

TEACHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN MODERN AFRICA

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Abstract

The main pre-occupation in education today is the development and sustenance of quality education. Although this is one of the most cherished qualities in education, it is elusive. In the case of modern Africa, the development of quality education faces many serious challenges. Among the challenges experienced include increased sophistication in the society, especially rapid technological advancements in the world, emergence of globalization process, non-performing economies in Africa, and socio-economic factors. All these developments have put pressure on the efficiency of administration of the existing systems of education on the continent. One single determinant in the process of developing quality education anywhere in the world is Teacher Education Programme. However, there is little evidence that many countries in Africa have not promoted the quality of this programme of education since the colonial era. The programme has the multiplier effects on the efforts of developing quality education in Africa which could be used to accelerate general development. Therefore, this paper examines the relationship between teacher education and development in Africa, the role this programme and its relevancy to the development of quality education in Africa. Further, the paper discusses the indicators of quality education in modern Africa and the future of Africa in the context of Teacher Education Programme. Notably, these are the potential measures of the development and administration of quality education in Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

Quality of education is the main concern for most contemporary societies in the world. But quality has not been effectively actualized in the education sector of many countries all over the world. This is because of the rapid and multiple developments in education and society. There are so many emerging challenges in education and in society that undermine the development and sustenance of quality education. These include the increased demand for education which has resulted in high enrollments in the education institutions; the emerging trends/fashions in education (Kajjubi, 1969), technological advancements that came on stage last century and the changing perception of education by the modern societies (Kafu, 2011). All these developments have created new dimensions and/or perspectives in education that have untold impact on the efforts of developing quality education. There is the inherent feeling that the presently practiced

education systems are conservative in nature and irrelevant for the needs of modern societies. Thus in these societies there is a need for a new and highly sophisticated competencies to facilitate their survival in the present technological era. Generally, there is a strong feeling in Africa that the present education practices do not have the capacity to provide for, accommodate, develop and create relevant competencies (Maritim, 1997). Therefore, the practiced education in the present sophisticated Africa society is of poor quality and irrelevant to the continent's pressing needs.

The nagging question is “what is quality education?” Casually quality education means “good” education! But what is good quality education? Educationally, quality of education has two closely inter-related connotations. First, it refers to the relevance of the designed and administered education to the needs of the current society. That is a comprehensive (wholesome) education. Further, this term refers to the performance of the practiced education in the society. In other words, whether this education satisfies the aspirations and needs of the society as espoused in both the goals and objectives of this education system. When quality and relevance are established in education, then such an education system can be said to be of good standard and appropriately serving the purpose it was designed for in any society. Secondly, implicit in this concept of quality of education is another aspect of quality in education. This refers to all the inputs in the practice of education that promote the quality of education in the society. The inputs include economics of education, quality of Teacher Education Programme and the level of development in the society. These factors among others are the major determinants of quality of education as observed by King (1961) and are commonly used to explain differences in the quality of education from one society to another in the world. Indeed, Huaston (2008) argues that quality education is the education that develops and produces individuals who are morally, physically, intellectually and socially grounded in the society.

This paper examines Teacher Education Programme as one of the key players in the development of quality education - in Africa (Ringa, 1994). The focus is on the relationship between Teacher Education Programme and development of quality education in modern Africa, the relevancy of this programme to the development of quality education; the role of the Teacher Education Programme in the development of quality education in modern Africa, the relevance of this programme to the development of quality education in Africa and, by extension general

development, of this continent and its future in the context of teacher education programme. Consequently, the discussion of these issues covers the need for development of quality education and its indicators in modern Africa.

