

Main-Theme Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development

Sub-Theme Efficiency and Effectiveness

Title: **Assessment of Teacher Education in Kenya**

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Abstract

Education is the whole process by which one generation transmits its culture to the successive generation. Teacher education is part of this process and has always been in the hands of experts at all times and from eternity across all cultures in the world.

Examination of education systems from ancient times to the present day reveals elaborate and deliberate practices of teacher education. This study sought to assess the teacher education in Kenya today and in the recent past using participant observation as a one-time teacher trainer and classroom teacher. Changes in the curriculum and overhaul of the education system has been made without regarding the teacher trainer for decades now. Introduction of technology has been done in the classroom whereas the teacher trainer has been left out missing out on the new pedagogies to use. As a result key areas in education such as listening, talking, reading and writing has suffered a great deal thus leaving learners in upper classes and high school unable to do well in all subjects. This has filtered into institutions of higher learning.

Key words: education, teacher trainer, pedagogy, neo-illiteracy, technology.

Introduction

A teacher refers to a person who imparts knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes to learners and has undertaken a recognized pedagogical training program and attained accredited certification. In a general sense, teachers can be categorized as trained or untrained teachers.

A trained teacher is a person who meets the prescribed admission criteria to training, as provided for in the regulations, and has gone through a recognized and accredited training program, and attained accredited certification. An untrained teacher refers to a person who is engaged as a teacher and meets the prescribed admission criteria as provided for in the regulations and has the subject mastery for the purposes of becoming a teacher but has not undertaken pedagogical training program.

Teachers are an important resource in the teaching and learning process and their training and continuous professional development is pivotal to achieving the vision and aspirations of the country.

Teacher education is an important component of education. Through it school teachers who are considered mentors of any society are prepared and produced. Normally, it is ostensibly designed, developed and administered to produce school teachers for the established system of education. Teacher education is the main pillar of any established system of education and the custodian of the society's culture.

History of Education

Education is a whole process by which one generation transmits its culture to succeeding generation (Ocitti, 1994: 14). Education therefore is not something which the African has received for the first time from the white man. Before the introduction of western education, the older members of society acted as custodians of knowledge as they transmitted knowledge, skills and attitudes to the young members of the society.

The Kenya Vision 2030 recognizes education and training within the social pillar alongside the economic and political pillars that are cornerstones expected to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized middle income country providing a higher quality of life to all its citizens.

Teachers are an important component of education whose services are indispensable in the realization of education goals the world over. Due to their central role in the enterprise of education, teachers at all levels require effective and sufficient education to be able to adequately carry out their roles and responsibilities. There are variations of teacher education programmes for the different levels of education from early childhood to tertiary education.

Teacher education is a whole range of activities that constitute preparation for and improvement of the teaching profession. This encompasses pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. These forms of teacher education programmes involve the study of professional disciplines, teaching subjects and general knowledge subjects. With the advent of free primary education (2003) and free secondary education (2008), the need and demand for more teachers has resulted in re-engineering and expansion of teacher education programmes for all levels of education with the realization that teachers are crucial personnel whose contribution activates the optimal functioning of the social, economic and political facets of a country. This confirms the fact that teacher education is an important driver for sustainable development since literally every knowledgeable and skilled individual in micro and macro productive activity has been shaped in some way by the contribution of a teacher. It is thus important that teacher education programmes are crafted in a manner to energize their impact on the learners and humanity in general.

The Kenyan government echoed the same view in the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 when it said that “there is urgent need to develop and promote teacher education programme if the administration of education in the country is to succeed and national development is to be accelerated” (Republic of Kenya, 1988). These views summarize the importance and the role of teacher education in the survival of any society. In this respect, education is regarded as the driving force behind development in a society. The realization explains why emerging nations in Africa invested heavily in education in general and teacher education in particular in the mid-sixties and most part of the seventies (Kajubi, 1970).

History of Teacher Education in Kenya

Teacher education has always been an important component of education since time immemorial. This is because all societies in the world have always needed teachers to propagate/transmit their cultures (read education) from one generation to the next.

