

The Role of Nomadic Education in Developing Nomadic Community

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Abstract

The paper discusses the basic objectives of Nomadic Education which is to help the nomads contribute their quota in their Societal development, these objectives include the training of the mind and understanding of the world around them, that is training in scientific and critical thinking while the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Furthermore, the paper will examine the multifaceted schooling arrangement to suit the diverse transhumant habits of Fulani, some conclusions are drawn and recommendations for the improvement of nomadic education for the benefiting communities is also discussed.

1. Introduction

Education is a worthwhile venture as it is recognized worldwide as the most important engine that propels technological and natural development in modern societies, education has been a major instrument to change and development, it has also been identified as a right and indispensable means to realizing other human rights. It also plays a vital role in empowering the child economically, socially and assist those marginalized adult out of poverty. Education also provides them (children) with the means to participate fully in their communities (UNESCO, 2000).

Education, according to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), is a fundamental human right and a key factor in reducing poverty and child labour as well as promoting sustainable development.

In Africa, like else where in the world, not all children have access to education, the nomad child access to education is influence by traditional considerations and attitude which make them under –represented. A nomad child is usually the first to be pulled out of school when the family suffers some financial or cultural loses or constraints.

The basic reasons for the establishment of schools for children in all countries of the world are to provide educational opportunities to the children and integrate them into their societies, it is also to prepare them to be functional citizen who will be able to contribute their quotes to the development of their societies and families and help them lives a normal life. These objectives are in line with the universal declaration of Human Rights in 1949, the United Nations General Assembly charter of 1959, and United Nations Conventions on the right of the child of 1989 which saw education as a human right issue. (UNICEF, 2004). Based on this convention, all children regardless of socio-cultural and economic background should be given access to education, in support of the view above, the National Policy On Education, a part from declaring that education is a birth right of every Nigerian child went further to reaffirm that it should be brought close to the environment of the children of those special groups different from the sedentary people in the country. This is perhaps in recognition of different special needs of the individual children and peculiarities of the social set up of their society. This section of the National policy on Education appreciated that, those, whose occupational circumstances prevent from the acquisition of modern education should be given necessary attention by the formulation of suitable policies to suit those circumstance that hitherto debarred them from conventional system of education, these are mostly the postoralist and migrant fishing group in the Nigerian context.

Evidence, both locally and internationally have shown that nomadic herder number tens of millions of people. Mainly in Africa, the middle East, South-West and central Asia. They include same of the poorest and vulnerable of all. Populations reaching them with formal schooling has become a major challenge, and million of nomadic children remain outside the education system despite their tremendous contributions to the development of the nation in terms of fundamental necessities of life they provide, such as meat, milk, butter hides and skins, food and crops. Educationally they often represent not a significant part in terms of school enrolment, attendance, classroom performance, achievement, continuity to higher education and gender balance, they regularly score at the bottom of the ladder.

Ezeomah (1995) also added that, this propelled researcher, into the study of nomadic population in all their ramification and look for the most suitable way to educate them. Some of these studies were conducted at the university of Jos with the support of the federal government and other concerned international organization. The result of this research led to a major breakthrough in the development of nomadic education in Nigeria. A national workshop for nomadic education was held in Yola Adamawa state in 1986, daring which decision were taking and led to a blueprint for nomadic education in 1987, a national advisory committee on nomadic education was formed in 1988 which metamorphoses into national commission for nomadic education in 1989 with promulgation of decree.

However, Abubakar (1996), with the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) there is National Policy On Nomadic Education, the commission which was set up to give Nomads access to high quality basic education was by Decree (41) of 1989 given the mandate to carryout the following functions the commission utilizes innovative approaches and strategies such as:

- Drawing up and using relevant curricula teaching method and suitable facilities
- Flexible academic calendars and hours that suit the learners
- Intensely building awareness among the community and empowering them, and
- A solid collaboration and partnership with the institutions involves in drawing up, carrying out and evaluating the programme (Abubakar, 1996)

For effective discharge of its responsibilities, the NCNE has four operational departments six zonal offices and four university based Nomadic Education Centres (NEC) the four University based centres are for: curriculum and instructional materials development for education of postoralist located at Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto; Reseach and Evaluation for the education of

nomadic pastoralist located at the university of Jos; teacher training and outreach program for nomadic pastoralist located at the university of Maiduguri and curriculum and instructional materials development, teacher training programs, research and evaluation for the education of migrant fishing groups located at the university of port Harcourt.

The National Commission for Nomadic education was set up to achieving the following set of objectives.