However, the discussion of this paper would be incomplete without presenting the concepts of Teacher Education Programme and Teacher Preparation Programme in education. These two concepts are commonly interchangeably used in education though they mean totally different things (Kafu, 2012). Teacher Education programme refers to all issues that are related to teaching profession such as Teacher Preparation Programme, teacher development, schemes of service for school teachers, legal rights of school teachers, emerging issues in teaching profession and so on. Precisely, it is a programme of education that characterizes teaching as a specialized profession with distinct features. Teacher Preparation Programme, on the other hand, refers to what has been traditionally practised since the era of industrial revolution in Europe in the early eighteenth (18th) century, and popularly known as Teacher Training Programme (Ringa, op cit). The programme entails developing and equipping prospective teachers with relevant competencies of teaching, especially the approaches, methods and skills. But Teacher Preparation Programme is a new development in Teacher Training Practices. It involves preparing prospective teachers in areas that have not been aspects of traditional Teacher Training Programmes. These new areas include academic content, media education, social and current issues, legal issues in education which focus on human rights including child's rights, emerging trends in education and teaching profession, and the broadened scope of pedagogical content. Therefore, Teacher Training Programme covers ethics of teaching and teaching profession, curriculum and instruction, foundations of education, educational management, educational psychology and social studies. Note that these developments occurred in Kenya in the 1970's (GoK, 1975). The programme is a much broader teacher training curriculum than the traditional type that focused on pedagogy, the art of teaching. The traditional curriculum was narrow in its scope, nature and out-look. The concern was on approaches, methods and skills of teaching. The consequence was to produce school teachers who appeared competent in some narrow aspects of pedagogical content but very deficient in areas related to academic content and emerging issues in the teaching profession. This practice tended to reduce the capacity of school teachers to efficiently contribute to the development of quality education in the society making them

incompetent to adjust to emerging fashions or trends in education in the society. The discussion that follows underlines this deficiency.

TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME AND DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN MODERN AFRICA

This aspect deals with the congruence between teacher programme and the development of quality in the society. Close scrutiny of the various dimensions of teacher education programme as an aspect of education clearly reveals that this programme plays a leading role in the process of developing quality education in the society. It is the main soft-ware in this process. It prepares, nurtures, and plays an active role in the production of school teachers who determine the quality of education that a society offers. Teachers are the individuals who sustain any system of education in the world (Lucas, 1972) at all times.

Generally, whatever happens to Teacher Education Programme will always have an impact on the quality of education offered at all levels of education in the society from early childhood development education to university. The manner in which Teacher Education Programme is designed, developed and administered will have a bearing on the quality of the prepared and produced school teachers (Uwamahoro, 2013). Well prepared school teachers are usually those who undergo a broad and pragmatic teacher education curriculum that prepares them in creativity, innovativeness adaptability and initiative. These are the hallmarks of quality education. Therefore, the relationship between Teacher Education Programme and the development of quality education can be traced from the quality of this programme. That is, how this programme is organized and administered in the society, in particular the quality of its curriculum and the manner the prospective teachers are prepared for the teaching profession. Note that quality education can only be realized in the society when Teacher Education Programme is appreciated as the genesis, custodian and disseminator of the culture of the society. In other words, Teacher Education Programme must always reflect the aspirations of the society and be pragmatic enough to cater for the developments in the society. Such a feature will ensure that competent and relevant school teachers are prepared and produced to serve the society's education system (Lucas, 1972). This is what Harvey and Green (1993) and Kiptoon (1996) focused on in their discussion and definition of quality of education. Arguably, school

teachers are beacons of quality of education as well as quality in education (Houston, 2008) in every society.

Apart from the relevance of education to the needs of the society, quality of education is about the availability and use of the required facilities and resources. Teacher education programme is instrumental in the development of these essential learning resources. The quality of school teachers will facilitate the design, and development including improvisation practices and administration of these items in instructional development process. Well prepared cadre of school teachers are apt to explore and utilize the required resources to ensure that good quality of education is created, nurtured, and sustained. This culture is developed through the media education programme in Teacher education.

Further, Teacher Education Programme also deals with emerging issues in the society (Kafu, 2011). The programme responds to and forestalls some developments in education and society that have an effect on the quality of education. This reduces the possibility of these developments compromising the desired quality of education in the society. The usual response to some of these developments is by reviewing the existing teacher education curriculum, modes of teacher preparation programme and instituting and conducting action research that address specific emerging issues in education. These are actions that guarantee the development and administration of education in the society. Unfortunately, this special relationship between Teacher Education Programme and the process of development of quality education is normally missed. Hence, the falling standards in education worldwide as reported by UNESCO (1981). As a result of erratic responses by the societies many people do not realize that education, like any other process, suffers from glaring shortcomings and therefore, needs reforms. The most perfect tool for this process is Teacher Education Programme.

