies which will be presented are of particular germane to the South African context in certain respects, as will be seen in the chapters that follow.

The critical period to be reviewed will be the period from 1994 to 2003. It was in 1994 when the then Government of National Unity (hereafter referred to as GNU) began to set the framework for the restructuring of education (including ABET) in the country.

1.5   METHODOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

1.5.1   APPROACHES

The concept "approach" refers to the way in which an academic problem or situation is viewed, thought through and dealt with, according to principles which can be objectively discussed and are appropriate to the case being studied (Sinclair, Fox, Bullon & Manning 1995:72). The researcher's approach refers to a perceptual activity, different from the practical steps taken to access data, analyse and draw conclusions from them. Every researcher operates within a specific paradigm, a conceptual framework/way of thinking which determines his or her perception of a particular theme. Because the researcher has been in the field for almost thirty years, a long view which takes into consideration the history of the provision of ABET is necessarily part of his approach.

In this study, different approaches have nevertheless been used to investigate the phenomenon of ABE in South Africa. Those investigations have revealed what the barriers are which prevent the amelioration of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa. It has also justified the researcher's intuitive understanding that the problem is not simply one which has developed in the present but rather that it has a long history. Different ways or approaches to the illiteracy problem in South Africa – its poor provision, its status in education as a "Cinderella", its inappropriate fit into the system of current education – these and many other subordinate problems, each have to be approached differently to explain their existence and to draw conclusions about them. It is from this practical perspective that it has been necessary to list and explain the variety of approaches used in the research.

1.5.1.1 The problem-historical approach

The problem-historical approach enables the researcher to place an educational problem in its current context. The problematic matter or theme in contemporary education theory and practice is the point of departure for the researcher to examine the educational past. The question is asked about how solutions were found for problems in the past similar to current ones. In this way, the educational past can be understood when specific problems or questions are directed at it. The data which is gathered in this way is not an indiscriminate collection of historic-educational facts, but can be phrased as a series of answers to questions arising from actual educational problems (Venter 1979:167-168).

This approach assumes that the historical past can be clearly demarcated into specific eras for analysis. Approaching current problems which are developed and broadened by knowledge of the past is a valuable tool for the researcher. The past provides a perspective on the problem. In this case, without a detailed and intimate knowledge of past provision, any guidelines for the future would fail to accommodate the complexities of ABE in this country.

In this study the use of the historical approach helped to establish where ABE for blacks in South Africa stands and in which direction it should go (Venter & Verster 1986:36). In other words, knowledge of the problematic past of black ABE enables the researcher to better understand the present practice of ABE and to formulate guidelines for the future.

1.5.1.2 The socio-andragogical approach

The term "socio-andragogical" is derived from *sociare* (Latin, living together of people) and *andragogy*, a term constructed to mean "leading adults to learn". The researcher uses the socio-andragogical approach to investigate the interaction and relationship between ABE for blacks and other societal structures such as the school, the family and the community in time perspective. This approach can facilitate an analysis and evaluation of the role of ABE in the socio-political context in which it evolved. This is needed so that it becomes possible to suggest guidelines for drawing "educated" youth and illiterate parents in black communities closer together in the present (see paragraph 2.7.2).

In other words, this approach makes possible an assessment and evaluation of the role of ABE in the community and its relation to social and cultural activities. This is so whether ABE is offered in accordance with the educational needs and aspirations of blacks in South Africa or whether the philosophical basis of ABE is founded on ideas about ongoing social change.

1.5.1.3   The metabletic approach

The word metabletic is derived from the Greek word *metaballein* which means change (Venter & Van Heerden 1989:156). According to Venter & Verster (1986:44) the spotlight in this approach is on educational change in its many different manifestations over the years.

Education is always changing and the researcher uses this approach to trace fundamental changes in the most important aspects of ABE, that is, changes in the aims, the content and the methods of education, from 1652 up to 1994 (see chapter 2). Eras of the past are described and the changes in educational provision are discussed. A metabletic approach allows the researcher to describe education reality as it manifests itself (in documents) and how it has changed (Venter & Verster 1986:43).

The above approaches focus on the exposure and elucidation of changes in the phenomenon of ABE for blacks in South Africa and on its variable appearance in time. These approaches facilitated the understanding of the issues, which prevent illiteracy from being mitigated among blacks in South Africa.

1.5.2   RESEARCH METHODS

For the purpose of this study the concept "method" will be understood as the planned, orderly procedures followed to attain a specific goal, namely, the laying out of the problem that there has been little done to alleviate illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa; and the suggesting of a solution to this problem.

The concept "method" is derived from the Greek word *"methodos"* which is a combination of the words "*meta"* (after) and "*hodos"* (a way). Method, therefore, refers

10

to the way of doing something in a formal, scientific and systematic way in order to reach a set goal (Venter & Verster 1986:23).

The following methods gave direction to this study:

1.5.2.1 The historical-educational research method

The method of investigation chosen has been determined by the nature of the questions being posed about what would be a suitable strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa. ABE as an educational phenomenon can be usefully examined in its historical dimension over a long period of time (before 1652 and during the period of colonisation until the present). Black adult education after 1652 was focussed on meeting the socio-political and economic needs of the white minority rulers. Prior to 1652 the education of black adults served to keep the African traditions and tribal community cohesive and powerful. At present black adult education seems to be serving the competing political agendas of a range of ministers in the government. Looking at ABE from its position in education policies or initiatives over the last three hundred years or so, is a method of research which adds depth to observations and conclusions, and enables an understanding which should be scientific, objective and free of political bias.

The historical-educational research method involves the following interrelated steps (Venter 1992:9-13; Venter & Van Heerden 1989:111-117):

(i)   Identification, understanding and formulation of a problem

It is estimated that about 12 million adults in South Africa lack a basic education (see paragraph 1.1). The provision of ABET by the state, NGOs and other stakeholders scarcely reaches 1% of the population of illiterate adults in South Africa (see paragraph 1.2). The pivotal problem of this thesis can therefore be formulated as follows: What is a suitable strategy for alleviating illiteracy in South Africa? It follows that a critical analysis of the provision of ABET is necessary to provide guidelines for and to contribute to the improvement of ABET provision in South Africa.

(ii)   Delimitation of the problem

After the research problem had been identified and formulated, it was necessary to conduct a penetrating analysis of the alleviation of illiteracy in South Africa and set it within the context of strategies used in other developing countries. This was an obvious step so as to prevent the research design from being involved in a superficial investigation of too broad a field (Venter & Van Heerden 1989:112). The delimitation of the subject field is discussed in paragraph 1.4.

(iii)   Investigation of the problem in the present

The research problem in a contemporary context was intensively researched and studied to determine exactly what the topic entails. By mastering the knowledge of and convictions held by other scholars on the topic, the research problem could become a reasonably limited one, suitable for this study's purposes (Venter & Van Heerden 1989:112). This preliminary investigation enabled the researcher to interpret and evaluate data which provided questions to interrogate the educational past.

(iv)   Investigation of the problem in the educational past

Once the problem was identified, namely, what would be a suitable strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy in South Africa, an in-depth study of both primary and secondary sources was conducted in order to gain a solid background of the facts pertaining to the alleviation of illiteracy in the educational past.

(v)   Critical evaluation of data

The data gathered from the educational past and present was classified and analysed carefully, according to the principles of historical criticism. Historical criticism itself must be classified as external and internal.

◊   **External criticism**

External criticism, the examination of provenance of the documents, was applied. This methodology determines the originality of the documents used by seeking to establish where, when, why and by whom they were written.

◊   **Internal criticism**

Internal criticism was used to determine the meaning and truthfulness of statements in some of the documents used in this study.

(vi)   Interpretation of data and writing the report

The data found valid and reliable were further analysed, classified and integrated into the study. They were then documented according to specific, acceptable standards and interpreted to realise the general aim of the research (see paragraph 1.3).

The writing of the report on the data is the final step of the historical-educational research. The historical facts examined in the study have been systematised and interpreted. From that interpretation some conclusions were drawn. They have served as a basis to the guidelines offered in this study to the problem of alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa.

1.5.2.2 The Descriptive Method

Describing the extent and particular character of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa and describing the past and present provision to alleviate it, is a necessary first step. As Sax (1979:18) says, a descriptive method may help to point out the extent of a problem and indicate how serious and widespread it is. This information is vital if solutions to the problem are to be proffered. The descriptive method in this study provides the researcher with a tool to systematically describe the phenomenon of "illiteracy", showing that its extent and nature are a serious barrier to economic development in the country. The social ills characteristically arising in illiterate societies are of a grave nature, especially in the context of the AIDS pandemic in South Africa.

13

1.5.2.3 The Analytical Method

Heinemann's (1979:47) understanding of the term "analysis" as a process of separating something into its constituent parts, so as to examine or describe it is used at various stages of this study in both primary and secondary sources so as to arrive at valid conclusions and recommendations.

1.5.2.4 The Chronological Method

Chronological ordering supports the historical research method. The chronological method implies that the analysis of the educational phenomenon, in this study, the alleviation of illiteracy is done for the whole period from 1652 up to 2003 in a serial way (see Chapters 2 and 3). In other words, themes are not what drives the research, but rather the development in time against a background of changing political situations. How education was provided to alleviate illiteracy is studied so that the present can be understood better and a future provision be suggested.

1.5.2.5 Case Studies

Studies showcasing international trends and advances in strategies for alleviating illiteracy in other developing countries have been selected to get a broader view. This method is used in chapter four in which a study is made on the strategies for alleviating illiteracy. The findings of this chapter have been used to develop a conceptual model of ABE for blacks in South Africa (See chapter five).

1.5.3   TECHNIQUES IMPLEMENTED IN THE RESEARCH

Two techniques were used in this study – interviews and personal observations. The word "technique" is used here to describe a method for realising some purpose (Hawes & Hawes 1982:227).

1.5.3.1 Interviews

Onions (1973a:1101) defines the concept "interview" as a method of talking to a person or group of persons so as to elicit statements for publication. This kind of conversation between individuals aims at exchanging views about a particular topic.

According to Sax (1979:232) the research interview represents: *"…a direct attempt by the researcher to obtain reliable and valid measure in the form of verbal responses from one or more respondents".* Interviews are useful because if responses given by respondents are unclear, questions can be rephrased. The researcher can also probe for more specific answers and repeat questions where it appears that they have been misunderstood.

However, the interview technique has its own limitations. Some of the limitations are given below (Sax 1979:233-244):

◊   They are expensive and time-consuming.
◊   They may intimidate or annoy respondents with racial, ethnic or social economic backgrounds different from the interviewer.
◊   They are open to overt subtle biases of the interviewees.
◊   They are vulnerable to personality conflicts.
◊   They require skilled and trained interviewers, and
◊   They may be difficult to summarise.

McKay (2001:5) distinguishes between three types of interviews:

Highly structured interview: In the highly structured interview the interviewer poses questions using a questionnaire. The respondent is given a list of possible answers to choose from and ticks the appropriate boxes. The respondent is not allowed the liberty of considering options which were not originally thought of by the researcher and included in the possible answers.

Semi-structured interview: In this type of interaction, the researcher makes use of a loosely constructed interview guide. A few questions are asked to initiate the conversation and then issues are explored in more detail. The questions posed are more open-minded than in the previous type of interview and the respondent is given the opportunity to respond with a variety of possible answers.

In this study semi-structured interviews were carried out with officials in the top management of the Department of Education as well as adult educators at universities (see Appendix E). The reason for choosing these officials is that they have a broad

15

experience over a long period in the ABE sector. They also have depths of experiences in education in general and ABE practices in particular. Interviews from such a wide range of ABET practitioners proved valuable for this study – providing first-hand knowledge from which deductions about the whole provision of ABET in the RSA could be made.

In an attempt to identify a suitable strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa an interview questionnaire provided some questions which depend on the primary and secondary questions (see Appendix C). Questions to respondents were largely open-ended to gather as much information as possible. The researcher allowed the respondents the flexibility to elaborate on any ideas that they felt warranted further exploration, and encouraged them to relate their own views on the issues under discussion to those issues within the context of the ABET programme. The data gathered were tested for authenticity by cross-checking with government publications and official documents (see Appendix D for a resume of the findings of such interviews).

Unstructured interview: In this type of interview, there are no predetermined questions. The interview is more like a general conversation. Direct questions are only asked if some area of interest to the researcher is not covered and definite information is required.

Unstructured interviews were also carried out with principals and supervising teachers of adult education centres. The major advantage of the unstructured interview is that the interviewer can tailor it to the person being interviewed and can use verbal and non verbal cues to a greater extent than in the more structured interviews to determine respondents' responses. However, the disadvantage of this technique is that the data gathered may be unreliable or inconsistent because of the differences in questions or methods employed by the interviewer (Cates 1985:97).

1.5.3.2 Personal observation

Onions (1973b:1429) defines the concept "observation" as "*an act of observing scientifically a phenomenon [education] in regard to its cause or effect.*" In a certain sense, all techniques of gathering information involve observation of some kind. The observational method compels the researcher to rely on seeing and hearing things and

recording them rather than relying on a subject's self-report responses to questions (McMillan & Schumacher 1989:271).

In this study, personal opinions were proffered and conclusions drawn about the state of ABE for blacks in South Africa from the time the researcher joined the Division of Adult Education as Principal Education Adviser in the Highveld Region of the former DET in 1986.   The conclusions were based on experience in the management of adult education centres and from informal direct observation. Other sources for observation and active participation have been the seminars and workshops of the Forum for the Advancement of Adult Education of the University of the Witwatersrand from 1988 to the present. The researcher's association with the ABET Institute at the University of South Africa from 1996 has also influenced his opinion on the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa.

The researcher's personal observations have been substantiated by discussion with departmental officials and ABET practitioners. The sum total of these experiences has had an effect on concepts and opinions of the researcher with regard to the provision of ABET and the identification of a suitable strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa.

1.5.4   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An experiential base which extends over three decades to include the establishment of the Adult Education Section in the then DET at the height of the apartheid government's power in the 1970s, until the present in which adult education has become a factor on the democratic government's political agenda, provides many years of practical work in the field. The consequence of this practical experience is that the theoretical framework in which this study took place is well informed about local conditions, subtle changes in political intention, the appearance of the same mistakes in the present as plagued the past of adult education, the successes and failures of campaigns in other countries developing in a similar way to South Africa (out of a colonial past into a new democratic provision), and, importantly, what needs to be done to rectify the lack of literacy for a better future for all.

In looking for a model which could accommodate elements of the researcher's own observations and research, Bhola's work (1983, 1984 and 1994) appeared to offer such an opportunity. Bhola conceptualised three programme options for the alleviation of illiteracy within societies, namely, the diffusion approach, the selective–intensive approach, and the mass approach. Bhola synthesised the findings presented at a UNESCO Conference with the expressed intention of finding what was successful and necessary for the success of a literacy campaign and presented what he has called an *idealised* model for the alleviation of illiteracy. While each approach in his synthesis seems to possess its own constructs and unique explanations, the three approaches are actually intertwined. Of necessity when Bhola does his comparative study of the various campaigns and programmes, the evidence must be synthesised into themes which summarise his findings. These themes categorise his conclusions. But for the researcher suggesting a conceptual model in a practical sense, those themes can only be useful as starting points to the investigation. So the differences, not the similarities between the South African needs, efforts and goals will be different from those of other countries. The history of each country is unique. The three approaches are briefly outlined below.

The diffusion approach

According to Bhola (1984: 34) the diffusion approach assumes that literacy will come through universal primary school education. As the graduates of primary schools enter adulthood and join the economy and as the older generation pass away, literacy will have been diffused throughout the society. This approach seeks to alleviate literacy through attrition of the numbers of illiterates over a long term. The supporters of this approach believe that childhood and adolescence are the best periods of life for learning; and that, on the other hand, adults are not competent learners. Even when adults do have the mental capacity for learning, they are supposedly overwhelmed by obligations to the family and to the community. If adults have survived without literacy thus far, why not, it is asked, let them muddle through life, instead of taking already scarce resources away from the children?

This approach when applied to the researcher's understanding of the problems faced in South Africa, was immediately seen to be deficient. Adults are, in fact, excellent learners because as they learn they also increase their learning ability. Indeed, if learning to read and write is seen as an unfulfilled obligation to the family and the community, learning is

18

accelerated. But to return to budgetary issues a programme for adult literacy would mean greater overall allocations to education. It should be remembered that expenditures on adult literacy are likely to improve the rate of returns on primary school education. Quite apart from the logic of the arguments for and against, the experience of developing countries in the post-colonial periods indicates that in most countries, our hopes of alleviating illiteracy through attrition will not be fulfilled for decades, in the context of existing demographic trends. Why? Illiteracy will not go away only if we wait long enough to allow the schools to do their jobs of educating children of the present and future generations. Children cannot affect the economy for up to twenty years under certain conditions as President Nyerere said (United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar 1964:xi): *"To try to bring about universal literacy through the universalisation of primary education will indeed be a practice of gradualism. Should such a strategy be followed, many of the developing countries may not be fully literate even by the twenty first century…considering the poor quality of primary education and poorer retention power."*

In the South African context, the researcher proposes a comprehensive approach which aims at education for all, that is, children, youth and adults. Plans for universal literacy should be complemented with plans for universal primary education and universal early childhood educare. These three universal approaches should be pursued, at the same time, one integrated with the other and none of the three given more priority than the other. The right to education starts from early childhood and continues through adulthood into old age. The integrated approach to literacy is expanded in chapter 5 taking the South African situation into consideration (see paragraph 5.3.5).

The selective-intensive approach

Bhola (1984: 35) reports that this approach seeks to promote literacy among those select economic regions, select occupational groups and select age cohorts which often have the highest promise of economic returns and to work with them intensively for maximum effect. This approach accepts the central role of literacy in the process of development, but it makes segmented commitments. The hope is that after the economic take-off within the selected sectors, there will be spillover to other economic sectors and these will then become eligible for intensive material and literacy inputs. In the meantime, the unstated assumption is that mass literacy will be a waste. A mass

campaign can use the selective-intensive design to serve the developmental needs of peoples in various sectors and in different geographical areas.

In the South African context this approach is very similar to the approaches used by oppressive regimes and colonisers. The selective-intensive approach appears to have been developed primarily to promote a political-ideological agenda rather than an education one. It is also not an approach which is successful when the numbers of illiterates relative to the literates are as great as is the case of South Africa.

The mass approach

In comparison with the other two approaches discussed above, the mass approach seems to be the most promising for the alleviation of illiteracy. According to Bhola (1984: 35) this approach seeks to make all adult men and women literate within a particular timeframe. Literacy is seen as a means to a comprehensive set of ends – economic, socio-structural, and also political. By giving the campaign a mass orientation, a large part of the population is able to participate in it as learners, instructors or in one of the many other roles that a campaign requires.

The mass approach is crucial for bringing the population into contact with the new ideology of the state. Through education, the state attempts to give a new political meaning to citizenship and a sense of national unity. The ideological struggle through education also attempts to mobilise the people in constructing new kinds of political democracy (Lind 1988: 28).

In the present study of identifying a suitable strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy in South Africa, the analysis takes into account the various processes involved in the planning and implementation of a mass literacy campaign developed by Bhola. According to Bhola (1984: 177-195) the following conditions are a prerequisite for the conduct of successful mass literacy campaigns. These conditions represent a resumé of Bhola's findings in a thematic way. They are:

◊ **The question of political will and the ideological context of mass campaigns**

The alleviation of illiteracy hinges firstly on political commitment of the leadership. This factor does not refer to mere policy declarations on alleviating illiteracy, but rather to the integration of literacy activities into active socio-economic change, as part of a general programme for political change, or into a national development plan. Experience shows that in the South African context, the underlying reason for the problems and limitations in the provision of ABET is the lack of political will that would provide a sound foundation for the distribution of literacy resources. The national commitment should also permeate all levels of the political structure from top to bottom and should be sustained until the literacy solution has been achieved.

◊ **Mobilisation of the masses**

A mass campaign is impossible without the participation of the masses. Successful campaigns require the mobilisation of all the forces, that is to say, the participants themselves, literacy workers and the community as a whole. Even if the masses at the grassroots level are made aware of the campaign, they need the support of the authorities at national and provincial levels.

◊ **Resources needed for implementing the campaign strategy**

A campaign should never be short of resources, as successful campaigns generate their own resources as they proceed. In the South African context, a lack of commitment by the leadership leads to reluctant funding of the campaign and a lack of effective mobilisation. Use of external funding is valuable and necessary if there are such partnerships in existence. But when no contingency plans are made for the time when the funds are unavailable, it points back to a lack of planning and commitment by leadership. The alleviation of illiteracy cannot happen without adequate resources.

◊ **Establishment of administrative and technical structures**

Political will is prior, but technology is the great enabler in the planning and implementation of a successful mass literacy. The top-down approach used by Bhola in

planning the campaign creates problems because the authorities do not know what people want. Top-down strategies which fail to engage communities at a very local level and build on their motivation and interests should be discouraged.

The conclusions which Bhola draws about mass literacy campaigns are informative for South Africa. But Bhola's idealised model will not fit into the range of particularities which make the South African circumstances difficult to understand in detail. It is for that reason that an historical view of the context of adult literacy education and a non thematic approach, comparing what has been successful and what has not, is not useful for understanding the South African illiteracy problem. It is only by a *detailed analysis through time* that a model can be presented as usable for a new dispensation for literacy in South Africa.

1.5.5   DISCUSSION OF SOURCES

The literature study for this thesis was initiated with a bibliographical search for material in the libraries of the following institutions, namely, the University of South Africa, University of Pretoria, University of the Witwatersrand, South African Institute of Race Relations and the Centre for Sciences Development of the Human Sciences Research Council.   The major reference sources for ABE material were consulted.   These comprise journal articles, books, dissertations and theses, newspapers and archival materials.   In accordance with the requirements of the historical-educational research method each separate source was carefully investigated so that only data found relevant, correct, reliable and trustworthy would be included in this study.   The sources discussed below were of particular importance.

1.5.5.1 Primary sources

Primary sources (McMillan & Schumacher 1989:118) used in this study are personal observation, interviews, the unbroken series of the DET's and Department of Education's Annual Reports from 1975 to 2002, education memoranda, the manuals for Adult Education Centres issued by both the former and current Department of Education. Also used were newsletters compiled by principals and supervisory teachers of adult education centres, minutes of conferences and seminars and newspaper articles from

papers such as the *Sowetan, Sunday Times, The Star, Business Day et cetera*, government publications on education and training and archival materials.

There is an acute shortage of primary sources on the topic of the *alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks* in South Africa. Thus the researcher had to rely heavily on secondary sources.

1.5.5.2 Secondary sources

Secondary sources are syntheses of previous literature, both theoretical and empirical. Secondary sources are useful because they provide an overview of research developments on the topic being investigated. The disadvantage of the secondary source is that they are less reliable, especially if more than one intermediary is involved (Cates 1985:105).

In this study, the authoritative secondary sources consulted and referenced on the state of ABE for blacks in South Africa were located at the libraries of the University of South Africa, University of Pretoria, University of the Witwatersrand, Rand Afrikaans University, University of the Western Cape, University of Zululand and Vista University. Some of the secondary sources were also located at the Pretoria State Library and the library of the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria.

The following bound volumes of British and American Journals were used, namely, *Adult Learning, Adult Education, Adult Education Quarterly and Adult Education Journal of Research and Theory*. This study has also used the information provided by South African journals such as *South African Journal of Higher Education, Fundisa, Africa Insight, South African Journal of Science, Nou-blad, Popagano*, Radio and Television. Other secondary sources used are textbooks, dissertations and theses.

1.6   PLAN OF STUDY

CHAPTER ONE: Orientation and background

Chapter one is an orientation chapter in which the introduction, background to the problem and the statement of the problem are presented. The aims of the research are

formulated, as well as the direction followed to attain the aims. The demarcation of the field of study and the proposed plan of study are proposed. Basic concepts of ABET are defined.

CHAPTER TWO: **The provision of adult basic education from before 1652 up to 1994**

This chapter sketches the historical background in which the current ABET provision and development arose. It provides an overview of the origin and development of ABE for black people in South Africa, during the traditional period which is understood to be before 1652, and after colonisation in 1652. The alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks during the various governments is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: **Situational analysis of adult basic education and training: 1994-2003**

This chapter examines current developments in the South African education system in the alleviation of illiteracy. This chapter investigates the role of the state, the National Literacy Cooperation and the business sector in the provision of ABET. It provides a critical analysis of the South African National Literacy Initiative.

CHAPTER FOUR: **Review of literature on mass-scale provision of adult basic education in developing countries: some practical implications for South Africa**

This chapter examines some of the international trends and advances in the alleviation of illiteracy. It provides a theoretical reflection on "mass-scale provision of adult basic education and training" and a conceptual background against which the problem of the study is analysed. Lessons learned from other literacy campaigns will be implemented to solve contemporary problems.

CHAPTER FIVE: **A conceptual model of adult basic education and training for blacks in South Africa**

This chapter is about the question of whether mass-scale provision of ABET is a suitable strategy for alleviating illiteracy in South Africa. A model of how best to plan and implement a mass literacy campaign in South Africa is proposed.

CHAPTER SIX: **Summary, findings and recommendations**

On the basis of the research findings, some recommendations are made and a workable plan of action for the future alleviation of illiteracy in South Africa is proposed.

1.7   EXPLICATION OF CONCEPTS

In the field of ABE many definitions are used interchangeably to describe the nature and scope of ABE in its theory and practice. There is a lack of agreement about some of the basic terminology in the field.   The problem is exacerbated by the existence of conceptual ambiguity and the confusion of concepts such as "formal education", "informal education", "non-formal education", "lifelong education" and "lifelong learning", which are closely related to "adult education" (Campbell 1977:179-180; Long 1983:266; Titmus 1989:15; and Selman & Dampier 1991:2).

To eliminate misunderstandings, it is necessary to formalise definitions and concepts on the topics as understood in this study. There is no intention to enter into a polemic of semantics. The basic concepts, which figure prominently in the present study, are itemised and discussed individually below.

1.7.1   THE CONCEPT "STRATEGY"

According to Ouane (1989:4) a strategy implies objectives and options, which in turn have implications for action. Lind & Johnston (1990:68) refer to a strategy for alleviating illiteracy as approaches or methods of planning and implementation of literacy training and development in developing countries. In this study the concept "strategy" is used with a specific meaning and focus, namely, to refer to all the procedures, methods,

techniques, activities and structures designed and set up to alleviate illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa.

1.7.2   THE CONCEPT "HISTORICAL-ANDRAGOGICAL STUDY"

The adjectives "historical" and "andragogical" are based on the concepts of "history" and "andragogy". History is understood to be, according to Best (1977:340), a meaningful record of man's achievements in the past. It is not merely a list of chronological events, but a truthful, integrated account of the relationships between persons, events, times and places. Good (1959:269) defines the term "history" as "*the science or field of study concerned with the recording and critical interpretation of past events.*" Man uses history to understand the past, and tries to understand the present in the light of past events and developments. "History", understood in these general terms, is different from the "history of education".

Venter (1979:43) maintains that "history of education" is intimately concerned with the study of education in its manifestation through the ages. However, Venter warns that this must be seen as a branch of pedagogics and not of general history because history of education emphasizes the educational issues in a historical perspective.

Knowles (in Tight 1996:103) defines the concept of "andragogy" as "*the art and science of helping adults learn.*" Adult learners have a number of unique characteristics which makes teaching them different from teaching children. These unique characteristics of adult learners must be taken into account when planning for them to learn. Knowles (1984:55-59) identifies the following characteristics to be considered:

i.   Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.

ii.   Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions and their own lives.

iii.   Adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and different quality of experience from that of youths.

iv.   Adults are ready to learn those things they need to learn and be able to do in their actual life situations in an effective way.

v.   Adults are life-centred or problem-centred in their orientation to learning; while children are subject-centred.

In the light of what has been discussed so far, the concept "historical-andragogical" in this study refers to the question of what actually happened in the educational past in the field of ABE with a view to clarifying the educational present and laying down guidelines for the future.

1.7.3   THE CONCEPT "ALLEVIATION OF ILLITERACY"

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (Sykes 1976:26), the term "alleviate" is derived from the Latin word *alleviare,* which means *lighten,* also *mitigate, ameliorate, relieve, extenuate.* "Eradication of illiteracy" is a term used by some authors to designate reduction of illiteracy. For the purpose of this study, the term "alleviation of illiteracy" is used because in practice, no country has ever eradicated illiteracy, as there is always a small percentage of the population which does not attain literacy for one reason or another, such as, those with learning handicaps, and so on. Thus, the term "alleviation of illiteracy" in this study refers to reducing illiteracy to a very low overall level.

Many definitions exist for illiteracy. All relate in some way, at their core, to the state of a person who is functionally unskilful in reading and writing and who cannot engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his/her group or community (UNESCO 1978).

1.7.4   THE CONCEPTS "LITERACY" AND "FUNCTIONAL LITERACY"

Dictionary definitions of the term literacy refer to an individual's ability to understand printed text and to communicate through print. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (hereafter referred to as UNESCO), *"A person is literate who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his every day life"* (1978:18).These dictionary definitions and the definition from UNESCO stress the mechanical skills of reading and writing and do not elaborate on what the literate person can do with his or her literacy skills.

Coombs (1985:281) argues that, "*The debate over the meaning of functional literacy, both outside and within UNESCO, has not been settled to this day and probably never will be, for the simple reason that no dictionary-type international definition can possibly fit all cultures and all times.*" This narrow mechanical concept of literacy was considerably broadened by UNESCO (Coombs 1985:280) when it gave wide currency to the term and defined it as follows:

> *Rather than an end in itself [functional literacy] should be regarded as a way of preparing man for a social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the limits of rudimentary literacy training consisting merely of the teaching of reading and writing. The very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can immediately be used to improve living standards.*

For the purpose of this study, the concept "literacy" will be based on the UNESCO definitions, which include the ability to read, write and calculate and also prepare man for a social, civic and economic role. With regard to the functional perspective of the UNESCO definitions of literacy, Baynham (1995:8) contends that, " *… the term 'functional literacy' emerges as a powerful construct in defining literacy in terms of its social purposes, the demands made on individuals within a given society, to function within that society, to participate and to achieve their own goals.*" The concept "literacy" in this study will therefore be used to refer to the basic education and training of adults rather than to the strictly technical skills of reading and writing. This means that people with less than one year of schooling, most of whom are probably completely illiterate, learn to read and write in the person's own language as well as an introduction to numeracy skills.

1.7.5   THE CONCEPTS "ADULT" AND "ADULTHOOD"

There seems to be no agreement among educationists as to what constitutes an adult or what should be understood as the criteria for adulthood. Consequently definitions of these two concepts vary across centuries and across cultures. Defining the concepts "adult" and "adulthood" depends on the person's cultural and social situatedness, as well as his world and life views. A further consideration is the contextual and political

overtones and the *zeitgeist* (*time spirit*) of a particular moment in time (Long 1983:268; Ripinga 1979:57; Steyn 1991:24 & 382; Rogers 1992:22; and Jarvis 1993:5).

For the purpose of this study "adult" will refer to a person who is 16 years of age or older; who has left the ordinary conventional schooling system prematurely, for example, for socio-economic reasons, or who has never had any formal education, and who has assumed the responsibilities of adulthood. "Adulthood" will refer to a normative state of making morally independent choices and decisions, being self-directed in and accountable for the choices made and the decisions taken (Oberholzer 1979:72-77; Lawson 1985:13; and Wiechers 1994:36).

1.7.6   THE CONCEPT "EDUCATION"

The concept "education" has been interpreted differently by various educationists. Education is often defined as any process by which an individual gains knowledge, insight, or develops attitudes or skills (Tandekwire 1985:24). It could also indicate a process, a system or goal (Rogers 1992:20). Education is more often regarded as synonymous with the concept "schooling." This means that education is equated with the classroom learning of the child at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. However, the concept "education" has a much broader meaning since it implies learning which takes place from the cradle until death (Knowles & Klevins 1972:5; and Coombs 1991:13). Education for adults is used to refer to provision in any situation in which adults are systematically taught or systematically informed for educational purposes (Rivera 1987:12).

The concept "education" in this study will not refer to the formal system of schooling for the child but will be used to encompass all forms of planned and spontaneous learning by which one adult, directly or indirectly, assists another adult to learn something. In this study "education" will furthermore, refer to occurrences, which should enable an adult learner to adapt rapidly and adequately to his/her own environment, taking into account the fact that life is a continuous interchange between people and their environment. It follows that "education" in this study must be seen as referring to a continuous occurrence of interchange, learning and adaptation.

1.7.7   THE CONCEPT "ADULT BASIC EDUCATION"

In the UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education adopted at UNESCO's General Conference in Nairobi, 1976, the concept "adult education" denotes the

> *… entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether it prolongs or replaces initial education in school, colleges and universities as in apprenticeship, by which persons regarded as adult by society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development* (UNESCO 1980:2).

In the broad definition of adult education by UNESCO adult education is seen in the context of education and development processes in society as a whole, and the concept includes any learning which adults engage in, formally and non-formally.

Formal, informal and non-formal adult education are three modes of providing adult education, but should not be understood as neat, mutually exclusive categories. These modes of provision of adult education are based on the premise that adult learning occurs in formal institutions of learning (formal adult education), everyday life experiences (informal adult education) and organised out-of-school programmes (non-formal adult education).

Within the context of this study, "adult education" includes ABE and compensatory schooling at secondary school level for adults. Programmes of ABE include literacy, numeracy and personal enrichment courses ("coping" or "life-skills"). Unless otherwise stated, compensatory schooling at secondary level will refer to general secondary education programmes (grades 10 and 12) for adults who are literate (that is, have had at least seven years of schooling but have not completed twelve years of schooling) and wish to pursue their education beyond the level reached through formal initial schooling, to acquire general qualifications of an academic kind rather than engage in vocational training. Although most education takes place informally and adults learn all the time

through everyday life experiences, this study will only concentrate on that kind of ABE which happens by means of formal and non-formal education programmes.

Formal adult education in this study refers to education for adults provided in a planned way and in a recognised educational institution with a view to obtaining general qualifications for a certificate or diploma instituted under, or by, any law (Department of National Education 1992:26).

Non-formal adult education, on the other hand, refers to educational activities for adults which take place outside the established formal system. These activities are aimed at basic education, for example, literacy, numeracy and personal enrichment on life-skills courses, as well as vocational training provided at or by any institution. The aim of obtaining qualifications other than a degree, certificate or diploma instituted under, or by, any law relating to formal education (Department of National Education 1992:26) is understood.

1.7.8   THE CONCEPT "ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING"

There is a growing trend, which requires that ABET should be skills-based and practical so as to ensure that the courses are career-orientated and increase the learner's chance to gain employment. The Department of Education in South Africa adopted this integrated approach to adult education by bringing education and training together. In its policy document on ABET (Department of Education 1997b:11) the concept "adult basic education and training" refers to

> *… the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally, provides access to nationally recognised certificates.*

The integrated approach to ABET, by the Department of Education in South Africa, marks the shift from categorising ABET as almost entirely an academic achievement of literacy and numeracy, to understanding it as programmes which relate to income generating skills. This understanding of ABET encapsulates the idea that the needs in

31

the economy are met by education of adults in the larger field of human resource development.

1.7.9   THE CONCEPT "LIFELONG EDUCATION"

Titmus (1989:15) defines "lifelong education" as the "*… organised provision of opportunities for persons to learn throughout their lives.*"   This means that education does not end at the end of initial formal schooling but is a lifelong process which covers the entire life-span of an individual. "Lifelong education" is often used as a synonym for "lifelong learning" and yet these two concepts do not convey the same meaning. "Lifelong learning" refers to, "*… the habit of continuously learning throughout life, a mode of behavior, whereas 'lifelong education' is the principle on which the overall organisation of a system is founded*" (Titmus 1989:15).

The concept "lifelong education" has a much broader meaning than "adult education". It is based on the principle that education is a lifelong occurrence; it encompasses and unifies all stages of learning, namely, pre-primary, primary, secondary and adult education. For the purpose of this study, ABET will be seen as part of a system of lifelong education and learning.

1.8   CONCLUSION

In chapter one, the research area is discussed in broad terms in order to give an overview of the magnitude of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa. It is very plain that there is a need for a new approach to alleviate illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa. The need to develop a well-planned strategy to alleviate illiteracy is highlighted.

The legacy of inequality in education in South Africa has left thousands of black people illiterate. Illiteracy is a serious impediment to an individual's growth and to a country's socio-economic progress. Could the key to free millions of adults and out-of-school youth from the shackles of illiteracy lie in mass-scale provision of ABET?

The next chapter is devoted to the origins and development of ABE for blacks in South Africa during the traditional, missionary government periods from before 1652 up to 1994.

CHAPTER TWO
THE PROVISION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE
FROM BEFORE 1652 UP TO 1994

The aim of this chapter is to:

- sketch the historical background in which current ABET provision and development exists;

- provide an overview of the origin and development of ABE for black people in South Africa, during the traditional period which is understood to be before 1652, and after colonisation in 1652.

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the origin and development of adult education for black people in South Africa during the traditional period (before 1652) and after colonisation in 1652. Education has to be seen in the larger context of cultural and social concepts which define any historical period. So, the development of ABE (Colonial or Western type) for black people which began, under Dutch rule (1652 to 1806) cannot be described in precisely the same terminology as current educational efforts in the twentieth and twenty first century. But there is a continuity to be observed in the lack of adequate political support for a comprehensive and inclusive education. The efforts towards the education of adults to equip them to join the exploitable workforce for the changing needs of the colonists were supported by missionaries who traditionally purveyed *salvation* through the medium of education (1799 to 1954). During the period of the Union of South Africa (1910 to 1953), and the Republic of South Africa (1961 to 1994) the focus of education for black people shifted to development for economic support of the State. Other interest groups in the provision of ABE gradually became prominent.

