

Bantu Education

K. B. HARTSHORNE

SUMMARY

Much has been achieved in the past 20 years in expanding educational facilities for Blacks and in giving greater emphasis to secondary and technical education. However, rapid population growth, limitations of finance, and the production of a sufficiently rapidly increasing corps of teachers, are factors that are hindering the development of universal, effective education.

S. Afr. Med. J., 48, 2517 (1974).

Education does not exist in a vacuum but reflects the broad social, economic and political structure of the country which it serves. In South Africa, therefore, the education systems for the Blacks are closely related to the broad development programmes and political solutions which are being worked out for a multinational society. Political separate development, with physically separate homeland governments, has clear implications for the organisation and conduct of education. More than half of the Black pupils in South Africa are in the care of homeland education departments.

One way of looking at education relevant to our present discussion is to see it as the bridge between the old and the new.

In its **conservative** aspects education is therefore community-orientated and rooted in the particular culture and traditions of the various peoples it serves (in practice, the use of the mother-tongue, environment study, social studies etc.). However, because education must also be geared to the needs and aspirations of developing peoples moving forward to take their place in a modern world, in its **creative** aspects it is concerned with training, adaptation, opportunity (in practice, science, mathematics, commerce, technical education, etc.).

Finally, all education is also concerned with the pupil as an individual. It has an ethical responsibility to assist him to make the most of his potential and to develop into a 'whole' man.

Education for the Blacks has become a major issue in recent years, because it has become much more generally recognised that homeland development, particularly in the social and economic fields, is dependent upon the maximal realisation of human potential, both in terms of general education background and in the training of manpower and leadership at all levels; and that rapid economic growth, along with shortages of trained White manpower in the greater part of South Africa, has led to a position in which it is imperative that the Blacks should play an increasingly important part in providing the skills neces-

sary in commerce and industry. Linked to this are the topical issues of wages and productivity.

EDUCATION PRIORITIES 1955 - 1973

In what follows I am not to be understood as indicating that the various priorities are mutually exclusive, or that any disappear when a new one appears on the scene. They are given rather as an indication of those matters to which emphasis has been given from time to time during the years since Bantu Education became a central state responsibility.

Primary Education

When Bantu Education took over the previous dual mission/provincial controlled system in 1955, it inherited some 5 700 schools, just over 21 000 teachers and 869 000 pupils, representing 40 - 45% of the potential of school-age children from 7 to 15 years of age (the range in percentage is due to uncertainty as to the accuracy of earlier census figures for the Blacks). Our initial primary target was therefore to ensure that every child who could benefit from education was placed within reach of a school and could enjoy at least 4 years of schooling. In spite of enrolments now having risen to nearly 3½ million, 4 times the 1954 figure, this target has not yet been reached, and just over 70% of the potential of school-age children are now in school. The basic factor underlying this position is a fundamental population-growth problem, which I shall comment on at a later stage.

This initial target therefore continues to be a high priority of all the education departments; it should be realised, too, that the 70% figure is an over-all, national one, and that there are areas (both urban and in the homelands) where it is as high as 85%, while the lowest school attendance figure is to be found in the White, rural farming areas, in spite of the tremendous increase in the number of farm schools.

The four-fold growth in school enrolment has not been achieved without serious strains and stresses on the education system, nor would it have been possible without the use of the so-called double-session in Substandards A and B, or of the double-shift use of school buildings, particularly in the urban areas. Its main result has been a too-high teacher-pupil ratio in the primary schools, clearly the most important educational reason for 'drop-out', which, while steadily improving, is still a disturbing feature of the primary school.

Secondary Education

At the end of the first 10-year period, i.e. from 1965 onwards, a second priority was given special attention.

Department of Bantu Education, Pretoria

K. B. HARTSHORNE, *Director of Education Planning*

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Secondary education in all its facets — academic, commercial and technical — produces the trained manpower, the recruits for tertiary education (teacher-training and technical colleges, universities), the leaders at all levels that the homelands specifically, and the Black communities in general, need so urgently.