Teacher Education Programme and quality of education are the most demanded commodities in the society to-day (King, 1961). All societies in the world, irrespective of their levels of development, require school teachers to promote their development. Teachers are the initiators, developers, and guides for setting the development agenda of the society. They are the incubators of the competencies for generating sophistication in the society (Kafu, 2013). Implicit in this scenario is the quality of school teachers. Lucas (1972) and Kajjubi (1969) assert that competent school teachers are an essential asset in national development. Therefore, the talk about quality

education implies the need for school teachers of good quality and, by extension, the quality of the designed and administered Teachers Education Programme. This situation demonstrates the existing strong and direct relationship between the quality of provided education on one hand and Teacher Education Programme and the quality of development in the society on the other.

The common characteristic between the need for quality education and Teacher Education Programme is that both are resource-and skill-intensive. Both of these components of education need heavy investments for the purpose of developing the required structures, expertise, infrastructure, logistics and media resources. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned are essential materials for developing quality education as well as Teacher Education Programmes. The latter is an immediate and highly demanded service by the society. Although the required investment for quality education and Teacher Education Programmes is a huge burden to the society, it is unavoidable. With proper planning and management of resources for the two, they are achievable.

The Teacher Education Programme and the progress of developing quality education are important because they are the determinants of development in the society. Quality Teacher Education Programme guarantees the preparation and production of competent and well informed school teachers who have the capacity and ability to initiate and adapt to meaningful development in the society. Indeed, understanding of the critical relationship between quality education and Teacher Education Programme is important in order to justify heavy investment to achieve them. Also, the demand for these aspects of education for the development of the society calls for constant appraisal and correction of the systems that initiate and deliver them.

The preceding discussion clearly establishes the following facts. There exists strong relationship between Teacher Education Programmes and the process of developing quality of education in the society. The relationship between these two features of education can be characterized as inter-related and inter-dependent in nature. Further, it is arguable that Teacher Education Programmes and quality education are guarantors of meaningful development in the society. The latter argument is clearly articulated in the section of the paper focusing on the role of Teacher education programme on development of quality education in Modern Africa.

ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN MODERN AFRICA

Before examining the role of Teacher Education Programmes in the process of developing quality education in the society, it is necessary to explain the meaning of Modern Africa. Generally, Modern Africa refers to transformed Africa since the Europeans dominated the continent in the seventeenth century. Africa is a continent that is experiencing rapid changes in economic, political, social, and technological domains. Modern Africa is now a region striving to relatively compare itself to the developed continents of the world that have undergone change since the seventeenth century. It is against this background that the role of Teacher Education Programmes in the process of development of quality education in modern Africa is discussed.

As a matter of emphasis, Teacher Education Programme is an important component of education when attempting to develop quality education in the society. This is because this programme is the basis of the measure of quality of education and by extension quality of the created society. It is the avenue of creating and sustaining quality of education. Normally, Teacher Education Programme is the reflection of the aspirations of the society and a mirror through which reforms and innovations in education in particular and society in general can be determined.

Through Teacher education programme, and especially teacher preparation programmes, prospective teachers are prepared to initiate, adapt to and adopt and introduce reforms and innovations in education and the society. Teachers are the main players in the culture change of developing and promoting the quality of education in the society. Therefore, they are the spur of this process in the society. Through instruction of learners, interactions with the general public and active participation in education programmes as well as public life, school teachers are able to influence development.

Further, the Teacher Education Programme is a catalyst in the process of developing quality education. Through this programme of education, new ideas are developed, experienced with and introduced in the mainstream education. New ideas could impact instruction, management and perception of education. In other words, the Teacher Education Programme is the incubator of innovations and creativity in education (Kafu, 2013). Whatever developments occur in this programme, they tend to spill over to mainstream education; hence promoting the desired quality in education (Sifuna, 2006).

The Teacher Education Programme draws its in-puts from the society. This feature makes the programme to be part and parcel of the society. Thus, the programme is the property of the society. It has to be relevant to the needs of the society. Ideally, the teacher education curriculum should be a reflection of the ideals of the society. It establishes and strengthens the link between education and the society in which it operates. The role of Teacher Education Programme in the process of developing quality of education is that of a catalyst. It is the force and push behind the development and administration of quality in education. Examination of the relevancy of this process of developing quality education in modern Africa confirms this fact.

RELEVANCE OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN MODERN AFRICA

Teacher Education Programme is relevant in the process of developing quality of education. So, the sustainability of this programme in the process of developing quality education in the society is of paramount importance. Specifically, teacher education is relevant to the process of developing quality education because it provides the frame-work within which the latter can effectively be developed and conducted.