It should, however, be emphasized that these divisions are not absolute (see overlapping dates above) because what happened during or was related to one period was not really unique to it, and it cannot therefore be separated or differentiated from the period which went before or the one which followed. The purpose of structuring this

chapter according to time periods is to help clarify issues which were prominent in each period. However, the whole period of time, from before 1652 up to 1994, must be seen as a historical unity from beginning to end. Attention will, therefore, also be focused on the similarities and differences between the various phases of the development of ABE for black people in terms of aims, content and methods.

Since the theme of the chapter is so comprehensive and covers such a long period of time (from 1652) only a broad overview will be presented, while at the same time an attempt will be made to focus on the most important aspects, namely, aims, content and methods of ABE which provide a useful matrix on which to understand current conditions in the field of ABET.

Although a distinction will be made between the aims, content and methods of ABE for greater clarification and for comparing the identified periods, it should be kept in mind that these – aims, content and methods – are closely interwoven and cannot be compartmentalised in the reality of education. A cursory examination of the reaction to and opposition to the implementation of the Bantu Education Act, Act 47 of 1953, with regard to ABE will be undertaken.

It should be pointed out at this stage that the literature consulted on the origin and development of ABE for black people before 1954 consisted primarily of parliamentary debates, archival materials and one or two paragraphs from single chapters in books on the wider aspects of the origins and development of childhood education (see paragraph 1.5.4). The reason for this limitation of the literary research is that in most instances, adult learners followed the same curriculum as used by their primary and secondary school counterparts, and teachers used the same methods of teaching as shall be seen in the subsequent paragraphs of this chapter. The lack of an authoritative and complete work on the history of ABE for blacks in South Africa for verification purposes was sorely felt during research on the period under review.

Attention will be focused on ABE for blacks in South Africa before the arrival of white settlers at the Cape in 1652.

2.2 ADULT BASIC EDUCATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE TRADITIONAL PHASE (BEFORE 1652)

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The absence of a formal education system prior to the arrival of the Dutch settlers at the Cape in 1652 does not mean that there was no system of education for black people in South Africa at the time. Studies on Adult Education in Africa as well as in South Africa reveal that black people always had (and continue to have) a viable system of traditional adult education (also known as initiation) in their own cultures (Anderson in Hlatshwayo 1991:52; Busia 1964:13-18; Dube 1988:129; Du Toit 1961:34; Fafunwa 1974:15-49; Matooane 1980:113-124; Sebakwane 1993:32-35; and Van Warmelo 1935:5).

There was, for example, a system whereby traditional ways of life were passed by the adults, that is, parents and elders, of a community on to the early adult generation in an informal way. This may be correctly termed traditional adult education. Although the black people of South Africa comprise different ethnic groups, each with its own particular socio-cultural set-up and tribal patterns of life, the researcher will refer to the black people of South Africa as a whole and the aims, content and methods discussed refer to commonalities, not to cultural differences.

It could prove useful if planners of ABE were to decide which aspects and elements of the traditional adult education system could be maintained or rejected in the current provisioning of ABE. Consequently, a brief account of traditional ABE for black people in South Africa as portrayed in the aims, content and methods of adult education during the period under review will be given.

2.2.2 AIMS

As previously stated the black people in South Africa comprise different ethnic groups and societies each with its own culture and tradition, they all have common educational objectives and aims. The aims of traditional adult education are deeply embedded in the philosophy of life of a particular society and the society wished these aims to be passed on from generation to generation (Fafunwa 1974:17). Traditional adult education had a three-fold aim, namely:

35

◊   **Preparation for active participation in communal life**

Traditional adult education prepared its learners for life in the community. Adult learners were equipped with knowledge and skills to enable them to play their full role as adult members of their communities. Their role as adult members will be discussed in paragraph 2.2.3. According to Busia (1964:17) traditional adult education sought to produce men and women who were not self-centred, but people who felt strong obligations towards those around them. Moments of joy or sorrow were shared by everyone in the close-knit community. Fafunwa (1974:48) maintains that the spirit of togetherness was best demonstrated when there was a birth, marriage or death in the community. During these three great events in traditional societies, every member of a community was expected to join in the ceremonial observance of a close or distant relative's birth, marriage or death. Communalism through community participation was one of the overriding aims of traditional adult education. Communalism was important for the survival of the individual and the fittest and the most skilled.

◊   **Preservation of the socio-cultural heritage**

Traditional adult education aims at perpetuating the culture of the society. Castle (in Hlatshwayo 1991:48) summarizes the "conserving factor" of traditional adult education as follows:

> *In the deepest sense African customary education was a true education. Its aim was to conserve the cultural heritage of the family clan … to adapt children [and young adults] to their physical environment and to teach them to use it, to explain to them that their future and that of their own community depended on the perpetuation and understanding of their institutions, on laws, language, and values they had inherited from the past.*

The aim of traditional adult education for black people in South Africa was, *inter alia*, to preserve the existing socio-cultural order, that is, the existing knowledge, skills, customs, traditions and culture of the people. Traditional adult education was meant to ensure the survival of society by training young adults for initiation into the tribal pattern of life. Fafunwa (1974:48) in his study of education in Nigeria treats this phenomenon extensively.

◊ **Vocational training for economic survival**

One of the aims of traditional adult education was vocational training. Young adults were taught various trades such as weaving, smithing, hunting, carving, sculpturing, dress-making and pottery which would contribute towards the improvement of the economy of that particular society (Fafunwa 1974:30). Skills were transmitted from older men and women to young adults as shall be seen in paragraph 2.2.3.

This three-fold aim might be termed "basic life-skills education" which is essential for survival as an individual within a close-knit community. A close analysis of the aims of traditional adult education reveals that they were directed at producing an individual who was skilled, community-oriented, honest, respectable and co-operative and perpetuated the culture of the society to which he or she belonged (Fafunwa 1974:20). The aims of traditional adult education were closely connected with what the young adults were taught, as shall be seen in the subsequent paragraphs on content and methods of traditional adult education.

2.2.3   CONTENT

The content of traditional adult education was not worked out in a formal syllabus which could be passed on to new generations. The young adults depended on education from extraneous sources such as the geographical setting of the area, the historical and biological facts about the land and the people, political and social organisations, tribal beliefs and customs of the people (Tiberondwa 1978:10). Moreover, circumstances of life created the content of traditional adult education. The possibility of learning from the communal activities such as farming practices, dancing, hunting, fishing, uses of fauna and flora and traditional medical remedies was a natural process for young adults who needed to acquire knowledge and skills in an informal way. Knowledge and skills gained in this way were passed on to the young adults (Fafunwa 1982:9). Furthermore, learning did not take place within the walls of a classroom. Young adults learned from experience and through exposure to various life situations. As pointed out earlier, the environment was a major resource centre for learning.

Matooane (1980:114) makes a distinction between general education and specialized education in the traditional education of the young adults. According to this distinction,

the community group of elders takes charge of general education; while specially selected individual's conduct the specialized education known as the circumcision initiation into manhood and womanhood. The two types of education will be discussed below:

◊ **General education**

Sebakwane (1993:32) in her study of the education of Pedi women observed that young adults were socialized into specific gender roles. Young women were taught life-skills related to home-making, cleaning and plastering, sweeping the courtyard, cooking, brewing beer, baby care, assisting with agricultural activities and so forth. For young adult men, life-skills included caring for the livestock, attending to cattle diseases, breeding, ploughing and harvesting and such special trades as metal work and basketry (Sebakwane 1993:33; and Fafunwa 1974:30). In addition to life-skills training, there was instruction in traditional beliefs and values and in religious and military duties for positions of leadership and responsibility (Fafunwa 1974:30; and Bown 1969:169).

With regard to gender differences, Sebakwane argues that the way of life of the black people, especially the Pedi people in the Limpopo Province, had particular effects on the social status of women during the traditional phase. Sebakwane (1993:32-33) summarizes the gender differences as follows:

> *In general [traditional adult] education inculcated in girls [and young women] a spirit of submission to males, nurturance of the men folk, the aged and children in the domestic sphere, and non-competitiveness with males outside the domestic sphere. Conversely in the boy [young man] a spirit of authority was inculcated.*

Young men and women were obviously treated differently. Young women were socialized into assuming subservient roles within the family and other social practices. For example, the public courtyard was inaccessible to young women and they were never consulted on issues of tribal policy and all potential offices were kept exclusively in the hands of men (Sebakwane 1993:34).

◊   **Specialised education**

The circumcision initiation was a time for formal education in tribal laws and values and was also a crucial phase of development during which masculine and feminine roles became clarified and reinforced (Sebakwane 1993:33). On average the young women go to the circumcision initiation at the age of 17, and young men at the age of 19.

The circumcision initiation specializes in the appointment of selected instructors. The criteria for the selection of male and female instructors is quoted in detail by Matooane from the so-called "Secret Book" which he claims is circulating among some clergymen in Lesotho. It is understood that this book is called "Secret" because it gives neither author nor publisher and it is written in Sesotho. For the female instructors the translated version states the following (Matooane 1980:122):

> *The instructors are the ladies yet unmarried, who are circumcised and have kept their virginity. They should also be free from any blame with respect to integrity, honesty, and sincerity. Their good conduct and manners should match their ability to teach others with the aim of educating them in the norms and values of womanhood according to the Basotho standards. The organizer of the circumcision lodge chooses such instructors.*

With regard to the criteria used for the selection of the male instructors, the book notes the following:

> *An instructor is chosen because of his sincerity and honesty. He must also be commendable for his modesty with respect to social behaviour because during the whole time of the circumcision initiation he is not allowed to have any sexual intercourse. He must also be distinguished for his singing skill because, among other things, his duty is to teach the initiates how to sing the secret songs. He is chosen by the organizer of the circumcision lodge.*

In earlier times the curriculum for the initiation of young women has fertility as its core element (Matooane 1980:123). Young women receive training in life-skills relating to married life, to their roles as wives and to sexual matters. They are encouraged to respect all men, particularly the chief (Sebakwane 1993:33). The initiation of the young

men is military in nature. The young men receive instruction on duties and obligations of manhood so that when they emerge from the initiation circumcision they are fully-fledged men ready to marry, bring up families and participate in tribal councils. They are also given sex education, and advice on the manly attributes of courage, endurance, and obedience to the father and "disobedience" to the mother (Sebakwane 1993:33).

2.2.4   METHODS

Since the content of traditional adult education was not formalized in a syllabus which could be passed on from generation to generation as is the case today, all knowledge and skills had to be transmitted from experience to young adult learners by the knowledgeable "professionals", that is, parents and elders of the community (Vilakazi 1965:124).

The methods used in traditional adult education were mainly informal except for the period of more or less formal training at the initiation schools and during the period of apprenticeship. The young adults learnt within the context of the family, in the household and in community life, in public discussions, public meetings, and by imitation relying heavily on the spoken word, memorisation, rote learning and actual task performance while hearing and seeing (Busia 1964:13; Bown 1969:174; and Lekhela 1958:26).

◊   **Traditional apprenticeship**

As pointed out previously, formal training of young adults took place at the initiation schools and during the period of apprenticeship. Traditional apprenticeship was a formal method of skill acquisition and has been handed down through successive generations of elders and parents (Fluitman 1994:223).

Apprenticeship usually took three or four years, depending on the trade and, to some extent, on the age, aptitude and experience of the apprentice. For example, somebody who wanted to become a traditional healer usually took two or three years. The apprentice was allowed to practise the healing of the sick during the training period. The apprentice was praised if she or he demonstrated skill and would be reprimanded for poor learning.

Apprentices learned primarily through observation, imitation, and memorisation and by being actively involved in what they were told to do by their masters. They were "corrected" when their trials ended in error and were discouraged from asking too many questions by their masters. The apprentices were allocated simple tasks at the beginning of their apprenticeship, such as cleaning the workshops and running errands. They were gradually introduced to more complex tasks and given increased responsibility, such as completing a piece, dealing directly with customers, and from time to time, they might have been given the responsibility of looking after the business in the absence of the owner (Fluitman 1994:224).

Traditional adult education, though largely informal or incidental, was lifelong and effective; it was comprehensive and became integral to society. It taught young adults to understand the traditions and values, as well as the politics of the day; it taught them the skills of the various trades and careers; it taught them their civic and economic duties in service of the community.

Although traditional adult education declined because the ideals and values on which it was founded lost their meaning, its implementation continues to a limited extent in black communities even today (Mutua 1975:11). If traditional adult education was relevant, the reasons why blacks were willing to accept Colonial education need to be investigated, which will be done in subsequent paragraphs. We shall now briefly survey the development of Colonial (Western) adult education for black people in South Africa during Dutch rule.

2.3   ADULT EDUCATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE UNDER DUTCH RULE (1652-1806)

2.3.1   INTRODUCTION

Blacks at the Cape of Good Hope during the Dutch rule were mainly slaves brought in from Angola, West Africa (1658-1659), Madagascar (from 1670s until 1724) and thereafter from Delagoa Bay (until 1730) (Davenport 1978:20; and McKerron 1934:156). The slaves were imported to the Cape of Good Hope to work as artisans, domestics and farm labourers for the Dutch settlers who arrived at the Cape in 1652 under the commandership of Jan van Riebeeck (Bozarth 1987:25; Fleurs 1984:10). However, the

41

original inhabitants of the Cape Colony were Bantu, which included black people each with its own cultural identity (Van Niekerk 1988:84).

When the slaves from West Africa arrived at the Cape in March 1658, they could not understand the instructions of their masters and neither could the masters understand their slaves (Le Roux 1998:99). In response to the need to teach the slaves to speak the language of their masters, that is, Dutch and to facilitate conversion to Christianity, the first school for the slaves of the Dutch East India Company (hereafter referred to as DEIC) was opened in the Cape of Good Hope on 17 April 1658. The school lasted only a few weeks. Even though Jan van Riebeeck instructed the teachers to give each pupil a glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco after school each day, the slaves ran away (Molteno 1984:45; and Fouche 1910:156). Subsequently, the school was closed in 1659 and reopened in 1661 and from that time the slave school ran fairly continuously (Spilhaus 1949:127).

Details of ABE for slaves during Dutch rule are sketchy and inadequate. The available literature consulted deals mainly with the education of slave children (Behr 1963; Molteno 1984; McKerron 1934; Coetzee 1963; Cilliers 1953; Du Toit & Nell 1982; and Du Toit 1937). However, the fact that there was no age restriction for admission to the school, that slaves were given brandy and tobacco at the end of each school day and that classes were also organized in the afternoon suggests that adult slaves received the same type of education as their own children (Behr 1963:404; Molteno 1984:45; Fouche 1910:3; Cilliers 1953:13; McKerron 1934:156; Bozarth 1987:483; and Spilhaus 1949:126).

In 1676 the Political Council was approached by the Church Council to establish a separate school for slaves. The Political Council was in favour of segregated schooling for slaves and whites, although it decided that slaves should continue to use the existing school for whites until proper provisioning for the tuition of blacks could be made. The decision by the Church Council to establish a separate school for slaves laid the foundation for the apartheid policy on education in South Africa (Behr 1963:405). However, segregated schooling had already been instituted during 1685 (Molteno 1984:46; and Du Toit 1937:43). The slave school continued for a long time even after the annexation of the Cape Colony by the British Government in 1806. In 1795 the British occupied the Cape at the invitation of the Dutch King. The Cape was returned to Dutch

control in 1803 with the Treaty of Amiens. The British Government did not introduce fundamental changes in education during the short period of annexation (Du Toit & Nell 1982:29).

Having outlined the historical development of education in general during the Dutch rule, attention will now be given to the aims, content and methods of ABE for blacks during this period.

2.3.2   AIMS

The primary aim of education at the schools for slaves was to teach adult slaves to speak the Dutch language and to receive religious education, which were regarded as the most necessary qualification for church membership (McKerron 1934:156; Behr 1963:404; Behr & MacMillan 1971:357; Du Toit 1937:39; and Eybers 1918:22). Education during this period was, as in the Netherlands, chiefly an instrument for the inculcation of a religious education (Malherbe 1925:46). Although the aim of the instruction at the schools established by the Dutch was to lay the foundation of a Christian education with the object of preparation for church membership, most slaves did lip service as members of the church acquiescing to being Christianised because they were "*… filled with fear, and resentment and tragic home sickness*" (Spilhaus 1949:126). Christianity and the ability to speak the Dutch language could not replace their loss of freedom.

The subsidiary aims included, *inter alia*, instructing the slaves in reading, writing and arithmetic, teaching them obedience to authority and training them in good morals and habits. The company also aimed at the inculcation of industry among the slaves (Bozarth 1987:490; and Eybers 1918:22).

2.3.3   CONTENT

The curriculum was essentially religious (Behr & MacMillan 1971:357). Adult slaves were to attend religious services every evening and twice on Sundays. They had to learn to recite prayers. The slaves learned passages from the Bible, the Ten Commandments and the Heidelberg Catechism (Behr & MacMillan 1971:104). A slight attempt seems to have been made to teach the "3R's" (McKerron 1934:156). Before the British

Government permanently took control of the Cape of Good Hope at the beginning of the nineteenth century, formal adult education for slaves was synonymous with instruction in the doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church and the only secular subject was a little simple arithmetic (Pells 1938:20-21).

For improved communication between the slaves and their masters, more emphasis was laid on the learning of the Dutch language. The emphasis on learning the Dutch language is evidenced by one of the instructions left by Jan van Riebeeck for his successor, Wagenaer, in 1662 when he wrote:

> *The slaves here learn nothing but Dutch, and so do the Hottentots, so that no other language is spoken here, and if this should remain the rule it will be a fine thing to let the Portuguese and others stand dumb before the natives …* (Spilhaus 1949:13).

To promote the use of the Dutch language in the Cape of Good Hope, De Mist, who was appointed at the Cape under the Batavian Republic in 1803, ensured that "*no person … was allowed to hold office who could not speak, read and write the Dutch language*" (Malherbe 1925:51).

2.3.4   METHODS

The methods of teaching were similar to those which were used in Holland at the time (Malherbe 1925:46). Recitation was the order of the day. The subjects were learnt by heart and repeated without any attempt at understanding the same (Behr & MacMillan 1971:106). The young adult slaves were apprenticed to the company as artisans in order to learn a skilled trade, which could ultimately buy their freedom (Spilhaus 1949:128).

To sum up, ABE for slaves during the period under review served a two-fold purpose, namely, to benefit the DEIC by teaching the slaves the Dutch language so that they could understand their masters' orders and to teach them the basic principles of Christian religion to facilitate conversion to Christianity (Le Roux 1998:9; and Van Niekerk 1995:131). The education of the slaves was sporadic as the need arose (Van Niekerk 1995:134). The company's great compelling purpose for promoting the education of the slaves was to create greater loyalty to the Netherlands through learning

to read, write and speak Dutch well (Bozarth 1987:485). However, the education imposed on the slaves was rejected as evidenced by the running away of young adult slaves from the school.

Attention will now be focused on the development of ABE for black people during the missionary era.

2.4   ADULT BASIC EDUCATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE DURING THE MISSIONARY PHASE (1799-1953)

2.4.1   INTRODUCTION

This study cannot provide a comprehensive survey of the white missionary societies and their role in the education of black people in South Africa. A great deal of literature has been written by educational historians on the education of young blacks in South Africa. In this paragraph, only a brief historical development of ABE by the white missionaries will be given. It is worth noting that the development of ABE for black people during the missionary phase has not been treated adequately in some works. The result is that the paragraphs dealing with the education of school-going pupils have to do for our purposes.

Formal adult education (Western type) for black people in South Africa was initiated by the various overseas missionary societies during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The missionary societies which were involved in the development of black education, including ABE, included the Moravian, the London, the Rhenish, the Wesleyan, the Berlin, the Paris Evangelical and the Glasgow Missions, the Church Missionary Society and the American Board Mission (Behr 1984:173).

The provision of education for blacks by the white missionaries may be divided into three stages of development. The first stage (1799-1850) was the period when white missionaries provided education to young and old black people with the state subsidizing education. Mission schools were entirely under missionary control. The second stage (1850-1953) was when the state gradually assumed more control after 1841 when state subsidies were progressively increased over the years. The third stage (1954) is that of Bantu Education, which followed the enactment of the *Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953*,

45

and the control of adult education for blacks fell under state control. Provision of ABE for black people during the period under review was undertaken by white missionaries with government's assistance in the form of grants. In this paragraph, therefore, this provision will be discussed.

The British Colonial government finally took possession of the Cape in 1806. The Earl of Caledon, who took over the administration at the Cape as the first British Governor in 1807, took a keen interest in the education of the slaves, both young and old, immediately after his appointment (Behr & MacMillan 1971:374-375).

Between 1806 and 1839, little was accomplished in terms of state education for blacks. The education efforts of the churches in the Cape Colony, the Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State among blacks were made without any financial aid from the government. It was only in 1841 that state aid was made available for the first time to mission schools in the Cape Colony (Pells 1938:74). State grants were provided much later on in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal. The education of black people was entirely a missionary undertaking until 1902 in the Transvaal and up to 1910 in the Orange Free State (Van Niekerk 1995:139). State grants were progressively increased over the years in proportion to the degree of control exercised by the state until 1953 when education for black people became a state concern under the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953.

Formal adult education for black people in South Africa during the missionary era was confined largely to the mission stations where learners were usually converts or people who had never attended school as children (Davis 1969:193). Sunday schools established by the missionaries were attended by both young and old. Although a significant number of adults attended the Sunday schools, the vast majority of Sunday school students were children (Davis 1969:223).

The first mission school was established in the Cape Colony near King William's Town in 1799 by Dr J.T. Van der Kemp of the London Missionary Society. The first school in the Orange Free State was established by the Wesleyan Mission Society in 1833. The American Mission Society established the first school for blacks in Natal in 1835 (Kgware 1961:4).

Having outlined the historical development of adult education for blacks during the missionary era, attention will now be focused on the aims, content and methods of adult education during this period.

2.4.2   AIMS

The various missionary societies which worked among the black people in South Africa had different approaches to their missionary work. Generally however they all pursued the same aim, namely, to establish themselves and their work and to convert black adults to Christianity (Perold & Butler 1989:65). According to Van der Walt (1992:222) missionary groups such as the London Missionary Society and Berlin Mission were "*… genuinely concerned about the conversion of the 'poor' heathen in South Africa.*" Thus the conversion of the heathen to Christianity was the primary objective and the other activities were subservient to this main objective (Mabunda 1995:31; and Pells 1938:75).

However, the missionaries soon realised that the process of conversion and evangelisation was not complete until the black person could read the Bible independently (Mabunda 1995:59). This requirement of enabling black people to read the Bible so that they could communicate directly with God inevitably led to the establishment of mission schools for black converts. According to Mawasha (1969:5) these early mission schools were seen and regarded by the missionaries as "*… a gateway to Christianisation and evangelization.*"

Loram (1917:74) observed that during the process of converting black people to Christianity, the Christian missionaries could not avoid westernising them. To succeed in their attempt at westernising the potential converts the missionaries had to break down the indigenous customs, beliefs and traditions of the black people. According to Loram (1917:74) condemning the indigenous traditions and customs of the black people as heathen was the grave mistake. The missionaries would have had more success, as countless previous colonisers had, not least of them the Church itself over the centuries, if they had used the culture of the black people as a solid foundation for the superstructure of Christianity and Western civilization.

Dealing with the question of the indigenous customs, beliefs and traditions of the black people, Hoernle (in DC Marivate Collection 1934) confirms Loram's observation that

47

> *… it was unjustifiable to condemn all Bantu (black) customs as unchristian, e.g., lobola, circumcision schools and initiation schools, that there was something good in these schools, some of these things could be modified.*

The black converts were indoctrinated into believing that indigenous traditions and customs were worthless. According to Maluleka (1995:99) Christianity was therefore

> "*... a component and an appendage of Western civilization as propagated by the missionaries. An acceptance of Christianity not only meant the wholesale adoption of this new broader culture, but even more significantly a total and complete rejection of essential aspects of one's own culture.*

Besides the "civilization" of blacks, other secondary aims included character building and training in life skills as shall be seen in the next paragraph on the content of missionary education. With regard to the secondary aims of missionary education, Evans (1916:97) has maintained that the missionaries took a broad approach to their work. Missionaries attempted to change the mindset of the black people by emphasizing the dignity and moral value of manual labour. By teaching black people life skills, missionaries sought to balance conversion with material benefits. In this sense, missionaries tried to link their schools with the economic progress of the black people. In line with the history of conversion in Europe and the Americas it was always the intention of the missionaries not only to evangelise but also to consider the economic and social conditions of their converts – but to serve the colonisers' ends (Taylor 1925:49).

In this paragraph the researcher has attempted to discuss some of the educational aims of the missionaries. Attention will now be focused on the review of the content of ABE during this period.

2.4.3   CONTENT

To achieve the primary aim of missionary education, namely, the conversion of "heathens" to Christianity, the missionaries taught basic reading and writing along with Christian doctrine (Perold & Butler 1989:66). At the night school for adults in Stellenbosch, started by Luckhoff in 1842, adult classes were held on four nights a week

and involved the teaching of reading, writing and religion (Behr & MacMillan 1966:322-323). ABE became an important means for conversion.

As indicated in paragraph 2.4.2, the Christian missionaries emphasized the value of manual labour. Miss Jane Waterston trained women in the evening as domestic servants or seamstresses at Lovedale Girls' School. The curriculum covered cookery, needle-work and knitting. Some hygiene and child welfare instruction was also given. The aim of the course was to equip women to make comfortable homes for those for whom they worked (Sheperd 1941:475). The life skills taught to men included carpentry, elementary agriculture and building (Pells 1956:42; and Davies & Sheperd 1954: xxiii).

In order to meet their aims of evangelization and Christianisation, the missionaries needed to train black people as catechists, evangelists and teachers, who could organize services, spread the gospel among their own people, and teach basic adult education in the mission schools (Perold & Butler 1989:66).

The next paragraph examines how the aims of missionary education were achieved.

2.4.4   METHODS

The missionaries employed the method of indoctrination to encourage blacks into accepting Christianity. Black people did not readily decide to be converted to Christianity but had to be persuaded by a variety of ruses, among them the provision of ABE (Sibiya 1985:87). The missionaries, rooted in their time and ideas of a hegemonic culture, were interested in the indoctrination of blacks into accepting Christianity, and disregarded the indigenous customs, beliefs and traditions of the learners.

Missionaries, in their all out attempt to raise interest in the type of education they had to offer, used bribes in the form of food, clothes and even money payments to induce blacks to accept Christianity. The method of using bribes is similar to the one used by Jan van Riebeeck during the Dutch rule when he instructed the teacher to give each pupil a glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco after each school day to encourage the slaves to attend classes (see paragraph 2.3.1).

The method used to teach reading was what has been called the *Laubach* method. Frank Laubach, a missionary who began his work in the Philippines in 1930, developed this method. Laubach used literacy with an aim of winning people over to Christianity (Lyster 1992:30). According to the *Laubach* method, letters and their corresponding sounds are taught. The vowels are taught first using their most common sound in the language of instruction (Lyster 1992:119).

Domestic science for women and carpentry, building and wagon-making for men were taught through practical teaching, that is, practical demonstrations were conducted. Adult learners were taught life skills by personal example. They were involved in the erection of mission buildings and outhouses at the mission stations (Lekhela 1970:690).

The question why blacks were willing to accept missionary education is naturally raised after the above discussion. In the description of traditional adult education for blacks in South Africa (see paragraph 2.2), it was observed that the type of education that existed before the imposition of missionary education was suitable and relevant to the needs of the people at the time. Traditional adult education prepared black people for life within their environment. However, life changed and is still undergoing changes. This changed life, according to Stubblefield (1988:121) was accompanied by a need to change education to meet new demands.

Education of black people was planned and implemented by the missionaries without taking the indigenous customs, beliefs and traditions of blacks into consideration. This resulted in the alienation of the adult learners from their society since they were compelled to live in two worlds at the same time – the traditional and a more modern scientific world than their own. The educated black had an identity crisis often. Professor Malonowski, one of the outstanding delegates from overseas at the South African Education Fellowship Conference, held on 16 to 27 July 1934, at the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, said, "*We educate the native [black], we raise him to our level, but we do not give him the place for which we have fitted him. … so that he, finding himself without any society seeks happiness in towns*" (South African Education Fellowship Conference in DC Marivate Collection, University of South Africa, 1934:2). It is evident that the elite minority of educated converts, especially male black teachers and preachers, found themselves in a social vacuum.

In the next paragraph, attention will be focused on the development of ABE for blacks in the Union of South Africa up to the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (1910 - 1953).

2.5 ADULT EDUCATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE IN THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA UP TO THE BANTU EDUCATION ACT OF 1953 (1910-1953)

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1910 the Cape, Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were joined to form the Union of South Africa under a central government, with the administrative capital in Pretoria and the legislative capital in Cape Town. Education, other than higher education, for black people fell under the control of the Provincial Councils for a period of five years and thereafter Parliament would provide otherwise (Behr 1988:59). After this period the Union Parliament could decide on other arrangements for the control of schooling. What became evident was that control of black education, including ABE, remained a provincial responsibility until 1953 when the enactment of the *Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953* transferred the control of black education to the Union Department of Native Affairs (Horrell 1963:27; Wollheim 1943:37; and Pells 1938:136).

Before 1922 the provincial governments differed in their approach to and interest in education for black people. Natal was the most progressive and adapted the European syllabus to suit the perceived needs of black people. On the other hand, the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State were so involved in establishing and stabilizing their own governments that they had little time or funds to do much work for black education, and were satisfied to leave the control of black education in the hands of missionaries (Leonie 1965:81).

Government involvement in black education was almost non-existent during this period. However, changing conditions associated with increasing technological advances and the social complexity brought about by World Wars I (1914-1918) and II (1939-1945), especially the rapid expansion of secondary industry and urbanisation during the 1940s and 1950s, contributed to the steady and continuous emergence of ABE for blacks in South Africa. However, this industrialisation / urbanisation process did not immediately affect the demand for ABE for black people because much of the skilled artisan work was initially reserved for white people (Bird 1984:193).

As industrialisation progressed and secondary industry emerged, a fragmentation of skilled work occurred creating opportunities for black workers. There were only a very limited number of white collar positions such as those for teachers, clerks and interpreters, which were opened to blacks. This resulted in an increased demand for black adult education among blacks and some elements of society (Bird 1984:193). Consequently, numerous interest groups emerged to address the educational needs and aspirations of black adults in South Africa.

Various interest groups such as missionaries and students were involved in the development of ABE for black people. However, the main role players were the Communist Party of South Africa (hereafter referred to as CPSA), students from the University of the Witwatersrand and Mayibuye Night Schools, the South African Institute of Race Relations (hereafter referred to as SAIRR), the Johannesburg Local Committee for Non-European Adult Education, the Transvaal Workers' Education Association and the Cape Non-European Night School's Association.

Attention will now be focused on these role players' contribution to the development of ABE for black people in South Africa. This paragraph would be unnecessarily long if a survey of all the interest groups were to be conducted. Therefore only a selection of the most important of the groups will be presented. These three interest groups are the South African Communist Party, students from the University of the Witwatersrand and Mayibuye Night Schools and the Transvaal Workers' Education Association.

◊ **ABE by the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA)**

The International Socialist League (hereafter referred to as ISL), established in 1915, initially directed its activities towards skilled white workers. However within the ISL, men such as Sidney Bunting, David Jones and later Edward Roux extended the activities of the ISL to include education of black workers. The ISL was the forerunner of the CPSA which was established in 1921 (Bird 1984:194).

Thibedi, Roux and others started the first night school of the CPSA in Ferreirastown in 1924 (Wilson 1988:57; and Roux 1964:346). The schools prospered for some few years, but went into a decline when purges of right deviationists within the leadership of the Communist Party began to alienate most of the African trade unions and other

organisations (Roux 1964:346). As a result of the continued purges, Roux resigned from the Communist Party in 1936 and returned to Cape Town to pursue his profession as a botanist (Roux 1964: xi).

At the party conference in 1924 "Africanisation" won the day when the conference resolved to turn its attention to the education of the masses who came to find work and had little or no formal schooling. Subsequently, party schools were established under the leadership of Thibedi who launched a drive against illiteracy (Bird 1984:195).

In 1936 the Communist Party started a school housed in the Church of England school in District Six. This school was attended by pupils who were completely illiterate and included those up to Junior Certificate. However, it lasted for a few years and was closed down because of war conditions which prevented teachers from teaching in the evenings (Roux 1964:346).

Although there was direct state harassment, the infamous pass laws existed and physical conditions – being taught by candle-light without blackboards or desks – were very poor (Roux 1964:346), there was still some success. Bird (1984:198) summed up the achievements of the CPSA as follows, "*their success in the twenties can be gauged by the relatively large number of [political] leaders who emerged after attending the night schools.*"

◊   **The African College and the Mayibuye Night Schools**

A group of students from the University of the Witwatersrand founded the African College and the Mayibuye Night Schools for adults between 1938 and 1940 (Bird 1984:198). The students began literacy classes for black adults in a dancing studio in Johannesburg. Within a few weeks, the literacy classes were moved to the African National Club in Diagonal Street. It was in this small, badly lit and poorly ventilated clubhouse that a war against illiteracy was waged by the students (Night School for Natives, 1938-1947, in Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 82.1:1).

In September 1940, the first Mayibuye Night School was opened in a shop at 5 Kruis Street in Johannesburg. During this time school teachers and university lecturers joined the university students. The school flourished because its reported attendance was

good, for example, at one time there were between 80 and 90 students. One teacher would have to work with 20 students round a table (Night School for Natives, 1938-1947, in Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 82.1:1).

In addition to the schools at Kruis Street and Diagonal Street, another school was opened at Sherwell and one at Rosebank in September 1940. Although the main object of the Mayibuye Night Schools was ABE, students who wished to write public examinations for the junior certificate were sent to these schools (Night School for Natives, 1938-1947, in Rheinallt Jones Collection, University of the Witwatersrand, AD 843, B 82.1:2).

The learners and teachers of the Mayibuye Night Schools had to contend with difficulties similar to those endured by the teachers of the Communist Party, namely, the pass laws and the poor physical conditions (Bird 1984:200). Betty Lunn (in Roux 1964:347) says the following about the difficulties under which the Mayibuye Night Schools operated:

> *The teachers are usually untrained, and even if qualified, cannot always adapt themselves to the specific problems involved in adult education. As they are not paid, they do not all attend regularly, and the pupils are subject to frequent changes of teachers and teaching methods.*

However, despite all the difficulties mentioned above, there was plenty of enthusiasm among teachers and students and the schools struggled on (Roux 1964:347).

◊   **Adult education by the Transvaal Workers' Education Association**

The Transvaal Workers' Education Association (hereafter referred to as TWEA) was established in 1914 in Johannesburg. The TWEA operated mainly through trade unions. The Executive Committee of the TWEA comprised representatives of affiliated trade unions, individual members, the University of the Witwatersrand and the City Council of Johannesburg. It was common practice for a representative from the University of the Witwatersrand to be elected president and for the majority of the members of the Executive Committee to be representatives of trade unions.

The Workers' Educational Association of Durban received a grant of R800 a year from the Union Government. The classes, with 100 students, were held at Natal Technical College. In Johannesburg, the University of the Witwatersrand conducted short courses and the main source of revenue was a municipal grant of R200 (in Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, 8 B50.3).

The adult education activities of the TWEA in Johannesburg were not as successful as its members could have wished. The following reasons can be cited for its lack of success:

- Special conditions arising out of the Great War;
- The struggle between the Chamber of Mines and the white workers which culminated in the Great Strike and Red Revolt of 1922; and
- The large increase in the number of Afrikaans-speaking workers which made it difficult to create a demand for black adult education (Roux 1964:147; Adult Education, Transvaal Workers' Educational Association July 1936:7, in Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, 50,3).

2.5.2   AIMS

◊   **Aims of the Communist Party of South Africa**

The object of establishing Night Schools was to enable the party to recruit and train black political leaders (Bird 1984:194). For the CPSA adult education had to be part of an active political struggle, and therefore had to enable blacks to understand the structures that oppressed them. The CPSA Night Schools produced a relatively large number of political leaders (Bird 1984:198). Moses Kotane, one of the students who attended the CPSA Night School, believed that "*… the early night schools had been a formative influence for him and had been responsible for his own political initiation*" (Bird 1984:195). Moses Kotane subsequently became the general secretary of the Communist Party and an executive member of the African National Congress (hereafter referred to as ANC).

◊ **Aims of the African College and the Mayibuye Night Schools**

The document "*Night Schools for Adult Africans: History of African College and Mayibuye Night Schools*" (Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 82.1:4-5) laid special emphasis on the aims of the two schools:

- To impart useful knowledge adapted to the needs of the pupils.
- To impart as much general knowledge as possible to help the pupils adapt to and understand their present cultural environment.
- To solve special problems and difficulties brought by the pupils or known to be common to the black.
- To encourage free expression and discussion by the pupils to reveal and clarify their difficulties and attack superstition and prejudice through discussion and explanation from both sides. In the course of these discussions, the pupils will be able to see European approaches and attitudes more clearly when these stand out in contrast to their own.

The schools established by the CPSA prepared the pupils for political leadership so that they could understand and cope with the structures that oppressed them. The African College and the Mayibuye Night Schools provided their pupils with education for adaptation to modern or "European" ways. This aim is similar to the one espoused by the Christian missionaries when they condemned the indigenous beliefs, customs and traditions of blacks as anti-Christian and encouraged black converts to adapt to a changed life.

◊ **Aims of the TWEA**

The objectives of the Association as reflected in the document "Adult Education" (Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 50.3, July 1936:1) were declared to be as follows:

- To stimulate among working men and women demand for further education.
- To encourage the quiet and continued pursuit of social, political and other cultural interests among those to whom the ordinary forms of higher education have been denied.

- To bring opportunities for further education within the reach of the mass of citizens, so that democracy may become more intelligent and effective.

The above-mentioned aims emphasise the importance of life-long learning for men and women who have reached maturity and are working but who have not received any education which they regard as adequate, and who are eager to make good their deficiencies in knowledge. The Association also encouraged people to study courses which would not be used directly for vocational purposes, but to pursue other courses which would serve the social as well as the intellectual needs of the students.