Examination of education systems from ancient times to the present day reveals elaborate and deliberate practices of teacher education. Therefore, when discussing the development of teacher education in Kenya, one should not lose sight of the fact that before the coming of the Europeans, there existed an elaborate teacher education system in indigenous/traditional African education systems. This may not have been formal in the sense of Western European education system, but it produced competent teachers who sustained the African indigenous/traditional education systems.

Formal teacher education was introduced in Kenya in the mid-nineteenth century by European Christian missionaries. This program of education was patterned on the Western European and Canadian established teacher education models of the early nineteenth century. The urge to establish teacher education at the time was necessitated by the unplanned, rapid expansion of the “mission” and “bush” schools. This development called for an equally sharp increase in the supply of teachers to work in the newly established schools. In addition, there was no need to produce school teachers to relieve missionaries who were required to concentrate on missionary/evangelization work.

During the colonial period, the missionaries and the colonial government employed primary school teachers. Initially, the teachers were awarded the Elementary Teacher Certificate. In 1948, rules for the teacher certification were changed. T4 certificate replaced the elementary teacher's certificate. The T4 were to teach up to standard IV; T3 replaced lower primary school teachers' certificate and were to teach up to standard VI. T2 were to teach up to form II. Because of the increase in demand for secondary school education, teachers certificate (T1) that was offered by Makerere College in Uganda enabled one to teach up to form IV. It is important to note that majority of teachers at this time were either untrained or of low grades. This had a serious effect especially at the primary school level. At this time, teacher education was not organized at all.

There were large numbers of small colleges scattered across the country. The teacher training colleges were set up at Siriba and Kagumo in 1956 to co-ordinate teacher training activities and look at the possibilities of consolidating them. This was a major step towards setting up standards in teacher education in Kenya. This led to the establishment of the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) in 1964.

By this time, other colleges voluntarily closed down. The government as a result of the recommendations of the Kenya Education Commission consolidated the teacher training colleges to 18 with each admitting 600 students. This was a good direction towards quality assurance and increase of standards. In 1965, Kenyatta College was established and Kenya Science Teachers College in 1966 to train diploma teachers (S1). In technical education, the Kenya Technical Teachers' College (KTTC) was established in 1977 to train teachers on technical subjects up to diploma level. Later, Makerere became a university college and was training teachers at university level graduate secondary school teachers with B.A/B.SC (education option). In 1966, the same happened with the University of Nairobi College. Later the course was changed to Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) professional degree qualification in 1970. Kenyatta University College was established in 1972 and expanded the training of graduate teachers. Today all the 22 public universities with the exception of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, the Technical University of Kenya, Multimedia University and Technical University of Mombasa offer degrees in education.

Teacher Education Development in Kenya

Issues in teacher education development in Kenya have been occasioned by socio-economic and political changes and technological advancements locally and beyond. The impact of these developments on teacher education programmes, education, teaching professionals and national development is worth the attention. Kelly (2003) says that the status of teacher education has generated great debate among the teacher educators and teacher educationists.

Recognizing that teachers are an important group of professionals who impact virtually on every sector of the economy, teacher education is considered as an indispensable driver for economic development. This realization is made real by a number of developments taking place in teacher

education around the country focused on the improvement of teacher education programmes in terms of quality and quantity.

Tremendous growth of universities in Kenya, whereas there was only one public university in Kenya in 1970, currently there are eight public universities with thirteen constituent colleges and seventeen private universities (Otunga et al, 2011). This tremendous growth of academic institutions has presented expanded opportunities for teacher education activities. Most of the public universities have teacher education programmes. Besides having many students in education programmes, there are also many education students enrolled in privately sponsored students programmes (PSSP). In addition, most of the private universities also have teacher education programmes. This scenario is a clear indication that teachers are important drivers of the economy.