Statistics can be tiresome, but they do indicate the new emphasis given to this priority. The general growth pattern for our primary school enrolment has stabilised at between 6-7% compound interest per year. At the Junior Certificate level, however, (3 years of secondary education) the growth-rate is double this, and about 36 000 pupils wrote the examination at the end of 1973. At the Senior Certificate (matriculation) level (5 years of secondary education), the growth rate is now at least 33% compound interest per year: successful candidates qualifying for university entrance increased from 1 013 in 1970 to nearly 1 800 in 1972 — a further 1 100 gained Senior Certificate passes.

Whereas in 1960 Form V pupils represented 1 out of 20 of those pupils who had commenced secondary school 5 years earlier, in 1972 they represented 1 out of 8. It is hoped to maintain this improvement and in so doing to broaden the apex of the statistical pyramid which is so typical of education in all developing communities. It is quite clear that if we are to cope with the demand for highly-trained manpower in an increasing number of fields, this priority will have to continue to receive emphasis.

Teacher Training

It will be clear that educational expansion and improvement in quality at all levels is dependent upon providing an adequate supply of teachers and upon improving the quality of these teachers. Recently, training courses have been revised and up-dated, with greater emphasis on language competency and practical teaching. All primary school teachers who are now trained have at least 11 years' general education behind them before doing the 2-year professional course. Within the next 5 years it will be possible to insist upon a Senior Certificate entry requirement for a growing proportion of male primary school teachers in particular.

About 4 100 primary school teachers qualified at the end of 1972, over 4 500 at the end of 1973, and 5 500 will qualify at the end of 1974. The long-term target for 1980 is 8 000 per year.

In the secondary school the problem is not the professionally-unqualified teacher but the teacher who is working beyond his capacity and training — these form some 35% of the total. Ideally, secondary school teachers should be produced by the universities, but the very rapid expansion in secondary school enrolments has made this impossible to achieve. Junior secondary teachers are therefore being trained at departmental training colleges as well as at the universities, and do a 2-year course after Senior Certificate/matriculation — 388 junior secondary teachers qualified at the end of 1972, the target for 1973 was 450 and for 1974 it is 600.

At the senior secondary school level — where the graduate teacher is essential — the need will not be met so adequately. In spite of university expansion, the

graduate is not finding his way into teaching because of the many other openings which are now available to him. This will be a continuing problem, and for this reason it will be necessary to maintain the small cadre of White teachers (± 900 in all) who function at this level, and in our training schools and technical schools and colleges.

It is of the utmost importance that, faced with these problems, teachers should be helped to do the best they possibly can in the secondary schools. Therefore they are backed up by an intensive in-service training system, based on a permanent centre at Mamelodi, near Pretoria. The work of this centre has proved to be so effective that it is hoped to develop similar centres for the larger homeland education departments — plans for the Ciskei and KwaZulu are well advanced.

Trade, Technical and Vocational Education

The specific area of trade and technical training is the newest of the emphases adopted by the Bantu Education Department. It must be borne in mind that this cannot be an exclusive priority but must be seen as parallel and supplementary to the other priorities already listed. While what has been achieved up to the present is somewhat limited, not so much in the directions offered as in the numbers involved, it is important to note that it is only in the past 3 years that there has been a general opening-up in the work opportunities in this area, and a full realisation by industry of the need to make the fullest use of this potential.

Because of this it is only during the past few years that the Blacks themselves have seized the opportunities offered by this kind of training; until 2 to 3 years ago the courses that did exist were not fully enrolled. Now there are far more applications for entry to trade schools than can be considered. Differentiation at Junior Secondary level consists of trade schools, technical schools, technical colleges, industrial 'in-factory' training, and crash courses.