2.5.3   CONTENT

◊   **The CPSA**

The CPSA schools on the Reef during the 1920s and 1930s were concerned with worker education, teaching mainly English and politics, rather than with ABE (French 1992:56). Roux spent much of his time as a teacher on the publication of texts in easy English for adult neo-literates (French 1992:56). However, there was a shift of emphasis from training for political leadership in the 1920s and 1930s to simply educating in the 1940s. Evidence of this is a school conducted by the CPSA in Johannesburg in 1946 which taught English, Arithmetic and History to about 40 pupils (Bird 1984:197).

◊   **The African College and the Mayibuye Night Schools**

At these schools the following subjects were taught – English, Arithmetic, Civics and Government (with special emphasis on the Native Laws). Hygiene was introduced later on and debating and speaking for higher classes. The majority of pupils chose English instead of Afrikaans because most of them knew a bit of English and few knew Afrikaans. It is also interesting to note that the pupils learned geography more easily than history because the facts such as those learned in political geography were more closely related to their life and experience (History of African College and Mayibuye Night Schools, Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 82.1).

According to the document "*Night Schools for Adult Africans: History of African College and Mayibuye Night Schools*" (Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 82.1), the subjects mentioned above did not follow the ordinary school curriculum for the following reasons:

(a)　　*The pupils have mostly been out of school for many years and besides forgetting most of what they have learned, have gained other knowledge and learned to do things that a school-going child would not know, for example, many of them have technical knowledge and vocabulary, as a result of working in garages, factories, etc. ... A not uncommon case is that of the man who can barely read or write but has a fluent knowledge of English, both speaking and understanding. It is necessary therefore to grade the classes and adapt the syllabus to meet the abilities and needs of the pupils in this respect.*

(b)　　*As the large majority of school are adults, their ability to learn and grasp new ideas is different from that of the children for whom the schools syllabuses are drawn up. In arithmetic, for example, they learn very quickly and remember what they learn because many of the concepts are not new to them, for example, they are all used to dealing with money.*

In addition to ABE, these schools emphasised skills development to prepare black workers for more efficient employment in skilled positions (Bird 1984:199). To achieve this objective, the night schools were instrumental in persuading the Johannesburg Technical College in 1943 to open a Department for black adults (Bird 1984:200).

◊　　**The TWEA**

The curriculum of the TWEA covered subjects such as the following, Political Science, Economics, Economic History, Currency and Finance, Philosophy and Psychology, Language and Literature, Appreciation of Music, Public Health and Public Speaking. The choice of subjects depended entirely on the needs and aspirations of the student group as the main consideration was the personal interest of the student (in Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 50.3).

2.5.4   METHODS

◊   **The CPSA**

The majority of teachers who taught at the CPSA's Night Schools were unqualified and even those who were qualified could not adapt themselves to the special problems involved in adult education. Roux (in Bird 1984:196) is quoted as saying, *"We were not experts in teaching, but we improved as we went along."*

The aim of the CPSA's Night Schools was to prepare the learners for political leadership and the methods of teaching were also geared towards achieving this aim. Bird (1984:196) reports that occasional lectures and debates on general topics of working class interest were held.

To enable the learners to understand the structures that oppressed them, Roux would spend ten to fifteen minutes of a teaching session in comprehension tests to test the neo-literates, that is, those learners who had passed Standard III. The comprehension tests designed by Roux and Roux (1970:173) were carried out as follows:

> *Sentences were written on the blackboard containing the words to be tested which were underlined. Having first made certain that all other words in the sentences were understood, Roux next asked the pupils to indicate any of the underlined words, which were unknown to them. Their understanding was then tested by asking them to make sentences using the words.*

Roux developed accessible reading materials for the Communist Party's night schools between 1934 and 1949. Roux's texts were characterised by experiments with systematic simplification (French 1992:245). Before the book was published, these experiments were repeated by Roux in the Cape Town night schools and results confirmed by Jack Lipman in the Communist Party's night schools in Johannesburg (Roux & Roux 1970:174).

◊ **The African College and the Mayibuye Night Schools**

The methods employed in the night schools were basically the same as those evolved for young children in the conventional schooling system. In 1945 SAIRR launched a project which aimed at providing learning material and working out methods and techniques of training teachers for night schools (Bird 1984:203). Maida Whyte, wife of Quintine Whyte, the Director of the SAIRR, started with the implementation of the Laubach literacy method. The literacy method was carried under the slogan "*each one teach one and win one for Christ*" (Bird 1984:203).

Wilson (1991:78) reports that each learner, according to this method, is supposed to teach someone else the first lesson before he is permitted to learn the second. Whyte adopted the Laubach literacy method to teach literacy in the South African vernaculars and in English and Afrikaans. This method was implemented by Whyte experimentally in the Donaldson Community Centre in 1946 and subsequently in many of the Johannesburg night schools, including the African College and the Mayibuye Night Schools.

◊ **The TWEA**

According to the document "Adult Education" compiled by the TWEA to draw the attention of the Universities Commission to the need for encouragement of adult education in South Africa (Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B50.3:6), the methods of teaching included study groups, use of films, demonstrations and discussions. Each class lasted two hours; the first hour was used by the teacher in direct instruction, while the second was devoted to the discussion of the lecture and to tutorial assistance. Students were given homework in the form of essays on the topic of the lecture or arising out of the course. Methods such as study groups, essay writing and discussions were used to induce the learners to overcome shyness and lack of ability to express themselves orally or on paper and above all to contribute to the growth of thoughtful, well-informed public opinion (in Rheinallt Jones Collection, AD 843, B 50.3:6).

To sum up the paragraphs on ABE for black people from 1652 up to the introduction of the *Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953* it is clear that the state itself took no positive steps to promote the provision of ABE for blacks in South Africa. As mentioned previously the

white Christian missionaries and other interest groups were involved in the alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa for their own reasons. However, the provision of ABE by the Christian missionaries and other interest groups illustrates a relationship between educational programmes and wider political and ideological interests as shown in the discussion of the aims of ABE in this chapter.

In the next paragraph consideration will be given to the reaction and opposition to the implementation of the *Bantu Education Act of 1953* with regard to ABE. Attention will be focused on how the state used its power to shut off the available resources of the providers of ABE who attempted to alleviate illiteracy among blacks in South Africa.

2.6   REACTION TO AND OPPOSITION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT 47 OF 1953 REGARDING ABE

The Nationalist Party came to power in 1948. The government under the Nationalist Party undermined the policy of support for night schools and this was achieved through the passage of such laws as the *Suppression of the Communist Act of 1950*, the *Bantu Education Act of 1953* and the *Regulations for Night Schools in Urban Areas Act of 1957* which placed constraints on the provision of ABE by white Christian missionaries, political organisations and other literacy agencies.

The *Bantu Education Act* became law on 1 January 1954. One of the provisions of the Act was the transfer of control of black education, including ABE, from the provincial administrations to the Union Department of Native Affairs (Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1953: 258).

Subsequently, Notices 1414 and 1415 in the *Government Gazette* of 13 September 1957 introduced many restrictions, including the following (Horrell 1964:115):

◊   night schools for blacks were to apply for registration or close down;
◊   night schools had to operate during normal school terms only, and be open for inspection by Departmental officials;
◊   night schools located in African urban areas or rural areas were to be conducted only by African school boards or committees;

◊   in urban areas, the application for registration had to be accompanied by a permit from the Group Areas Board and apply for renewal every year;

◊   classes could be held in official school facilities controlled by the school board and committee unless exceptions were approved by the Director of Bantu Education;

◊   only black learners above the age of 16 years with legal residency status in a particular urban area could be admitted into a night school in that area;

◊   all teachers' appointments were subject to approval from the Director of Bantu Education who could withdraw approval subject to 24 hours' notice and without reasons; and

◊   the financing of a night school would be the responsibility of the manager concerned who could collect regular compulsory school fees subject to the approval of the secretary.

The *Bantu Education Act of 1953* and the *Government Gazette* of 13 September 1957 (Government Notices 1414 and 1415) placed enormous constraints, namely administrative, financial and logistical ones, on night schools and learners. Consequently, many of the left-wing volunteers withdrew their assistance when the *Bantu Education Act of 1953* was passed, stating that they did not want to be party to the new Bantu Education system (Bird 1984:205).

According to Horrell (1968:12) the night schools which survived were in fact granted the Group Areas permits and official registration in 1958, but for seven years after that, although annual applications for registration were submitted in terms of regulations, no replies were received from the Department until 1966. A letter was sent in 1966 throughout the country by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Johannesburg, with the approval that the Mayibuye Night School close in 1957 and that any application for the extension of registration "*will not be entertained under any circumstances*" (Bird 1984:208).

Bird (1984:208) reports that the Minister of Bantu Education noted in his report in 1962 that there were 33 night schools and 19 continuation classes with a combined total of 2 218 learners. According to these figures, there was a drastic reduction from the period before the 1957 regulations when there had been over 10 000 students enrolled in night

schools and continuation classes all over the country. As a consequence of the financial limitations and administrative problems, many night schools were closed.

Attention will now be focused on the development of ABE for blacks after the Union of South Africa.

2.7   ADULT BASIC EDUCATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE AFTER THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (1954-1994)

2.7.1   INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in paragraph 2.5, the Nationalist Party government's hostility to night schools and literacy in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in a dramatic reduction in night schools and adult learners. Until 1975 the government was not directly involved in the provision of ABE for blacks in South Africa. The needs of adult learners were catered for by the night schools which were conducted in various parts of the country as indicated in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5.

The Adult Education Section of the DET was established in 1975 to provide ABE for blacks from disadvantaged sections of the society who had never had the opportunity of education, or as a result of social and economic pressures, had had to drop out of school at an early stage. According to Engelbrecht (1980:4), "*This somewhat delayed participation is due mainly to the other urgent responsibilities which the Department had had to give attention to in its vast and varied education task.*" The following are some of the matters which had to take preference over the Department's active involvement in adult education for blacks in South Africa:

◊   facilities had to be provided for every black child of school-going age to attend a school;

◊   the training of a sufficient number of teachers with adequate qualifications to meet the requirements of such a body of learners;

◊   the supply of buildings, school furniture and equipment for schools with increasing enrolments;

◊   the provision of Department school books;

◊   the reduction of the pupil: teacher ratio;

◊   the abolishment of double session classes; and

◊   the improvement of the salaries of teachers.

The DET claimed it became actively involved in the provision of adult education in 1975 because of an increased allocation of funds (Engelbrecht 1980:4). However, this shift in the attitude of the government towards night schools and literacy was prompted by economic pressure, with increasing demands for a better trained labour force (French 1992:75). Masilela (1991:29) shares the same sentiment when he says that, "*Adult education for Africans was to be used as a means to the end of solving skilled manpower shortage.*" Engelbrecht (1980:3-4) also admitted that there was a need for adult education for blacks because of changed circumstances at the workplace and he summarised the need for adult education as follows:

> *Just as in any other country in the world, communities of South Africa are changing fast. It would be foolish of any education programme to ignore these changes or try to evade them. Adult education is the one aspect of education that must react to change in the community … individuals who do not know what is happening become confused and afraid. Adult education can equip them to have insight and realization of the changing circumstances and to make them feel safe and secure.*

From 1975 the various autonomous regional education departments for blacks set up divisions of adult education with literacy components. Public Adult learning Centres (hereafter referred to as PALCs) were established in consultation with local communities. These are centres where the Department accepted full financial responsibility.

State-aided centres were registered where a subsidy was granted by the Department and study material supplied free of charge. This was applicable in cases where mines, industries and companies wished to upgrade their own employees in their academic field. Circuit centres were established where each circuit inspector could arrange classes for the upgrading of teachers in service in his inspection circuit.

Specially prepared study material for adults, based on andragogic principles, was provided free of charge to adults enrolled at registered public learning centres. State-

aided and private centres were given copies of the study material on request with approval for duplication.

The following table reflects a phenomenal growth in the student population in the DET night schools between 1984 and 1988.

TABLE 2.1:   ENROLMENT FOR THE YEARS 1984-1988

		1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Literacy	Man	3 829	4 673	3 779	6 438	7 409
	Woman	3 402	3 309	3 351	4 704	5 669
	Total	7 231	7 982	7 130	11 142	13 078
Preparatory	Man	2 746	3 317	2 824	3 695	4 077
	Woman	2 295	2 518	2 235	2 963	3 198
	Total	5 041	5 835	5 059	6 658	7 275
Course I	Man	2 369	2 366	2 254	3 623	3 786
	Woman	2 039	1 935	1 911	3 066	3 330
	Total	4 408	4 301	4 165	6 689	7 116
Course II	Man	3 200	3 643	3 137	5 062	5 921
	Woman	3 217	3 284	3 191	5 599	6 101
	Total	6 417	6 927	6 328	10 661	12 022
Course III	Man	3 899	4 062	5 046	10 015	12 305
	Woman	5 342	5 199	6 281	13 593	16 284
	Total	9 241	9 261	11 327	23 608	28 589
Course V	Man	2 606	3 522	5 698	10 545	14 262
	Woman	3 910	5 341	7 280	14 707	19 940
	Total	6 516	8 863	12 978	25 252	34 202
Students		38 854	43 169	46 987	84 010	102 282
Teachers as Students		3 387	2 739	3 322	2 356	2 170
Total Students		42 241	45 908	50 309	86 366	104 452

[Source: Department of Education and Training, Annual Reports 1984-1988]

By the end of 1994, 145 public, 29 circuit, 44 state-aided and 16 private centers under the control of the DET were in operation, with a further 171 registered satellite campuses

65

attached to public centres (Department of Education and Training 1994a:26). The enrolment at centres for adult education increased from 85 022 in 1993 to 114 980 in 1994. The majority of learners enrolled for literacy training, where the number increased from 13 365 in 1993 to 15 919 in 1994 (Department of Education and Training 1994a:26).

In the next paragraph, the aims of adult education as propounded by the DET will be given.

2.7.2   AIMS

When the Adult Education Section was established in 1975, the following priorities were identified by the DET (Department of Education and Training 1994b:9):

◊   **To offer courses in literacy**

Adults who have had no formal education whatsoever need basic literacy as a point of departure. This means that a person should first be able to read and write his mother tongue and, where necessary, at least one of the official languages. Basic literacy should then be followed by functional literacy which would include, for example, the language of the workplace. To become functionally literate, therefore, a person must first acquire the basic skills of reading and writing. Basic literacy is required to help illiterates to reach a stage where they can function effectively in society.

According to the former DET (Department of Education and Training 1988:152) supportive parental involvement is a prerequisite for effective formal education in any community. Parents who have themselves learnt to read and write can give more assistance to their children in dealing with schoolwork. Promoting literacy may encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children which may, in turn, improve academic performance and reduce high failure rates at primary and secondary school level.

◊ **To improve the academic qualifications of adults**

Another priority identified by the Department was to help black adults to complete their formal academic education. This varied from adults who had dropped out as pupils in the primary or secondary levels to adults who had failed matric at some stage. This may be correctly termed a "second chance" education because it gives a second chance to adults who, for various reasons, could not complete primary or secondary education.

◊ **To improve the academic qualifications up to grade 12 of the teachers already in employment**

When the Adult Education Section was established in 1975, the majority of teachers who were in service, were in possession of a Std 8 certificate and a Primary Teacher's Diploma. These teachers had to be assisted to obtain a Std 10 certificate and this enabled them to obtain further qualifications in the teaching field.

◊ **To offer community development and personal enrichment courses**

A number of community development and personal enrichment courses were developed. The principal/supervising teacher was expected to do needs analysis and articulate the needs of the community. However, the Department warned that: "*Both parties should try to satisfy the needs within the budget allocated to their particular centre*" (Department of Education and Training, Working document on Adult Education 6/6/2).

Attention will now be focused on the courses which were offered at centres for adult education.

2.7.3 CONTENT

The content of the adult education programme offered at the centres for learning was formal and based on the Departmental syllabuses used in day schools. These syllabuses were in turn based on the core syllabuses prescribed for all education Departments (Engelbrecht: 1980:6). The academic courses were examination-oriented and failed to address the immediate problems of adult learners such as employment and promotion at work.

Certification alone does not necessarily lead to employment in a current social context. Relevant education must be provided at the centres. This entails market-oriented education which is in line with the ever-changing requirements of the economic world. This will make people employable.

The following courses were offered at the centres for adult education (Department of Education and Training 1994b:84-99):

◊　　　　**Course To Teach Adults To Read and Write (CARW)**

When the Adult Education Section was established, it was decided to make use of the literacy programmes offered by the existing literacy organisations such as the Bureau of Literacy and Literature and Operation Upgrade. In 1983 the Department decided to develop its own programme which was completed in 1986. It was therefore necessary to train all the literacy instructors in the field in order to enable them to offer the new course called CARW. In April 1987, a post for literacy advisor in each region was created for this purpose. CARW programmes were offered to 13 078 adults in 1988 (Department of Education and Training 1988:156).

The CARW courses were available in the following languages: isiZulu, isiXhosa, SePedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Xitsonga, Thsivenda, Afrikaans and English. A candidate had to pass the CARW course with at least 50% in each of the languages, that is, mother tongue, English and Afrikaans, in order to be promoted to the Preparatory Course (Department of Education and Training 1994b:84).

In addition to the three languages, a student could follow a short course in numeracy which comprised the following:

- Writing, reading and identifying numbers
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
- Measurements
- Telling the time
- Using money
- Academic courses

The following academic courses were developed and offered:

- Preparatory Course - equivalent to Stds 1 and 2
- Course I - equivalent to Stds 3 and 4
- Course II - equivalent to Std 5
- Course III - equivalent to Std 8
- Course V - equivalent to Std 10

As pointed out above, adult learners followed the same curriculum as their day school counterparts. External examinations were written in courses II, III and V.

◊ **Non-academic courses**

In accordance with the government's policy of community development as contained in the *White Paper on the Provision of Education in the Republic of South Africa 1983*, non-formal education programmes were developed and made available (Department of Education and Training 1987:97). Consequently, night schools offered a variety of community development programmes such as the following:

- Practical Course for Housewives and Domestics
- A Beginner's Course in First Aid
- Prepare your Child for School
- You and Your Income Tax
- Basic Welding
- Know Your Car

These courses were introduced in 1986 with a view to creating "home industries" through which many people from disadvantaged communities might earn a livelihood. These courses did not lead to any certificate. The participants received "diplomas" as proof that they had attended and successfully completed a particular self-enrichment programme.
In the next paragraph, the methods of teaching used at the centres for adult education will be explored.

2.7.4   METHODS

When the CARW course was completed in 1986, the Department retrained all the literacy instructors in order to enable them to offer the new course. It was the policy of the Department not to allow anybody who was not trained in this course to handle a literacy class. The literacy advisors were responsible for the training of study leaders who conducted reading and writing courses at adult education centres.

The training involved the following:

◊   Andragogy (teaching adults)

◊   The special CARW method to teach adults how to read and write an African language, English and Afrikaans

◊   Teaching adults how to write

◊   Physical exercises

The researcher in his involvement in adult education from 1975 to 1996 as principal of adult education centres and later as Deputy Senior Chief Education Specialist for Adult Education at the head office of the former DET, observed that teachers of Preparatory to Course V had not had any preparatory training in adult education. Teachers in many adult education centres emphasised rote learning, that is, memorising the subject matter with little or no understanding at all. There was a lack of flexibility by some of the teachers in adapting their teaching methods to adult learning situations.

The teacher possessed the knowledge which was transferred to learners who were passive recipients. In this approach, a heavy dependency of the learner on the teacher was promoted. This problem was compounded by the cultural and education background of adult learners which did not encourage learner assertiveness. Adult learners are often reluctant to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning and benefit. They tended to wait for a teacher to direct them.

Adult learning can be made more meaningful through group activities and discussion. The discussion is facilitated by the teacher who also participates as an equal. Adult learners are problem-centred and very often they learn with a problem-solving focus.

Social learning such as role-playing, case studies, outings and field trips could have been used to help create a participative learning environment.

However, the Department soon realised that there were real differences between the pedagogical approach and the andragogical approach to education. This meant that the nature of the tuition and learning at a centre for adult education differed from that at a school. The Adult Education Section launched a campaign to change this "wrong" approach. In 1990, 253 teachers successfully completed the course on teaching adults (Department of Education and Training 1990:130).

2.8   A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROVISION OF ABE FOR BLACK PEOPLE FROM BEFORE 1652 UP TO 1994

In tracing the origin and development of ABE for blacks in South Africa in this chapter, from what may be termed *education of adults into traditional culture* in the pre-colonial period to the most recent provision, certain trends have emerged. What is apparent is that depending on the circumstances of the education the prevailing hegemony will make different demands on the educational system. So the cultural, political and social demands of a traditional culture of warriors and farmers will be profoundly different from an oligarchic hegemony of state which educates a labour force to serve its needs.

Traditional education of adults was conceptualised and developed in a pre-literate social context. With the coming of the Dutch into South Africa, literacy amongst indigenous people and slaves was conceived in a limited way – reading, writing and arithmetic (see paragraphs 2.3.3; 2.4.3; 2.5.3 and 2.7.3). It needed to be sufficient to serve the needs of trade and limited communication. But in a predominantly oral society in which the indigenous communities have lived and live, the literarisation of the oral traditions can take decades. This has been the case in South Africa, which continues to have very large sections of the community living and functioning in rural communities. But the materials provided for adults have only recently begun to take on the challenge of the oral elements (needed and familiar) in literacy courses. This grave lack of understanding of what the literarisation process entails has led to stunted and uncreative materials for literacy courses.

The promotion of literacy always has its own agenda and motivation. During Dutch rule and the missionary phase, teaching people to read made it possible for black people to study the Bible by themselves. The enormous push of the German and Dutch churches, themselves in a phase of revivalism, enabled missionary schools to be set up and projects for the so-called heathen people to be funded. State and Church worked hand in hand with a double aim – to create a slightly literate workforce of cheap labour and people who would be Christian and share the ambiguous values of the conquerors (see paragraphs 2.3.2; 2.4.2; 2.5.2; 2.7.2). This style of ABE teaching has remained in essence one of the most energetic programmes during 300 years in South Africa. The strong Christianisation process is not in evidence but other important political slogans and propaganda have overturned the religious thrust. During the 1960s the aims of ABE were to achieve universal basic education for all. There was a gradual shift to literacy for development during the 1970s when it became obvious that universal basic education for all was not going to happen. The results of this shift were inconclusive and during the 1980s the objective changed to literacy for improving the quality of life. Once again only very limited success was achieved, causing another shift in objectives away from the mechanical skills of reading, writing and arithmetic to a broader based ABE in the 1990s (Wydeman 1993:5).

The curriculum of adult learners was similar to the one used by their day school counterparts. It was, therefore, not relevant to the needs and aspirations of the learners. It was based on a pre-specified series of topics and did not provide them with marketable skills (see paragraph 2.7.3). The curriculum for adults should be learner-centred rather than imposed from above. It should be dynamic and change with time.

The teachers at the centres for adult education did not have any preparatory training in ABE. They were trained to deal with children and youth. Consequently, they employed teaching methods which they used when teaching children and youth. The apparent effects of employing primary and secondary school teachers are that there is a failure to adjust to the role of educator of adults, and a distorted view of his/her role, namely, considering the work in this field as part-time work for earning extra remuneration. The motive for extra remuneration is, in most instances, far greater than the services rendered (see paragraph 2.7.4)

The CPSA's night schools provided literacy to conscientise blacks about the structures which oppressed them (see paragraphs 2.3.2; 2.4.2; 2.5.2 and 2.7.2).

But that ABE provision for blacks in South Africa has been delivered in an uncoordinated and fragmented way because of a lack of any central structure or framework which could take responsibility for ABE, has continued into the present democratic society.

The state did not take greater responsibility for ABE until 1975 when the Adult Education Section was established within the Department of Education and Training. Although the Department became actively involved in the provision of ABE in 1975, it was left largely to the private and informal sectors up to 1994 (see paragraph 2.7.1). The question must be asked why education in general is subsumed beneath the larger and more diffuse efforts of government to retain an educational stasis while saying the very opposite. The fragmented provision without central organisation of ABE reveals the need for a new paradigm. In such a new model of provision, education should be provided along lines which match the Constitution, in which human rights are upheld and exploitation of education for more sinister labour requirements would not be the case.

The discussion of the historical events in this chapter is an attempt to sketch the background against which the current provision for ABE for blacks in South Africa and the urgent need for a new model of provision can be understood.

Chapter three will focus on what is being done in South Africa in the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks after 1994 up to 2003.

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CHAPTER THREE
**SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1994 – 2003**

The aim of this chapter is to:

- conceptualise adult basic education and training;

- investigate provision of ABET after 1994 in South Africa;

- investigate the role of the state, the National Literacy Cooperation and the business sector in the provision of ABET in South Africa;

- give a critical analysis of the South African National Literacy Initiative.

3.1   INTRODUCTION

It is stated in chapter one that South Africa, like most developing countries, is faced with the enormous challenge of alleviating the high rate of illiteracy amongst blacks. Despite the change of government from a white hegemony to a black democracy, with its expressed intention of making education inclusive, comprehensive and of such importance that it is described as a basic human right, a paradox exists. Almost 4 million South Africans have had no schooling at all and about 3,5 million were taught inadequately according to the Population Census of 1996 (1996:36). At present the situation appears to be much the same: the pool of adult illiteracy is enlarged now by inflows of illiterate children who have either not attended school at all or have had only minimal or inadequate schooling. A concentration on setting the wrongs of past regimes right by using the strategy of adult education is a fallacious argument. The specific strategy and action plan for illiteracy in South Africa cannot be an idealized one. It cannot be based on political agendas either; it is as urgent as any of the major politically inspired campaigns has been in the developing countries. Government in South Africa would best serve its people by adopting an integrated approach, not only to universal primary and preschool education, but to education as a whole. What this study has sought to make clear (see chapter one) is the need to identify a strategy suitable to South Africa for alleviating illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa.

To propose a suitable strategy for alleviating illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa, it is necessary first to analyse the current provision of ABET. Much has been written about the causes of illiteracy amongst blacks in South Africa, but it is not germane to this discussion to review ABET in the period prior to the establishment of the new democracy in 1994. The period before 1994 is reviewed in chapter two. This chapter records an evaluation of what has happened since the change of government in 1994. A review and assessment of the transformation of the ABET sector in the Department of Education since the 1994 elections reveals that educational reform has been a central part of the country's reconstruction and development project.

After the establishment of the democracy in South Africa the situation in the country in terms of literacy was ominous and calamitous.

3.2   THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM OF ADULT ILLITERACY

Despite the Minister of Education's call to "*break the back of illiteracy among adults and youth in five years*" (Department of Education:1999b), there are still almost 3 to 4 million people who have had no schooling at all (Statistics South Africa 1999:36). According to the survey of ABET conducted by the University of Natal (Aitchison, Houghton & Baatjes 2000:18), if "no schooling" is taken as any indication of complete illiteracy, about 24% of black adults aged 20 years and older are totally illiterate, 10% of coloureds, 7% of Indians and only 1% of whites. The difference between men and women total illiterates, though present, (men 41%, women 58%), is relatively minimal.   There are also considerable variations among the nine provinces in South Africa. Some provinces have high numbers of people who are functionally illiterate though they form a relatively small percentage of the population such as in Gauteng, whilst other provinces, for example, Mpumalanga, may have small numbers but high percentages of people in need of ABET.   Provinces such as the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal have both high numbers and high percentages of functionally illiterate people. However, in interpreting the estimates of functional illiteracy in South Africa, Harley *et al.* (1996:31-32) warned that a large number of the functionally illiterate in any society will be those who are uneducable for reasons of mental handicaps or sub-normal intelligence. Aitchison *et al.* (2000:18) contend that some first world countries such as the United Kingdom also have a large percentage of the population who may be functionally illiterate because of sub-normal intelligence or severe mental handicaps.

The magnitude of the adult illiteracy problem reveals that the new government which took over in 1994, inherited an education system which excluded most blacks from general basic education. The challenge faced by the government is to expand access to general basic education in order to enable black adults who have had no formal schooling at all or only the barest minimum to acquire basic skills.

An outline of how the government has attempted to conceptualise ABET to help those who have had no schooling at all and to educate and train those already in the economy – in factories and on farms, will be useful here.

3.3   CONCEPTUALISATION OF ABET

A dictionary definition of literacy simply means the ability to read and write and does not adequately describe the skills needed to function or participate in a modern economy. According to Harley *et al.* (1996:20) the term "adult basic education" is preferable to "literacy" because the latter "*… does not adequately describe the provision of a functional, general knowledge education built on a foundation of literacy, numeracy and information-gathering skills.*"

Since 1994, policy documents formulated by the South African Committee for Adult Basic Education (hereafter referred to as SACABE), the National Training Board (hereafter referred to as NTB) and the Centre for Education Policy Development (hereafter referred to as CEDP) suggest that ABE should be understood as changing its field of meaning. ABE is rapidly being transformed into a concept which makes it an equivalent in the range of knowledge and skills it describes to what is considered basic education within the school systems. In formal terms the achievement of ABE can be regarded as the equivalent achievement of a General Education Certificate.

The SACABE, as quoted by Harley *et al.* (1996:20) defined ABE in the following categories:

◊   The basic education phase in the provision of life-long learning.
◊   The final exit point in terms of certification from ABE should be equivalent to the exit point from compulsory education (Std 7/8).
◊   ABE should include a core of skills, knowledge and values.

◊   ABE should consist of levels of learning along a continuum assessed as outcomes.

◊   ABE should be aimed at adults who have had none or very little formal schooling, those who do not have the equivalent of a school-leaving certificate and those who only require specific sections of ABE which meet their particular needs.

This definition stresses the basic education equivalence element of ABE although adults would not necessarily follow the same curriculum as children or be assessed as children are. The formal certificated value of ABE was subsequently reinforced by the Interim Guidelines of September 1995 (Department of Education 1995). Current discourse in South Africa tends to be about ABET rather than literacy. ABET is defined as education and training provision for people aged 15 and over who are not engaged in formal schooling or higher education and who have an education level of less than grade 9 (Std 7). Thus ABET is essentially an adult equivalent of the basic schooling which children receive and which they have recognised by the award of a General Certificate in Education (Aitchison *et al.* 2000:15).

◊   **How did ABET come into existence?**

To set the scene for the development of ABET, a brief recapitulation of the situation before the advent of democracy in South Africa is provided. Black people who were illiterate and untrained were formerly kept on the lowest rungs of the formal economy by the Nationalist Party government. A second-chance education had to be designed and delivered to those already in the economy. The type of education required by illiterate workers in the modern economy had to be more than literacy and numeracy. Since the emphasis would be on training workers for the formal economy, the education provided had to include a strong training component so that those already in employment could be certificated and promoted (Bhola 1997:77).

In response to the need to educate and train illiterate blacks for the formal economy, ABET planners decided to link ABE with Training and the Recognition of Prior Learning (hereafter referred to as RPL) which would result in the awarding of a higher qualification. The integration of education and training implied in ABET sounds simple but it is difficult to implement. Bhola (1997:78) has argued that learning centres "*… will*

never be able to afford the workshops, equipment and technicians of high enough calibre to train learners adequately for the labour market where technology changes each day." Furthermore, ABET cannot train people to effectively enter a workplace and fit perfectly into any job.

Aitchison *et al*. (2000:25-26) argues that the relationship between ABE and Training and the RPL is not simple because "*… though the candidate is technically proficient (in particular skills, in the "T"-training) he/she does not have the BE, the "E" (such as the literacy skills necessary for such things as reading instructions or plans) that would enable a higher qualification to be awarded through the RPL. Workers often simply need the ABE component, not a T component.*" Although the conceptualisation of ABET was well structured in terms of its formal logic, it was seriously flawed in terms of organisational and pedagogical processes.

The Department of Education is committed to lifelong learning on the basis of an integrated approach to education and training. The creation of a new framework for education and training is one strategy aimed at redressing past inequalities. According to the Department of Education (1997d:11), this approach represents a move away from the artificial and rigid division between "academic" and "applied", "theory" and "practice", "knowledge" and "skills" and "hand" and "head" which have long chracterised the organisation of curricula in the traditional education and training system in South Africa. Learning programmes should provide for an integrated approach to ensure that learners can use the knowledge, skills and attitudes learned through ABET in their daily lives. Education and training must be viewed as one, in other words, integration is the key word. The next paragraph will focus on policy developments for ABET.

3.4   FORMULATION OF THE ABET POLICY

Since 1994 policy formulation in the education and training sector has been dynamic, dramatic and challenging. The formulation of policy for ABET is part of a larger process of developing policy frameworks for education and training in South Africa. Various policy documents for ABET have been published by the Department of Education. The most important policy documents which will be discussed briefly in this study are the following:

3.4.1   INTERIM GUIDELINES FOR THE PROVISION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, announced on 8 September 1995 the *Interim Guidelines* for ABET as official policy of the national government. The policy document addressed the following eight key elements:

◊   The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

◊   Principles for standard setting

◊   Levels for ABET

◊   Generic competencies

◊   Level descriptions

◊   Fields of study

◊   Assessment

◊   The language of teaching and learning

The *Interim Guidelines* have been developed to set standards which will enable individual learners to demonstrate, through outcomes assessment, what learning he/she has achieved in the required standard at a particular level, regardless of how that learning was acquired. The vision of ABET which underpins the Interim Guidelines has emphasised that "*… the provision of ABET is linked to the development of human resources within national development, aimed at restructuring the economy, addressing past inequalities, and the building of a democratic society… ABET should provide people with the basic foundation for lifelong learning and equip them with the skills and critical capacity to participate fully in society*" (Department of Education 1995:1).

The *Interim Guidelines* have served as the principal reference point for subsequent policy and legislative development. Although the *Interim Guidelines* were developed after extensive consultation, negotiation and revision, the implementation of these guidelines has so far not produced the desired results. Bhola (1997:81) comments on this as follows: "*… ABET as idealised in the Interim Guidelines has not yet had a chance to be actualised.*" It can be assumed that the slow progress of the implementation of the new education policies can be attributed to the fact that when the new government came into power in 1994 it had to overhaul the education system by putting in place progressive legislation with the general objective of reconstructing the country. This is a mammoth task which requires time and energetic action.

3.4.2   POLICY DOCUMENT ON ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Department of Education published the *Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training* in 1997 (1997a). The document builds on previous policy works, in particular on the *Interim Guidelines* of 1995 which sought to address the historical and calamitous lack of support for ABET and to encourage ABET as the basic foundation for lifelong learning.

The formulation of policy in ABET is also shaped by three policy frameworks, namely the *White Paper of 1995*, the *National Education Policy Act of 1996* and the *South African Qualifications Authority Act No. 58 of 1995*. The executive summary of the Policy Document on Adult Education and Training clearly formulates the wish of its compilers to develop an ABET system that is "*… based upon principles and practices of equity, redress, development, reconstruction, access, integration, partnership, sustainable use of resources, a flexible curriculum, outcomes-based standards of attainment, the recognition of prior learning and cost-effectiveness*" (Department of Education 1997a:3).

The Department also sees ABET as part of and a foundation for lifelong learning. This is reflected in many of its policy concerns which attempt to integrate ABET into lifelong learning as a sustainable level of literacy, numeracy, basic general education and certificated career paths (Department of Education 1997a:3).

The Department's vision for ABET is reflected in the policy as follows: "*A literate South Africa within which all its citizens have acquired basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation*" (Department of Education 1997a:6).

This vision emphasises the core values for South Africa which are based on the principles of human dignity, liberty and justice, democracy, equality and national development (Department of Education 1997a:7).

The Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training provides a national definition of ABET as follows (Department of Education 1997a:2):

Adult basic education and training is the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally provides access to nationally recognised certificates.

Aitchison *et al.* (2000*:*136-137) point out some issues which are not adequately clarified in the Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training. These are in the first place that the ideological orientation of ABET is not clearly defined. For instance, if the ABET curricula and the school curricula are based on the same outcomes, do we really need an ABET system if the differences are so limited/minimal? Secondly, the curriculum framework is pursuing an outcomes-based education approach, which raises questions about the learning material not based on outcomes. In the third place the 1997 policy is regarded as Department of Education policy and not as ABET sector, national or government policy although role-players and stakeholders in ABET made major contributions to the policy. There is the question in the fourth instance of the lack of legislation which raises serious questions about provisioning and delivery, funding for ABET, the constitutional obligation of government to ABET and, most importantly, the political will to alleviate illiteracy and under-education. Legislation is still the best evidence signalling the government's commitment to addressing these issues as part of a policy renewal process.

3.4.3   A NATIONAL MULTI-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING: PROVISION AND ACCREDITATION

The overall national objective of the Four-Year Implementation Plan is to provide general (basic) education and training to adults for access to further education and training and employment as emphasised in the National Education Policy Act, the White Paper on Education and Training and the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Department of Education 1997b:viii).

The Plan is based on a two-phase approach to implementation in which the first phase is focused on developing the structures, systems and capacity of the ABET sector. The second phase is focused on mass scale provisioning of programmes and services to

learners. Phase One (1998-1999) aims at relatively small increases in the number of learner enrolments. Phase Two aims at the mass mobilisation of learners so that the overall target of some 2.5 million learners is reached by the year 2001 (Department of Education 1997b:x).   As indicated previously, the first phase focuses on the establishment of structures, systems and capacity, while the second phase is concerned with mass mobilisation, provision and delivery. The Plan provides details of implementation elements which include all the sub-systems of the policy, for example, development work and learner targets. In addition the Plan recognises the need for national, provincial and local coordination as well as the need to mobilise political and financial will to realise the objectives of the Plan.

The Plan had to be translated into provincial plans. This required financial support and obtaining funding from the National Department of Education delayed the drafting of provincial plans. Although it was agreed that provinces should recruit relatively small numbers of new learners during 1998/99, the latest statistics show a decline in learner numbers and in other cases, failure to reach the target of 10 000 learners set by each province (Aitchison *et al.* 2000*:*138).