2. Aims of Nomadic Education

From the broad aims and objectives of the National Policy on education, specific aim, and objectives of nomadic education (based on their culture and ways of life) were adopted, as in the past, the strategies and curriculum adopted in most of the nomadic education program led to the failure of the programme. Thus the objective were classified into two and these are short and long term objectives as stated in the 1987 blue print on Nomadic education, the National Nomadic Education programmes established in 1986 among other things are to:

2.1 Short Term Objectives

Ensure the acquisition of basic functional literacy and numeracy, for the nomads, these in practical terms, should mean the ability to do the following:

- a. Read with comprehension those things, that affect their occupational roles like useful direction tax (Jangali, Haraji) receive instructions on health and animals treatment and manufacturers instruction scheme relating to animal husbandry and agriculture.
- b. The Nomads could read and understand National polices and magazines to know what is happening around them, functional literacy will enable them read simple instructions for example, voting instructions in order to make independent choice on those to govern their nation.
- c. The Nomads could write legibly and meaningfully letters to friends, relations, veterinary, agriculture and livestock officers on how to improve their herds, poultry and crops write to government officials on the needs of the clans.
- d. The Nomads can do simple calculation and keep record relating to the numbering their herds, cost and returns from investment on improved herding and grazing, distance covered on seasonal movements, interest charges on credits and rental on lands, measurement of land and building to hold family and herds, birth and death satisfies.
- e. They develop scientific out looks, attitudes and self reliance to deal with the problems such as reporting out break of disease to government agencies and
- f. Improve their relationship with immediate neighbours, sedentary farmers, and government authorities and agencies (Blue print on Nomadic education, 1987:8&9).

2.2 Long Term Objectives includes:

- Acquisition of knowledge and skills to enable them improve their income earnings, capabilities and consequent development on grazing reserves and settlement. Proper grazing management including effective use of good variety of fodder (grass land legumes improvement), Modern scientific livestock breeding and scientific treatment of animal diseases.
- Improvement of livestock product such as meat, mil, butter, hides and skins by applications of modern technology. Better marketing of their products such as meat, milk, butter, hides and skin by application of modern technology.

- Appreciation of the need to use modern savings and bank credit facilities which will enable them integrate better within the dominant national culture.
- Appreciation of skilled fulbe professionals and administrators such as doctors, nurses, teachers veterinary or livestock officers, posture agronomist, lawyers and law makers for effective management of fulbe affairs and constructive contribution to the larger society.
- Acquisition of functional knowledge and skills for raising healthy well adjusted families and for operating happy household such skills will ensure the protection of family, good child care, nutrition, sanitation culture and recreational activities (blue print on Nomadic Education 1987).

The Programme adopted a multifaceted schooling arrangement to reflect the socio-cultural and economic life pattern of the nomads, as such all stakeholders, the ministries of education, schools management board, the National Commission for Nomadic Education, the Agency for Mass literacy and scholarship board all worked together to operate the mobile school system in conformity with the transient nature of the nomads.

3. Approaches for Providing Nomadic Education

The multifaceted approaches identified to be likely appropriate in different cases are:

- a. Regular schools: may be use mainly for settled group. Helping teacher may be used to help nomadic children, whose performances fall below expectation as a result of un familiar curricular contents and teaching method, it is noted that regular school syllables or curricular content and padeogy are use for the mobile children, consequently cattle rearers, children appear weak due curricular contents foreign to them.
- b. On site schools: may be used for semi sedentary nomadic groups, such schools should be sited along movement routes, at fixed points of references, such schools may become schools of alternative intake, where the movement pattern of nomads makes it necessary.
- c. Mobile schools (portable classroom) may be used for mobile families depending on their number within a clan cluster, the Qur'anic mallam model could be incorporated here. It is noted that mallam move with the nomads teaching them the Qur'an, this system can be improved upon and adopted in the present programmes.
- d. Adult Education programme: may be used for adult monadic men and women, the Nomadic House hold model in which classes are organized for parents, and where teachers are provided that follow and teach them to read and write, so that later such adults can teach their children, is an extension of adult education programmes.
- e. Radio or distance education programmes: may be use to aid all educational system. Adopted for nomads at different levels. Radio drama, whose styles, plot and content reflect the nomadic cultural heritage, radio commercial and sport announcement and radio discussion by fulanis who have made to the it to the top, are all envisaged, it is noted that the nomads carry their radio sets along and listen to them as they trek, this factor can be exploited in educating them.
- f. Telecast may be used mainly for the settled cattle fulanis who possess television sets.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

In this paper an attempt was made to describe and analyse the achievement and problems of nomadic education programme. However, the short and long term objectives has been discussed, the multifaceted schooling agreement that can reflected the socio-cultural and economic life pattern as adopted by the programme were look open.

Moreover, looking at the living condition of the nomads, it could be seen that much need to be done to improve the precarious situation if they are to get educated. Although their situation is bleak, the paper is optimistic that with commitment and dedication nomads could be educated especially if only the political will is there. Moreover, what is required is for us to do our best when ever we have the opportunity to do so and to encourage others to do so when ever they have the opportunities to do so.

The paper also maintain that, nomadic education programme is not waste of funds. Unlike the unproductive nomads of other lands. Nigeria nomads are economically very productive; they are no beggers, all they needed is to be shown the "light" they will definitely be partners in progress.

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