The relevancy of Teacher Education Programme to the development of quality education lies in the need to ensure quality in the society. Indeed, quality in education is crucial because education is the culture of the society. Education develops and equips the individuals with competencies for adjustment to the environment. But since Teacher Education Programme is the originator, genesis and incubator of the desired quality education in the society, it is a requirement for this process. Therefore, any attempts to initiate and develop quality education in the society must start with promoting the quality of Teacher Education Programmes.

Because of the critical role both teacher education and quality of education play in transformation of societies, they are essential in the modern world. All modern societies appreciate the need for and importance of quality education and especially the **wonders** it has done in the developed world. But the testimony for the need of quality in Teacher Education Programmes and its multiplier effects in the society, is the experience of “the Tigers of Asia” (Mazhar, 2011). Therefore, the relevance of Teacher Education Programme to the process of

development of quality education is not debatable at all. Consequently, if the world has to establish equality in development, emphasis should be on promotion of quality of Teacher Education Programme as a component of mainstream education.

From the foregoing discussion, the relevance of Teacher Education Programme to the quest for developing quality in education is underlined. This programme is the source and moderator of whatever happens in mainstream education. This paper is simply emphasizing this fact. This is a reality which every society, from the ancient times to the present appreciates (Sifuna, 1975) but modern Africa seems to have miserably failed to do so. This is why its education systems have failed to perform as expected. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the modern nations of Africa to invest in and promote the quality of Teacher Education Programmes with a view of creating avenues for promoting quality of education to accelerate general development in Africa.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN MODERN WORLD

The measure of education is discernible from the products of the established education system. This could be in the form of the provided competencies, performance of the beneficiaries of the provided education and the general character of the members of the society.

Generally, modern formal school education since 19th century has transformed Africa from a traditional, primitive, conservative region to a relatively modern society. However, the failings of the practiced education systems as pointed out by the Kamunge Education Report (1978) and Kiptoon (1996) the continent has not kept pace with the rapid developments in other regions in the world. This worrying trend can be seen in such areas as technological advancements, globalization process and entrepreneurship which are the main features of the modern world. Africa is fairing on poorly in these critical areas that characterize the modern world (Kerre, 1992). Close scrutiny shows that these failures are related to the designs and administration of Teacher Education Programme in Africa since colonial era and when this programme was synonymous with pedagogy. These programmes of education have not been reformed to relate them to developments in the world (Ringa, 1992; Bosire, 1995; Kafu, 2011). The consequence has been to produce school teachers who have no capacity to initiate and conduct reforms and innovations in education and general society. Therefore, the fear expressed by Kajjubi (1969) in

his discussions about fashions in education and the mismatch between the practiced education systems and the anticipated development in Africa has become a reality. The African continent must act now if it has to come out of the present quagmire. Notwithstanding these arguments King (1961) contends that that education has to a great extent, transformed Africa.

However, given the confusion in the existing mismanagement of Teacher Education Programmes in Africa, it is not quite easy to determine the quality of education on this continent. Apart from this feature, there are many emerging and seriously competing interests in the African society. There are wasteful conflicts, technological advancements and globalization processes that need national attention to allow serious focus on the development of quality both in Teacher Education Programme and mainstream education. This scenario has resulted in reduced investment in education which has adversely affected all attempts to promote the quality of education. A related global development is the emergence of the globalization process which is rapidly engulfing Africa. This is a totally new feature in education that has far-reaching implications to the process of developing and promoting quality in education. The globalization process is a costly development in terms of resources, logistics and systems development in education. Currently, the economies in Africa are very weak and lack the capacities to accommodate this development in education. This situation further complicates the quest of African countries to up-grade their education systems in terms of promotion of quality of education to the international competitive level.

Despite the above cited hurdles to achieving quality in education in Africa, there have been some reasonable milestones made in this direction. So far Teacher education programmes, with little or no reforms and innovations since colonial period, have successfully prepared and produced school teachers who have influenced modern level of technological developments in Africa (UNESCO 1982; Kerre, 1992). Nevertheless, the main impediment has been the conservative nature of Teacher Education Programmes since colonial period. It has failed to adequately prepare prospective teachers and change the general negative attitude of the society towards the teaching profession. Even further, there has been little evidence of serious reforms and innovations in education in general and especially Teacher Education Programmes particularly in Africa because of the crop of the present cadre of school teachers who are not creative and

innovative enough (Kiptoon, 1996). Generally, the widespread under-development in the continent has been caused by the low quality of serving school teachers.