The Plan was also regarded as a mechanism through which NGOs could access funds to reinforce and multiply provisioning and delivery. Many NGOs have closed because they have had difficulty in accessing funds because of bilateral or multilateral agreements made by foreign donors with government. As a result of these agreements, foreign donors insist that government approval of proposals is necessary.   It is also evident that foreign donors prefer not to deal directly with small organisations and this has made it difficult for small NGOs to access funds directly (Aitchison *et al.* 2000*:*138).

3.4.4   THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Directorate for Adult Basic Education and Training developed a document, namely, *Regulatory Framework: Transforming Night Schools into Public Adult Learning Centres* (Department of Education 1997c) during 1996 and 1997. This framework proposes policy similar to that of the Schools Act. The framework was intended to regulate the provision and delivery of ABET in the night school system and also to transform the old night school system into one of efficient and effective PALCs. Adult educators employed by the state are now registered under the Employment of Educators Act.

3.5   CURRENT STATE OF ABET PROVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.5.1   THE STATE AS ABET PROVIDER

The RSA comprises nine provinces, (see Figure 3.1, p84). The National Department of Education is responsible for education policy in general and all aspects of ABET. However, public and private adult learning centres fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial departments of education.

When South Africa achieved its democracy in 1994, one of the challenges facing the Department of Education was to take responsibility for providing ABET for adults who have had no schooling or inadequate educational experience. The acceptance of this responsibility is captured in the spirit of the new Constitution which promises basic education for all, that is, children, youth and adults.

The Department of Education established a Directorate for Adult Basic and Community Education and Training in 1995 to show its commitment to ABET.

This Directorate has now been reconstructed and renamed the Directorate for Adult Education and Training in order to merge ABET with adult learning in the further education and training band (Department of Education 1997b:27). The Department did this to ensure that ABET was not confined to the provision of the mechanical skills of reading and writing but extends to include other essential areas for the purposes of progress in careers, work, employment. This is more in line with the National Qualifications Framework (hereafter referred to as NQF) and ensures that lifelong learning is built into the departmental structure itself (Department of Education 1997b:27).

One of the educational challenges of the 21st century is the need for an educational system to facilitate a process of lifelong learning. This need is vividly presented by the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education 1995:21):

The overarching goal of policy must be to enable all individuals to value, have access to, and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality. Educational and management processes must therefore put the learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs. An integrated approach to education will increase access, mobility and quality in the national learning system.

The system must increasingly open access to education and training opportunities of good quality to all children, youths and adults. The Constitution guarantees equal access to basic education for all.   The satisfaction of this guarantee must be the basis of policy. It goes well beyond the provision of schooling. It must provide an increasing range of learning possibilities, offering learners greater flexibility in choosing what, where, when, how and at what pace they learn.

In achieving this goal, there must be special emphasis on the redress of educational inequalities among those sections of our people who have suffered particular disadvantages, or those who are especially vulnerable, including street children, out-of-school youth, the disabled and citizens with special educational needs, illiterate women, rural communities, squatter communities and communities damaged by violence.

The *White Paper on Education: Education and Training in the Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System* (Department of Education 1995:31) reflects the government's commitment to redressing past inequalities and providing basic education for adults whom it sees as a "*… force for social participation and economic development, providing an essential component of all RDP programmes.*" Along with the ongoing policy work, the Department of Education adopted A National Adult Basic Education and Training Framework: Interim Guidelines as an interim policy with a set of interim guidelines which became the nationwide guide for ABET.

◊   **The Ithuteng Campaign**

On the basis of the *Interim Guidelines* which were published in September 1995, the Department of Education and the National Literacy Cooperation (hereafter referred to as

NLC) co-operated as the Ithuteng (Ready to Learn) Campaign on 11 February 1996. The Ithuteng Campaign had two components, namely a national "programme" (Ithuteng) run by the state, and a national "project" (Thousand Learners Unit) run by the NLC as an organ of civil society.

The Ithuteng Campaign run by the state targeted 10 000 learners in each province. The NLC's Thousand Learner Unit would cover 1 000 new learners in each of the nine provinces. The Ithuteng Campaign became a Presidential Lead Project, and R50 million in donor funds was distributed to the provincial education departments. The state demonstrated its commitment to forming partnerships with NGOs and private sector organisations when it worked together with the NLC to provide literacy education. Bhola (1997:79) comments on this thus, "*This may have been the first time in the history of adult literacy or adult education that a state and an organ of civil society came together in such a partnership.*"

However, the implementation of the Ithuteng Campaign was not successful right from the start. Motala, Vally & Modiba (1999:9-10) identified the following problems experienced by some of the provincial education departments in the implementation of the Ithuteng Campaign:

◊   Provinces lacked the personnel and facilities to implement the programme.

◊   Provincial ABET directorates were unfamiliar with the new policies and discourse of ABET, and with modern literacy methods.

◊   When existing school facilities were used as ABET centres without prior permission of the school governing bodies, the latter exercised their power to deny learners access to classrooms.

◊   The training provided to teachers was short, limited and therefore often ineffective.

◊   The concept of "cascade training" proved unworkable because of the lack of managerial and logistical support at every level of the cascade.

◊   In many provinces, learning materials were never delivered to night schools, and teachers and managers were unpaid for months.

◊   Provincial education departments generally failed to pay service organisations, mainly NGOs, for the learning materials, teacher training and support they provided.

◊   There was no monitoring or evaluation of services, and no feedback between partners.

Though the provincial education departments experienced some problems with the implementation of the Ithuteng Campaign, the departments of education generally consider the Ithuteng Campaign to have been a success for the following reasons (Aitchison *et al.* 2000:40-41):

◊   It led to the launch of new PALCs.

◊   There was an increase in the number of learners.

◊   NGOs played a major role in practitioner training.

◊   Though the practitioner training was brief, it was useful and well done in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga and Western Cape.

◊   The new ABET curriculum, in the form of new approaches such as outcomes-based education approach, was introduced.

◊   Some management information system training was provided.

◊   There was an increase in the capacity for financial management of sub−directorate officials.

◊   Assessment training by the Independent Examination Board was useful.

◊   It led to increased supplies of materials.

◊   It led to the setting up of governance structures at PALCs.

◊   Learners were very positive about having been included in Ithuteng classes as opposed to traditional night school classes.

◊   Learner accomplishment was externally assessed through Independent Examination Board exams.

◊   It provided employment opportunities for unemployed teachers.

◊   There was an audit of centres.

All the provincial departments of education have a unit dedicated to ABET provided at PALCs. PALCs were previously called "night schools." Most of the ABET units are technically sub-directorates and have a fairly small complement of professional staff at their head offices – Eastern Cape has five, Free State four, Gauteng three, KwaZulu-Natal one person only, Northern Cape has four people, North West six, Northern Province one only and Western Cape has six. Lack of capacity within these sub−directorates is a serious problem at PALCs (Aitchison *et al.* 2000:27). Actual

delivery takes place at PALCs run on public school premises by part–time teachers. Each PALC usually has a part–time supervisor or a full-time principal. PALCs are clearly key providers of ABET, though the statistics from some provinces on the scale of their provision may be unreliable or grossly inflated. The problem of providing unreliable figures is exacerbated by the confusion about what ABET is.   The "ABET" sub-directorates are in charge of all adult education, that is ABET from literacy to Matriculation and Further Education and Training, and their statistics on "ABET" usually include students in Further Education and Training. Table 3.1 below gives the latest statistics of the learners at PALCs from the Draft ABET Sectoral Report (Department of Education 2000a:20-23; 47).

TABLE 3.1:   **OFFICIAL ESTIMATES OF LEARNERS AT PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRES**

REGION	ABET 1	ABET 2	ABET 3	ABET 4	ABET	FET	ALL
Eastern Cape	59,908				59,908	3,248	63,156
Free State	1,862	1,638	598	1,967	6,065		
Gauteng	7,181	5,864	6,313	10,490	29,848	25,295	55,143
*KwaZulu-Natal	5,401	3,831	2,184		11,416	11,739	23,155
Mpumalanga	4,549	4,496	4,249	2,450	15,744		
North West	9,086	14,800			23,886		
Northern Cape	2,040	1,111	557	419	4,127		
Northern Province	8,913	5,411	851	851	16,000		
Western Cape	18,828	5,000			23,828		
Totals	117,768	42,151	14,752	16,177	190,822		

[Source: Draft ABET Sectoral Report (Department of Education 2000a:20-23,47)]

However, Aitchison *et al.* (2000:35) argue that "*It is unclear whether the lack of FET statistics from most provinces is because they only submitted ABET statistics and there are unrecorded FET learners or whether they claim they have no FET learners at all.*"

88

The analysis of the surveys on enrolment at PALCs published by the Joint Education Trust (Harley *et al.* 1996 and Aitchison *et al.* 2000) suggests that the provision of ABET was not as successful as hoped. Aitchison (2001:16) states vividly that "*…what provision there has been has not been enough, or utilised enough, to do much more than stop the illiteracy situation from getting worse.*" Learner participation in ABET provided by the Department of Education in 1994/95 and in 1998/99 was 89,159 and 162,900 respectively (Harley *et al.* 1996:54). From 1994 the situation had not changed significantly. Aitchison (2001:17) contends that the declines in state provision have been influenced by the funding crisis which resulted in the reduction or temporary closure of PALCs and the ineffective management of the PALCs. Aitchison (2001:17) cites the following problems experienced by the PALCs:

◊   Delay in the payment of part-time tutors;
◊   lack of proper mechanisms for monitoring;
◊   poor specification of the work expected of coordinator/ supervisors/principals;
◊   funding shortages for training and learning materials; and
◊   the difficulty in accessing funds allocated for certain projects.

Moreover, the national and provincial departments of education have not yet formed themselves into one articulated system. ABET structures are also not yet well established in all the provinces (Bhola 1997:79-80). With regard to the supportive involvement of the provincial departments of education in PALCs, Aitchison *et al.* (2000:43) observe that

> *… perceptions of provincial government support for ABET vary, in many provinces it was largely nominal. Claims were made that there was strong political will and commitment in the Eastern Cape for ABET.*

Attention will now be focused on provision of ABET by the NLC.

3.5.2   THE NLC AS ABET PROVIDER

The NLC was established in 1986 as a coordinating body and conduit for funds to NGOs and community-based organisations (hereafter referred to as CBOs). Since its establishment in 1986, the NLC has developed into an association of 200 literacy NGOs.

The headquarters of the NLC was in Johannesburg. The NLC created nation-wide structures for ABET with the money it received from the European Union (hereafter referred to as EU). There was a provincial director in every province, who was assisted by a provincial coordinator and district coordinator. According to Aitchison *et al*. (2000:54) the NLC established a good relationship with the Department of Education both at national and provincial level. The NLC officials in the provinces liaised with NGO affiliates who in turn appointed field organisers and educators to implement ABET projects as part of the Thousand Learner Unit project (Bhola 1997:80).

In 1994 the NLC received a grant of R20 million from the EU to implement the Thousand Learner Unit project that would take 1 000 new adult learners in each of the nine provinces through two levels of ABET in two annual cycles. However, during the second half of 1997 the NLC began to experience cash flow problems due to financial mismanagement. The Board of Trustees took action against the NLC and terminated the services of all staff members from the end of February 1998 (Aitchison *et al.* 2000:52). Before 1994 there were over 200 NGOs and CBOs involved in adult education. After the collapse of the NLC this number dropped from 200 to less than 40 (Aitchison 2001:18). According to the two surveys conducted by the University of Natal on ABET in South Africa (Harley *et al.* 1996 and Aitchison *et al.* 2000) the number of learners who participated in adult education provided by the NGOs dropped from 62,140 in 1994/95 to 20,000 in 1998/99.

In summarising the involvement of the NLC in the provision of ABET as an organ of civil society, Aitchison *et al.* (2000:54) point out that

> *With some modest exceptions, the NLC's Thousand Learner Unit project collapsed without really achieving much other than keeping a number of NGOs and learner groups going. There was little reliable evidence of numbers of learners or of monitoring or indeed much planning at all … Where IEB examinations were written the results were usually appalling.*

3.5.3   THE BUSINESS SECTOR AND ABET

President Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address to Parliament on 25 June 1999 posed the question "*Is our education system on the road to the 21st century?*" In response to this question, the then Education Minister, Kader Asmal, outlined his Call to Action in July 1999. The Call to Action had been designed to mobilise South Africans to build an education and training system for the 21st century. The Call to Action had been operationalised under a plan known as *Tirisano* – a Sotho word meaning "working together" (Department of Education 1999b). In the Multi-year Implementation Plan for ABET, Minister Asmal called on the State to form partnerships with NGOs and business organisations to provide ABET for nearly a million new learners to achieve the equivalent of grade 9 by 2003. The then Minister (Department of Education 1999b) said, "*We must support this programme as much as possible. Unfortunately, budgetary pressure has resulted in several provincial departments cutting back or closing ABET programmes when they should have been expanding.*" At the same time the then Minister admitted that "*… it is improbable that the government will find sufficient additional funds in the near future to eliminate illiteracy through formal ABET programmes*" (Department of Education 1999b).

The then Minister of Education (Department of Education 1999b) proposed that "*… all employers, including employers in national, provincial and local governments, must be encouraged to run or support ABET programmes for their employees.*"   The then Minister also proposed the Skills Training Levies Act of 1998 be used to raise funds for ABET. This Act provides that from April 2000 employers shall contribute 0.5% of their payroll to the relevant Sectoral Education and Training Authority (hereafter referred to as SETA). This levy increased to 1% in 2001. There is a possibility that some of these levies will be used to support ABET. The then Minister pledged to consult the Minister of Labour to ensure that the Department of Education and the Department of Labour "*… target a massive increase in ABET provision through this route*" (Department of Education 1999b).

While there are hopes that the Skills Training Levies Act will lead to an expansion of ABET delivery, a number of adult educators have expressed concern that ABET provision by the business sector will only benefit those who are employed and excludes the majority of illiterates who are not formally employed. Although the then Minister

indicated in his Call to Action that unemployed illiterates would also have access to ABET programmes through the National Skills Fund, he did not elaborate on how they would access the funds.   Aitchison *et al.* (2000:48) also note in their survey that companies are already beginning to employ only those who already have a basic education, thus absolving them from the responsibility to provide ABET for their employees.

3.6   THE FUNDING OF ABET

In South Africa, the illiteracy situation had not changed significantly since 1994.   This situation should be attributed in the first place to the closing down of the NLC – the biggest provider of ABET in the country – in 1998 because of misappropriation of funds.   As a result, some of the main donors for ABET either terminated or reduced their funding.   Unfortunately the foreign donor withdrew the entire funding without considering an alternative approach to saving the organised effort and work done by the NLC.   Secondly, the budget allocated to the ABET sector by the government is insufficient (Department of Education 1997a:57).   The funding crisis worsened as provinces, which are responsible for the delivery of ABET, failed to spend more than 1% of the education budgets on ABET.   Only Mpumalanga spent 2,2% (R33m) on ABE and Gauteng spent 1,1% (R51m) (Department of Education 1997d:9).   According to the Department of Education (2002:24) government funding for ABET increased significantly since 1999.   In 2002 spending for ABET was R454m with a projected R1,2 billion by 2004.   However this still represents 2% of overall education funding.   Over R30 m was donated by DFID to Unisa ABET Institute when it entered into a partnership agreement with the government's SANLI project in February 2002.

Despite the continuing literacy drives, progress in the delivery of ABET is often slow. The South African Democratic Teachers Union (hereafter referred to as SADTU) argues that although there is a national pilot scheme (SANLI) put in place for ABET "*… there remain serious questions about the commitments of resources to make this a reality*" (*City Press*, May 2001:13).   Aitchison (2001:18) confirms SADTU's observation as follows, "*The high hopes for a rapid and exhilarating expansion of ABET's provision after 1994 cannot be realised unless funding for ABET is significantly increased.*"   This assertion seems to be justified by the declining enrolments of learners in adult learning centres as depicted in table 3.2 below.

TABLE 3.2: **LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN ABET IN 1994/95 AND 1998/99**

		1994/95	1998/99
State	Department of Education	89,151	162,900
	Other government departments and local governments	13,157	25,000
Business (including parastatals)		156,597	140,000
NGOs		65,140	20,000
Other		14,436	8,000
TOTALS		335,481	335,900

[Source: Harley *et al.* (1996) and Aitchison *et al.* (2000)]

There is a slight increase in the number of learners participating in ABET programmes since 1999 (see Table 3.3). The increase in learner participation might be attributed to the involvement of SETAs. The ABET directorate has strengthened its partnership with SETAs for programmes outside the employment context, especially with ABET. The SETAs are using some of the funding for 30,391 ABET learners (Department of Education 2002:23).

TABLE 3.3: **LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN ABET SINCE 1999 TO 2002**

1999	294,506
2000	283,832
2001	387,879
2002	377,362
SUBTOTAL	**1,343,579**

SANLI	307,000
DCS	19,300
SUBTOTAL	**326,300**

TECHNIKON	175
PRIVATE	29,079
NGO	38,972
PARASTATALS	4,596
SETA (MQA)	53,788
CHIETA	4,865
ESETA	938
POLSEC	811
TETA	5000
LGWSETA	223,574
TEMBALETHU	1784
NASA	6305
GUINESS/UDV	400,000
SUBTOTAL	**769,887**
DOE PALCS	1,343,579
OTHER SECTORS	1,096,187
TOTAL	**2,439,766**

[Source: Department of Education 2003]

Although there is a slight increase in learner participation in ABET programmes since 1999, there are still millions of illiterates to be reached.

From a historical perspective, the ABET sector has been neglected in favour of formal schooling. Within the context of competing demands for government resources, an insufficient budget is likely to be experienced. As a result, alleviation of illiteracy will be extremely difficult unless political will and support are translated into commitments and resource allocations.

3.7   THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL LITERACY INITIATIVE (SANLI)

3.7.1   HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The revolutionary movements which took place in developing countries, such as Tanzania, Mozambique, Cuba, India and Nicaragua, and their perceived literacy achievements prompted the then Minister Asmal to try to emulate a similar national literacy campaign.   Those countries mentioned mobilised the population to support literacy as a key part of political liberation and transformation (Department of Education 1997d:46).

Following consultations with various stakeholders such as the government providers, community organisations, employers, NGOs, churches, academics, and so forth during 1999, the then Minister Asmal, identified the alleviation of illiteracy as one of the nine priorities of his department.

In his Call to Action in July 1999 (Department of Education 1999b) the then Minister advocated "*… a social movement to bring reading, writing and numeracy to those who do not have it.*"

In January 2000 the Implementation Plan for *Tirisano*, which gives tangible expression to the alleviation of illiteracy, began. The national literacy campaign began to operate in June 2000. Within the Tirisano project provision is made for the establishment of SANLI with the objective of significantly reducing adult illiteracy through:

◊   mobilisation of voluntary services in support of nationwide literacy campaign;

◊   development of training programmes for volunteer educators;

◊   evaluation and, where necessary, development and procurement of reading and resource materials for use in the nationwide literacy campaign;

◊   establishment of decentralised literacy units with responsibility for running the campaign at a local level; and

◊   recruitment of learners and the servicing of their needs (*Mail & Guardian*, November 10 to 16, 2000).

The national literacy initiative would be targeted at approximately 3 million learners who are entirely illiterate and would be aimed at providing ABET Level 1, that is, Language,

Basic Communication and Mathematical Literacy (Department of Education 1999a:69). The then Minister of Education officially launched SANLI on 26 June 2000 as part of the *Tirisano* initiative. SANLI aims to mobilise a "*nationwide voluntary movement for adult literacy*" and to reach some 3 million illiterate people over the next five years, starting in 2001.

The then Minister subsequently established a National Literacy Agency (hereafter referred to as NLA) in October 2000 to oversee the conduct of the Campaign. The NLA would be accountable to a board established by the then Minister, with an authoritative membership. Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, has accepted the role of patron-in-chief of the Campaign (Department of Education 1999a:70).

John Samuel, formerly head of the ANC education desk, has been appointed to do the initial planning for the campaign. The NLA under the leadership of John Samuel is to be the driving force behind the campaign by mobilising political support and raising funding for the campaign. To ensure the success of the campaign, the agency seeks to "*… harness all existing resources, establishing memberships with a broad range of organisations in South Africa, all of whom will work together to create and sustain a literate society*" (Department of Education 2000b:2).

The then Minister of Education pointed out in November 2000 that only 6% of those who lack basic education were enrolled in PALCs in 1999. This translated into some 387 000 enrolments out of more than 6 million South Africans over the age of 16 who had never attended school and were illiterate (South African Institute of Race Relations 2000/2001:294). To alleviate the high rate of illiteracy of some 6 million South Africans, the then Minister set targets for the campaign as of March 2001 as follows:

Average Number of Learners per Educator	10
Average Number of Educators per T&L Site	5
Average Number of T&L Sites per Agency	50
Number of Agencies	200

(T&L refers to Teaching and Learning sites.) The above model would mean using about

10 000 teaching and learning sites and 50 000 educators in order to reach approximately 500 000 learners in the first year of operation (Department of Education 2000d:17).

Currently, the implementation of the national literacy initiative is in serious crisis and this is evident from a quick survey of media reports on ABET provision in South Africa:

◊   Literacy initiative "did not deliver" (*Business Day*, 30.11.2000).

◊   Promises made but progress slow (*City Press*, 20.05.2001).

◊   Literacy plan comes to nought (*Mail & Guardian*, 20-26.07.2001).

According to the media reports, the national literacy initiative is not progressing as envisaged by the organisers. John Aitchison, an academic at the University of Natal, pointed out in his speech at a conference in Johannesburg on the theme "*Adult Basic Education and Training on Trial*" that the national literacy initiative had failed to deliver on its promises (*Business Day* 30.11.2000). When John Samuel was appointed as head of the NLA in February 2000, he made the following comment on the implementation of the national literacy initiative, "*The thing I am most conscious about is that so far we've hardly made a dent in our efforts to break the back of illiteracy*" (Samuel 2000:17).

Samuel (2000:17) ascribes the crisis in the implementation of the national literacy initiative to the following reasons:

◊   Not enough resources have been allocated to literacy;

◊   Literacy efforts have been fragmented and uncoordinated;

◊   The necessary passion has also been lacking; and

◊   No one has made this a number one agenda item.

During the first half of 2000, Samuel and his task team produced a detailed planning document. It was on the basis of this document that the government invited tenders from the NGOs and others for materials to support the literacy campaign. It was during the production of the learning materials for the campaign that a power struggle within the Department of National Education began to become obvious. The *Mail & Guardian* (July 20 to 26 2001:4) quoted Aitchison as saying,

> *… things went steadily downhill, as the National Department [of Education] regained control of the process, halted the production of materials, reverted back to the idea of working through the provincial departments of education and finally settled on a two-province pilot that looked increasingly and suspiciously like the warmed-up leftovers of previous and far smaller literacy projects.*

Furthermore during the second half of 2000, SANLI was both "stalled and dubious" to the delight of NGOs (Aitchison in *Mail & Guardian* July 20 to 26 2001:4). The reason that the NGOs seemed to be happy when the activities of SANLI were "stalled" is that there was talk of SANLI becoming a Section 21 non-profit company. This evoked fears that SANLI would simply become a competitor in the NGO sector for foreign funding. According to the bilateral agreements between governments, foreign funders would, after 1994, channel their support through the government.

It is understood that SANLI will no longer become a Section 21 non-profit company, but a directorate of the Department of National Education. The department's ABET directorate is also insisting that no literacy campaign could be conducted without the directorate's involvement. Currently, SANLI and the ABET directorate co-exist within the department but have not integrated their activities.

According to Aitchison (2001:25), "*… there is little evidence yet of any thorough planning. There is also little evidence of any financial commitment from government …*" With regard to the progress made by SANLI since it was launched in June 2000, the *Mail & Guardian* (July 20 to 26 2001:4) reported that "*… little has been done other than to set up and maintain SANLI bureaucracy.*"

3.7.2   THE STRUCTURE OF SANLI

The highest body in the organisational structure of the National Literacy Campaign is SANLI which comprises the Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, the Patron-in-Chief, the Minister of Education, MECs for education, political leaders, the private sector, trade unions, community organisations and donor agencies.

At the launch of SANLI in June 26, 2000, the then Minister announced the members of the 25 member SANLI Board to be led by Reverend Charity Majiza-McKinty, Secretary

General of the South African Council of Churches. Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, will act as Chief Patron of the Board (Department of Education 2000c:1). The Advisory Board members include, *inter alia*, *Sowetan* Editor-in-Chief, Aggrey Klaaste, Coordinated Network Investment chairman Ruel Khoza, Independent Broadcasting Authority chairman Mandla Langa, South African Democratic Teachers' Union president Willie Madisha, Easy Reading for Adults director Beulah Thumbadoo, Congress of SA Trade Unions Secretary General Zwelinzima Vavi and Herdbouys McCann-Erickson chairman Peter Vundla (*Sowetan* 30-06-2000). The Board will advise and support the Minister, mobilise the nation to work together, ensure the success of the Literacy Initiative, inspire and encourage the NLA in its task to implement and monitor national strategic plans (Department of Education 2000c:1).

A NLA, which is accountable to an Advisory Board was established in December 2000, to oversee the implementation and monitoring of SANLI, by doing, *inter alia*, the following:

◊   Designing, developing and distributing literacy learning packs and related resources.

◊   Designing, developing and delivering educator training.

◊   Providing information to educators and learners.

◊   Developing a call centre to link teaching and learning sites to coordinating agencies.

◊   Establishing and maintaining central management information systems.

◊   Coordinating national advocacy and developing marketing strategy.

◊   Coordinating the involvement of the mass media.

◊   Planning post-literacy support strategies.

◊   Developing and implementing assessment and monitoring systems.

◊   Ensuring that contracts with coordinating agencies are fulfilled (Department of Education 2000b:2-3).

3.7.2.1 The National Office

The National Office is housed in the Department of Education in Pretoria. The office is managed by a small team of eight professionals who are led by the Director. The main

function of the national office is to initiate, coordinate, guide, facilitate and lead the national literacy campaign.

3.7.2.2 Provincial Coordinating Agencies

Provincial coordinating offices are set up and are headed by Provincial Project Managers. The primary responsibility of the provincial offices is to facilitate the literacy campaign in all their respective provinces. The Provincial offices of the Initiative are under the custodianship of the provincial Members of the Executive Councils (MEC) for Education.

3.7.2.3 The objectives of SANLI

The objectives of SANLI are crystallized in its mission statement and philosophy. A critical analysis of the objectives will contribute to a better understanding of the broader new educational philosophy of SANLI. A publication of SANLI (Department of Education 2001a) provides the following objectives of the campaign:

3.7.2.4 Overall objective

The overall objective is to significantly reduce the levels of illiteracy amongst South Africans and to increase the participation of all in the social, cultural and economic spheres of society by providing literacy classes to those adults with little or no schooling.

3.7.2.5 Sub-objectives

The further objectives of the SANLI campaign are:

◊   To mobilise voluntary service in support of a nationwide literacy initiative.
◊   To develop training programmes for volunteer educators.
◊   To develop, design and procure reading and resource material.
◊   To recruit learners and volunteer educators.
◊   To set up local literacy units in all corners of South Africa.
◊   To service the needs of and provide continuous support to learners and volunteer educators.

◊   To create post literacy opportunities for learners; and

◊   To promote a culture of reading.

Literacy conceived in the context of SANLI's overall objective makes it clear that the organisers acknowledge the broader scope which literacy should encompass. According to the overall objective of this national literacy campaign, literacy should achieve more than teaching adults to read, write and calculate. Literacy should go beyond teaching adults the mechanical skills of reading and writing and teach them to use the elementary skills of reading, writing and computing to attain higher goals in their economic, social and political circumstances. Levenstein (1999:147) contends that

> *… if previously illiterate adults do learn to read and write, and if the whole nation becomes enthusiastically involved in the campaign, there will be other outcomes such as feelings of national achievement and unity, improved living conditions and active participation in the development process.*

Literacy thus conceived by SANLI is considered essential for the life of the individual and society. From the overall objective it is obvious that the scope of SANLI was visualised as more than just being able to read, write and count. It was seen as a means of initiating development.

3.7.3 BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

The benefits of adult literacy (Department of Education 2001a; *Sowetan*, 30.06.2000; and *Sunday Times*, 25.06.2000) are:

◊   improved community participation in the education of their children;

◊   improved enrolment, retention and performance rates at primary and secondary school levels. Improved retention at primary and secondary school levels correlate to parents' literacy;

◊   children from literate households are less likely to drop out of school;

◊   an increase in the success rates of initiatives like sanitation, environmental awareness, family planning, HIV-AIDS awareness and education;

◊   a boost to the country's tourism development;

◊   that literacy rates correlate with reduced birth and infant mortality rates;

◊   literacy initiatives tend to strengthen civil society;

◊   increased workforce and productivity and better opportunities for entrepreneurial initiatives; and

◊   increased participation in the formal ABET system and other skills development programmes.

Apart from the personal benefits enjoyed by literate adults and the benefits of literate adults to society, the organisers of the project hope for other benefits to society, based on what happened elsewhere in the world in the literacy campaigns. Levenstein (1999:171) however cautions against exaggerated predictions when he says, "*… by considering South Africa's special needs and gaining insights from the experiences of other countries, the "initial conditions" could be created in such a way as to produce the best possible outcomes.*" Such outcomes are reported in Tanzania where, for instance, people have changed their attitudes, thinking and feelings. They have also lost their state of marginality, alienation and fear.

### 3.7.4   PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION MODEL-STRATEGY

The implementation model of SANLI is depicted in Figure 3.2 (p.103) below.

The model starts with individual teaching and learning sites, the places where literacy will be taught. These sites will be the place of engagement between educators and learners. These sites could be in people's homes, at schools or church halls, in prisons, at ABET centres, or at any other location suitable for achieving literacy. Learning at the sites of teaching will be supported by literacy learning packs supplied by the NLA. The delivery of education will also be supported by the use of radio, television, newspaper, as is available and useful.

Various persons drawn from all sectors of society, will coordinate learning at the teaching and learning sites. According to the Department of Education (2000d:8-9) different agencies will join forces to undertake, amongst many other tasks, the following key tasks:

◊   The creation/engagement of teaching and learning sites (including working with local sites of organisations which have committed themselves to the initiative).

FIGURE 3.2:   IMPLEMENTATION MODEL OF SANLI
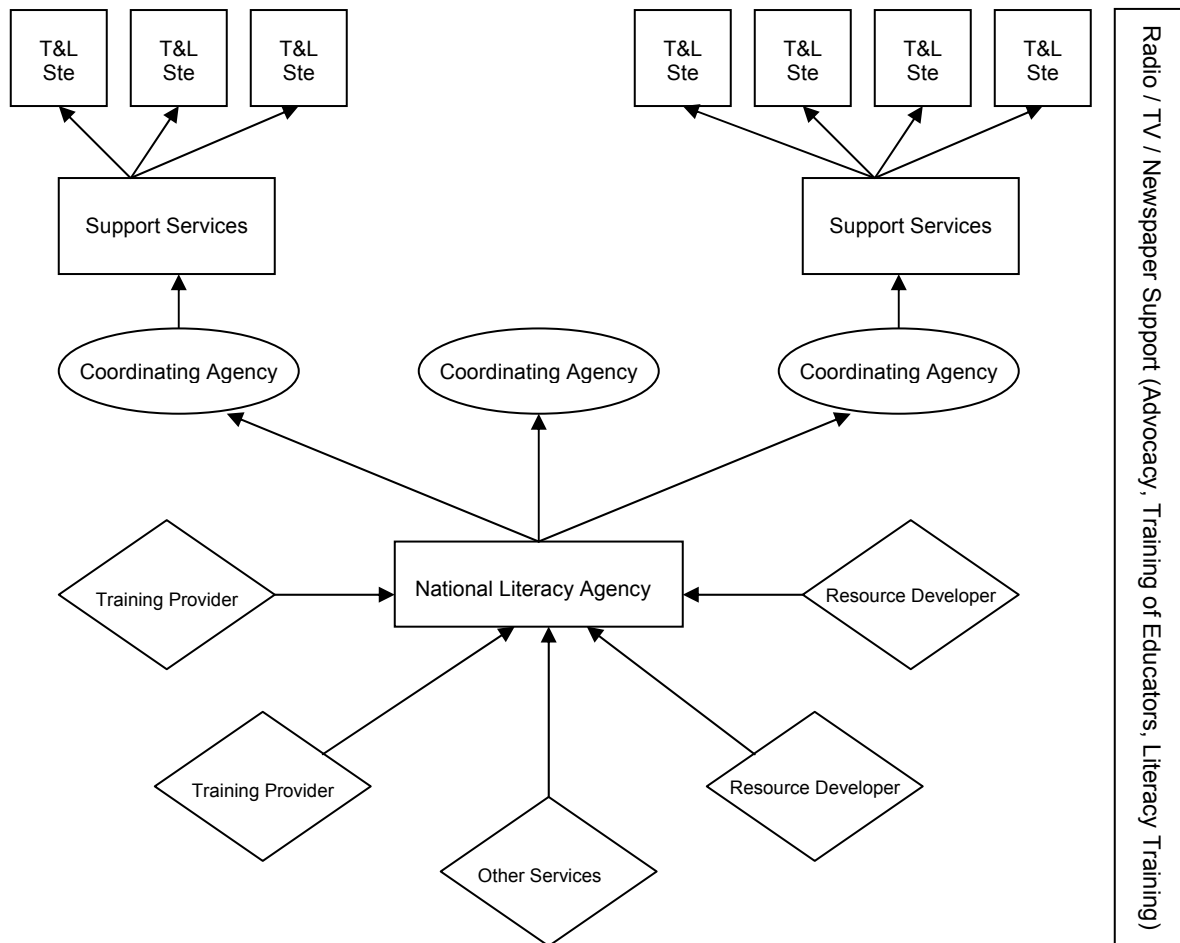
[Source: Implementation model adapted and modified from *South African Literacy Campaign 2001: Implementation Plan* (Department of Education 2001a:6)]

◊   Working with key people at teaching and learning sites to recruit and contract educators.

◊   Reporting on levels of literacy in their area of operation.

◊   Recruiting educators to reach specified target groups of learners.

◊   Working with educators to recruit learners.

◊   Packaging materials by adding their own materials to starter packs as appropriate.

◊   Distributing starter packs, as well as distributing any supplementary materials where these are not automatically available (such as newspaper supplements in areas where newspapers are not available).

◊   Coordinating a brief orientation for educators.

◊   Coordinating educator training, including finding a venue, negotiating with the training provider, and ensuring educators attend.

◊   Providing day-to-day support/advisory service to educators.

◊   Providing all necessary information to educators and learners (including information about important events, support services, times and content of broadcasts, newspaper circulations, and post-literacy support strategies).

◊   Organising the independent assessment of learners as required.

◊   Establishing and maintaining a monitoring system which will provide evidence of learner participation, retention, and achievement of different levels of success.

◊   Contributing to NLA research activities.

3.7.4.1 Who is SANLI targeting?

The Literacy initiative targets adults and out-of-school youth, aged 15 years and older, who have had no or inadequate schooling. The target is extremely broad in character and it is vitally important to document the number and demographic characteristics of the illiterate population in order to implement a systematic literacy plan. Table 3.4 below illustrates a breakdown of illiterate adults and youth by province based on the Population Census of 1966.

TABLE 3.4: PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 20 YEARS OR OLDER WITH NO EDUCATION IN EACH PROVINCE

PROVINCE % SHARE OF NON-LITERATE ADULTS AND YOUTH	
KwaZulu-Natal	22.49%
Eastern Cape	16.54%
Northern Province	13.51%
Gauteng	12.35%
North-West	10.13%
Mpumalanga	8.20%
Free State	7.44%
Western Cape	6.8%
Northern Cape	2.54%
Total	100%

[Source: Statistics South Africa, Census, 1996:36]

To make mobilisation easier, and to produce relevant learner support material, as well as to allow coordinating agencies to deal with specific groupings of learners, it is necessary to break the large group of illiterate people into manageable chunks. The following are possible cross-cutting organising themes (Department of Education 2001b:7):

i.   Place of residence
   ◊   Informal settlement
   ◊   Rural
   ◊   Deep rural, *et cetera*.

ii.   Type of employment
   ◊   Construction workers
   ◊   Farm workers
   ◊   Domestic workers
   ◊   Police
   ◊   Hawkers
   ◊   Miners

◊   Small business holders

◊   Health care workers, *et cetera*.

iii.   Learners with special motivations

◊   Early Childhood Development workers and caregivers

◊   Elderly

◊   AIDS workers, *et cetera*.

iv.   Learners with special access problems

◊   Prisoners

◊   Deep rural dwellers

◊   Homeless people

◊   Former prisoners

◊   Out-of-school youth

v.   Learners with special needs

◊   Disabled

◊   Blind

◊   Hard of hearing, *et cetera*.

The campaign will be designed to support a wide range of illiterate adults and youths with a wide range of interests, and to encourage different motivations for becoming literate. In this regard, it will be necessary to disaggregate the target group so as to be able to understand all the different interests and cater for them effectively (Department of Education 2001b:2).

3.7.5   PROSPECTS FOR SANLI

From a developmental perspective, ABE refers to the educational base which individuals require to improve their social and economic life. It is a tool which prepares people to effectively participate in the socio-economic and political life of their communities. The avenue to the development of this tool begins with the mastery of the basic skills of reading, writing and calculating. However, SANLI recognises that literacy training should go beyond literacy and numeracy, and emphasises the use of these basic skills as a means of preparing adults for lifelong learning and development. The government views

SANLI as part of the national strategy required for the transformation of the country through the provision of mass scale literacy.

The spirit of optimism which prevailed shortly after the new government came to power in 1994 has diminished because people believe that the government is not doing enough to fulfil its election promises. Some of the most pressing challenges facing the new government remain the alleviation of poverty and illiteracy, job creation and dealing purposefully with HIV/AIDS. Literacy is a tool which can be used effectively to address these problems.

It is interesting to note that South Africans are often urged by the government to participate actively in the transformation process and yet the guarantees in the Bill of Rights are, in practice, more accessible to literate than illiterate South Africans. The process of transformation could be accelerated by a successful mass literacy campaign which would provide opportunities for all South Africans to engage in rebuilding the nation.

