

The changing trends in the development of teacher education in Kenya: The role of the Teacher's Service Commission.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to locate the changing trends in the development of teacher education in Kenya by looking at the role the Teachers Service Commission has played. Kenya just like other countries of the world needs to transmit their cultures from one generation to the next. Formal schooling was introduced in Kenya in the second half of nineteenth century by Christian missionaries. They established schools in which they were 'teachers'. The 'mission' and 'bush' schools expanded rapidly and this led to the establishment of teacher education.

During the entire colonial period, the missionaries and the colonial government employed primary school teachers. The African teacher service and the government employed European secondary school teachers. In 1957, the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) was established. The KNUT came up with decentralized system of handling teachers' affairs. They pushed for the employment of teachers by a central body; this led to the establishment of the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) under an act of parliament (CAP 212) of the laws of Kenya in 1967.

This paper traces the historical development of teacher education in Kenya. This includes primary teacher education, Diploma teacher education, Technical teacher education and Secondary school teacher education. The Teachers Service Commission over time has been coming up with academic requirements for the training of teachers. The institutions involved in the training of teachers especially universities for secondary school teachers have been having different entry requirements. The TSC being the only teacher employer in Kenya has rejected most of the teachers trained by universities who don't meet its conditions. TSC has transformed over the years from merely serving as a staffing unit in the ministry of education to currently handling all that is stipulated in the mandate.

Teacher education being a whole range of activities that constitute preparation for and improvement of the teaching profession, it is important that it be regulated, so that we are able to achieve vision 2030. Education is recognized as social pillar in Kenya's vision 2030. Through the social, economic and political pillar, Kenya will become a middle income country with high quality life to its people. This paper traces the historical background of teacher education in Kenya, with a view to understanding the role of the Teachers' Service Commission in its development and change over time.

Keywords Education, development, teachers' service commission

INTRODUCTION

Education is the 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 Whiteman. 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.

In the 18th century, there was a revival of protestant churches in England. One of the consequences of this revival was the upsurge and foundation of missionary organizations (Maangi, 2011; 1). Western education was introduced to Kenya by the missionaries at the mid 18th century. The church missionary society (CMS) sent missionaries to India, China, West Africa, Canada, Newzealand and Abyssinia. Johann Krapf Ludwing was appointed to the staff of Abyssinia mission (Ethiopia). He worked among the northern Galla tribesmen until 1843 when the mission closed down. Krapf proceeded to East Africa and arrived at the Kenyan coast in 1844 after getting permission from his superiors in London to try his work among the Galla from the south (Muhoho, 1970; 2, Maangi, 2011; 1). He was later joined by Johann Rebman in 1846.

The first mission station and school in Kenya was opened at Rabai near Mombasa by the two CMS missionaries. The school taught 3Rs. Later various missionaries arrived in the interior of Kenya. Christian missionaries took schools as the most effective avenues towards introducing Africans to the new faith (Maangi, 2011; 13).

The Christian missionaries built 'mission' schools and from them, they opened others away from the mission stations. These schools were referred to as 'bush schools'. The schools provided primary education up to standard IV and intermediate which catered for class V to VIII. The institutions required teachers. The

missionaries 'trained' the students at the intermediate schools as teachers. Obviously, these were low qualifications despite the fact that these were the well educated of the time (Kafu, 2003). Initially, the teachers were awarded with the Elementary Teacher Certificate. In 1948, rules for the issue 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 of 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 the teachers at this time were either untrained or of low grades. These 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. Two 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 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 except Jomo Kenyatta, the Technical University of Kenya, Multimedia and Technical University of Mombasa offer degrees in education.

LEVELS OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN KENYA

Otunga et al (2011) identifies four levels in Kenya. They are:

Early childhood development education (ECDE), primary teacher education, diploma and graduate teacher education.

For a long period of time, training of early childhood development teachers has not been taken seriously. Different agencies train the ECDE teachers in different ways. Training is usually offered by the district centers for early childhood (DICECE) and Montessori. Entry qualifications for training are usually low. KCPE holders can be admitted to the proficiency course offered by the Kenya national examination council (KNEC). Upon completion of the proficiency course they can be admitted for a certificate course. Equally, KCSE D+ holders can be admitted directly to the certificate programme. The ECDE diploma program requires one to have a C (plain) at KCSE or its equivalent, a certificate course in ECDE or P1. ECDE centers are run by communities, parents and churches. Most of the certificate holders teach at these centers. The diploma in ECDE attracts the P1 teachers because it costs less in ECDE training centers. The central government through the Teachers' Service Commission does not employ ECDE teachers but they promote the P1 teachers who acquire ECDE diploma qualifications. Various universities in Kenya including: Moi, Kenyatta, Nairobi, Kabanga, Maasai Mara, pwani and other private universities are training ECDE teachers at degree and even post-graduate level (Namunga and Otunga, 2012;230)

As discussed earlier, primary teacher education has had the longest history than the other levels. Currently, there are 21 public primary teacher training colleges and about 70 private colleges. The private colleges have played an enormous role in providing training opportunities for primary school teachers. The teacher training in primary teachers colleges undergo a pre-service training of two years after successful completion, they are awarded a primary teacher education certificate (Namunga and Otunga, 2012; 230). Currently, the entry qualification to the training is C (plain) at KCSE or its equivalent and a D (plain) in mathematics and C- (minus) in English. The training colleges have a curriculum that was revised in 2004. The broad curriculum enables the teacher trainees to study ten subjects in first year and then specialize in the second year. They specialize in either Sciences or Arts. Teaching practice sessions are usually thorough and they are conducted thrice, one in the first year and two in the second year (MoEST, PTE syllabus, vol.2, 2001). Primary teacher education is also offered at diploma and degree levels. Egerton and Moi Universities have pioneered in this endeavor

In recent years, diploma teacher education doesn't attract many trainees. The diploma teacher education usually trains teachers to teach at secondary schools. The programme takes three years. The admission requirement is the same as degree programmes in education because it is a C+ (plus) at KCSE and C+ (plus) in the two subjects of specialization. In addition, those taking sciences must have a C (plain) in mathematics, a D+ (plus) for those taking humanities and C (plain) in English for all the applicants. Currently, Kagumo offers the sciences and Kibabii the humanities. Diploma teacher education for special educators is offered at the Kenya Institute of

Special Education (KISE). The programme targets P1 certificate holders with a C (plain) at KCSE. Additionally, the Kenya Technical Teachers' College (KTTC) offers technical education at diploma level.