The quality of the education system creates and produces the desired society which is supposed to be stable and development conscious. That is, the society that reflects the goals and objectives of the designed and administered education. Scrutiny of the goals and objectives of education systems in Africa are laudable and beautiful (Ominde, 1965); Republic of Kenya, 1982). These desires are not reflected in the products of the practiced education systems. The created societies in Africa seem to be less productive, chaotic and non-performing. This is a clear evidence of irrelevant education systems that are out-of-step with realities of the modern world. It is a clear indication of failed education systems. The widespread unemployment that is creating unprecedented vices in the continent is another demonstration of ailing education systems. Precisely, there is need to initiate believable change in the present practiced education systems in Africa. The focus of this development should be in promotion of quality education especially in Teacher Education Programmes (Jung-li, 2001). The desired change should involve development and introduction of reforms and innovations in education in the context of the African experience. Without this, Africa is likely to remain a backward continent for a long time.

TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME AND THE FUTURE OF AFRICA

A Teacher Education Programme has been underlined as the mainstay and basis of quality education in any system of education. It is the originator genesis and incubator of this feature in education in relation to general development in the society. This role of the programme cannot be underestimated. A Teacher Education Programme promotes and accelerates development and produces the desired society. But since quality education is the product of quality Teacher Education Programme as demonstrated in the “Tigers of Asian” countries, Africa must urgently do the following if it has to compete favourably in development with the rest of the world.

- Design and administer a Teacher Education Programme that is relevant to the needs of Africa. The present conservativeness in the management of this programme should be replaced with pragmatic models of Teacher Preparation Programmes that are more inclusive and comprehensive than the existing models. This will make Teacher

Education Programmes relevant, meaningful and useful to the needs of the present Africa.

- There is need to invest adequately in Teacher Education Programmes for the purpose of capacity building in the programmes. The investments include funding, training opportunities, development and utilization of relevant logistics and information systems, infrastructural development and research activities. All these factors are likely to generate the badly needed reforms and innovations not only in these programmes but education as a whole. These developments will, in turn, promote and accelerate general development in Africa through the production of the required skilled main-power.
- Governments of Africa must recognize the important role a Teacher Education Programme plays in the development of nations. The emphasis should be on preparation and production of competent school teachers who can facilitate the promotion of general development on the continent. The present strategy of placing greater emphasis on the school education and university education sectors at the expense of Teacher Education Programmes is a defeatist move and is bound to stall development on this continent. What is required to-day is to invest adequately in Teacher Education Programmes so as to enable them to produce creative, innovative and initiative crop of school teachers. These personnel are likely to create a society that is able to deal competently with problems bedeviling Africa to-day. But this may not be possible unless the present African societies appreciate and recognize the important role of Teacher Education Programmes in nation building (Karanja, 1978).

LIMITATIONS OF THE PAPER

The paper focuses on teacher education as a field of study and its role in development of quality education in modern Africa. This is a field of study that is riddled with confusion, misconception and misinterpretation (Kafu, 2012). Although this paper limits itself to the place of this programme of education in nurturing the quality of education in the society, it also attempts to clarify some of the existing confusion in this programme and the concept of quality of education.

The second limitation of the paper has to do with the sources of information for interesting reasons. Teacher education and quality of education in African education systems were taken for granted, in fact, these are recent developments in education. Therefore, there is not much literature on the role of teacher education in development of quality education in Africa. The reader of the paper is likely not to be able to interact with local literature relevant to the topic under discussion.

Thirdly, the paper discusses an educational issue which by nature is dynamic. Further, education is a social issue which is usually influenced by rapid development occurring in the society. Therefore, the issues discussed in this paper may have been addressed by different countries in Africa at present. However, the crucial point in this discussion is that critical issues related to the theme under review have been stated for the benefit of the general public.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to survey the role of Teacher Education Programmes in the development of quality education in modern Africa. It has demonstrated that this programme is the incubator, genesis and generator of quality education which is an inevitable component of general development in the society. Therefore, if modern Africa is to favorably compete with other regions of the world in general development, it has to promote the quality of its education through the design and efficient management of Teacher Education Programmes. This is the only hope for and the future of Africa. The “Tigers of Asia” have done it, why not Africa?

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