In the study of the literacy campaigns in the developing countries, it was noted that the most successful literacy campaigns were those engaged in very soon after a government had come to power when the people felt they were still waging a war against the "enemy", illiteracy. It is suggested that literacy campaigns should begin within one or two years after the achievement of democracy while everyone is still motivated and enthusiastic. SANLI was launched in June 2000, six years after the new government came to power. Although a literacy campaign would have thrived shortly after the first democratic elections, it is not too late to motivate all religious, political, social and community formations in fighting illiteracy. If people feel that they have accomplished something larger than their own literacy, the consequences of the literacy campaign could be far greater than the acquisition of the mechanical skills of reading, writing and calculating.

3.8   CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CURRENT ABET PROVISION

So much has been said and written about the literacy drive to alleviate the high rate of illiteracy in South Africa, but the ranks of the illiterate continue to swell as if to match that

volume of literature.   This paragraph will attempt to answer some of the following questions:

◊   Has the government fulfilled the promises it made when it took over in 1994?
◊   Does the government have adequate resources to support the literacy initiative?
◊   Does the political will exist?

3.8.1   THE STATE OF ABET PROVISION

The declining rate of enrolment of learners at public and private learning centres reveals a growing frustration among stakeholders in education about the inability of South Africa's education system to provide basic education to those who at the stage of initial education were underprivileged and deprived.   The slow implementation of ABET, despite promises, and the situation had not changed significantly by 2003. Levenstein (1999:137) maintains that up to the end of the last democratic government in May 1999:

> *… there seemed to be a widespread lack of enthusiasm for doing anything at all about adult illiteracy: the small pockets of enthusiasm and initiative seemed to be drowning in a sea of lethargy.*

The reasons for these declines were twofold. The NLC, the biggest provider of ABET in South Africa, closed down in 1998 because of mismanagement of donor funds.   The funding crisis worsened as provinces, which are responsible for providing ABET, failed to spend more than 1 percent of the education budgets on ABET. Aitchison (2001:18) states vividly that, "*The high hopes for a rapid and exhilarating expansion of ABET provision after 1994 cannot be realised unless funding for ABET is significantly increased.*"   In his Call to Action, the then Minister (Department of Education 1999b) said, "*We must support this programme [literacy] as much as possible.*" But he then admitted that *" … it is improbable that the government will find additional funds in the near future to eliminate illiteracy through formal ABET programmes.*"   Where should the money come from to break the back of illiteracy? Government funding for ABET is inadequate as a proportion of the education budget. This situation reflects its lack of commitment to meeting its constitutional obligations to provide ABE for all illiterate adults. The government might argue that, given the competing priorities within education, in particular the imperative to provide schooling for children, the budget allocation is

reasonable. In response, it must be emphasised that expenditures on ABET are likely to improve the rate of returns on primary school education.

Although the government should allocate adequate resources to the ABET sector for the alleviation of illiteracy, it should not be asked to be the main financial contributor to the literacy initiative, because there are other important projects such as primary, secondary and higher education within the Department of Education vying for limited resources. The government could contribute by making its facilities available for the campaign and for ABET. The government should provide the *political will* found to be essential for the success of the campaign. The level of political will informs the allocation of resources to ABET. If the political will exists, additional resources can be generated through the mobilisation of the people. South Africa could, for instance, ask the private sector to contribute to the campaign.

The government might argue that literacy will come about through universal primary school education (see paragraph 1.5.4). As more children pass through the education system and join the economy and as illiterate adults become older and die, literacy will have been diffused throughout the society. The government cannot rely on the school system to alleviate illiteracy through the diffusion approach, because children who do not attend school and those who drop out because of socio-economic problems are swelling the ranks of illiterate adults as they grow up.

3.8.2   NATIONAL LITERACY PROJECT

At his very first press briefing in June 1999, the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, announced his wish to break the back of illiteracy in five years. Subsequently , the literacy initiative launched in June 2000 by Asmal, aimed to mobilise a "nationwide voluntary movement" for adult literacy and to reach some 3 million illiterate people over the next five years, starting in March 2001 (South African Institute of Race Relations 2000/2001:295). In the process, Asmal believed that between the launch of the initiative in June 2000 and March 2001, half a million adults could be taught to read and write, provided his department and its partners stuck to their programme to fight illiteracy and if they raised enough additional funding (*Business Day* 30.11.2000).

Further, Minister Asmal expressed his belief that, "*No adult South African citizen should be illiterate in the 21ˢᵗ century, but millions will be unless we mobilise a social movement to bring reading, writing and numeracy to those who do not have it*" (Department of Education 1999b). Although the foregoing announcements by Asmal might mark the era of renewed interest and enthusiasm for adult literacy, many educationists in the field told him that his wish was admirable but utopian. Commenting on the four-year plan to alleviate adult illiteracy within five years, Aitchison describes the planning document as "*imaginative and expansive*" (*Mail & Guardian* 20 to 26.07.2001:4).

According to Aitchison *et al.* (2000:41) the national Ithuteng campaign, started by the department in 1997 using foreign donor money, was not successful. The campaign had been poorly managed, with major administrative weaknesses and little follow-through. Although the *Ithuteng* campaign did experience problems, valuable lessons were learnt from it (Levenstein 1999:34).

With regard to SANLI, the *Mail & Guardian* (20 to 26.07.2001:4) comments that, "*Two years ago Kader Asmal made literacy one of his department's top priorities, yet a third of South African adults remain illiterate.*" The crisis in ABET has been echoed by other media reports, as pointed out previously in paragraph 3.7.1.

Asmal proposed to offer basic education to approximately three million illiterate adults within five years. However, a close analysis of educational developments indicates that the Department of Education seems unaware of the proposed system of alleviating illiteracy within five years.

Given the size and extent of the problem of illiteracy when the ANC-led government took over in 1994, Motala *et al.* (1999:8) write:

> *Adult literacy programmes have been offered by the state, private sector and NGOs for more than two decades, yet they reach scarcely 1% of the total population of illiterate adults in the country. It is highly unlikely that the situation [illiteracy] can be reversed within five years given the size of the problem.*

From 1994 literacy campaigns have not functioned effectively in South Africa, mainly because of financial constraints. There have been some literacy initiatives, but these have been few and many have not been successful. The Multi-year Implementation

Plans, with detailed targets, have been drawn up but never implemented. Not only has the government not been able to promote ABET to any great extent, but many of the non-governmental literacy organisations which previously obtained foreign funding are no longer obtaining that funding and many have closed down. Provincial ABET Councils have also faded away.

3.8.3   POLITICAL WILL

In the study of literacy campaigns in developing countries, a political will has often been found to be essential for the success of mass literacy campaigns. Without the clear expression of the political will by the government, a successful mass literacy campaign is most improbable. ABET is not yet a key priority of the Department of Education although, in terms of numbers, the greatest need for education and training is at ABET levels. Up till now, the political will to alleviate illiteracy within five years has been inadequate. Commenting on the political will of the government, Khulekani Mathe, a KwaZulu-Natal adult education NGO, says, "*… there is no political will at the highest level*" (*Mail & Guardian* 20 to 26.07.2001).

3.8.4   ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

According to the Samuel Plan, it looked as though SANLI would operate independently of the education department. There was even talk at one stage that SANLI would register as a Section 21 company (*Mail & Guardian* 20 to 26.07.2001). As from 1 July 2001 SANLI became a Directorate operating within the Chief Directorate: Curriculum and Assessment Development and Learner Achievements, within the Department of Education.

According to Bhola (1997:236) a mass literacy campaign should not be assigned to one governmental ministry or department. The campaign administration should preferably be placed in the president's office. Although the campaign should have the support and involvement of the government, it should not be administered by any government department. Further, Bhola warned that the government should avoid employing literacy teachers and supervisors as civil servants to carry out the campaign. Bhola (1997:236) states, "*A literacy movement cannot be handled by career-oriented, rule-ridden, hierarchy-conscious civil servants.*" Literacy work can best be handled by political

parties and voluntary organisations because non-governmental employees are easy to employ and deploy and the body responsible for the literacy workers is not obligated to pay them benefits such as medical aid fees, pension fund and severance payments.

When Samuel was appointed as head of the NLA, he proposed that SANLI should be independent of the Department of Education, as: "*… that would give it more flexibility. The nature of a literacy campaign doesn't easily lend itself to bureaucracy*" (Samuel 2000*:*17).

South Africa should learn from the experiences of other countries such as Nicaragua where the government supported the campaign but did not administer it. In Mozambique, for instance, the campaign was administered by the Department of Education and this led to the campaign eventually being dealt with in a passive and bureaucratic way with a resulting decrease in enthusiasm (Lind 1988*:*169).

Levenstein (1999*:*146) suggests that an enthusiastic body of experienced adult literacy workers outside the government should administer the campaign. The leadership of such a body needs to be freed from crude political manoeuvrings.

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter critically analysed the current provision of ABET in South Africa and the following major issues have become prominent in the analysis. It appears that adult literacy provision in South Africa is still fragmented and uncoordinated. Until now, the national literacy initiative has failed to fulfil its promises. There appears to be little political will despite the fact that the Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, is Patron-in-Chief of SANLI. NGOs can play an important role by providing material and expertise as well as financial help to the literacy campaign. There is a need to set realistic and attainable targets. The funding for literacy should be borne directly by all sectors of the economy and not by the government alone. The government should support the campaign by making its facilities available for the campaign, but the government should not administer it. A semi-autonomous body, such as a Section 21 company, for example Prolit, with experienced adult literacy workers should administer the campaign.

In the past, ABET provision has never enjoyed high priority, and, in spite of great expectations that it would be a priority of the current government, its position in the present is not much different from what it was in the past. The presence of similar patterns and the legacy of the past are evident in the education system concerning ABET provision. The enrolment figures for ABET since 1994 (see paragraph 3.5.1) indicate that the government is not making ABET progressively available and accessible. There is a need to re-examine the current provision of ABET so that innovative strategies for its future use can emerge.

In the next chapter the discussion ranges over the conceptual background of the study. The analysis of examples of mass scale provision of ABET in developing countries which exhibit similarities to South Africa reveals that the differences between these countries and South Africa are much more significant for resolving the internal conflicts in the ABET provision of South Africa.

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CHAPTER FOUR
**REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON MASS-SCALE PROVISION OF
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:
SOME PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA**

The aim of this chapter is to:

- define literacy and illiteracy more finely than before;
- discuss existing literacy strategies in some countries, namely, Mozambique, Tanzania and Cuba;
- discuss features of successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes;
- examine the literacy campaigns of other developing countries in order to set guidelines for South Africa.

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Illiteracy as a worldwide educational phenomenon is one among many great social problems facing developing countries. Although much progress has been made in the late twentieth century, both through attempts at universalisation of primary schooling and mass-scale provision of ABE in many developing countries, the absolute number of adult illiterates keeps increasing. Titmus has suggested this is the result mainly of soaring population growth (Titmus 1989:88) but it is not strictly true in the South African context. Although projections made by the United Nations Population Division show that populations in the developing countries will have risen from 2,7 billion in 1970 to 5,1 billion in the year 2000, and to 9 billion by the year 2050 (Zaheeruddin in Mlekwa 1990:18) and this will naturally lead to greater numbers of adult illiterates, this is not the only factor to consider. South Africa faces an HIV/AIDS pandemic which impacts on the mortality rates of adults and children, especially in rural areas where the greatest number of illiterates is to be found. Another complicating factor in the discussion of growing numbers of adult illiterates is the fact that as an ever larger number of children do not have access to formal education, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels, they add to the numbers of illiterates (Mlekwa 1990:18). Depending on the educational context in which illiteracy is defined, whether it is socio-political or socio-economic, there will be a difference in the strategies chosen to deal with it. A factor which contributes

114

substantially to illiteracy is that the development of formal infrastructures lags behind the needs of populations because of population growth, government agendas and how illiteracy is framed in the educational programmes of the government, among many other things. One such factor is whether illiteracy is formulated in terms of the numbers of illiterates relative to those who are literate. In South Africa, the growth in population is an important factor to consider.

From a global perspective, the provision of ABE on a large scale has been closely linked to national development, whether it is conceived as socio-economic or socio-political. On national development, Hamadache & Martin (1986:10) argue that there can be no development if millions of men and women who must play an effective part in that development and benefit from it, remain illiterate. The newly independent states, conscious of the inequities entrenched most often in the colonial systems of education they have inherited and their inadequate provision for the people of the country, have insisted that for the new nations to become economically viable, an educated work force is a prime requirement. Yet in South Africa, ten years after liberation, illiteracy does not feature in the deployment of funds or on educational agendas with any prominence. This despite the fact that the expansion of ABE has begun to be regarded as the essential step without which other problems such as hunger, sickness and unemployment cannot be resolved. Sineshaw (1991:44) contends that literacy has been perceived as a "master key" for unlocking all human possibilities.

The alleviation of illiteracy is connected to issues of human rights in many newly independent states. The following declaration by UNESCO uses the emotive phrase "forgotten people" for those who are illiterate – those who have no access to one of their basic human rights (Calder in Tight 1983:311):

> *Experience shows that the provision of more education in most countries tends to favour most the already well educated; the educationally under-privileged have yet to claim their rights. Adult education is no exception to the rule, for those adults who most need education have been largely neglected – they are the forgotten people.*

In chapter one (see paragraph 1.3) it was stated that a review, in terms of international trends in the alleviation of illiteracy, would be one of the secondary aims of this study.

115

This chapter presents a historical-educational study into illiteracy definitions (in the wider sense), strategies and successes in three countries which might be comparable with South Africa. Choosing these countries allows for an in-depth study of the strategies used to alleviate illiteracy, whereas a broader choice may not lend itself to such an in-depth examination and prove to be unwieldy. The findings of this chapter will show that a simple comparison between the four developing countries - namely, Mozambique, Tanzania, Cuba, and South Africa - can support some elements of the guiding principles for a new South African national literacy campaign, but that the differences are more important. The differences also point to areas from which one can draw lessons in handling the South African situation. A recent past of colonial rule, a changed government committed to uplifting its people, funds for education made available – on the surface these similarities make the developing countries' profiles similar. But upon examination it becomes clear that deep differences in government intention and commitment make the South African case unique.

The dates of the campaigns in question are Mozambique 1978 - 1982, in Cuba 1961 and Tanzania 1971 - 1981. After the achievement of democracy, these developing countries, as happened in South Africa, embarked on a process of rectifying the elitist and colonial education systems which they had inherited. But in South Africa, although that is the expressed commitment of government, in ABE things seem to have stayed tragically the same as in the past three hundred or more years of the country's sad history. Curiously, the need for resolving a fragmented, uncoordinated provision which subverts its own stated principles of upliftment by education seems to be what has happened in South Africa.

Mozambique and Tanzania particularly resonate on the surface with South African conditions, in their approaches to the alleviation of illiteracy. It is argued in this chapter that both Mozambique and Tanzania embarked on a series of campaigns for the following reasons:

◊   The very high level of illiteracy (Mozambique 93% and Tanzania 75%), which made it almost impossible to reach all the illiterate people at once.

◊   The grave shortage of money and human resources, which made it impossible to organise a "once off" mass literacy campaign.

116

◊ Support of the ruling ideology of the government and the people in building a socialist society.

Although the above facts suggest that for South Africa, the choice to alleviate illiteracy through a series of campaigns, as took place in Mozambique and Tanzania, might be successful, nevertheless South African political ideology is not socialist but rather supports a capitalist ideology. This has profound implications for education nationally, in terms of how funding is disbursed. Where under the Apartheid regime money spent on white students in the mainstream outstripped that devoted to illiterate adults, the same inequality is repeated under the current Government. Funding for the most prominent literacy campaign in South Africa in the last five years, namely SANLI, came from Europe (DFID).

In Mozambique, Tanzania and Cuba, literacy was seen as an integral part of the development of a new society; it was not seen as a separate entity, but as part of a complex whole. The South African situation is similar to these countries, although South Africa seems to approach problems in isolation, with various government departments, for example, housing, health, education, safety and security, labour and finance, each dealing with their own areas. In such a situation adult literacy issues would have low priority.

In all three countries, literacy and post-literacy were conceived and developed as a continuum. Adult learners can study for formal school certificates and diplomas after completing the literacy stage. In South Africa, learners who complete the literacy course can join the PALCs for school certificates.

Cuba implemented a "once off" mass literacy campaign. In 1960 the illiteracy was 24%. The illiteracy rate had been reduced to 4% in 1961 – the conditions prevailing at the time were highly favourable to this achievement. Factors contributing to success were:

◊ A common and developed language;
◊ The government had a strong commitment to democracy;
◊ No more than half of the adult population was illiterate;
◊ The campaign began two years after liberation.

Although South Africa possesses none of the above favourable factors, we could learn from one of the key points in the Cuban campaign, namely, that literacy should be part of an overall plan for the transformation and betterment of society (Levenstein 1999:70). There are also many other features worth noting when discussing lessons for South Africa.

By focusing on Mozambique, Tanzania and Cuba, some of the international trends and advances in the alleviation of illiteracy are identified. Because these countries have had their successes well documented, this allows an in depth analysis of the approaches used to alleviate illiteracy. A common feature underlying their success is the enormous political will which was clearly articulated at all levels. This is one of the crucial differences between those countries and South Africa. The South African government has acknowledged the need for ABET, but has not regarded it as a priority.

An extensive review of relevant literature on the alleviation of illiteracy in these countries provided a contextual frame of reference within which the research was conducted. For clarification and understanding of the frameworks, a conceptual analysis of literacy and illiteracy has been presented before discussing literacy approaches in developing countries other than those mentioned above.

4.2   A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF LITERACY AND ILLITERACY

The concepts "literacy" and "illiteracy" have been defined in general terms in paragraphs 1.7.3 and 1.7.4. But it is useful now to develop these definitions. Because their use varies within the education systems of various countries depending on how the education system is constructed an in depth look can highlight similarities and differences so that a simple comparison between campaigns is not the outcome of the discussion.   Rather, the concepts should be viewed in terms of whether they are understood as part of a people-and-government move towards a better society for all, or a government of the people, with well developed capitalist interests.

4.2.1   DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPT "LITERACY"

Varying and often vague definitions of literacy abound in both literature and practice (Sjöström & Sjöström 1983:21). To foreground the multiplicity of meanings attached to

the term was useful initially, but it is useful now to delineate discernible trends in the development of the understanding of what it means in specific situations.

To begin with some pertinent questions about the nature of literacy relative to differing political-educational systems should be asked. The central question is what constitutes literacy. Or what exactly is meant by literacy. Some of the most important questions to be considered, if a solid conceptual grip on the complexities and controversies surrounding the idea of literacy is to be achieved, are the following:

◊   What are the complexities of conceptualising literacy?
◊   What is an *illiterate*?
◊   What is the current state of the literacy definition?

A brief discussion of the complexities encountered in conceptualising literacy is provided in the subsequent paragraphs.

4.2.1.1 Traditional literacy

Historically, anyone who could read and write his or her name was perceived as literate. The traditional definition of literacy had a distinct and measurable line of demarcation. Learning to read and write was an isolated goal and an end in itself. According to Sjöström & Sjöström (1983:22) this narrow view of literacy overlooked the practical needs of the literate person because literacy was viewed as a commodity for consumption.

4.2.1.2 Modern literacy and functional literacy

The most commonly accepted definition of a literate person is that proposed by UNESCO. According to UNESCO (1978:18) a literate person "*… can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life.*" UNESCO thus distinguishes between basic literacy and functional literacy. A functionally literate person must be able to "*… engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his/her group and community and also for enabling him/her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his/her own and the community's development*" (UNESCO 1978:18).   This understanding of literacy means that "functional" literacy

119

varies depending on the environment, the context and predominant ideology in each given society at a given time.

UNESCO launched in 1964 a highly ambitious and sophisticated pilot venture in eleven different countries, namely, Algeria, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Iran, Madagascar, Mali, Sudan, Syria, and Tanzania. This venture was the Experimental World Literacy Programme (hereafter referred to as EWLP) the aims of which were to transform literacy into an effective instrument for social and economic development. The new approach became associated with work-oriented programmes. According to this modern notion of literacy, functional literacy should "*… lead not only to elementary general knowledge but to training of work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civic life and a better understanding of the surrounding world, and should ultimately open the way to basic human culture*" (UNESCO/UNDP 1976:10).

Functional literacy was to be combined with work-oriented programmes to make workers even better workers. The framework in which literacy was planned was the understanding that countries were modern and had modernisation requirements. Modernisation was understood as an evolutionary path to be followed by all developing nations towards the state of modernity represented by the West (Prinsloo in Rodda & Mareka 1991:256).

This pilot venture was widely regarded as a failure by the evaluators because the programmes were too technical and ignored social, cultural and logistic factors. The workers perceived this approach to becoming literate as a method of creating a more efficient work force without any concern for their needs and goals (Limage 1993:30).

Another new approach, enshrined in the *Declaration of Persepolis*, adopted at the International Symposium for Literacy held in September 1975, emphasised the political, human and cultural aspects of literacy. According to the *Declaration* (Bataile 1976:273-274) literacy was conceived as

> *… not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his/her full development. Thus conceived literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its*

120

aims… Literacy work, like education in general is a political act. It is not neutral, for the act of revealing social reality in order to transform it, or of concealing it in order to preserve it, is political.

Functional literacy, as defined in the *Declaration of Persepolis*, is perceived as multi-dimensional in which a much more complex process than simply the technical skill to read and write must be understood. A definition of literacy which includes simply the abilities to read and write is inadequate because it ignores the purposes of reading or writing.   Hunter & Harman (1979:7-8) define the concept "functional literacy" from a broader perspective, as

… the possession of skills perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups to fulfil their own self-determined objectives as family and community members, citizens, consumers, job-holders, and members of social, religious, or other associations of their choosing. This includes the ability to obtain information and to use that information they want for their own and others' well-being; the ability to read and write adequately to satisfy the requirements they set for themselves as being important for their own lives; the ability to deal positively with demands made on them by society; and the ability to solve the problems they face in their daily lives.

Literacy should not be confined to the mechanical skills of reading, writing and counting/calculating but should be taught with the focus on enabling the learners to understand their world and to function more effectively in everyday life and work situations. According to Olson, Torrance & Hildyard (1985:14), what matters most is what people do with literacy and not what literacy does to people. The concept "literacy" in this study is used to refer to the basic education of adults rather than the acquisition of the mere skills of reading and writing. Literacy, in this study, is understood to contribute to the development of the individual and to society. Literacy should promote an improved quality of life, it should be useful in people's daily living, it should promote political and economic freedom, it should help people to grow more confident about the things they do and it should change people's lives completely. However, the validity and relevance of the above assertions is context-specific. According to Lind & Johnston (as quoted in Windham 1991:23) literacy has *"to be tailored to the particular … conditions existing in each country. It will only work where this is done"*.

4.2.1.3 Measurement of literacy level

Those who support a functional approach to literacy claim that literacy is achieved on the completion of a specified minimum of primary education or its equivalent in non-formal settings. According to Lind & Johnston (1990:33) four years of schooling have often been proposed as a minimum standard for functional literacy. Many experts have presented arguments against this single criterion. One argument against it is that the insufficient and uneven quality of primary schooling cannot ensure literacy necessarily. On this point, Sineshaw (1991:50) argues that the demands and requirements for literacy in a society with high technology should be quantitatively and qualitatively different from those of a society which is still in the pre-industrial era, rendering minimum grade level definition of literacy inappropriate and invalid. For example, a person considered functionally literate in a developing country such as South Africa may be far from being functional in an environment like that encountered in the United States, where the level of high technology and industrial development requires much higher standards of functionality. The level of functional literacy required in a society varies and changes, which means that no fixed or general equivalence to formal schooling can really be given.

4.2.1.4 What is the current state of the literacy definition?

The best definitions of literacy must have a bearing on real life situations, showing that the people using the definition are sensitive to skills people need in out-of-school contexts. With the rapid advance of technology in our information era to be literate today includes being technologically literate. This means that learners should be capable of making effective use of the instruments for communication and information processing which are available. By using computers as an integral part of adult literacy training, learners will experience functional applications of one type of technology, which should make them feel more comfortable with the changes they are facing in the world about them.

From the foregoing discussion of the concept of "literacy", it emerges that literacy is a concept with many dimensions. The meaning of literacy varies dramatically according to context. Literacy is never itself an isolated goal. It is a vehicle which can improve the

development of large numbers of people who find themselves in poor socio-economic situations.

4.2.2 DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPT "ILLITERACY"

How illiteracy is defined and described is as wide as the concept of "literacy". Illiteracy is not an isolated phenomenon, but is often associated with a multiplicity of related factors such as poverty, unemployment, ignorance and helplessness. According to Ahmed (1990:1) illiterate persons find themselves placed among the most disadvantaged in society – disadvantaged economically, politically and culturally. The illiterate has a sense of diminished self-esteem because he or she is unable to contribute to or participate effectively in community life. According to Wedepohl (1988:18) being illiterate means being ignorant and lacking dignity; illiterates are often poor and helpless. The illiterate is deprived of access to society's store of knowledge, information and life skills. Thus the illiterate cannot read the world around him or her. Nor can the illiterate participate efficiently in the democratic process. Illiteracy of parents leads to their children's poor attendance in or early dropout from primary school. This naturally perpetuates the chain of illiteracy (Ahmed 1990:1). Massive illiteracy is always accompanied by the lack of universal primary education opportunities for large numbers of children. Any campaign aimed at alleviating adult illiteracy in a significant way should begin by implementing an effective plan for expanding the reach of preschool programmes and primary education. The quality of primary education should be such that a self-sustaining level of learning skills is acquired and the floodgates of illiteracy can eventually be shut (Ahmed 1990:5).

Illiteracy is still one of the greatest social problems of our time. Illiteracy is closely correlated with poverty and although the vast majority of adult illiterates are found in the least developed countries, there is still an illiterate population in many of the western industrial countries (Lazarus in Titmus 1989:88).

Mace (1992:3) maintains that the idea of illiteracy in most cultures, depending on the point of view of the person who thinks about it, is often associated with strong emotions of shock, contempt, disbelief, anger, shame and pity. Illiteracy is often referred to as a "symptom" – the result of the "sickness" of poverty or interrelated causes. However, Hunter & Harman (1979:1) contend that illiterates "*… rarely perceive literacy per se as a*

123

solution to the immediate problems they face in their daily lives."   The fact that some adults do take part in classes of a basic educational nature, presupposes that some need is being filled.

4.2.3   WHO IS AN ILLITERATE?

An illiterate is one who is partly or fully deprived of access to written information. An illiterate in the technological and industrial age is not born but made so usually in an inhuman and insensitive environment, which is not concerned about his/her predicament. An illiterate is not necessarily dull and unintelligent. Lind & Johnston (1990:19) warn that the "illiterate" should not be considered the bearer of a disease, to be treated by a "vaccination campaign".   Illiteracy is a symptom, not the cause of underdevelopment, injustice and poverty.

The issue of when a person can be regarded as having emerged from a state of illiteracy varies from country to country (see paragraph 4.2.1.3). In some cases a person able to read and write is considered literate. In others a person considered to be literate should be able to read with understanding a text of a given length. There is a whole range of factors to consider when making pronouncements on levels of literacy as functional; factors such as the place where people live in the world- some countries are less developed than others and it might be sufficient enough to write down one's name. Other factors to consider are whether people live in urban or rural communities and the consequent demand made on their literacy skills. Time of life as well as contingencies in which people find themselves make a difference to deciding whether they are functioning effectively as literates or illiterates. In South Africa there is a need to develop a more precise explanation of those skills that would enable us to measure the attainment of basic and functional literacy.

For the purpose of this study, an illiterate person is one who is functionally unskilful in reading and writing and who cannot engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in the group or community (see paragraph 1.7.3).

4.3   LITERACY APPROACHES

Approaches to literacy refers to methods of planning and implementation of literacy training and development, particularly in the developing countries (Lind & Johnston 1990:68).   Depending on whether the government of the country reconstructs the education system to benefit its people in the light of literacy being a human right, or maintains that it is to serve only specific sections of society, the approach to solving the problem of illiteracy will be different. According to Lind & Johnston (1990:68) there have been four main approaches which have had or still have a major influence in the developing countries, namely, fundamental education, functional literacy, conscientisation methods and mass literacy campaigns.   With the exception of the conscientisation approach, which stresses the political implications of literacy training, all other approaches emphasise the techniques of reading and writing as well as the socio-economic functions of literacy. None of the literacy approaches is complete or exclusive. Lind & Johnston (1990:69) maintain that these literacy approaches overlap in time and space. The various literacy approaches as discussed by Lind & Johnston (1990:70-89) are more fully elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

4.3.1   THE "FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION" APPROACH

Fundamental education gives the minimum knowledge and skills which are an essential condition for attaining an adequate standard of living (Gray 1956: 17). UNESCO promoted the "fundamental education" approach and it sought to promote community development through literacy training. UNESCO stressed the importance of finding out the values and interests of illiterates; both young and old, so as to adapt programmes to local circumstances.   Addressing the problem of language, UNESCO strongly recommended the use of vernacular languages as the most effective method of teaching literacy. Concerning the choice of language for literacy, Lind & Johnston (1990: 126) affirm that the mother tongue is the best language for learning and write that: *"Literacy conducted in a second language is difficult and time-consuming and can lead to demobilisation if there is no strong motivation among the participants to learn this language."*

4.3.2   THE "FUNCTIONAL LITERACY" APPROACH

The EWLP and United Nations Development Programme (hereafter referred to as UNDP) initiated a world experimental programme in eleven countries during the period 1967 to 1972 (see paragraph 4.2.1.2).   The main objectives of the experimental programme were "*… to test and demonstrate the economic and social returns of literacy and, more generally, to study the mutual relations and influences which exist or may be established or strengthened between literacy training – particularly among the working population – and development*" (UNDP/UNESCO 1976:9).

The "functional literacy" approach adopted a broader view to literacy training and development by imparting to the learner not only the technical skills of reading, writing and numeracy, but also functional skills and knowledge about socio-economic conditions and the learner's daily life activities. The approach was intensive and selective in the sense that it sought to teach a specific group of adults working within a specific economic activity in a specific region. The target group was expected to make rapid progress by immediately making use of newly acquired skills.

The functional literacy approach had a few serious limitations. Because literacy was turned into a function of economic issues, it was therefore limited in improving vocational skills.   Integration of literacy into a national developmental plan was not achieved because the teaching of the three "R's" was not allied to the practical material to be learned. Inadequate provision of post literacy programmes was a serious problem in many national projects. These projects were characterised by a high number of drop-outs because of an inadequately developed psychological climate at a local level.

4.3.3   THE "CONSCIENTISATION" APPROACH

Deeply rooted in a political and social analysis of the living conditions of the poor, the conscientisation approach of Paulo Freire aims at making it possible for oppressed illiterates to become aware that they can change their own situation. In this process the main task of adult education is seen to be about enabling a process of critical reflection which leads to action and change. Education is viewed, designed and practised as primarily a liberating pedagogy.   According to the conscientisation approach, the

learners' needs and experiences are utilised by engaging them in the teaching and learning process through dialogue and participation.

The conscientisation approach, with its emphasis on mobilising and organising the oppressed illiterates to empower themselves, does not provide any theories or practical guidelines on how to organise a literacy project administratively. No mention was made of how to mobilise or motivate people to enrol for classes. No proper guidance was given on how the people should liberate themselves.

4.3.4   THE "MASS CAMPAIGN" APPROACH

The mass campaign approach ideally involves all segments of society to make all adult men and women in a nation literate within a certain period of time. Literacy, in this context, is understood as a means towards a comprehensive set of ends – economic, social, structural and political. According to Bhola (1983:245) a mass campaign must be seen as a necessary part of a national strategy for overcoming poverty and injustice. There are two kinds of mass campaigns for alleviating illiteracy. The first is the "once-off" mass campaign as was carried out in Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Somalia. Within a period of one or two years, these countries managed to minimise illiteracy, primarily it would seem because of the unique commitment arising out of their recent realisation of political hegemony by a popular movement. For example, illiteracy in Vietnam (1976-1978) was reduced very rapidly from 25% to 14% and in Somalia (1974-1975) from 95% to 30% (Lind & Johnston 1990:88-89).

The second kind of mass campaign approach seeks to alleviate illiteracy through periodically organised campaigns like those conducted in Mozambique, Tanzania and Ethiopia. The determining factors for choosing this approach include the existence of a large number of illiterates as well as the low level of development which makes it difficult to reach all of them at once.

To sum up, the literacy approaches used by the developing countries in an attempt to alleviate high illiteracy rates have been limited in a number of ways. For example, in cases where functional literacy was restricted to the work-orientated aspects of literacy programmes, emphasising the methodology of adapting the programmes to the specific skills required by the target groups of each project, certain problems arise. With the

mass campaign approach, the level of literacy achieved is usually low, leading to learners relapsing into illiteracy. The Freirian conscientisation approach had a number of serious limitations, among them language problems, organisational weaknesses, staff shortages in quantity and quality and a lack of political will, mobilisation and support. The method for reading and writing with an accompanying dialogue was not relevant to the real conditions of the countries where it was applied.

However, these different literacy approaches show a concerted effort by the developing countries to alleviate illiteracy because it is regarded as an impediment to individual and societal development. The different literacy approaches discussed above can play a vital role in alleviating the problem of illiteracy provided they are used creatively and adapted to reality in a sensitive way.

4.4   FEATURES OF SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL LITERACY PROGRAMMES

A literature review of the national literacy campaigns as assessed by Bhola (1984), Hamadache & Martin (1986), and UNESCO/UNDP (1976) reveals some recurring features of successful and unsuccessful literacy campaigns. For example, most successful literacy campaigns have been launched in countries following revolutions for national independence or in countries moving toward greater social justice. A lack of sustained political commitment to the campaigns is the fundamental problem responsible for the failure of most projects.

This discussion does not purport to address all aspects related to the successful and unsuccessful literacy campaigns. However, an attempt will be made to synthesise the most important factors behind successful and unsuccessful literacy campaigns.

4.4.1   THE FACTORS BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF THE LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

The success of the campaigns can mainly be attributed to the fact that they were conducted in an atmosphere of eagerness and enthusiasm arising from specific circumstances. From the specific point of view of mass-scale literacy results, the following factors have been identified as being conducive to relative success:

4.4.1.1 State involvement

The success of mass-scale literacy campaigns was not dependent on the wealth of the countries launching the campaigns. Poor countries with limited resources such as Mozambique, Cuba and Tanzania, conducted some of the most successful literacy campaigns. Hamadache & Martin (1986:16) maintain that what is crucial is the political will which must be clearly articulated and people-oriented. They also stress the importance of the creation of a political and social climate which makes it possible to muster the national commitment and to mobilise the energies behind literacy efforts. The importance of this factor helps explain why most successful campaigns have been launched in countries following revolutions for national independence or in countries moving toward greater social justice.

The existence of political will can always be sensed by listening carefully to the voices of the power elite; and its strength can be gauged by weighing the political, institutional and material resources allocated by the political leaders to the launching and implementation of a mass adult literacy campaign. However, the political will and the national commitment, is to be measured not so much by the yardstick of impressive declarations as by the extent of the resources allocated to a campaign.

4.4.1.2 Mobilisation of the state and the masses

A mobilisation of the masses and a mobilisation of a state have to proceed simultaneously for the success of a mass literacy campaign. The mobilisation of the masses is crucial because only the masses, through genuine participation, can make a literacy campaign a mass literacy campaign (Hamadache & Martin 1986:27; and Bhola 1983:231). By giving the campaign a mass orientation, a large part of the population is able to participate in it as learners and teachers. Awareness should be raised throughout the entire nation. This can be done by using slogans to raise awareness so that people are aware of their special place in their history. Such slogans were used in Ethiopia's national literacy campaign. An Ethiopian example is, "*I undertake to combat illiteracy by learning and teaching*", and two used in the United Republic of Tanzania, are, "*Elimu haina mwisho*" (*We never stop learning*) and "*Elimu kwa wote*" (*Education for all*) (Hamadache & Martin 1986:26). The media, ranging from billboards, leaflets,

129

posters to puppets, theatre, radio film and TV, should be participatively used in a mass campaign.

No mass literacy campaign can succeed without effective mobilisation of personnel and resources internal to the State – the government and the party. The functionaries of the government at various levels must be re-educated to strengthen their commitment and enthusiasm. The mobilisation of the State must include both administrative/material and intellectual/technical resources in the system. Effective use of the professional and technical resources available within and outside the government is an important part of the mobilisation effort.

The literacy campaign should not be conducted within the framework of one ministry alone, for example, the ministry of education or department of economic planning, but should be so placed within the government structure that the campaign can be identified with and gain support from other ministries. To minimise the bureaucratic channels, a semi-autonomous structure should play a key role in organising the campaign especially in its conceptualisation and planning, and for the establishment of administrative and operational structures.

4.4.1.3 Linking literacy to man's fundamental needs

Although the nation-state cannot be wished away; it is important that people participate in the design of their destinies; they must have a voice in changing their world. Through a process of needs assessment and needs negotiation, national visions must be re-invented in local settings. Literacy programmes, which are imposed on people and are not related to development as a whole and local conditions, have little chance of improving people's lives. Literacy is effective to the extent that the people to whom it is given feel it meets their most essential requirements. Literacy programmes should encourage the skills of participation and self-management.

4.4.1.4 A clear-cut language policy

Language is clearly the significant expression of a culture and the rejection of the language of a culture is often viewed by the culture as an attack on its identity and it's

being. Literacy in a language other than the national language may doom a person to a parochial, limited and marginal existence.

It is impossible to generalise in a prescriptive way on the content of a language policy for all developing countries because each presents a unique cultural and political situation. A single language, as the language of literacy, has contributed to the success of mass literacy campaigns in Burma, China, Cuba, Tanzania and Somalia, to name a few. The only suggestion which can be made to policy makers about language policy is that they face the question of language literacy squarely and honestly.

