

ABSTRACT

The pivotal role of teacher education in the development of a country's education system cannot be overestimated. Its eventual contribution to political, economic and social development continually gives rise to concerns about its relevance to the needs of the society and the goals of the education system emanating from these needs.

This study describes developments in Teacher Education in Jamaica 1960-81, relates them to societal needs and the goals of the education system and assesses their social relevance. Firstly, the political, economic and social needs of the society are identified. The goals set by policy-makers to satisfy educational needs are examined. Finally the relationship between developments in teacher education and the needs and goals of the education system are considered and the social relevance of these developments assessed.

Developments in teacher education have been identified from such sources as national development plans, reports, budget speeches, college records and newspapers. As a means of supporting documentary evidence, Principals who served teacher education institutions during the period under review have been interviewed and questionnaires have been ad-

ministered to past students of teacher education institutions and principals in whose schools they worked.

In undertaking this study, problems were faced in securing statistical information to support findings and where this was located, gaps existed for some years. It was found too that college records and reports gave scant information about developments in teacher education.

The study found that quantitative developments in teacher education failed to keep pace with expansion in other areas of the education system and so the teaching force continued to have a high percentage of untrained teachers up to 1977. In general, quantitative developments were limited by the unavailability of suitably qualified entrants to teacher education institutions especially in the scarce subject areas, and the secondary position given to teacher education by policy-makers.

Numerous programmes were instituted to improve the quality of teachers through pre-service and in-service training. Despite the criticism of the quality of teachers' college graduates and the quality of education offered in the system, gains were made. In pre-service teacher education the academic entry qualification for students preparing to teach at the JSS level was upgraded. A variety of programmes and courses were introduced to meet the needs of an increasingly complex school system. Greater autonomy was given to

training college staff in the introduction and assessment of college programmes. The partnership between the University of the West Indies and the teachers' colleges in upgrading the quality of staff and student teachers was beneficial to all areas of the education system.

Finally, in-service training played a greater role than at any previous time in improving the quality of teachers in the entire education system.