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

Population Growth

It has already been pointed out that although enrolments increased four-fold between 1955 and 1973, the percentage of school-age children actually enrolled improved only from between 40-45% to just over 70%. One of the primary reasons, therefore, for the education system not having achieved more than it has in terms of universal education has been a very rapid population growth for Blacks — about 3.2% compound interest per year. School-age children form very nearly 28% of the total Black population (estimated at 16½ million at present), but only just over 20% of the population attends school. In a fully-developed country a figure of 20% would mean an almost complete enrolment of school-age children at school, but in South Africa projections show that the school-age group is likely to grow to more than 30% of the total Black population by 1980. The implications of this in terms of finance, facilities, staffing, and general educational progress

are very clear. The strains and stresses, the improvisations and emergency measures must necessarily be expected to continue for some years to come, even if family planning should begin to have an influence on the situation.

Compulsory Education

The problem just outlined is very relevant to the issue of compulsory education. One of the vicious circles in which educational planning and development abounds is that, on the one hand, countries where there is compulsory universal education, tend to be able to hold population increases under control; on the other hand, universal education is very difficult to achieve until there is effective population control. The very countries that are still working towards compulsory education are those with the greatest population problems. Moreover, as they move to broaden the base of education they have to concern themselves at the same time with the quality and relevance of the education they are providing.

There is further irony in that the better we do our job, the lower the drop-out rate becomes, the more children stay in school for longer periods, thus increasing enrolments and worsening the pressures on the system. Of the over 200 000 increase in our enrolments each year at present, only 30 000 are accounted for by increases in the number of beginners in Substandard A; the rest reflect improvement in the drop-out situation — children who are staying on longer than before. It would be wise educational policy, I believe, to encourage this tendency: to dispense with double sessions, to improve the teacher-pupil ratio and to improve the quality of the teacher, before insisting strongly on compulsory attendance at school.

That is not to say that there are not areas in our country, both urban and rural, where because of high enrolment under the voluntary system, compulsory education will become a realistic target in the next 5 years. I do not believe this is something which can be done on a national scale, right across the board, at one and the same time. It can be done, however, in stages and in certain areas. It is on this basis that steady progress towards universal education is planned.

Literacy

Closely related to the issues just discussed is the question of literacy. It would appear from recent discussions with industrialists, particularly in respect of the older worker whom they seek to promote, that this is one of their main practical problems. He is not the 'marginal man' whom certain economists have recently identified, but a competent worker whose advance in the industry is retarded because of communication breakdown. Some firms have found solutions to this by making use of programmes already available in this country. But it has also become

clear that this is an area in which the Department of Bantu Education can be of assistance to the adult worker, not necessarily through night schools, which have built-in difficulties, but through an extension of in-service programmes to which both the worker and the industrialist contribute time.

If 4 years of education (the UNESCO definition) is taken as achieving literacy (and numeracy, which is almost as important in a modern world), then our statistics show that $\pm 60\%$ of the Black population below the age of 45 years is literate, with this percentage growing the younger the age group concerned, until it reaches about 80% for those under the age of 22 years. As schooling increases, therefore, problems with the younger workers in this field should be very limited.

Financing

In the end the extent to which priorities may be achieved and problems overcome will be dependent upon the funds made available for education. These funds in their turn will reflect what importance the nation attaches to education in relation to other priorities to which it must give attention. In the 1973/4 financial year a total of R109 million is being spent by the State on the education of the Blacks: an average of R32 per year for every Black child in school, and twice the figure for 1969. Since more than half of the Black children in school fall under the control of homeland education departments, it is of paramount importance that homeland budgets should continue to receive even more massive injections of funds for educational development in order to maintain this rate of progress in the next 5 years.

APPENDIX

Some Basic Statistics

Since 1955 there has been a four-fold growth in school enrolments — from just over 800 000 to very nearly 3½ million in 1973. There has been a steady improvement at all levels, as shown by the following table:

	1965	1970	1973
Total school enrolments ...	1 957 836	2 748 650	3 312 283
% of total Black population attending school ...	14,64%	17,91%	19,86%
No. of pupils in Std 6 (end of primary school) ...	86 311	135 440	165 860
No. of pupils in Form III (Junior Certificate) ...	12 134	26 695	35 231
No. of pupils in Form V (Senior Certificate/Matriculation) ...	1 405	2 938	5 492