4.4.1.5 Establishment of administrative structures

Illiteracy cannot be ameliorated on a large scale without powerful organisational structures. Effective organisation is important for the implementation of an ideology as it is the operational aspect of a nation's will. The following organisational principles, as indicated in a memorandum to decision-makers on planning, implementing and evaluating literacy campaigns by Bhola (1984:187), are important in developing effective administrative systems:

◊ The power elite should have the will to change, modify, eliminate and create legal and administrative structures.

◊ A harmonious balance should be established between centralised direction and decentralised initiative and implementation.

◊ The literacy organisation should be placed within a government structure with which it can demand identification and support from all the various organs of the state.

◊ A mass literacy organisation should be created to provide opportunities to the people for mass participation.

◊ The overall administrative organisation of the government should be linked on the one hand with the party organisation and on the other hand with the mass organisation for literacy, both horizontally and vertically.

These various principles can be elaborated more fully based on Bhola's ideas (1984:187-189). Bhola describes the need for institution building for the right level of response. The power elite, he suggests, should be ready to institute, in its legal and

131

administrative structures, those changes necessary for the implementation of the campaign. Policy-makers should be willing to experiment with different institutional forms. There should be readiness to experiment and to make changes as experience in the delivery of instruction and services accumulates. The literacy organisers should be able to make the right level of response to the needs of the campaign in organisational terms.

A further requirement for a successful mass campaign as detailed by Bhola is that the matter of centralisation versus decentralisation is addressed. A national campaign must have a national direction from the centre. No national campaign can be successfully implemented under a national command. The centre should envision, inspire, demand, and enable but without extinguishing local initiative and the local need for adaptations. The implementation decisions – both administrative and curricular – should be left to local workers.

The location of literacy organisation within the overall structure of the government is a further important fact to consider. The government authority for the organisation of the mass literacy campaign must not be limited by assigning the campaign to one governmental ministry or department, for example, a ministry of education. The campaign administration should be placed in the President's office (or in the office of the Prime Minister) or another similar over-arching administrative unit such as a planning commission.

There should be a link between the administrative organisation and the political and the popular organisation of the campaign. Governments should avoid employing literacy teachers and supervisors as civil servants to carry out the campaign. A literacy movement cannot be handled by career-oriented, rule-ridden, hierarchy-conscious civil servants. Political parties and voluntary organisations can best handle literacy work. The government, party and popular literacy organisation must be vertically and horizontally integrated. A system of committees would have to bring together different representatives of the three streams of government, party and popular literacy organisation and would have to coordinate different levels of decision-making (Bhola 1984: 188-189).

4.4.1.6 Planning of post-literacy activities

A systematic post-literacy and continuing education programme for adults should be conceptualised as the follow-up to the literacy campaign in order to prevent a widespread relapse into illiteracy and the stagnation of skills acquired during literacy programmes. Emphasis should be laid on the systematic organisation of learning and action programmes suited to the social, cultural and occupational needs and interests of the neo-literates. The post-literacy programmes should be institutionalised so that they can last over a long period.

Without a systematic post-literacy and continuing education programme and the creation of a literate environment in which the effects of such a programme can be sustained, retention of literacy is not possible. On this, Bhola (1984:194) writes, "*The effects of a mass literacy campaign may disappear like a river in the desert unless a post-literacy and continuing education programme is established … to sustain the effects of such a programme.*" Opportunities for applying recently acquired literacy skills must be created. However it is crucial that post-literacy programmes take less time to complete, are concise and practical, and emphasise productive skills and life skills.

Successful literacy can only be achieved when it is integrated into a national development plan where the political will to implement literacy is clearly articulated in theory and practice. The political will, which is essential, must lead to mobilisation of resources at national, provincial and regional level.

4.4.2   THE FACTORS BEHIND THE FAILURE OF THE LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

These factors can be summarised as the lack of political will, lack of universal primary education, the choice of language and lack of post-literacy programmes.

4.4.2.1 Lack of clear expression of the political will

Without the ideological and political commitment of the leadership of the country, achieving successful mass literacy is most improbable. Without the existence of a super-ordinate political will, there will always be competitive claims from other development sectors in the economy on the resources of the nation. Although literacy

campaigns cannot be justified in purely economic terms, ideological justifications are necessary; quite often ideological justifications may even be sufficient.

Lack of sustained political will is the most fundamental problem as the campaign loses direction and momentum. Since the achievement of democracy in South Africa in 1994, adult literacy and adult education have been low priorities because the political will to alleviate illiteracy has been too little. The full backing of the government and of all the people is essential towards the success of the national literacy campaign.

4.4.2.2 Lack of universal primary education in South Africa

The problem of illiteracy is always accompanied by the absence of primary education opportunities for huge numbers of children. Any mass literacy campaign aimed at reducing adult illiteracy in a significant way has to begin by instituting an effective plan for expanding the reach of primary education. The implication is that the problem of illiteracy must be simultaneously approached on two fronts. There should be close interdependence between the formal education of children and adult literacy enabling each to reinforce the other. A mass campaign cannot achieve its aims unless accompanied by intensified action in the formal education of children. The alleviation of illiteracy rests on universal primary education and adult literacy programmes. It should be borne in mind that universal primary education without adult literacy programmes might not succeed in reducing illiteracy in the foreseeable future, in view of the present rates of school attendance, high dropout rates and the fact that people relapse into illiteracy.

4.4.2.3 The choice of language

The choice of the medium of instruction was recognised as a serious problem in many developing countries, often characterised by extreme linguistic diversity. The solutions to the problem of the medium of instruction vary considerably from one country to another. In Tanzania, with 126 different dialects, literacy is taught in the official language, Swahili, while countries such as India, Kenya and Ethiopia have opted for the use of various languages for literacy purposes.

Reading and writing are more rapidly and readily mastered when the medium is the learners' home language, often referred to as the "mother tongue." However, many learners in some developing countries such as Tanzania considered the teaching of the transitional language to be a waste of time and an extra hurdle in achieving their ultimate goal of literacy in the national language, Swahili. While they cherished their tribal languages as an expression of their culture and identity, they could see no need or even purpose in becoming literate in these languages. According to the learners, the mother tongues were for speaking and Swahili was for reading and writing (Ryan in Carron & Bordia 1985:160).

It is safe to say that the decision on the medium of instruction should be considered as a political choice rather than a technical one in a mass literacy campaign. Although political authorities may determine the choice of language, it is important that educational planners and literacy workers assist in clarifying important technical issues. Further, the choice made by the political authorities can only be understood if it is related to the specific linguistic context of the country, its history and its general development objectives.

4.4.2.4 Lack of post-literacy programmes

As was pointed out in the preceding paragraphs, that many different opportunities for applying recently acquired literacy skills need to be created in order to avoid a return to illiteracy for neo-literates. Without follow-up programmes of some kind, retention of literacy skills is most unlikely.

4.5   A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF SOME SELECTED INTERNATIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

Mass literacy campaigns have been composed according to ideological commitments on the one hand and utilitarian concerns of nation-building and socio-economic development on the other. Socio-economic development is on the national agendas of almost all developing countries today.

Proceeding from the broad framework of reference outlined thus far, the ensuing discussion will be about what has been done on the international scene in respect of the

alleviation of adult illiteracy. Lessons learned from the international experience will be used to design a model for an ABET programme which will address the problem of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa.

4.5.1 THE MOZAMBICAN LITERACY CAMPAIGN: 1978-1981

4.5.1.1 Historical Overview

When Mozambique gained national independence from Portugal in June 1975, the illiteracy rate, estimated at about 93%, was amongst the highest in the world (Veloso 2002: 81). Although the country was liberated from colonialism, one of the greatest challenges to the ruling party, FRELIMO (the Mozambican Liberation Front) was, *inter alia*, economic and cultural recovery and the expansion of the provision of a formal education system and an adult literacy programme. Literacy and adult education programmes, first as local initiatives (1975-1978) and then as organised national campaigns (1978-1982), enjoyed special attention from the government.

The new government called for an immediate concerted effort to help the entire Mozambican population to become literate because it viewed it as the right and duty of every citizen. This principle is enshrined in the Constitution of The People's Republic of Mozambique, promulgated at Independence in June 1975. The Constitution (Lind 1988:52) declares, "*The People's Republic of Mozambique undertakes an energetic fight against illiteracy and obscurantism and promotes the development of national culture and personality.*"

In 1978 President Machel singled out illiteracy as the major obstacle to rapid development of the national economy, and defined the struggle against illiteracy as "*fundamentally a political struggle*" (Lind 1988:53). Mozambique had four national literacy campaigns aimed at mobilising people to join in building a socialist society. President Machel (Steinberg & Stuttner 1991:93) said that: "*Socialism cannot be built with illiteracy.*"

When Mozambique became independent in June 1975, only one person in every ten could read and write, and by 1980, three Mozambicans in every ten were literate. In 1980 the illiteracy rate had decreased from 93% to 71.1%, at a rate of 4.2% per year

(Ngunga 1999:148). It is, however, unfortunate that the rate of illiteracy reduction has decreased from 4.2% per year from 1975 to 1980, to 1.44% per year from 1980 to 1991(Ngunga 1999:148). The participation of all elements in the country in the Mozambican literacy campaign rose and fell, from mid-1978 to the end of 1982.

In the subsequent discussion, an attempt will be made to analyse the critical factors behind this process of rise and fall.

4.5.1.2 Political will and mobilisation

FRELIMO saw the expansion of the formal education system and mass adult literacy initiatives as part of a social revolution. The ruling Party was inspired and influenced by other contemporary revolutions in developing countries such as Vietnam and Cuba, where mass literacy had in different ways been an important component of the project of reconstruction. The need to expand the formal education system and adult literacy initiatives seemed to have created a fertile ground for a strong "national commitment" to alleviate illiteracy, based on the motivation of both the illiterate people and the State (Lind 1988:3).

During the first five post-independence years a "natural commitment" to adult literacy was expressed in various ways by the Party, the government and the people, that is, illiterate women and men, students, teachers and professionals. Local political committees, the "Dynamising Groups" (Grupos Dinamizadores), set up in residential areas and workplaces, were encouraged to organise and support popular literacy initiatives and were structured accordingly. As a result, crowded literacy classes flourished all over the country (Lind 1988:3).

The first national literacy campaign, launched in 1978, attracted far more than the target of one hundred thousand set for this first phase of the planned series of campaigns (Lind 1988:3). The second national literacy campaign was organised in the same way as the first and took place during 1980. The third and fourth national literacy campaigns were carried out within the same framework as the two previous campaigns in 1981 and 1982 respectively (Lind 1988:4).

The high participation in the first two national literacy campaigns may be attributed to the two national literacy seminars held in 1974 and 1975. The constitution, presidential speeches and definition of literacy as a priority task of the "Dynamizing Groups" all expressed a high level of commitment and priority to literacy in general and adult literacy in particular. Within the education sector the high value of adult literacy was manifested by the creation of institutions and the allocation of the resources necessary to preparing and implementing literacy campaigns (Lind 1988:59).

However, the last two campaigns tended towards decreasing participation and increasing drop-out rates. According to Lind (1988:96), there existed, particularly from 1981, a reduced political mobilisation and less involvement by the political structures at all levels. The political mobilisation for literacy was in most cases replaced by administrative measures. It became much harder to recruit volunteer tutors.

The Adult Education Decree, promulgated just before the start of the third national literacy campaign at the end of January 1981, contained norms and regulations on the responsibility for literacy and adult education activities for every government body and social and economic unit (Lind 1988:93). It appears that the promulgation of the Decree was the last separate significant act taken by the national government in literacy during the period analysed in the recent study. By 1982, the focus in the education sector was on preparing the introduction of the new National Education System, including a sub-system of Adult Education. The declining political will is evident in President Machel's speech on education, given in March at the beginning of the academic year in 1982. Lind (1988:84) summarises the situation as follows, "*In President Machel's speech on education … he did not once mention Adult Literacy or Adult Education. This was particularly intriguing since the role and responsibility of the parents for the school progress of their children was the major topic in the speech. Why had he suddenly forgotten that the large majority of Mozambican parents were illiterate and thereby hindered in helping their children with schoolwork?"* The omission of adult literacy in the President's speech might have been interpreted by the staff working within the adult literacy sector as a sign that the government and the FRELIMO Party had changed their educational priorities.

The political will declined during the last two campaigns because the FRELIMO Party and the government might have considered other problems, such as hunger, poor

production and enemy attacks, more urgent than illiteracy. Consequently the literacy activities did not receive the political priority required for a successful mass campaign.

4.5.1.3 Pedagogical aspects

Despite the ideological commitment of the government and the massive participation of the population, the language adopted as the medium of instruction contributed to the failure of the literacy campaigns in Mozambique (Veloso 2002:79). The focus of the analysis here is on the use of Portuguese as the medium of instruction and the language policy of the country.

Mozambique is a multilingual country where more than twenty African languages (mother tongues) co-exist with Portuguese, the language of the former colonial power. Portuguese is the sole official language of the country. FRELIMO chose Portuguese as the language of "national unity" because it is "neutral" to the majority of Mozambicans, and does not serve as a mark of ethnicity in the country (Marshall 1990:289).

FRELIMO maintained that the use of Portuguese as the medium of instruction would enable the Mozambicans to share political power and participate in the economic system, thus making it possible for them to participate in the everyday affairs of the country. However, Portuguese is not a spoken language in most of the country and so learning it does not fall within the socio-cultural reality of an illiterate person (Veloso 2002: 82). What might have been the cause of the decline in the number of participants in the campaign after 1981 is that FRELIMO ignored the fact that literacy is the acquisition of reading and writing abilities in a language already known by the learners. Literacy is not second language teaching. Literacy in the mother tongue is much easier to attain than initial literacy in a second language. It also provides a solid foundation for the learning of a second language (Veloso 2002:94). According to Ngunga (1999:151) the use of Portuguese as a medium of instruction was conceived and badly realised as second language teaching.   The language problem during the campaigns was exacerbated by the lack of scientific-pedagogical training of teachers.   The teachers were the only people who had some understanding of the language. This implies there was virtually no communication in the classroom. Teaching people how to read and write in Portuguese without understanding was to a large extent responsible for the failure of literacy in the country. Ngunga (1999:150) adds that, "*… if the mother tongues*

of the target people had been used as languages of instruction, it would have been less likely that those who had mastered reading and writing would have reverted to illiteracy." Veloso (2002:83) concurs with Ngunga that the adoption of Portuguese as the medium of instruction in literacy programmes contributed to the drastic decrease in the number of participants in literacy campaigns.

Although language is the most significant expression of a culture, it is also a matter of economics and politics. In the modern world of science, technology and bureaucracy, people must know the language of politics for the sharing of political power and the language of the economy for participation in the economic system (Veloso 2002:81-82). Bhola (1984:191) maintains that "*Literacy in a language other than the national language may doom one to a limited and parochial and marginal existence.*" The only suggestion that can be made about language policy in Mozambique is the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the beginning to assist learners to acquire basic literacy. This knowledge could then be transferred to the learning of Portuguese, which would be taught as a second language. Literacy in the mother tongue, it is hoped would serve the function of allowing the learner to acquire reading and writing skills before starting to learn Portuguese.   Where there are many local languages, as is the case in Mozambique, clear strategies should be formulated about teaching literacy in the mother tongue and about a later shift to the national language (Bhola 1984:191).

4.5.1.4 Post-literacy planning

The present analysis focuses on the role of post-literacy programmes as well as the implications of running the post-literacy campaigns simultaneously with the literacy campaigns as was done from 1980 in Mozambique.

The need to follow up the literacy programme in order to avoid a return to illiteracy, as well as the need to provide further adult education had been recognised ahead of time. The principle of conducting the post-literacy campaigns was well grounded. Compared with the experience gained by other countries, the post-literacy programme was planned, prepared and offered unusually well in advance, and early enough to be readily available for the first large contingents of literacy "graduates." The post-literacy programme led to achieving a diploma, allowing its holder to be admitted to further education and training and/or to certain jobs requiring a minimum of fourth grade education. This probably

represented an important incentive and motivating factor for literacy campaign participation.   Nonetheless, the parallel campaign organisation probably reduced the mass campaign character of both stages of the programme. It was also burdensome for the regional staff and, particularly at district level, very difficult to manage such a parallel campaign (Lind 1988:117).   The staff members in particular felt the burden of simultaneously running two campaign programmes and being responsible for tutor training and in-service supervision and support.

4.5.1.5 Summary

The "campaign series" literacy approach cannot meet all the conditions for the success of literacy campaigns. The recurrent nature of these campaigns often implies large-scale investment with little return, and gradual decrease in interest from both the State and the people involved. The following critical factors identified in the analysis of the Mozambican literacy campaign might be of importance when designing an implementation model for the alleviation of illiteracy in South Africa:

◊   The mass mobilisation brought about by the historical momentum of a revolution tends to dwindle over time, making specific mobilisation actions for literacy even more important. It is essential for South Africa to get literacy initiatives going and do as much as possible immediately after the achievement of democracy while everyone is still motivated and enthusiastic (see paragraph 4.5.1.2).

◊   Teaching literacy in a second language is very difficult. Learners should be taught first in their mother tongue and then they can use their literacy skills to acquire and use other languages (see paragraph 4.5.1.3).

◊   Literacy campaigns will only succeed if they are inherently political. Without national commitment and political priority the literacy activity gradually turns into a centralised bureaucratic process (see paragraph 4.5.1.2). South Africa should consider illiteracy as a national problem and its alleviation should be a collective responsibility of all the people if it is to succeed.

◊   Literacy campaigns should not be too formal and be managed in the same way as the formal school system, with a rigid school calendar. They should be fairly

informal and receive government support, without being compulsory.   The Ministry of Education should not be in charge of working for mass literacy.   Its views are too formal (see paragraph 4.5.1.1).   South Africa should consider the involvement of a Section 21 company which would operate independently of the education department.

◊   In spite of the importance of post-literacy programmes, running both literacy and post-literacy campaigns simultaneously can have a detrimental effect by becoming a mixture of parallel programmes, which complicate implementation and reduce focus on the literacy campaign itself (see paragraph 4.5.1.4).   South Africa should try to organise an innovative and energising post-literacy campaign.

4.5.2   THE TANZANIAN LITERACY CAMPAIGNS: 1971-1981

4.5.2.1 Historical overview

Literacy activities in Tanzania started after the Second World War, which ended in 1945. Literacy centres were opened for ex-army men. At independence in 1961, the illiteracy rate in Tanzania was 75% (Mpogolo 1983:59). When the first national literacy campaign was launched in 1970, more than 5 million illiterates, about 22% of the entire Tanzanian population, were mobilised to enrol in adult literacy classes (Johnsson 1983: 14). The Ministry of National Education in Dar-es-Salaam provided the central direction to the mass campaign.

Thousands of Tanzanians, from different occupations, participated in teaching literacy, the tuition taking place in all possible locations – health centres, church buildings, co-operative buildings, "pombe" (beer) shops and even under the trees in the open. Typically, 30 learners were enrolled in a class; and classes met three times a week for two hours on each occasion. Tanzania managed to reduce illiteracy from 75% of the adult population at independence in 1961 to 21% in 1981(Ryan 1985:165).

4.5.2.2 Political will and mobilisation

The Tanzanian literacy campaign came into being as the natural culmination of a decade of political developments. The political leadership played an important role in mobilising people for the national literacy campaign all over the country during the 1970s (Carr-Hill 1991:22). The development ideology of Tanzania found expression in the *Arusha Declaration of* 1967 adopted by the Tanganyika National African Union (hereafter referred to as TANU) which in February 1977 merged with the Afro-Shirazi Party of Zanzibar to form a new party known as Chama Cha Mapindzu (hereafter referred to as CCM). According to the *Arusha Declaration*, the nation was to work for socialism and self-reliance. Self-reliance was to be pursued at all levels-national, community and individual. At the national level, it would mean creating a non-dependent political economy; at the community level, it would mean creating self-governing communities – the spirit of *Ujamaa* – and at the individual level it would mean education for both economic and political participation (Bhola 1984:140-141).

The five-year development plans (1964-1969 and 1969-1974) were to be instruments for bringing about socialism and self-reliance. In introducing the First Five-Year Development Plan (1964-1969) President Nyerere (United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar 1964:xi) said that, "*First we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten, or even twenty years. The attitudes of the adults … on the other hand, have an impact now.*"

The Second Five-Year Development Plan (1969-1974), which followed the Arusha Declaration, was directly aimed at the implementation of socialism and self-reliance; and through that, at mass education, to enable people to become conscious and willing agents of transformation (Bhola 1984:141).

On 31 December 1970, the President made a second appeal to the nation on behalf of adult education and directed that illiteracy should be wiped out completely in six districts-Mafia, Ukerewe, Kilimanjaro, Pare, Dar es Salaam and Masasi before the end of the year 1971. By September 1971, TANU Biennial Conference had resolved that illiteracy should be alleviated for everyone above the age of 10, using a functional literacy approach (Bhola 1984:142).

The Tanzanian mass literacy campaign was conceived within the context of Tanzania's adult education policies; indeed, within its overall perspective on socialist development. The objectives and purposes of the mass campaign were inherent in the development approach itself. These objectives were at the same time economic and technological, and the State sought to bring about conscientisation and communitarianism, a new political culture, in short, a new society (Bhola 1984:142).

Although the government provided an extensive infrastructure for adult education, the TANU Party, was used as the key instrument in the mobilisation of learners and voluntary teachers. A variety of motivational and public relations approaches were, however, implemented, both before and during the mass campaign. These included, *inter alia*, newspapers and radio broadcasts; songs and jazz bands; schools and the army; textiles printed with literacy themes and motifs; special postage stamps; diaries and calendars; and competitions for literacy flags, sports, dances, demonstrations and exhibitions (Bhola 1984:146).

4.5.2.3 Pedagogical aspects

In considering the pedagogical aspects of the campaign the key issues are multiple literacy primers which were used, the four levels of literacy which were conceptualised, and post-literacy planning.

(a)   Multiple literacy primers

Tanzania is a multilingual country, but it was fortunate in having to use only one literacy language – Kiswahili. It was a unique campaign in that twelve different sets of primers were used after they had been developed and tested by the UNDP/UNESCO projects. The primers, all in one language, were differentiated by occupational groups, namely, cotton farmers, fishermen, banana farmers, cattle raisers, coffee growers, housewives, et cetera.

A teacher's guide accompanied each primer set. Primers on home economics and on agricultural topics also had demonstration guides for presenting practical demonstrations. During 1972-1975, some 25 million primers and 1.25 million teachers' guides were produced and distributed.

(b)   Four levels of literacy

The definition of literacy within the campaign context was based essentially on the ability to read, write and calculate. Four levels and two sub-levels of literacy were identified, namely, Levels I, II, III and IV.

> *Level I: Has enrolled in literacy classes and attended two-thirds of the session.*
> *Level II.1 Able to read words and recognise symbols, to write alphabet letters, numbers and arithmetic signs.*
> *Level II.2 Able to read a short, meaningful sentence, to write a simple, short sentence, to add and subtract one figure numbers.*
> *Level III.1 Able to read and write as above, to add and subtract two figure numbers.*
> *Level III.2 Able to fluently read a simple text (in the Swahili language) with understanding, to write a simple, short message, to add and subtract three figure numbers, to multiply two figure numbers and to divide by one figure.*
> *Level IV Able to read a newspaper to keep up to date with current happenings and obtain information, to read "how to do it yourself" books on better living, better food, better ways of farming, et cetera, to keep records and solve simple arithmetic problems, to keep a simple book of accounts on income and expenditure* (Johnsson 1983:Appendix I).

According to Mpogolo (1983:69) the idea of the first four levels of literacy was an excellent one as it helped the learners to think of literacy skills as a continuum. The learners who completed Level I could still experience success even though they knew they still had a long way to go to become functionally literate. Those who passed Level IV were considered to be functionally literate. After completing Level IV the learner is enrolled in Level V of the post literacy phase which goes up to Level VII and each stage is completed in two years. Eleven books in political education, Swahili language, agriculture, mathematics, home economics, handicrafts, history, geography, English, health and political economy have been written and printed for the post literacy stage

4.5.2.4 Post-literacy planning

The specific objectives of the Tanzanian post-literacy programmes, as discussed by Mpogolo (in Bhola 1983: 67-68), are listed below. These objectives are:

i   To ensure retention of attained literacy capability so that the neo-literates do not relapse into illiteracy.

ii   To create literacy environments in the rural areas through a network of rural libraries, rural newspapers, Folk Development Colleges, correspondence education, radio programmes, cinemas and development campaigns.

iii   To provide systems of educational advancement for primary and secondary school dropouts and the whole adult population.

iv   To enable adults to broaden their knowledge of the official national language and English as the second official language.

v   To provide political education to adults.

vi   To improve the knowledge and skills of adults in such fields as agriculture, handicrafts, home economics, health and water supply.

vii   To give adults an understanding of simple national economics and economic geography.

viii   To give adults mathematical knowledge useful in their daily activities.

ix   To increase the knowledge of Tanzanian and African history and culture.

x   To develop democratic and co-operative knowledge and skills among adults.

xi   To help adults develop leadership skills and attitudes.

xii   To achieve an understanding of the world.

The following programmes served as "support programmes" for both the mass campaign and post-literacy activities. They were rural newspapers, rural libraries, correspondence education, film education, instructional radio, Folk Development Colleges and post-literacy textbooks for Levels V, VI, VII. The post literacy programme comprises subjects similar to those offered in the regular school system. It consists of three stages – V, VI, VII (Johnsson 1983:26).   These programmes were introduced at different times according to the need, availability of resources and the expansion of literacy.

4.5.2.5 Summary

◊ **Political will:** The United Republic of Tanzania could declare and implement a mass campaign because it had the political ideology of socialism and self-reliance. The literacy campaign succeeded in Tanzania because it was perceived as a political undertaking in a larger context of development (see paragraph 4.5.2.2).

◊ **Self-reliance:** Self-reliance was emphasised in all adult education activities and the entire nation assisted in generating additional resources. Tanzania did not wait for the economy to take off and for a literate environment to emerge, but used literacy as a tool to bring this about (see paragraph 4.5.2.2).

◊ **Continuum:** In Tanzania literacy and post-literacy were perceived and developed as a continuum. There are four levels in the literacy achievement stage after the completion of which the neo-literate of Level IV is enrolled in Level V of post-literacy stage which goes up to Level VII and each stage is completed in two years. The idea of four levels of literacy helped the learners to think of literacy skills as part of a continuum (see paragraph 4.5.2.3).

◊ **Integration:** Adult education in Tanzania is totally integrated with development plans. It is also integrated with community life (see paragraph 4.5.2.2).

◊ **The role of the Party:** The role of the mobilising agent, in this case the TANU Party, is critical for success in mass literacy campaigns. While the government had established an extensive structure for Adult Education, it still made use of the Party cadres' literacy committees and volunteers to make the campaign a people's campaign (see paragraph 4.5.2.2).

4.5.3   THE CUBAN LITERACY CAMPAIGN: 1961

4.5.3.1 Historical overview

Before 1959 educational development in Cuba had stagnated. On the eve of its revolution in 1959, only 50% of Cuba's children were enrolled in school, and among

peasant families, less than half the adults had ever had any education. According to the 1953 Census of Population and Housing (Bhola 1984:91; and Leiner in Arnove & Graff 1987:173), 23,6% of the population over 10 years of age was illiterate. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that about 45% of the children from 6 to 14 years of age did not attend school.

To address this critical situation in education, the revolutionary government adopted a number of measures which, from the initial stages of implementation, established the new principles and laid the foundations for the further development of education.
The education policy set by the revolutionary government was aimed at guaranteeing access to education to all Cubans. The President of Cuba, Fidel Castro, equated education with revolution. He said, "*Revolution and education are the same thing … society as a whole must become a huge school*" (Leiner in Arnove & Graff 1987:175). During his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 September 1960, Castro (Bhola 1984:91) made the following announcement:

> *In the coming year our people intend to fight the great battle of illiteracy, with the ambitious goal of teaching every single inhabitant of the country to read and write in one year, and with that end in mind, organisations of teachers, students and workers, that is, the entire people, are now preparing themselves for an intensive campaign. Cuba will be the first country in America which, after a few months, will be able to say it does not have one person who remains illiterate.*

The development of education in Cuba was based on the alleviation of illiteracy, achieved in 1961 through the mass literacy campaign. The campaign was characterised by its mass character. It was led by popular organisations and utilised the services of 250,000 literacy workers, including 100,000 young literacy workers. As a result of these efforts, the illiteracy rate was reduced to 3.9% of the total population when the campaign ended 8 months later (Bhola 1984:100).

4.5.3.2 Political will and mobilisation

Cuba has been able to summon and then sustain the political will necessary for launching and implementing successful mass literacy campaigns. From the very beginning the attack on illiteracy was viewed by the Cuban leadership as not simply a

148

technical or pedagogical problem. It was seen as a profoundly political effort, one tied intimately to the revolutionary transformation of society and the economy (Leiner in Arnove & Graff 1987:173). In his speeches Castro frequently referred to education as the key to understanding the interconnections between development and revolutionary changes.

The view of Cuba as "one large school" extended and promoted a national political will for lifelong education. The campaign utilised the model of revolution to inspire mobilisation, organisation and commitment (Leiner in Arnove & Graff 1987:175).

Cuba mobilised the entire nation to join in the struggle against illiteracy. Cubans chose the strategy of closing the schools and focused on the illiteracy problem by the sacrifice of the regular school schedule. Some 105,664 students of the sixth grade and above became available as teachers. Later in the campaign, the direct participation of school teachers in teaching and supervision was made mandatory. In all, a quarter of a million teachers was mobilised to work in the mass literacy campaign (Bhola 1984:96).

Mass mobilisation strategies included radio, television, posters, billboards, newspapers; et cetera. The words of the slogans chosen touched the hearts of the people. For example, slogans such as the following exhorted the people, "*If you can teach, teach; if you can't teach, learn*!" (Bhola 1984:95-96). Another appeal was directed especially to the youth of the nation, "*Young men and women, join the army of the Young Literacy Workers. The home of a family of peasants who cannot read and write is waiting for you now. Don't let them down*!"

Cuba did have certain conditions which were favourable for a "once-off" successful national literacy campaign. Cuba's 25% illiteracy rate was lower than that of many other countries; there was only one language for the whole country; and there was tremendous enthusiasm because people realised a better life would follow from their efforts (Bhola 1984:91).

4.5.3.3 Pedagogical aspects

The national literacy campaign had opened the way to participation of the masses in education. A direct dialogue, which had never before existed between the different

social strata in the population, was established. Participation became the crux of the pedagogy.

In Cuba Spanish was the language of literacy. One single primer was used for the whole country.   The *Brigadistas* (Volunteer brigades of school-age youngsters) were given some training by expert teachers and counsellors. Actual instruction was given in small groups of two to three adults in their own homes and lasted two to three months. The reading level required to be considered literate was approximately that achieved by children at the end of the first grade.

4.5.3.4 Post-literacy planning

Some reading material was made available to the neo-literates so that they would continue reading. *El Placer de Leer* (The Joy of Reading) designed especially for new readers and containing national and international news was published and distributed free of charge. Rural libraries were established where new neo-literates could go to borrow books.

The follow-up to the literacy campaign did not merely consist of producing materials and establishing reading rooms, but was conceptualised in the larger context of adult education of the masses. As a result, this led to a variety of instructional settings and structures being put to use such as evening and late afternoon schools; schools in work centres and factories; workers' and farmers' faculties; schools for homemakers; family reading circles; language schools; and residual illiteracy classrooms (Bhola 1984:103).

4.5.3.5 Summary

Successful campaigns result from hard work, technique and organisation and all these do not come together without the political will of the leadership.

◊   The campaign was characterised by its mass support. There was wholehearted enthusiasm from both the government and the people. The enthusiasm seems to have been prompted by the timing of the campaign – shortly after the revolution when people were feeling a strong sense of unity and a desire to build up their country (see paragraph 4.5.3.1).

◊ Literacy was not viewed as an isolated phenomenon by Cuban leaders, but was seen to be invaluable as the key to understanding the interconnections between development and revolutionary changes (see paragraph 4.5.3.2)

◊ The campaign should be emulated for its impressive post literacy planning. Books for neoliterates to continue reading were made available. Post literacy work was conceptualised in the larger context of adult education of the masses (see paragraph 4.5.3.4).

4.6 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE LITERACY CAMPAIGNS: SOME PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The following aspects of the mass literacy campaigns as implemented in Mozambique, Tanzania and Cuba may be defined as important in the alleviation of illiteracy by the SANLI in South Africa:

◊ The most important lesson for South Africa is that political will is a necessary condition for the success of mass literacy campaigns. The political will which has been found to be necessary for a successful campaign was present in all three countries. Without the clear expression of political will by the ruling Party and government, a successful mass literacy campaign is unlikely. If the literacy campaign is to be successful, political will must be reflected not only at the highest levels of government but throughout the nation. Illiteracy should be perceived as a national problem to be solved by the complete commitment of society.

◊ There is no single, simple recipe for a successful literacy campaign; every country must use its own unique strategy for its literacy campaign because each country has different characteristics. South Africa should be careful not to transfer experiences of other countries, without consideration of significant conditions. For example, Cuba did have certain conditions which were favourable for the national campaign's success. Cuba's 25% illiterate rate was lower than for many other countries; there was one language for literacy for the whole country; and there was tremendous enthusiasm because people believed that a better life would follow from their efforts (see paragraph 4.5.3.2).

Abel Prieto (in Leiner in Arnove & Graff 1987:191) argues that, "*To make a simple comparison to other countries is completely unscientific … because if you're lacking the sensibility to be able to comprehend the subtleties, the characteristics of the nations, the idiosyncrasies of their peoples, you can easily be deluded …*"

◊ The campaigns should begin within one or two years of liberation (it took 7 years for South Africa). The campaign must be of limited duration, if national interest is to be sustained. It is essential to do as much work as possible after liberation while everyone is still motivated to change. It becomes problematic if there is a series of campaigns in a country because people lose interest after a while feeling the end is never in sight. The Mozambican experience highlights the fact that campaigns should not be too long. The national literacy campaign in Mozambique was conducted from 1978 to 1982. Volunteer educators become more difficult to recruit and keep on the job in a voluntary capacity, given the low salaries and prospect of a long haul (see paragraph 4.5.1.2).

◊ The literacy programme should not be too long and academic. It should be related to the learners' everyday life activities. Illiterate people in South Africa want to find out what democracy means to them. Many people go to literacy classes to be part of the struggle against illiteracy. The organisation and the content of literacy work should strengthen that feeling (see Mozambique, paragraph 4.5.1.3).

◊ South Africa can benefit from the experiences of such countries as Cuba and Tanzania where literacy and post-literacy were conceived and developed as a continuum. In these countries adults can study for formal school certificates after completing the literacy stage. They can study for school certificates or by correspondence or they can attend adult education classes. Alternatively, completely different programmes can be designed specially for adults. In South Africa, learners who complete the literacy course can join the Public Adult Learning Centres for school certificates. Activities and programmes must be set in place to prevent new literates from relapsing into illiteracy. Resource centres in work areas, churches, community centres and schools must be readily accessible to the new literates (see paragraphs 4.5.2.3, 4.5.2.4 and 4.5.3.4).

◊ South Africa can learn from Cuba that successful campaigns result from hard work, technique and organisation. These do not come together without the political will of the leadership (see paragraph 4.5.3.2).

◊ The Cuban campaign demonstrates that even a serious lack of resources is not an insoluble problem in launching a literacy campaign if effective mobilisation can be undertaken. If political will inspired by an ideology, exists, additional resources can be generated through the mobilisation of the people.

4.7   CONCLUSION

The main aim of this chapter as stated in paragraph 4.1 was to provide a review of certain efforts which have been undertaken in some selected developing countries in the alleviation of illiteracy. A sub-aim was to clarify the concepts of "literacy" and "illiteracy" in terms of the approaches adopted by governments to implement literacy campaigns.

That the approach of each government will be in line with its underlying ideology, its long-term political and economic goals for the country and its conception of how its citizens can articulate their human rights in the sphere of education, is true. But because of the paradoxical nature of the South African education system, approaches to the alleviation of illiteracy are complicated by factors not necessarily found in the countries used in the case studies, despite superficial similarities. These factors make a simple comparison impossible. But the findings, insights and lessons learned from what has happened in the international scene in the alleviation of illiteracy have a special significance for this study. They both mark the differences in approach to illiteracy and also help to provide guidelines for the development of a conceptual model of ABET for blacks in South Africa. Such a new model, informed as it is by the successes in the three given countries, makes use of their successful strategies in a sophisticated way. But the fact that a differently conceived model for ABET is needed becomes all the more clear through the comparisons. ABET has yet to wean itself from its old patterns of searching for funding external to that provided by government; using ill-trained teachers; serving discordant ideals; subservience to the economic and political agendas of government regarding a cheap labour force.

In the next chapter a new model for the provision of ABET will be offered. This model is informed by local and historical conditions, and a critical analysis of the current government's deceptive provision of ABET. The models used in the three developing countries have also informed the construction of the new model presented. But more than anything else, the experience on the ground of learners' and facilitators' profound disappointment with SANLI campaign has compelled the development of the model.

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CHAPTER FIVE
A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
AND TRAINING FOR BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The aim of this chapter is to:

- propose a model of how best to plan and implement a mass literacy campaign in South Africa.

5.1   INTRODUCTION

As indicated in chapter one the primary purpose of the present study is to contribute to the development of a suitable strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa. The aim of this chapter is to propose a model of how best to plan and implement a mass literacy campaign. The chapter will be divided into two sections; the first section will identify the barriers to the development of increased ABET provision, and the second will propose a model of provision.

In proposing a model of ABET provision for the alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa, it is not being offered as a blueprint for planning and implementing a mass literacy campaign. What is offered here are guidelines which might be useful in the planning and implementation of a mass literacy campaign.

The proposed model of provision seeks to draw from South Africa's historical context and from experiences in other developing countries as well as differences from South Africa. Although reference will be made to literacy campaigns in other developing countries, there is no attempt to transplant a foreign model into the South African literacy campaign. Only relevant and appropriate guidelines will be used as a reference for responding to South African conditions.