At the time of implementation of the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya, there were a number of non-degree teacher education opportunities both diploma and P1 certificate level. With time, some of the teacher education facilities were closed and used for other purposes. This was particularly true especially during the 1990s into 2000s and presently when institutions of higher learning have been allowed to take over teacher training colleges for purposes of expansion of their programmes. In response, the great need of teachers at this level has resulted in many private investors, initiating and running many teacher education institutions at these levels across the country.

Besides those in existence, many more institutions for teacher training are mushrooming across the country. The government policy on focusing on the production of graduate teachers for various levels of our schools is very attractive and noble in essence, however, it is not possible for the universities to produce the required numbers in the interim period. The dynamism in teacher education serves to demonstrate the central role of teacher education in driving the country's economy.

Conclusion

Teachers are in charge of the educative process at all levels of education and their influence permeates all spheres of life. It is for this reason that they are regarded as the drivers of social,

economic and political development of a society. Consequently, it is suggested that teacher education at all levels should be carefully managed to incorporate all socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of life for the teachers to effectively serve their roles as instructional leaders in their spheres of influence. The best approach for realizing this is for the teacher education programmes to be based on relevant research findings focused on enhancement of teacher education programmes at all levels. This is the surest way for teacher education to contribute to sustainable development.

Recommendations

The country needs to deal with the above mentioned challenges in order to clean the teachers training sector in the country. Reason being, it determines the type of generation we are going to raise up as a nation. Here are ways in which the country can handle the situation:

1. Design and formulating of policy framework

This is a priority in administering teacher education programme efficiently and effectively. Through this strategy the concepts of teacher education and teaching profession will be provided; guidelines for organizing and administering the programme will be provided; and the proper structure and procedures for administering the program will be provided.

2. Review of existing structure of teacher education

There is urgent need to review the policies, administrative structures, recruitment of staff and students, financing of teacher education programme and teacher education curriculum. This should be done to reflect modern needs in teacher education locally and globally. But for this process to succeed, there must be adequate and reliable sources of funding and good will from the political establishment (government and society).

3. Improvement of information and communication systems in teacher education

To change for better the face of teacher education, programme, teaching profession and school teachers respectively, there is need to adopt to and adopt new educational communication and technology materials. That is design, develop and use modern educational technology to prepare school teachers. This will improve the training and instruction of teachers and teacher-trainees.

These packages (computers, satellite technologies and their accessories) will educate, inform and expose these individuals to the needs and the challenges of the modern Kenyan society that they are expected to serve, the initial costs of adopting to and adopting these systems may be high but the eventual benefits are rewarding.

4. Investment in facilities and resources for teacher education

There is concern that the quality of teachers produced today is wanting. The teachers are said to be incompetent, undisciplined and disinterested in their service. The cause root(s) of this behavior include the factors outlined and discussed above i.e. poor administration of teacher education, terms and conditions of service for teachers and teacher preparation programme. To reverse this trend in teacher education, the government must invest heavily in it and recognize this programme as an essential service to society.

Therefore, those recruited in it should be accorded the same treatment as those in essential services. This will attract and retain the best brains and committed individuals in this programme and teaching profession respectively. But this means that the government must provide adequate funding generated from a well performing economy, collaboration and cooperation with other stakeholders in teacher education and encouraging teacher training institutions to conduct income generating activities. These funds, if well managed, can be used to improve facilities and resources for teacher preparation programme.

5. Identity of teacher education

Today, there is confusion of what teacher education means and what it does. The confusion comes from the fact that the emphasis is on pedagogy rather than training and development of school teachers and how the programme was conducted. Therefore, there is need to broaden the teacher education curriculum to include areas that are being demanded by modern, technologically oriented society. This will ensure teachers are equipped with relevant competencies to emerging challenges in education and the society. In fact this is the major shortcoming of the current teacher preparation programme.

Further, there is need to professionalize teacher education to make it an exclusive rather than inclusive (stake-holding) enterprise. This will give a clear identity to this programme and teaching profession. If this is buttressed by strong and attractive packages of terms and

conditions of service for teachers, the identity of this programme and the teaching profession will not be a problem at all.

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