The Bachelor of education programmes trains teachers for secondary schools. Primary teacher education colleges and diploma teacher education colleges. The programme is offered in different specializations including: Arts, Science, Technology, Early childhood and primary education studies and finally guidance and counseling. The most popular Bachelor of education specialization is Arts and Sciences. The course has two major components, that is: the subjects teaching content and the professional component. The professional component includes: psychology, educational foundations areas, curriculum and instruction and education management. Teaching practice is also compulsory and must be passed for one to be awarded the Bachelor of education certificate (Otunga.et.al, 2011).

THE TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Quality in education is the degree to which education can be said to be of high standard, satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives and their overall experience of living (Republic of Kenya, 2012;47). The most important question is; has the Teachers Service Commission ensured that the teachers they employ provide quality education? Despite the fact that developing and maintaining standards in education and promoting quality education indeed remains a challenge across the system of education across the world, TSC can contribute significantly to quality education.

As noted earlier, during the entire colonial period, the missionaries and the colonial government employed primary school teachers. The African teachers' service and the government employed European secondary school teachers. In 1957, the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) was established. The teachers' union pressed for a decentralized system of handling the affairs of teachers in the country. They pushed for the employment of teachers by one body. This led to the establishment of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) under an act of parliament (CAP212) of the laws of Kenya in 1967.

For a long period of time since its establishment, TSC remained over the years as merely staffing unit in the ministry of education. The quality of teachers for a long period remained low. Up to the year 2001, the entry grade to join primary teachers' training colleges in the country was D+ (plus) at KCSE. In the previous years, it was below the D+ (plus). At diploma teacher training colleges, the entry grade has been C (plain) for a long period while at the university, there were no regulations as to what one had to score especially on the subjects to specialize on; the general grade was enough and TSC would then absorb the graduates. Since 2001 and later years these trend has changed towards better quality and standards. TSC has transformed itself from serving as a staffing unit in the ministry of education to currently handling all that is stipulated in the mandate. In 2001, the entry grade to joining primary teachers colleges was increased to C (plain) in KCSE and D (plain) in mathematics and C- (minus) in English. The Teachers' Service Commission has insisted that primary school teachers with P1 who want to upgrade their studies up to degree level must have scored C (plain) at KCSE in addition to the P1 certificate. Further, P1 holders who get Bachelor's degree in education cannot be moved to teach at post-primary institutions unless they scored KCSE C+ (plus) and C+ (plus) in the two subjects they have specialized in. This has controlled P1 holders with degree certificates from moving to post-primary institutions. Universities have continued to admit students based on their admission criterion. Nowadays, teacher trainees make sure they meet the requirements of the employer (TSC) before embarking on an academic programme in education.

The TSC has also increased entry requirement for diploma teacher education trainees to C+ (plus) at KCSE and a C+ (plus) in the two subjects of specialization and C (plain) in mathematics for those doing sciences and D (plain) for those doing humanities and C (plain) in English for all applicants (Namanga and Otunga, 2012;231). These requirements are followed by diploma in teacher education colleges but not the universities. The universities continue to admit diploma teacher trainees who have scored C (plain) at KCSE. This has serious implications because at completion they realize that they don't meet requirements of the employer.

At the secondary school level, teacher trainees doing Bachelor of education programmes, according to TSC must have scored at least C+ (plus) at KCSE C+ (plus) in the two subjects to specialize in and must have done more than nine units including methods of teaching in the subjects of specialization. The universities still continue to produce graduates without those requirements. TSC has responded by not employing the graduates without their requirements. This is another step towards quality assurance and standards. Initially, teachers who had not studied for particular subjects at secondary school level but did them in university were employed, today, TSC doesn't employ those teachers. Besides, holders of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees with post-graduate diploma in education must have two subjects in the curriculum

CONCLUSION

The Teachers' Service Commission is now established under article 237 of the constitution. In the teachers'

service commission act of 2012, part II, section 11, the commission is mandated to formulate policies to achieve its mandate, ensure that teachers comply with the teaching standards prescribed by the commission, facilitate career progression and professional development for teachers in the teaching service among other duties (TSC Act, 2012). This means that the Teachers' Service Commission can use its mandate and increase the quality of teachers in this country. Already the commission is doing well in these regard. The TSC secretary has maintained that the new code for teachers requires that teachers must go through refresher courses to upgrade their knowledge and skills. The secretary says that the commission will liase with universities and teacher training colleges. "If a teacher does not undertake profession courses within three years after employment,we will deregister them" (Daily Nation, Saturday June 22, 2013). This therefore means that at least the constitution has empowered the commission to set the standards in the teaching profession. Henceforth, the quality of the teaching force will change for the better. It is by setting high standards that the children of this country will get quality education. The Teachers' Service Commission therefore can change the past and current trends in teacher education in Kenya.

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BRIEF ACADEMIC BACKGROUND OF THE CPRRESPONDING AUTHOR



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