The rationale for studying the historical development of ABET provision in South Africa in chapters two and three and the critical analysis of literacy campaigns in chapter four, is that it can inform or support decisions about the design of a conceptual model for alleviating illiteracy among blacks in South Africa. The analysis of the past and current

155

provision of ABET in South Africa reveals the changes ABET has undergone under various governments in South Africa. A better understanding of the problems underlying the provision of ABET by different governments in the past will be useful in designing a model for the provision of ABET in South Africa today.

In the next paragraph barriers to the increased provision of ABET among blacks in South Africa will be expanded on.

5.2 BARRIERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCREASED ABET PROVISION AMONG BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Many problems which South Africans face in mitigating illiteracy are similar to problems experienced in other parts of the world. Barriers to the development of increased provision of ABET in South Africa must be seen against the historical background of the educational crisis amongst blacks as discussed previously in chapter four of this study. There are many problem areas limiting the provision of ABET work, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Some of the most notable are the following:

◊ Unsatisfactory measurement of literacy levels

◊ Lack of universal early childhood educare

◊ Lack of universal primary school education

◊ Limited resources

◊ Social attitudes

◊ Absence of political will

◊ Absence of coordinated and coherent guidance to central government departments from the Department of Education

◊ Inflexible administrative structures.

The barriers to ABET are discussed in the following paragraphs in more detail.

5.2.1   UNSATISFACTORY MEASUREMENT OF LITERACY LEVELS

Coetzee (1991:78) notes that the problem of illiteracy in South Africa cannot be determined accurately because of the way in which the incidence of illiteracy is determined. It is interesting to note that official statistics in the field of literacy are generally based on data from censuses.

What creates further difficulties is the variety of ways in which literacy is defined and measured. As discussed previously in paragraph 4.2, definitions of literacy differ from one country to another. In South Africa, the 1980 census figures were based on responses to a question about whether a person (15 years and older) could read and write, while the 1985 census used the levels of schooling attainment for persons 20 years and older as criteria. Consequently the criteria used to determine if a person is literate or not can be very biased. For example, the statistics for the 1985 census are based on numbers of years in school. According to NEPI (1992:2), it is a fallacy to assume that a certain number of years of schooling results in the same literacy level for all individuals across different circumstances.

The literacy figures from the 1980 census are almost certainly optimistic because the survey gave no written test of literacy and people were merely asked if they could read and write. There is no doubt that many people would have replied in the affirmative out of pride rather than admit that they were illiterate.

According to the 1995 October Household Survey and the 1996 General Population Census, about 7.4 to 8.5 million people aged 15 years and older were found to be functionally illiterate (Aitchison *et al*. 2000:16). The 1996 census indicated that of the nearly 24 million adults in South Africa, 4.1 million had not had any schooling, and a further 8.5 million had not completed grade 7. Thus over 12 million people had not completed a general education (Statistics South Africa 1999:36). However, the number of people who had not had a full nine years of schooling is often confused with the figure for people who had not had any schooling (4.1 million). For example, the Executive Director of AETASA indicated in a report to the South African NGO Coalition published in the SANGOCO annual report (1999:28) that "*… there were 13 million illiterate adults in South Africa.*" MacFarlane (2002:6) reported in the *Mail & Guardian* of 19 to 25.04.2002 that, "*There are between eight million and 15 million illiterate adult South Africans.*"

157

There is a high risk of large margins of error in the assessment of literacy levels, leading to underestimates of the extent of illiteracy. The reliability of the statistics as reflected by the literacy profiles is questionable. According to Coombs (1985:268) national literacy statistics are the least trustworthy, and probably the most inflated, of all published and educational statistics.

5.2.2   LACK OF UNIVERSAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Pre-school education among blacks has been neglected over the years and it was only in 1979 that it was incorporated in the new Education Act. There is a consensus among professionals and increasingly among parents that pre-school education gives children a healthy start and a solid foundation in the first months and years of their lives, and that children exposed to pre-school programmes are less likely to repeat grades, drop out or need remedial services (Department of Education 2001c:10).

There is growing evidence from child development research that pre-school education helps children to acquire certain basic skills which help them to cope and keep pace with the increasing demands of formal schooling. Gugushe (1987:309), for example, is of the opinion that children who have gone through a pre-school education programme learn far more easily and far more readily when they start their formal education at the age of six years.

According to the revised 1996 census statistics, it is estimated that nearly 10 million children fall within the age range of birth to nine years. However, about 40% of families live in abject poverty, with rural blacks being the hardest hit (Department of Education 2001c:18). According to The Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa (2001c:1), about 1 million of an estimated 6 million children in the nought to seven years age range were enrolled in some type of pre-school programmes. Children from poor families, especially black children in rural and informal settlements in urban areas, have no access to pre-school programmes of any kind. Consequently, the failure and drop out rate of children raised in such poor families is extremely high in the first four years of schooling. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that these children are not exposed to the basic concepts, skills and attitudes required for successful learning and development prior to entering the formal education system. According to the then

Minister Asmal of the Education Department, nearly 90% of children entering grade 1 in 2000 had no basic awareness of the working of numbers and letters (South African Institute of Race Relations 2001:274).

According to NEPI (1992:3) an estimated 25% of black children per year are likely to leave school before they become literate (without passing grade 5 or grade 7), which is an unacceptable waste of human and financial resources. These children who drop out of primary schools early on very soon become illiterate. Thus, the high drop-out rate at the primary level aggravates the problem of adult illiteracy because these drop-outs are the adults of tomorrow.

5.2.3   LACK OF UNIVERSAL PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

As discussed previously, the 1996 census estimated that about 4.1 million black adults cannot read or write. This number will increase, until universal primary education has been effectively implemented, because tens of thousands of school-going age children cannot get places in schools or leave too early to retain the skills of literacy.

The apartheid policies of the past resulted in the unequal distribution and allocation of resources for educational purposes in favour of the children of white communities (Coetzee 1991:218). For example, insufficient funding resulted in a shortage of more than 1000 primary school classrooms, based on the calculation of 40 children per classroom in 1989 for children under the control of the DET alone (South African Institute of Race Relations 1990:263). As a result of the shortage of classrooms in primary schools for blacks, many primary school-aged children could not enter schools and so became illiterate. Moreover, parents who had never attended school either did not send their children to schools because they were not motivated to do so or they let their children leave school early in order to supplement family income.

Another disturbing factor that impacts directly or indirectly on literacy in South Africa is the poor retention of primary schools for blacks (Coetzee 1991:218). According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (2001:274), it has been calculated that some 74% of children aged 13, 50% of children aged 14, 35% of children aged 15 and 25% of children aged 16 had not completed primary school in 1999.

The school enrolment in 2000 decreased from the previous year for the first time after a levelling off over the past few years. The decrease was attributed largely to a drop of 5% or nearly 401 000 pupils in primary school enrolment between 1999 and 2000. The decrease in school enrolment may be attributed to restrictions on repetition and on the admission age of pupils. The Department of Education stipulated that from the year 2000 pupils could enter only in the year in which they turned seven (South African Institute of Race Relations 2001:274). It is obvious from the above figures of children who do not complete primary school education and the decrease in primary school enrolment that the ranks of illiterates and potential illiterates will continue to swell as a result of this situation.

5.2.4   LIMITED RESOURCES

As described in paragraph 3.6, the provision of ABET in South Africa was inhibited in the apartheid era by limitations of funding. No serious attempt has yet been made to place ABET on a sound financial footing. The provision of ABET has been neglected in favour of formal schooling. Another problem is ABET in South Africa has to compete for the necessary resources with a host of other development needs such as housing, prevention of crime, job creation and land distribution.

In South Africa the Department of Education finances, to a great extent, the adult education it is providing, but the funds at the disposal of the Department for adult education are insufficient (Croeser 1991:37). In agreement with Croeser, MacFarlane (2002:6) reports that "*… spending on adult basic education continued to shrivel – and will decrease further in the next few years.*" NGOs dependent on subscriptions, donations, fund-raising and short-term grant aid are necessarily inhibited from growing by their dependence on uncertain finances.

5.2.5   SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Social attitudes towards the education of adults are a major barrier to the development of increased ABET provision.   Many people equate literacy with job acquisition. Traditionally, parents sent their children to school with high expectations that the government or the private sector would provide them with jobs when they completed their studies. The high unemployment rate in South Africa and a lack of understanding about how it has come about and will continue to grow has created tension and frustration among the youth.   It has also promoted strong negative attitudes towards education in general and literacy in particular among the adult population.   Sineshaw (1991:159) also observed this negative attitude towards literacy among the adult population in research on a national literacy campaign in Ethiopia. He recounts the story of a middle-aged man who had always refused to enrol in literacy classes in Ethiopia. This story is perhaps revealing of dilemmas shared by millions of adult illiterates in South Africa. The story is given in full below:

> *I have seven children, three of whom I have been able to support through high school. They were able to graduate three years ago. It has been a substantial financial burden on the family to support them all those years. We were able to persevere those long years with the great hope that they will, one day, be able to help us out of poverty. Instead, they have been unemployed for the past three years which is very frustrating and saddening. Nor, could they contribute to the household by working on our small plot of land, for the school had made them too "civilised" to engage in such manual jobs. Why, should I, an old man, bother in learning how to read and when, in fact, the young and strong are unable to benefit out of an extensive training?*

This negative attitude towards education is embedded deeply in our social history; the difficulty of eradicating it must be related to the alienating impression made on many adults by the education system.

5.2.6   ABSENCE OF POLITICAL WILL

According to Bhola (1984:179) political will is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for a successful mass literacy campaign. The political will that fuelled thinking in government during the apartheid era had as its basis an expressed desire to ensure that black people remained ignorant, uneducated or illiterate to be ruled more easily and to support the economic needs of the white capitalist hegemony.   This thinking, combined with the policy of "divide and rule", had been practised for centuries by colonial powers and was exploited by the apartheid regime. The people who benefited from the illiteracy of blacks in South Africa were those who wielded political and economic power. But paradoxically, the current government is continuing the same practice as the previous one in giving alleviation of illiteracy as little support. The reasons might be expressed differently but the outcome and approach are the same.

In paragraph 3.8.3, it was pointed out that the political will to break the back of illiteracy within five years in South Africa has been too little. A major barrier to the development of increased provision of ABET among blacks in South Africa is the low level of priority attached to it. According to Bhola (1983:225) it may not be easy to measure a nation's political will but one can always sense the existence of political will by listening carefully to the voices of the power elite. The omission of adult literacy in the speeches of most of the power elite in South Africa may be interpreted as a sign that literacy work is not receiving the political priority required for a successful mass literacy campaign. Without the existence of a clear and focussed political will, there will always be competitive claims from other development sectors on the scarce resources of the nation (Bhola 1984:179).

5.2.7   ABSENCE OF COORDINATED AND COHERENT GUIDANCE TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Another major barrier to the development of ABET provision is the absence of coordinated and coherent guidance to public providers from the Department of Education. As there are so many government and non-government institutions involved in adult education, overlaps and duplication in provision occur. Competition between the various government departments may not be a good thing if it occurs with the full knowledge of each as this is a waste of scarce resources.

162

5.2.8   OVER-AMBITIOUS TARGETS

The then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, promised to reach some three million adult illiterates over five years, starting in 2001. But what real hope is there that South Africa will have universal literacy within the next five years? Progress in eliminating the problem of functional literacy has not been as desired. Auerbach (1989:14) estimated that the combined efforts of literacy agencies reduce the number by no more than 1% per year. According to MacFarlane (2002:6) the current ABET provision reaches only about 6% of between 8 and 15 million illiterate adult South Africans.

5.2.9   INADEQUATE MOBILISATION OF ALL INTERESTED PARTIES AND POSSIBLE RESOURCES

With regard to the implementation of SANLI in South Africa, no serious efforts at mobilisation were made. The country was not put on a "war footing" from the beginning. The campaign was not extensively advertised in the newspapers, on radio and on television. Road shows of musicians, sports stars and television personalities were not conducted to encourage people to contribute to the campaign in different ways and capacities. Bhola (1984:185) notes that,

> *No mass literacy campaign has succeeded or even will succeed without mobilisation. Only the masses through genuine participation, can make a literacy campaign a mass campaign.*

The various political parties in South Africa seem not to be mobilising the population to participate regularly in literacy classes. Political mobilisation proved to be an efficient way of sustaining and increasing literacy participation in Mozambique (Lind 1988:118). It has not been so in South Africa.

5.2.10 INFLEXIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

In South Africa, the national literacy campaign operates as a Directorate within the Chief Directorate: Curriculum and Assessment; Development and Learner Achievements within the Department of Education. John Samuel, former head of the NLA, warned that SANLI should be independent of the Department of Education as it would give it more flexibility (Samuel 2000:17). This would also prevent the campaign from being run in a bureaucratic way as happened in Mozambique where the Department of Education administered the campaign. This resulted in decreased enthusiasm because the local literacy workers did not feel that it was their own programme, but that it was imposed from above (Lind 1988:169).

The barriers to the development of increased ABET provision among blacks in South Africa have been identified and explained in this paragraph. What emerges from the above are the following conclusions:

◊   Political will is clearly lacking in the South African campaign and no serious efforts at mobilisation have been made.

◊   Inadequate efforts have been made to develop awareness of the extent of the illiteracy problem and to enlist the voluntary and creative participation of adults in the attainment of national objectives. Illiteracy cannot be alleviated in a country where people are unaware that such a problem exists. Research should be done to find methods whereby all illiterates can be reached through the process of raising awareness.

◊   SANLI has not recognised motivation as the most significant factor in the success of the campaign. Planners of the campaign assumed that all illiterate adults, despite their myriad problems, the pressures and difficulties of their daily lives, would automatically welcome and participate in literacy classes. Needs assessment studies were not well done.

◊   Literacy is often seen as an end, rather than a means to an end. People cannot be made literate in isolation; literacy programmes should be plainly, powerfully and repeatedly linked to the basic needs of human life. Literacy will be

164

welcomed and accepted by people if the skills acquired are part of the full programme aimed at the total upliftment of the community.

5.3   A MODEL FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The aim of this chapter is to develop a model which could provide educational planners and policymakers with guidelines to be used for the effective implementation of a national literacy campaign. In order to propose a new model for the provision of ABET, the rationale of this study must be kept in mind, namely, to identify and develop a suitable strategy for alleviating illiteracy on a large scale among blacks in South Africa. In looking for a conceptual model to expand the researcher's own model, the work of Bhola (1983, 1984 and 1994) was useful.

The different components of Bhola's model are diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 5.1 (p.167).   Underlying Bhola's model is the idea that by a comparison of a range of campaigns which have been successful, key elements for success can be identified. This results in what he properly calls "an idealised model".   The following key components of that idealised model are, a study of pre-conditions, the articulation of political will, the setting of realistic targets, motivation of learners, post-literacy and continuing education programmes, evaluation and management of information systems, establishment of administrative structures, temporary institutionalisation of the policy initiatives, strengthening partnerships, mobilisation of the masses and resources, acceptable criteria for measuring literacy levels and an integrated approach to the development of literacy. But Bhola's comparison is necessarily idealised because it is based on a literature review which cannot be informed by the detailed analysis of particular conditions in different countries. Further a model for South Africa's practical use must be built on a review of the literature available, but additionally, observation on site, research into the complexities of the education provision over a long historical period and extensive experience and work in the field of ABET provision are necessary.
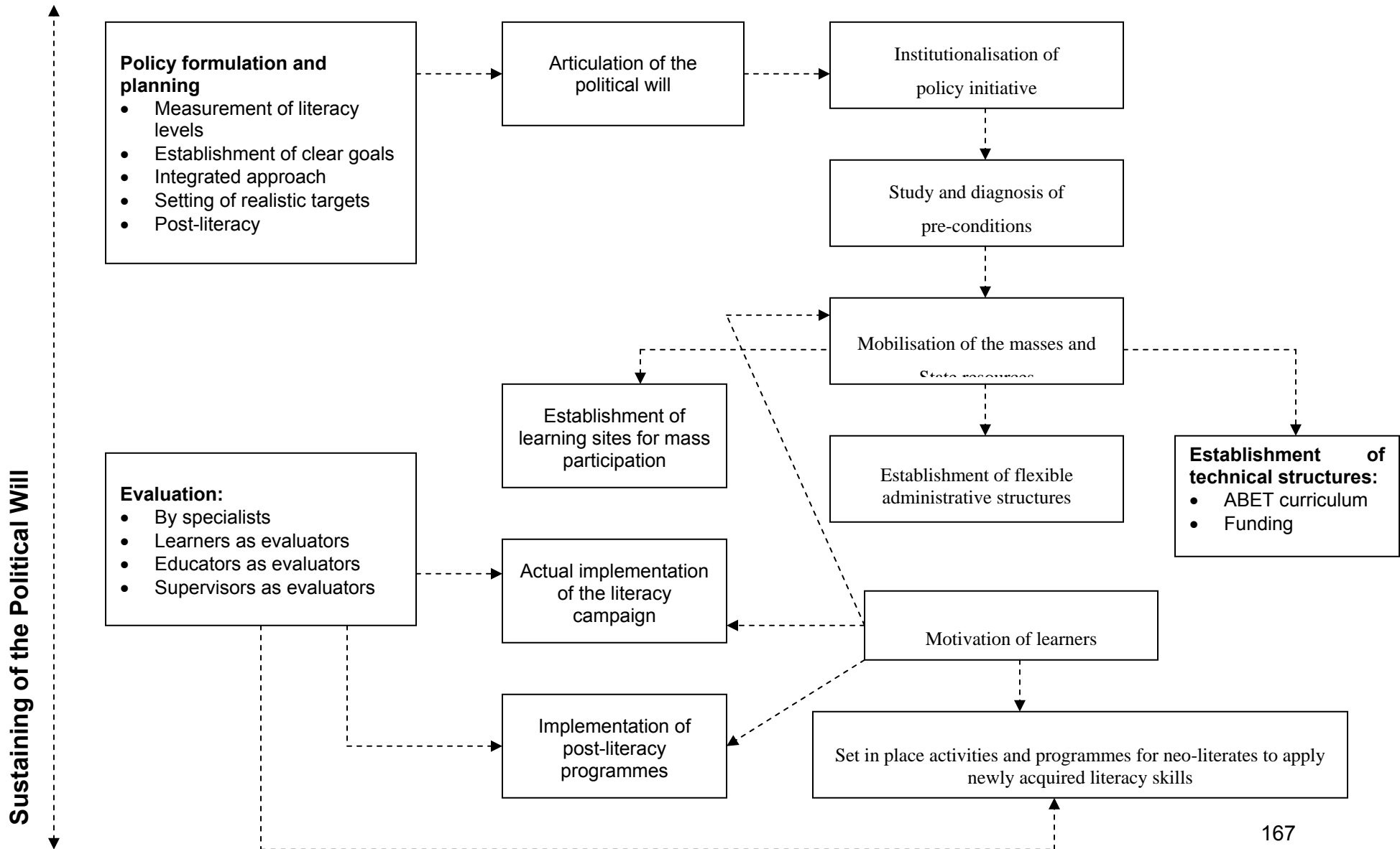
The components of Bhola's model will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs while acknowledging what might be valuable guidelines for South Africa. But simultaneously the differences between what was appropriate for other countries and what is different in

the needs of South Africa will be marked. It is these differences between the idealised model and the practical model offered by the researcher which are significant.

The various components of the model presented in Figure 5.1 and the discussion which follows should be considered within the context of the insight and understanding gained in the previous chapters of this study. A central tenet of the model is its focus on the development of a *suitable* strategy for the alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa. Any model has to take cognisance of the present (and its relation to its historical past) as well as the possible future scenario. This model will of necessity be based firmly in the South African context and it is assumed it would be implemented on a national scale.

It is important to note that the various subsystems of the planning and implementation of a literacy campaign are not strictly sequential. They may happen concurrently, or in a way which best suits the organisers of the literacy campaign. The components in the model are set out in the discussion which follows.

FIGURE 5.1: A MODEL FOR THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Sustaining of the Political Will

Policy formulation and planning
- Measurement of literacy levels
- Establishment of clear goals
- Integrated approach
- Setting of realistic targets
- Post-literacy

Articulation of the political will

Institutionalisation of policy initiative

Study and diagnosis of pre-conditions

Mobilisation of the masses and State resources

Establishment of learning sites for mass participation

Evaluation:
- By specialists
- Learners as evaluators
- Educators as evaluators
- Supervisors as evaluators

Establishment of flexible administrative structures

Establishment of technical structures:
- ABET curriculum
- Funding

Actual implementation of the literacy campaign

Motivation of learners

Implementation of post-literacy programmes

Set in place activities and programmes for neo-literates to apply newly acquired literacy skills

167

5.3.1   STUDY AND DIAGNOSIS OF PRE-CONDITIONS

Before a mass literacy campaign is launched, a number of pre-conditions have to be met. The aim of making a study and diagnosis is to generate and collect useful information for effective implementation of the campaign about to be launched. Such a study should include a census of the population to show the number of people to be served by age, gender, ethnicity, language, education and occupation and a comparative study of regions reflecting population densities, models of production, existence of infrastructures and economic possibilities (Bhola 1984:184).

The study of pre-conditions does not have to be conducted in a professional, formalised mode but may be conducted collectively with the people. People should be mobilised to become part of the process of conducting a survey. Mapping can be used to represent information graphically. Social mapping gives reliable information which can be understood by all, even illiterates. Social mapping, for example, could be used to indicate the following:

◊   Location of households,

◊   composition of households (parents, children, elderly),

◊   unemployed people,

◊   households with adults in need of literacy (male and female),

◊   households with out-of-school youth in need of literacy (male and female), and

◊   literacy levels.

People can also make use of their own symbols and explanation box in social mapping such as the following:

♂   men in need of literacy,

♀   women in need of literacy,

◘   out-of-school boys in need of literacy,

◉   out-of-school girls in need of literacy, and

⌂   venue for classes.

The value of obtaining information through mapping is that:

◊ information is represented graphically,

◊ the community is involved in the process and this brings a sense of ownership to the plan,

◊ it is development because the community understands itself,

◊ it is very powerful but cheap, and

◊ it uses low technology.

Bhola (1983:230) poses the following questions about the optimal pre-conditions for a mass literacy campaign:

◊ When is a society ripe for a mass adult literacy campaign?

◊ What set of pre-conditions must exist for launching a successful mass adult literacy campaign?

◊ What set of pre-conditions might preclude embarking on such a path?

Bhola (1983:230) suggests that a review of adult literacy campaigns indicates that the existence of the political will of the leadership and the accompanying social energy of the people to move and reconstruct is the only absolute pre-condition that must exist for a successful adult mass literacy campaign. All other conditions as for instance, material resources, infrastructures and technology should be seen as enabling conditions which could make things easier but which some degree of lack in them seldom render a mass literacy campaign impossible.

5.3.2 ARTICULATION OF THE POLITICAL WILL

In the preceding paragraph it is indicated that the existence of the political will of the society's power holder and the accompanying social energy of the people is the only precondition for a successful mass literacy campaign. The question is whether the political will required for successful implementation of a mass campaign exists only in one-party states.

What about a multi-party state such as South Africa? To answer these questions one first has to understand the meaning of political will and how it emerges.

According to Bhola (1983:209), "*To will is to resolve upon an action or objective; and an unyielding determination to persevere with zeal, energy and devotion, and at all costs, in attaining such an objective.*" Political will, therefore, is the collective will of the people, expressed on their behalf by their leaders.

The expression of the political will of a nation is almost always rooted in the ideological fervour prevalent at the time. It becomes crystallised more easily in societies where the power elite can, without hindrance, set directions and allocate resources and through a mixture of persuasion and imposition obtain compliance from the masses. It was in this way that countries such as Cuba, Nicaragua, China and Vietnam were able to summon and then sustain the political will necessary to launch and implement successful mass literacy campaigns (Bhola 1983:226).

In multi-party states, it is not always easy to articulate and implement the political will because it is more diffused. The political will may be a composite of the cultural will, the people's will and even the religious or spiritual will (Bhola 1983:209). Furthermore, a multi-party state is built upon the concept of freedom of the individual will as being superior to the will of the State and this makes it difficult to generate political will. However, it needs to be remembered that mobilisation through persuasion and activation of commitments may be difficult but not impossible.

In South Africa, ABET was accorded one of the highest priorities in the government development plan. The political will and rallying call of the government were focussed in the programme of Tirisano, the aim of which was that the back of illiteracy should be broken within five years starting from 2001. Illiteracy was regarded as the basic enemy, and the ANC government made a call to the masses to fight and alleviate this enemy. Although South Africa is a multi-party state, Levenstein (1999:143) contends that the ANC has such a large majority in government that it could easily exercise its resolve in supporting a literacy campaign. There are many compelling reasons for South Africa to follow the examples of Mozambique, Cuba and Tanzania where heads of state were at the forefront of the campaign to fight the scourge of illiteracy. Political leaders in these countries believed in the axiom, "*Let us educate the people so that they become well-informed, responsible and productive citizens*" (Napitupulu 1994:348). Participation in national development and the democratisation process may be enhanced only when two-way communication between the government and the masses exists.

5.3.3 INSTITUTIONALISATION OF POLICY INITIATIVES

It is important and urgent to institutionalise the first policy initiatives for the alleviation of illiteracy. The establishment of the NLA in South Africa in October 2000 could be seen as part of this institutional response.   The NLA is indeed a supreme body whose objectives include the following:

◊   To establish a core structure so that the core functions of teaching functional literacy can take place;

◊   to lay down policy goals and targets for the government;

◊   to represent all aspects and sectors of national life, for example, government, army, media, communication, agriculture, and so forth, thereby making literacy the nation's business; and

◊   to establish a system of organisations which allow people to participate in an advisory or a collaborative role.

5.3.4 ACCEPTABLE MEASURING CRITERIA AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO DETERMINE LEVELS OF LITERACY

As indicated in paragraph 5.2.1, there are some criticisms of the validity of the findings of the census and on the method used to conduct the survey. According to the 1980 census, persons who could read and write a language were regarded as literate. The ability to read and write was regarded as the basic requirement for literacy.   The question is, "*How well and what should be read or written in order to qualify as a literate person*?" According to the 1985 census, a person may be considered literate if he or she is older than 20 and has passed grade 5 (five years of school training).   Again, the question may be asked about how effectively a person who has passed only grade 5 can function in the highly industrialised, technological communities encountered in the cities of South Africa. Using a number of years of schooling as a criterion has been criticised because passing a specific school standard does not guarantee literacy (Hillerich 1976:52).

Determining the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy in a country depends on what literacy is taken to mean and it is increasingly difficult to formulate a generally acceptable definition (Ellis 1987:17). Although it is generally agreed that the term "literacy" connotes

171

control of aspects of reading and writing, major debates continue to revolve around such issues as what specific abilities or knowledge count as literacy, and what "levels" can and should be defined for measurement. In this context, Nascimento (1994:42) argues that,

> *Generally, all of the statistical data gathered and used until now have as their basis a simple dichotomy for the classification of individuals: between 'knowing how to read and write' and 'not knowing how to read and write', between 'literate' and 'illiterate', with no nuances, no intermediate degrees.*

If South Africans want to alleviate the problem of illiteracy in a systematic and planned way, then they will have to design a post-enumeration test to check the reliability of the data given by adults declaring themselves literate at the time of the survey. The use of educational level as the criterion for literacy cannot be relied upon because the chance of becoming literate after passing grade 5 seems to be slight or unlikely in the present circumstances. In contrast, Weber (1975:149) believes that there is an adequate relation between school education and reading ability to justify the use of the highest standard passed as a reasonably reliable instrument for measuring literacy.

5.3.5   AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TOWARDS THE ALLEVIATION OF ILLITERACY

As discussed in paragraphs 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 above, lack of universal early childhood educare and lack of universal primary education contribute to the high rate of illiteracy in South Africa. The problem of illiteracy cannot be addressed by teaching literacy to adults only. It is essential that an integrated approach be followed to achieve acceptable levels of literacy in South Africa.

5.3.5.1 Provision of pre-school programmes for all children

After the election of the ANC to government in 1994, former President Mandela pledged that his government would make the needs of children a priority (Department of Education 2001c:6). However, racial inequalities are still evident in the provision of pre-school programmes in South Africa. The audit of early childhood development sites shows that white children have access to pre-school programmes of considerably higher quality than coloured, Indian and black children. The early childhood development

services from birth to six years in poverty-stricken rural areas and informal settlements are far lower than in formal urban areas, both in terms of quality and quantity (Department of Education 2001d:19).

The government is faced with a considerable challenge in addressing the legacy of historical inequalities which are still evident in this sector. The development of better pre-school programmes for all children in South Africa is an urgent contemporary issue (Chamberlain 1997:5). The Department of Education should focus on expanding pre-school programmes, correcting the imbalances in provision, ensuring equitable access and improving the quality and delivery of pre-school programmes. According to Gugushe (1987:310) pre-school programmes "*… demand the fullest and the closest attention of the state, the private sector, public organizations and organized community endeavour to have [them] seriously launched and put into orbit.*" Pre-school programmes are critically important as they lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning and development. Timely and appropriate intervention can reverse the effects of early deprivation and maximise the development of potential (Department of Education 2001d:7).

5.3.5.2 Improving accessibility and equality of primary school education

The fact that about 74% of children aged 13, 50% of children aged 14, 35% of children aged 15, and 25% of children aged 16 had not completed primary school in 1999 (South African Institute of Race Relations 2001*:*274) and 46% of South African adults (South Africa Institute of Race Relations 2001*:*280) are currently illiterate, means that an integrated approach is required to alleviate this high rate of illiteracy. The provision of adult literacy should be seen as one leg of a two-part approach to alleviate illiteracy. The second part is universal primary education (hereafter referred to as UPE).

The provision of ABET without UPE might be considered to be addressing the symptoms only whilst the provision of UPE is viewed as proactive because today's children will be the parents of children who should be assisted to attain literacy. Coetzee (1991*:*224) contends that the war against illiteracy should not be seen as inseparable from the objective of primary education for all and can only be achieved through UPE of appropriate duration and sufficient quality for all in South Africa. The achievement and

the maintenance of a literate society depends upon the effectiveness of universalisation of primary school education (Mohsini 1993:178).

5.3.5.3 Provision of adult literacy

In view of the increasing number of illiterate blacks in South Africa, it is evident that a suitable strategy is required to prevent a further increase in the actual number of illiterates, and to bring about a decrease in these figures. The expansion of primary school education and the launching of the national literacy campaign during the post-apartheid era has reduced illiteracy among blacks considerably. However, it is true that many blacks, especially those living in rural and informal settlements, are still illiterate. What they require is a functional literacy to enable them to participate to a greater extent in modern society and occupational labour.

The alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa will to a large extent depend on the way in which changes are brought about in early childhood educare, the present system of primary school education and adult education programmes. One unfortunate blind spot in the new provisioning has been the tendency to tackle literacy training as essentially the training of adults and to regard this as a closed universe, with no connection to the provision of pre-school programmes and primary school education. All this has made it difficult to arrive at an integrated approach in which universalisation of pre-school programmes and primary school education are regarded as fundamental dimensions of illiteracy. Pre-school programmes, universal primary school education and universal adult literacy should be conceptualised and implemented in an integrated fashion.

5.3.6   MOBILISATION OF THE MASSES AND RESOURCES

According to Bhola (1984:78) the primary purpose of mobilisation is to invite people to participate "*… in a collective experience of evaluation, analysis and renewal of revolutionary experience, to claim the revolution for themselves and, in the process, to change their deeply held perceptions and values and their images of the future.*" Mobilisation means to provoke people to act; to get people out of their homes saying "We want education!"

174

Before referring to the approaches used for mobilizing the masses and resources, it is important to mention a few objectives of mobilisation as noted by Bhola (1994:172). The objectives for mobilizing people are to:

◊ get the maximum involvement of all the people to make a literacy programme a mass movement;

◊ create enthusiasm and a sense of urgency about universalising literacy within a country or community;

◊ enable people to make personal commitments so that teachers can teach, learners can learn and communities can commit resources in cash and kind; and

◊ develop thereby an environment of hope for creating a culture of print in which all the people are participants and are engaged in a process of lifelong learning in a learning society.

The real test of the success of any literacy campaign lies in the awareness which is created through mobilisation. Illiteracy cannot be alleviated in a country where people are unaware that illiteracy is a national problem. The population must be made aware that such a problem exists and that it can be alleviated. Research should be done to find methods whereby all illiterates in South Africa can be reached through the processes of raising awareness.

Levenstein (1999:149-150) recommends the use of the following strategies for the mobilisation of the masses and resources in South Africa:

◊ The country should be put on a 'war footing' from the start.

◊ The campaign should be extensively advertised in the newspapers, on radio and television.

◊ A sense of urgency should pervade all reports on and advertisements about the campaign.

◊ Prominent and colourful personalities should be asked to show their support for the campaign.

◊ There should be 'road shows' of musicians, sports stars, actors, television personalities and well-known politicians, all encouraging people to contribute to the campaign in different ways and capacities.

◊   Potential learners should be made to feel very special, and that by joining in the campaign they are contributing to the betterment of South Africa.

◊   Other people and institutions should be informed of the different, specific ways in which they could join the "battle", either by contributing financially or in kind toward the campaign.

It is evident from the suggested approaches that all South Africans should be mobilized to participate in the struggle against illiteracy. The struggle against the scourge of illiteracy should become the concern of the entire nation as was the case in Nicaragua, Cuba and Tanzania. All the people who are literate should be asked to teach the illiterate and those who are illiterate should feel the need to become literate. Despite the fact that South Africa is a multi-party state, the present situation is favourable for the mobilisation of the masses and resources.

Bhola (1984:87) concludes his discussion thus,

> *A commitment to act and achieve seems to compensate for the absence of infrastructures, scarcity of material resources, and lack of technical sophistication. Harsh conditions combined with commitment and hope seem to generate innovation in organization, social roles and methodologies.*

That this might be true from a comprehensive review of literature on the successes of campaigns, is one thing, but the reality of South Africa's experience teaches otherwise. Lack of infrastructures, resources and technical aids is directly the result of a particular approach adopted by the authorities in line with their *particular ideologies*. So support might be verbal and vocal and extend to powerful and innovative partnerships as in the case of Asmal's expression, but it is on the ground that it is clear that *commitment and hope* are completely insufficient to bring success to a literacy campaign.

5.3.7   STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

To alleviate the high rate of illiteracy, it is important that the national literacy campaign must be a co-operative experience in partnership. Strengthening partnerships with other central government departments and various sectors of the community is crucial to the provision of ABET among blacks in South Africa. Partnerships provide the means of

distributing scarce resources among stakeholders involved in ABET. Partnerships ensure the sharing of funds, human resources and equipment and prevent duplication of programmes within areas. They also promote net-working, establish learner pathways and ensure the continued relevance of course content and activities within ABET provision.

However, bureaucracy in South Africa appears to be hindering the effective delivery of the SANLI project. According to Mokonane (2002:5), the Department of Education is implementing the SANLI without NGO involvement and without regard for provincial plans or in consultation with provincial task teams. The number of NGOs involved in the provision of ABET has declined dramatically since 1994 because funds from foreign donors come into the country through bilateral government agreements.   The government accesses these funds, which then no longer find their way to civil society.

South Africa should consider the possibility of bureaucratic coordination between the ministries of education, health, agriculture, labour, or the like, in building programmes which reinforce literacy training. However, in this process of strengthening partnerships there are important issues of curriculum control which should not be ignored. The private sector, on the one hand, and different governmental development sectors, on the other, may equally be willing to share the cost of making their specific client groups functionally literate. In each partnership there should be an element of compromise between what the private sector see as being in their own interests and what the government perceive as being in the interests of public policy on ABET.

The Department of Education should collaborate with stakeholders and role players in the delivery of ABET programmes. The collective experience and expertise which would be achieved through such partnerships would benefit the learners a great deal.

Partnerships cannot be only the business of government and funding agencies. For a literacy campaign to be successful *all* those affected need to be involved in the design and implementation of the campaign. That means that illiterates, local authorities, school teachers, *et cetera,* not only university graduates, government officials and the business sector should be engaged. Further literacy campaigns must be seen in the light of globalisation.   When the funding agencies cease to fund the campaign in the partnership and fund humanitarian needs in a war zone such as Iraq, the time for

177

conceiving South Africa as an outsider in the global village has passed. Thinking which is so fossilized and set in old paths is a further factor to be considered as a barrier to sufficient and adequate provision of ABET for South Africa.

5.3.8   ESTABLISHMENT OF FLEXIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

The mass literacy campaign should be organised at central, provincial, regional and district level with learning sites. Each level should have a coordinating committee. Since literacy needs vary in different areas, regional or local committees must have the authority to deal with differing situations which arise. At local level, community leaders, volunteer educators and learners must feel that it is their own programme rather than one imposed from above. Without this feeling of ownership the commitment of literacy workers cannot be sustained.

According to Levenstein (1999:158) there should be an easy, respectful, considerate, good-natured and harmonious two-way communication and flow of ideas between different levels.   The coordinating committees should ensure that the lines of communication are kept open and that whatever problems arise are tackled immediately.

Mass campaigns frequently require the establishment of new and unusual structures to facilitate coordination at central, regional and local levels. The experiences of countries such as Tanzania, China and Nicaragua show that mass campaigns require unusually flexible structures and organisation.

5.3.9   CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL GOALS FOR THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The goals must be kept clear, unequivocal and unmistakable. There should be no possibility of misunderstanding. It is imperative that goals should be comprehensive and all inclusive, for example, to make every black citizen above the age of 16 literate, leaving only the seriously ill out of consideration (Bhola 1983:229). There should be an expressed intention to make the literacy campaign relevant to the needs of the learner, not to suit the convenience of the providers. The primary goal should be to improve the quality of life of the individual and the community. General goals should include:

◊   alleviation of illiteracy and the expansion of the participation of all South Africans in the social, economic and cultural spheres by 2004; and

◊   the laying of foundations for continuing and life-long education by enabling the majority of newly literate adults to take up referrals to further education and economic activities. It is necessary to ensure that newly literate adults maintain their skills through keeping contact with and accessing materials in local resource centres and community development projects.

The majority of illiterate adults in South Africa are also culturally deprived, socially depressed and economically handicapped people. To improve the quality of life of the individual and the community, Matabane (1990:354) contends that the context of the literacy campaign must be unapologetically and unequivocally political if the desired transformation is to occur. The literacy campaign must therefore go beyond the teaching of the mechanical skills of reading, writing and computation. The general population should be re-educated about their history and contributions, their reality and their rights and responsibilities in the new society.

It follows from the above that the conditions for successfully launching a literacy campaign are the clear identification of the goals for the programme, and that all the stakeholders concerned in the programme, that is, administrators, educators as well as the learners, should be involved in the identification of the goals so that each will have a clear understanding of what the campaign is all about.

5.3.10   SETTING OF REALISTIC TARGETS

Realistic and attainable targets should be set when a campaign is planned. The establishment of numbers should be done at grass roots level through social mapping (see paragraph 5.3.1).

According to the 1996 census, about four million South African people who were 15 years and above had never been to school (Statistics South Africa 1999:36). The likelihood of achieving the target of a literate society by the year 2004 is fast becoming an impossibility. The majority of educationists point out that if current trends are not reversed, the number of illiterates will increase in an alarming way. At all events, everything indicates that no serious attempt is being made to achieve a literate society by the year 2004. It is now time for the Department of Education and other stakeholders to give serious attention to the task of planning a strategy based on an evaluation of what has been done so far, on a diagnosis underpinned by updated, reliable information and, of course, on a political will capable of ensuring the viability of this strategy.

5.3.11 MOTIVATING ADULT LEARNERS

The poor motivation or even lack of it among illiterate adults to acquire literacy is, no doubt, the major constraint on the successful implementation of the literacy campaign. There are a number of psychological, sociological and economic problems which might prevent adults from learning.

The majority of illiterate black adults in South Africa are unable to perceive any use for literacy in their day-to-day lives. Most illiterate adults are involved in activities for which literacy is not a practical necessity. They are further discouraged by the fact that the people around them who are literate have no opportunities to use their literacy skills. As a result, many adult illiterates do not feel the need to become literate, and do not know to what uses they would put their newly acquired skills of reading and writing. The andragogical significance of this problem is that adult illiterates who do not feel the need to become literate have to be helped to learn a new need. Volunteer educators are therefore faced with the enormous challenge of creating a new environment, and new institutional arrangements and patterns, in which the newly acquired skills of reading, writing and computation can indeed be put to functional uses (Bhola 1983:214-215).

180

According to Mohsini (1993:181) a literacy campaign passes through three distinct stages as it develops. The first stage may be called the preparatory stage during which the people's level of motivation and their felt and real needs have to be identified. It is on the basis of the existing level of motivation and the identified needs of the people that strategies are designed for launching the literacy campaign, establishing support within the community and motivating its members to participate in the proposed campaign. The second stage is the mobilisation stage when adults are enrolled for classes. The third stage comes when adults start attending literacy classes. In each of these stages, some common and some distinctive methods and techniques are used to arouse the desire to become literate, to motivate people to participate in the programme and to sustain their interest in the process of life-long education.

To sustain the motivation of the adults, the following issues should be considered:

◊   Classes should be conducted in a clean and attractive environment with lighting arrangements and proper facilities.

◊   Volunteer educators should be committed to the task of adult education.

◊   Volunteer educators should be clear as to why adults should attend classes.

◊   The learners should not be allowed to be passive learners but must be encouraged and stimulated to become active participants in the learning process.

◊   The volunteer educators should attempt to make the learning progress visible to the adult learners who want to put to use everything they learn.

◊   The reasons for the indifference of adults towards learning are that they doubt the utility of literacy and find adult literacy classes unattractive and volunteer educators uninspiring agents of the campaign (Mohsini 1993:188-189).

Addressing the above issues can help to increase and strengthen adult learners' motivation to learn. Literacy must link with the life of the people as directly as possible. The motivation for becoming literate may become stronger among the illiterate black adults when they find the literate around them using literacy skills to enrich their lives through post-literacy and a variety of continuing education programmes. The focus should be placed on improving the quality of life of the people.

The primary problem faced by the Department of Education in its endeavour to alleviate illiteracy among black adults in South Africa is creating motivation and an environment for learning and education. The Department of Education has not recognised motivation as the most significant factor in the success of the literacy campaign. It is therefore essential that the Department should prepare concrete modalities for a motivational programme. Regular workshops on motivation should be organised so that proper attention can be paid to motivation. Further, a motivation committee should be constituted from various stakeholders. The motivation committee should evolve their own methods of motivation. Lack of motivation is evidenced by the high rate of drop-outs at the literacy classes. Without adequate motivation of the learners during the three stages in the development of the literacy campaign, there will not be success in the campaign. The effects of the campaign will disappear as rapidly as the posters announcing its launching fade.

5.3.12 POST-LITERACY AND LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

Post-literacy refers to all the means and activities which allow people who have become literate to make use of their newly acquired skills and to increase and deepen the knowledge they have acquired. People will not develop their literacy skills unless they use them regularly. If they read real materials like newspapers, government notices, advertisements, mail-order catalogues, and the like, and if they go on reading them, then they have already begun to use their new skills and to develop them. The literacy campaign should therefore not be abandoned immediately after the people have acquired the basic mechanics of reading and writing.

The preparation of the post-literacy programme must begin long before literacy operations commence. Literacy work must be designed, organised and implemented according to what is envisaged for the post-literacy phase. Literacy and post-literacy should form an indissoluble whole.

One of the most serious threats to literacy, without a doubt, is relapse into illiteracy. If people do not practise their literacy skills in real life situations, they relapse into illiteracy. This problem was experienced in Tanzania and Vietnam where many new literates lapsed back into illiteracy because of a lack of opportunities to use their newly acquired skills.

To prevent people from relapsing into illiteracy, the government should develop and implement coherent and comprehensive life-long strategies to make quality learning opportunities accessible to all on an ongoing basis. To achieve this goal, some of the following ideas could be included in the planning of the post-literacy programme:

◊ Literacy should not be provided to people in isolation but should be linked with other educational, social, economic, political and cultural programmes. According to Kanwal (1990:28) literacy is not sustained by the people as an isolated and unilateral phenomenon. People will welcome and accept literacy if it is part of the full programme aimed at the total upliftment of the community. Attempts should be made to ensure linkage with development programmes.

◊ Literacy and post-literacy should be conceived as a continuum as was the case in Tanzania and Cuba. In these countries, neo-literates enrolled for school certificates or attended adult education classes after completing the literacy course. In South Africa, the capacity of the formal adult education system will have to prepare for massive expansion of the formal programme in anticipation of more learners taking up referrals for further learning opportunities.

◊ The linking of the initial campaign to the post-literacy phase may require a bridging programme, without which momentum may be lost with a consequent relapse into illiteracy. The need at this stage is to replace volunteer educators by permanent staff. Here South Africa could emulate the Nicaraguan model where outstanding students or community members were selected as monitors in the final month of the campaign and retained as 'popular teachers' in order to link the campaign to post-literacy and to further adult education activities (Cairns 1994:112).

◊ The provision of literacy and post-literacy programmes creates a literate environment. A literate environment can be sustained if the government, private companies, NGOs, authors and would-be authors are asked to produce or donate suitable books, pamphlets, newspapers, and so forth, to keep neo-literates interested in reading and writing. It has been observed that the

constant presence of the written word in an everyday context is only one element among many others in an environment favourable to literacy.

◊   Multi-purpose centres, such as schools, community halls and churches, may be used to provide new literates with opportunities and settings in which to continue their education and enhance their social and economic mobility. Such learning resource centres could also be used as distribution points for learning materials.

◊   A forum for neo-literates and others could be established where they could meet to discuss what they had read and make decisions about community development.

5.3.13 EVALUATION AND INFORMATION FOR MANAGEMENT

The providers and sponsors of a literacy campaign will require the campaign to be evaluated for accountability and for effectiveness. Through evaluation, the government, NGOs and literacy workers are able to take relevant decisions on the provision of literacy. Evaluation of a literacy campaign should be done continuously throughout the campaign so that problems can be identified timeously and improvements made. The importance of evaluation is that lessons learned in one phase can serve to improve the next.

According to Bhola (1994:188) the evaluation of a campaign may be divided into two parts:

◊   evaluation by specialists, and
◊   evaluation by supervisors, volunteer educators and learners.

More than half of the evaluation burden is carried by the policymakers at the top, the supervisors, volunteer educators and the learners at the grassroots.

5.3.13.1 Evaluation by specialists

Evaluation specialists include post-graduate students who may be sponsored to do research on different aspects of evaluating the campaign, lecturers from universities, and

184

interested institutions such as the Human Sciences Research Council. The evaluation specialists organise management information systems (MISs), work out comparisons and correlations, and conduct impact evaluations. Functional literacy is supposed to change the personal lives of individuals and the quality of life in communities. Impact evaluation is intended to determine the extent of such changes, for example, how adults in their groups might be changing in subtle or direct ways. Evaluation by the specialists should cover the curriculum, materials, training of volunteer educators, administrative and teaching-learning aspects of the campaign (Bhola 1994:188). That this could be possible is an ideal situation. In South Africa the ABET practitioners had neither the language skills nor the training to engage in such an exercise.

5.3.13.2 Evaluation by learners, volunteer educators and supervisors

◊   **Self-evaluation by learners as a motivational device**

Learners will be involved, as equal partners, in participatory evaluation conducted in collaboration with volunteer educators, supervisors and community leaders. Learners must be assisted in conducting self-evaluations. They should learn to evaluate their progress or lack of progress. If they are impatient, they should learn to be patient. If they are complacent, they should be helped to move along so that they can experience achievement.

◊   **Volunteer educators as evaluators**

Volunteer educators keep attendance registers to record the functioning of the class in the following matters:

- How many learners are enrolled?
- How many are men?
- How many are women?
- How many are regular and how many are not so regular?
- How many dropped out and when?

Looking over these figures from month to month, the volunteer educator can determine the progress of the class in terms of numbers.

The volunteer educator should also keep a journal in which he/she records feedback from the learners about what they are doing with their newly acquired skills. The volunteer educator should also keep a daily journal which includes qualitative remarks on the conduct of the class such as the present morale of the learners and their level of motivation. Problems experienced should be recorded so that help can be sought from the supervisor on improving the provision.

◊ **Supervisors as evaluators**

The supervisor as an evaluator can play a most significant role in information gathering. In a very real sense, the visit of the supervisor to the learning site as a whole is evaluative. The supervisor consolidates all data received from volunteer educators under the supervisor's charge. By comparing observations made earlier at other sites, the supervisor can note whether problems of attendance and drop out are general or specific to certain volunteer educators or communities. By consolidating all the data, the supervisor gets a more complete view. Further, the supervisor develops a qualitative picture of the programme in his or her area from the various journal entries received from the volunteer educators. After consolidating the various journal entries, the supervisor adds his/her own observations and perceptions. These are then sent to the next level of the literacy programme management (Bhola 1994:189).

It is important that the evaluations should be shared with all the stakeholders. Nobody should be kept ignorant. The volunteer educator should know what the supervisor saw and what he/she thought. The learners should know what the supervisor saw and what he/she thought of their work and performance. The community leaders should know what the supervisor saw and what he/she thought.

5.3.14 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR ABET

The colonial and apartheid governments followed a centralised system of curriculum design for ABE in order to control the ideologies of blacks. The centralisation of curriculum design for ABET necessitated a core curriculum for adult learners. The government prescribed what should be taught and how it should be taught. According to Moodly (1997:99-103) the curriculum favoured the requirements of a minority group, neglecting to develop the large black sector of South African society.

◊ **Curriculum design with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**

The NQF provides a qualifications framework which makes it possible to register all types of learning achievement within one of eight levels. The NQF has adopted an outcomes-based approach to education and training. The intention behind the NQF is to bring about transformation and integration of the education and training system in South Africa (Department of Education 1997d:26).

The new education and training system is based on an Outcomes-Based Education and Training Curriculum Framework. This new system has as its starting point in the intended ouputs (specific outcomes) of learning as opposed to the in-put driven approaches of traditional education and training curricula (Department of Education 1997d:17).

The Department of Education is committed to developing a curriculum framework that will equip learners with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical capacity to participate fully in all aspects of society. Specifically, the curriculum framework must enable individuals to:

- develop literacy, language and communication skills in one or more languages;
- develop numeracy and mathematical skills;
- develop a critical understanding of the context in which learners live, work and interact with others;
- develop technical and practical skills, knowledge and understanding;
- develop an understanding of the world of science and technology.

(Department of Education 1997d:19).

◊ **The structure of the National Qualifications Framework**

The South African Qualifications Authority has adopted an eight level qualifications framework (see table 5.1, p189). The eight levels are divided into three broad bands providing for General, Further and Higher Education and Training. The following three

major certificated levels or exit points can be identified (Department of Education 1997d:27):

- General Education and Training marks the completion of General Education, including the three ABET sub-levels;
- Further Education and Training (Levels 2 to 4) mark the completion of further education whether school-based or work-based; and
- Higher Education (Levels 5 to 8) marks the completion of College, Technikon or University-based education.

The ABET directorate of the National Department of Education has selected six learning areas for which ABET unit standards have been developed, these learning areas are drawn from the twelve learning fields (Department of Education 1997d:30).

The ABET learning areas are:
- Language, Literacy and Communication;
- Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences;
- Human and Social Sciences;
- Natural Sciences;
- Technology;
- Economic Management

TABLE 5.1:   THE STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

NQF level	Band	Types of Qualifications and Certificates	
8	Higher Education and Training Band	Doctorates Further Research Degrees	
7		Higher Degrees Professional Qualifications	
6		First Degrees Higher Diplomas	
5		Diplomas Occupational Certificates	
Further Educational and Training Certificate			
4	Further Education and Training Band	School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
3		School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
2		School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
1 = General Education and Training Certificates = 4			
	General Education and Training Band	Senior Phase	ABET Level 4
		Intermediate Phase	ABET Level 3
		Foundation Phase	ABET Level 2
		Pre-school	ABET Level 1

[Source: Department of Education 1997d: 28]

◊   **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

In the past many adults and out of school youth have acquired a great deal of informal knowledge and experience outside the formal structures of education and training. Such knowledge and experience was not recognised or certificated and this often led to exclusion from certain jobs, promotion on the job and from further education and training opportunities, for all of which some kind of "certificate" was considered necessary. On

the basis of national standards as registered on the NQF, recognition will be given to the prior learning and experiences which learners have obtained through formal, non-formal and informal learning and or experience (Department of Education 1997d:18). Learners will be expected to demonstrate through agreed procedures that they have met the required learning outcomes before they are awarded credits.

◊ **Outcomes-based education and adult literacy programmes**

In the new democratic South Africa, the empowerment of individuals through education and training is crucial to their participation in all aspects of society – economic, social and political. The new education and training system is based on an Outcomes-Based Education and Training Curriculum. The outcomes-based approach marks the shift from content-based learning to outcomes-based learning. This approach is based on the notion that in order to get where you want to be you have to first determine what you want to achieve. Once the objective has been determined, strategies and other ways and means will be put into place to achieve the goal. In terms of outcomes-based approach, the learner accomplishes more than remembering or mastering skills and knowledge.

The ABET curriculum framework should be sensitive to the needs of a society. The people must be involved in the design of their own destinies; they must have a choice in changing their world (Bhola 1983:240). The implementation of the national curriculum framework for ABET should be informed through a process of needs assessment and needs negotiation, research and monitoring and evaluation of pilot programmes, to ensure its ongoing refinement (Department of Education 1997d:35).

5.3.15 FUNDING

As discussed in paragraph 3.6 Government spending on the alleviation of illiteracy in South Africa is not encouraging at present. The budget allocation for adult education and for the literacy campaign in particular is not commensurate with the very ambitious targets set by the government. Harley *et al*. (1996:535) state that the most important indicator of` a commitment to developing ABET capacity would be the allocation by the government of adequate money to ensure that ABET in its broadest sense would be available to anyone who wants it.

Illiteracy is a national problem and its alleviation should be considered a collective responsibility among the nation's stakeholders. Partnerships in terms of the government and various sectors of the community and foreign governments and international institutions should be considered. For example, on 7 February 2002, with a grant of £ 2 000 000 (over R30 000 000) from the British Department for International Development (DFID), the Unisa ABET Institute concluded a partnership agreement with the SANLI project and, in the same week, rolled out literacy classes at sites across South Africa. The DFID grant paid for all the support materials and the necessary stationary for over 100 000 learners (UNISA ABET Institute 2003:4). The sharing of funds, human resources and equipment prevents duplication of activities within areas. However, unless government sees itself as part of the larger community of those requesting funds from foreign funders and neglects to make contingency plans when those funds are deployed elsewhere, it risks failing to serve its *forgotten people*.

5.4   CONCLUSION

Paragraph 5.2 of this chapter identified the barriers to the development of increased ABET provision among blacks in South Africa. The second part provided a model of ABET provision. In designing a model of ABET provision, an overview was presented of the several parts (subsystems) required for the successful implementation of the literacy campaign.   Literacy campaigns differ in size and scope.   To be effective as literacy initiatives, they all have to have the necessary parts, some of which have been examined above. In concluding this chapter different plans of action that could be adopted by South Africa will be briefly indicated.

◊   In South Africa, as elsewhere, there is no single, simple recipe for a successful literacy campaign; each campaign must be adapted to the national context. This model, therefore, proposes guidelines within a flexible framework which can be adapted to the South African context.

◊   The mobilisation of resources and the focusing of energies, enthusiasm and dedication are best achieved during a period of radical social change and transformation.   The experiences of the USSR, China, Vietnam, Tanzania,

191

Cuba, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua demonstrate that mass campaigns are most successful when imbued with ideological fervour.

◊ The key to organising and implementing a successful literacy campaign is a solid political foundation underpinned by democratic principles and values in the post-apartheid society and an approach which is free of capitalist impulses to exclude the poor (and most often illiterate) from the education system. If the literacy campaign is to be effective, political will must be reflected not only at the highest levels of government but throughout the nation. Illiteracy must be recognised as a national problem to be solved by the complete commitment of society and not as a problem to be left to the educator.

◊ Without people's motivation and active participation, the literacy campaign will not succeed merely with government's administrative measures. To ensure the participation of the masses, great efforts should be made to spread information about the campaign and its role in national reconstruction and transformation and there should be wide consultation about the needs other than educational ones of illiterates.

◊ Clear goals and objectives which can be easily understood must be formulated and publicised.

◊ It is important that before a campaign is launched, people should be made aware of the existence of the illiteracy problem in the country, what must be done to alleviate this problem, how this will be done, and how the people will know when literacy has been achieved and what can be achieved through becoming literate.

◊ The literacy campaign competes with other urgent projects such as land redistribution, housing, crime prevention, economic and political restructuring and health concerns. All these are vying for the scarce resources of the State. People need to be encouraged to work in partnership with the State by developing creative problem-solving strategies and techniques to alleviate illiteracy. As in Cuba, further resources can be generated through mobilisation of the people.

◊   Literacy should not be provided in isolation, but should be linked with other educational, social, economic, political and cultural programmes to allow people to participate fully in society.

◊   The acquisition of literacy skills alone is unlikely to have lasting value if not followed by post-literacy projects and by a more permanent adult education programme. If the neo-literates are not given a chance to use their newly acquired skills in society, the campaign will have achieved nothing. Relevant post-literacy material and a literate environment are essential to sustain the newly acquired literacy skills.

◊   Since literacy needs vary in different areas, regional, provincial or local committees should be established to deal with situations which arise. People at all levels must feel they own the programme rather than seeing it as one imposed from above.

◊   Above all, a comprehensive approach to literacy will empower the individual and the community. The literacy campaign should not be confined to the teaching of reading, writing and computation. It must change the personal lives of the people.

The summary, conclusion and recommendations of this study are discussed in the next and final chapter.

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CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this chapter is to:

- recommend what sort of ABET provision would be useful for illiterate blacks in South Africa.

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The extent of ABET provision among blacks in South Africa is minimal in terms of the number of illiterates (see paragraph 5.2.1). There are between eight and fifteen million illiterate adult South Africans, but current provision only reaches about 6% of these (MacFarlane 2002:6).

In this study a conceptual model for the provision of ABET among blacks in South Africa has been developed. The model has been designed as an attempt to answer the research problem: *What is a suitable strategy for the alleviation of the high rate of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa?*

To conclude this study, chapter six gives a summary of the investigation, the findings and the recommendations of the research. The limitations of the research and subjects for the future research are also discussed. To put this final chapter in perspective, it is necessary to provide a summary of the chapters in the thesis as a recapitulation.

6.2   RETROSPECTION

In chapter one the genesis of the study, which includes the aims and objectives of the investigation, statement of the problem, research method, explication of the main concepts and the plan of study were explored. The main method of research in this paragraph was a literature review. Personal interviews were also conducted with ABET stakeholders.

In chapter two an attempt was made to focus on the alleviation of illiteracy amongst blacks during various periods of government from 1652 up to 1994. The discussion of

the historical events in this chapter is an attempt to sketch the background against which the current provision of ABET among blacks in South Africa can be understood.

In chapter three the current provision of ABET was analysed. The methods of gathering information for the establishment of a suitable strategy to alleviate illiteracy among blacks in South Africa stem from the data gathered in chapters two to four, by means of literature study, personal interviews and observation.

In chapter four a study of the literacy campaigns in other developing countries such as Mozambique, Cuba and Tanzania was undertaken in order to obtain information about the universal trends and advances in the alleviation of illiteracy. The main method of research (see paragraph 1.5.2.2) was the descriptive analysis of the literature. This method was found to be most informative and rewarding. To realise the aim of this study (see paragraph 1.3) an extensive literature study on mass literacy campaigns was undertaken in this chapter in order to give the theoretical context in which the proposed model is embedded.

In chapter five the principles that underpin a model for the successful implementation of a literacy campaign were identified and discussed. These are:

◊   Study and diagnosis of pre-conditions.
◊   Articulation of the political will.
◊   Institutionalisation of policy initiatives.
◊   Acceptable measuring criteria and performance indicators to determine levels of literacy.
◊   An integrated approach to the alleviation of illiteracy.
◊   Mobilisation of the masses and resources.
◊   Strengthening of partnerships.
◊   Establishment of flexible administrative structures.
◊   Clear and unequivocal goals for the literacy campaign.
◊   Setting of realistic targets.
◊   Motivating adult learners.
◊   Post-literacy and life-long education.
◊   Evaluation and information for management.
◊   Curriculum development for ABET.

◊　　　Funding.

Barriers to the development of increased ABET provision among blacks in South Africa were cited in the study. Some of the barriers have been synthesised and discussed.

6.3　FINDINGS

After an intensive literature study of the ideal strategy for alleviating illiteracy among blacks in South Africa, several findings can be indicated and they are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

6.3.1　DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION DURING THE TRADITIONAL ERA (BEFORE 1652)

Before the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652, black people always had (and continue to have) a viable system of traditional adult education (also known as initiation) in their own cultures (see paragraph 2.2), albeit related to a non-technological form of education. Traditional adult education prepared its learners for life in the community. Blacks communicative worlds were based on orality. During the colonial and apartheid regime a new order had the consequence of making blacks largely the illiterate ones in a predominantly literate society.

6.3.2　DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION FROM 1652 UP TO 1994

ABE was provided by government and various interest groups over the period 1652 to 1994. Each of these interest groups had specific ideas and objectives underlying it. Literacy was therefore, more a means to specific secondary ends than an end in itself. For example, the SACP's night schools on the Reef were concerned with worker education, mainly in English and politics, rather than with basic literacy (French 1992:56). Missionaries on the other hand wanted to promote Christianity among blacks. The state became hostile to night schools and literacy work in the 1950s and 1960s. In the decade of the 70s, the Department of Bantu Education, later the DET, and the various autonomous regional education departments for blacks set up a division of adult education with literacy components. French (1992:75) states that the motives for this

development were mixed as there was an element of idealism and missionary zeal, spurred by international efforts to combat illiteracy and Operation Upgrade's efforts.

6.3.3 PROVISION OF ABET AFTER 1994

When South Africa achieved its democracy in 1994, one of the challenges facing the Department of Education was to take responsibility for providing basic education to all, that is, children, youth and adults. The Department defined its policy with respect to the struggle against the alleviation of illiteracy and established institutions necessary for waging that struggle. However, in chapter three (see paragraph 3.8) it was noted that the government has not fulfilled its promises since it took over in 1994. The provision of ABET by the state, NGOs and other stakeholders scarcely reach 1% of the population of illiterate adults in the country.

6.3.4 A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF ABET PROVISION

Based on the findings in chapters two and three it was clear that the extent of ABET provision is minimal when compared with the number of illiterate black adults in South Africa. It was found that there is an urgent need to develop a model of provision for the alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa.

6.3.5 UNSATISFACTORY MEASUREMENT OF LITERACY LEVELS

Adult literacy and illiteracy statistics as discussed in chapter five (see paragraph 5.2.1) are never considered reliable because the survey gave no written test of literacy and people were merely asked if they could read and write. Consequently, these statistics usually indicate a much higher rate of literacy than really exists in the community.

6.3.6 LACK OF AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO THE ALLEVIATION OF ILLITERACY

Black children from poor families in rural and informal settlements in urban areas have no access to pre-school programmes of any kind. Consequently, the failure and drop-out rate of children raised in such poor families is extremely high in the first four years of schooling. It has been found that tens of thousands of school-going age children cannot get places in schools or leave too early to retain the skills of literacy (see paragraph

5.2.3). The high drop-out rate at the primary level aggravates the problem of adult illiteracy because these drop-outs are the adults of tomorrow.

6.3.7   LIMITED RESOURCES

As indicated in chapter three (see paragraph 3.6), no serious attempt has yet been made to place ABET on a sound financial footing. The provision of ABET has been neglected in the provision of resources by the State in favour of formal schooling and other development needs such as housing, crime prevention, job creation and land redistribution. The money spent on defence makes it clear that South Africa does not lack the resources to alleviate the high rate of illiteracy. The problem is how these resources are handled and distributed.

6.3.8   ABSENCE OF POLITICAL WILL

It has been noted in chapter three (see paragraph 3.8.3), that political will is clearly lacking in the SANLI literacy effort in South Africa and no serious efforts at mobilisation have been made. Without political will exhibited in the mobilisation and recruitment of the whole country, the problems of illiteracy cannot be addressed. The apparent lack of political will is demonstrated by some of the school governing bodies who do not want to help with the practical aspects of setting up classes for the upliftment of the entire community. The volunteer educators sometimes struggle to negotiate successfully for venues which would be free, close to the learners, adequate to their needs and available.

6.3.9   INADEQUATE MOBILISATION OF ALL INTERESTED PARTIES AND POSSIBLE RESOURCES

It has been found that inadequate efforts have been made to develop awareness of the extent of the illiteracy problem and to enlist the voluntary and creative participation of adults in the attainment of national objectives. Illiteracy cannot be alleviated in a country where the majority of both the literate and illiterate adults are unaware that such a problem exists. Illiteracy needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency for the social and economic projects which government has embarked on to be successful.

6.3.10 ADULT LEARNERS WERE NOT ADEQUATELY MOTIVATED

SANLI has not recognised motivation as the most significant factor in the success of the campaign. Learners were not adequately motivated during the various stages in the development of the mass literacy campaign.

6.3.11 NO CLEAR LINK BETWEEN LITERACY AND THE BASIC NEEDS OF HUMAN LIFE

Literacy is often seen as an end, rather than a means to an end. There appeared not to be much discussion in the SANLI classes about what is learnt in relation to the real life problems people experience. The volunteer educators do not point out the connections between what adults learn in class and the world outside the classroom. Adult learners are discouraged by the fact that they are unable to perceive any utility for literacy in their day-to-day lives.

6.3.12 INFLEXIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

The analysis of the campaign in other countries indicated that too much bureaucracy does not give the campaign more flexibility. This results in decreased enthusiasm because the local literacy workers do not feel that it is their programme, but that it is imposed from above. In South Africa (see paragraph 3.8.4) the campaign is administered by the Department of Education in a bureaucratic way and the masses do not feel they own the campaign.

6.3.13 SYSTEMS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARE LACKING

Although SANLI has a monitoring and evaluation strategy in place, it would appear that systems and procedures for the implementation of this strategy have not yet been developed and implemented. Literacy workers have not been made aware that evaluation of the campaign is everybody's business. Literacy workers have not been trained to conduct impact evaluation which is intended to determine the effects of adult literacy on family life, churches, on school attendance and on innovations in agriculture and nutrition. The monitoring of classes at the learning sites is receiving scanty attention from supervisors who were inadequately trained for handling management tasks.

6.3.14 **THE TIMING OF THE CAMPAIGN CAME YEARS AFTER ATTAINING DEMOCRACY**

This study revealed that timing of a campaign is vital to its success. Successful campaigns were carried out in Cuba, Nicaragua and Vietnam which implemented their literacy campaigns immediately following the radical shift of political power from their respective oppressive regimes to popular movements. South Africa's limping campaign to ameliorate illiteracy highlights the difficulty of mobilising the masses and resources and encouraging illiterates to acquire literacy skills when a campaign is implemented years after the attainment of democracy.

6.3.15 **OVER-AMBITIOUS TARGETS**

The then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, promised to reach some 3 million adult illiterates within five years starting in 2001. In a given year about 100 000 enrol on adult literacy courses in South Africa, at most about 1,1% of the illiterate adult population. Literacy researchers in South Africa generally estimate that less than 0,5% of illiterates are reached by literacy initiatives each year. The practicality of the then Minister's expectation is questionable given the extent of adult literacy provision in South Africa.

6.4 **CONCLUSION**

Change in South Africa and the pressure on individuals to participate as citizens has influenced the renewed interest in ABET among blacks in South Africa (see paragraph 1.2). The most compelling factor influencing the interest in ABET is the fact that about 75% of adult South Africans do not have adequate functional literacy skills to cope with life in the new democracy.

It cannot be denied that a major change in the national emphasis on the importance of ABET in development has occurred. A campaign to alleviate illiteracy by 2004 has been undertaken as one of the most important goals of the government. Despite the government's intention to "break the back of illiteracy amongst adults and youth within five years", it has been found that there are still many factors which impede and block the process (see paragraph 5.2).

6.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the fact that large numbers of blacks are illiterate in South Africa and the campaign presently under way cannot effectively address the problem, it is recommended that an effort is made to measure the levels of literacy which are according to universally accepted criteria. There should be an integrated approach by the State in its provision. Where there are so many competitors for resources in the State's development programme, specific resources should be given to the literacy effort. Partnerships between all elements of the society should be strengthened and encouraged. The leadership of the country should put political muscle into the fight against illiteracy which fuels poverty and the other difficulties of a developing country. With a holistic approach to literacy, it would be possible to motivate adult learners differently to how it is currently done. Flexible administrative structures in a model which has taken the recommendations of this study into consideration might be the way forward.

ABET programmes must bring development to communities. They must be career orientated, provide skills training with general education, offer training in development issues, teach people what they want to learn, teach health education, and help people to help themselves.

ABET programmes should cover skills which can help people start and sustain development projects, for example, organising, planning, researching needs, networking and managing projects. This will help ensure that ABET programmes are linked to development projects.

ABET programmes should reflect the developmental needs and priorities of specific communities. For example, if there is a need for jobs, then ABET programmes need to incorporate skills training related to setting up small businesses.

6.5.1   ACCEPTABLE MEASURING CRITERIA OF LITERACY LEVELS

If South Africans want to alleviate the problem of illiteracy in a systematic and planned way, they will have to collect data that are as accurate, reliable and comparable as possible. Operational definitions of the literate, semi-literate and literate would have to

be established as a basis for the classification of individuals. A post-enumeration test to check the reliability of the data given by adults declaring themselves literate at the time of the survey would have to be designed. The establishment of numbers of illiterates should be done at the grassroots level through social mapping (see paragraph 5.3.1).

6.5.2   AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TOWARDS THE ALLEVIATION OF ILLITERACY

The government should adopt a two fold strategy for alleviating illiteracy in the shortest possible time. This strategy should include a considerable increase in the provision of early childhood development programmes and primary school education and strengthening of Adult education programmes. Ahmed (1990:4) states that no serious and permanent dent in illiteracy can be made, without success in bringing children into the primary education system and keeping them long enough so that they attain a self-sustaining level of literacy. Early childhood programmes and primary school education should be coordinated with adult literacy education. If children are given a healthy start and a solid foundation in the first years of their lives, they are less likely to drop out of the education system. Universal primary education of appropriate duration and quality should be provided to improve the holding power of primary schools for blacks. The ranks of illiterates and potential illiterates are swelled by the lack of universal early childhood educare and the lack of universal primary education.

6.5.3   MOBILISATION OF THE STATE RESOURCES AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

On the basis of the findings elucidated in paragraphs 6.3.3 and 6.3.5 it is recommended that the government should strengthen partnerships with various sectors of the community to ensure the sharing of funds, human resources and equipment and prevent duplication of programmes within areas.

6.5.4   ARTICULATION OF THE POLITICAL WILL

The commitment of political leadership at the national, regional and local levels is vital to the success of a literacy campaign. The commitment of political leadership should be demonstrated by an increase in the number of official statements made about ABET in public speeches, newspaper articles, political meetings and government directorates. The national and regional newspapers should carry articles about the achievements of

ABET daily. The State President should include the role of ABET in South Africa in his New Year's messages. It is also recommended that an entire year should be specially devoted to the stimulation of ABET. The struggle against the scourge of illiteracy should become the concern of the entire nation.

6.5.5   A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LITERACY

Based on the findings discussed in paragraphs 6.3.10 and 6.3.11, a holistic approach to literacy would enable the empowerment of individuals.   To achieve this it is recommended that the current literacy campaign must do more than teach people how to read and write and acquire numeracy skills. Literacy must link with the life of the people as directly as possible. Another critical issue to understand is that literacy and post-literacy should form an indissoluble whole and should be conceived of as being on a continuum. To prevent people from returning to illiteracy, the government should create a literate environment. This can be achieved by using centres such as schools, community halls and churches, for many purposes so that they can provide new literates with opportunities and settings in which to continue their education and enhance their social and economic mobility. Lifelong learning should be encouraged and opportunities for such learning should be given value and publicity.

6.5.6   MOTIVATING ADULT LEARNERS

Adult illiterates who do not feel the need to become literate have to be helped to learn a new need.   The motivation for becoming literate may become stronger among the illiterate black adults when they find the literate around them using literacy skills to enrich their lives through a variety of continuing education programmes. The Department of Education should prepare concrete models for a motivational programme. Regular workshops on motivation should be organised so that proper attention can be paid to motivation.

6.5.7   ESTABLISHMENT OF FLEXIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

The mass literacy campaign should be organised at central, provincial, regional and district level with learning sites. Regional and local coordinating committees should be set up in order to allow for maximum flexibility, greater input at the grassroots level and

efficient and effective distribution of resources and support services. Mass campaigns frequently require the establishment of new and unusual structures to facilitate coordination at central, regional and local levels.

6.5.8   MODEL FOR ABET PROVISION

On the basis of the need for a conceptual model of ABET provision among blacks in South Africa as noted in chapter one, the model of ABET provision developed in chapter five should be considered by education policy makers.

6.6   SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY

This study set out to identify a strategy which would ensure that the millions of black adults who require access to ABET would be made aware of the advantages of literacy and life long learning and would be enabled to enrol for literacy programmes. In view of this, discussion was focused mainly on the principles which promote the successful implementation of the identified strategy, namely, a mass literacy campaign. The study has the following shortcomings:

◊   The alleviation of illiteracy cannot only be judged by the numbers of learners who successfully completed ABET programmes. The quality of a literacy programme should be linked to the development of communities and should not be confined to the development of individuals. This study did not examine how ABET programmes should cover skills which can help people start and sustain development programmes such as organising, planning, researching needs, networking, and managing projects.

◊   The motivations to participate in a literacy programme and the expectations of adult learners are crucial in understanding the extent of their participation and the likely effects of the programme. This issue was not explicitly addressed in this study.

6.7   SUBJECTS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

The study undertaken in this research is concerned primarily with the alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa. It became evident during the research that there are a number of barriers which exist in the implementation of an ABET programme. These require profound scrutiny. Some of these barriers were highlighted in chapter five (see paragraph 5.2) but still need in-depth research. As noted (in paragraph 6.6 above) this study did not include all the grounds required for the successful implementation of a mass literacy campaign because they are not within the ambit of the study. However, this study should be regarded as a start towards the consideration of new perspectives for research in the field of ABET in the future. The following are recommended areas of research which are considered critical for the alleviation of illiteracy in South Africa:

◊   A study of learners' motivations and expectations in the literacy programme. Such a study is necessary because the learners' views of the content of the literacy programmes may be different from those of the policy makers and of the field staff.

◊   Frameworks and models for improving motivation of learners to enrol for literacy classes.

◊   Considerations relevant to issues related to organisation and management of literacy classes.

◊   A study should be undertaken to clarify the links between failure and underachievement in schools and adult illiteracy.

◊   Investigation into the creation of a climate supportive of the establishment of partnerships among ABET providers in South Africa.

6.8   CONCLUSION

This study ranged over the historical and political deprivation which caused massive adult illiteracy among black adults in South Africa. Political changes before and after the achievement of democracy in 1994 have brought a growing awareness of the need to provide ABET to everyone who has missed schooling and has had very limited

schooling. A mass literacy campaign was identified as a suitable strategy for alleviating the high rate of illiteracy among blacks in the RSA. It has been demonstrated that the alleviation of illiteracy among blacks in South Africa requires serious government commitment, strong partnerships and a comprehensive and integrated approach such as the universalisation of primary school education and pre-school programmes. The problem of illiteracy is a national problem which must be addressed by the entire nation. It is therefore necessary that the findings and recommendations of this study are considered for implementation in the alleviation of illiteracy.

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