

Nomadic Education in Post Independence Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects

Abstract

This paper examines nomadic education in post independence Nigeria in the context of issues, challenges and prospects. Therefore, issues, challenges and prospects of nomadic education were identified. The issue of the provision of nomadic education, inadequate integration of nomads into the mainstream society, unqualified and inadequate nomadic school teachers, prospects like the various measures being taken by the National Commission for Nomadic Education to improve and provide equal educational opportunities for the nomads, regardless of their peculiar ways of life. Thus, the paper argues that, there is the need to improve the means/ways of teaching, learning and communication more especially with the present age of globalisation. Lastly, the paper made some recommendations, such as, governments at various levels should in collaboration with the pastoral community leaders sensitise and mobilise their peoples in the bush encampments with a view to making them appreciate the need and relevance of formal education for their children. The provision of education for nomads is capable of making them make use of it for personal and national development.

Introduction

Education is generally regarded as a social process aimed at capacity building, social integration, and socialisation as well as for the progress and development of the society. In view of the present global challenges, education is capable of meeting up the modern challenges of life and globalisation. However, the main aim of this paper is to examine issues, challenges and prospects of nomadic education in post independence Nigeria. Specifically, the paper aims at examining nomadic education programme in the context of how it can create a better future for Nigeria thereby, making it fit into the positive global changes of the world in modern times of science and technology.

Nomadic education is another area that has attracted special attention in the country's education system. Having realised that the educational needs of the nomadic population might not be met through regular or conventional school system,

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government established the National Commission for Nomadic Education since 1989 to cater for the education of nomadic population in the country.

However, one of the major educational problems facing the nomadic population is concerned with the issue of integrating them into the mainstream of the larger society. Therefore, education for the nomads should have relevant immediate and long-term approaches for meeting their basic needs and aspirations. Though the existing national policy on the education of nomads has taken such into consideration but there is the need to examine these provisions, so as to make them capable of confronting the modern challenges of life and social integration in the society.

Conceptual Clarifications

Nomads

The chambers universal learners' dictionary, defines nomads as a group of people with no permanent home, who travel about with their sheep, cattle and so on. In addition, Tahir (1996), posits that nomads are referred to as ethnic or socio-professional groups, who travel and migrate in large or small groups in search of means of livelihood within a community, a nation or cross-international boundaries. Nomads are also groups of people whose way of life involves frequent movements from place to place. In most cases, nomads live in tents, grass-covered shelters, bush encampments and temporary or mobile dwellings.

Nomadism

Nomadism is a worldwide or global phenomenon. This means that nomadism can be found all over the globe. The contemporary definition of nomadism according to Akinpelu (1994), refers to any type of existence which is characterised by features of the absence of a fixed home or domicile. Nomads are usually hunters, food gatherers, pastoralists, migrant fishermen and indigenous peoples such as, the

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indigenous Kambari in Kebbi and Niger states of Nigeria whose population is yet to be established. Akinpelu (1994), in Mahuta (2008), identified six categories of nomadic groups in Nigeria, namely; the Fulani (with population of 5.3 million), the Shuwa (with population of 1.0 million), the Buduman (with population of 35,001), the Kwayan (with population of 20,000), the Badawi (with population yet to be established) and the fishermen (with population of 2.8 million).

Furthermore, Tahir (1996), stated that, in Nigeria nomads can be categorised into two namely, the pastoralists and the migrant fishermen. In his view there are about 9.3 million nomads in Nigeria and 3.1 million of the population are children of school age. The migrant fishermen are about 2%. The population of pastoralist is over 6 million and they are the most disadvantaged group in Nigeria with extremely low participation in formal education.

Issues and Problems of Nomadic Education in Post Independence Nigeria

The 1948 Universal declaration of Human Rights stated that every person has a right to education. In 1990, the world conference on education for all which took place in Jomtein, Thailand, made it abundantly clear that every person should be provided with educational opportunities to enable him/her have access to basic education, and the nomads are not an exception. However, in realisation of the enormous place of nomadic education for national development, concerted efforts are being mounted by the governments at various levels to improve the participation of nomads in education and redress the inequalities in educational opportunities that are created as a result of geographical location, occupation, ethnicity and or gender.

Furthermore, Tahir (1998), states that, the 1979 Federal Constitution and the pertinent provisions of the new National Policy on Education (1977), which reorganised the need to provide equal educational opportunity for all that gave rise to

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a Federal Government initiative that was determined not to exclude anyone access to basic education. With technical support from UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank, researches were undertaken in the early 1980s to provide base-line data on the nomads, as a basis for designing an appropriate education for them. Consequently, the Federal Government launched the programme in 1986 with a view to providing education for nomadic pastoralists and the migrant fishermen.

However, consequent upon the launching of the programme of education for the nomads in 1986 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, it started mobilization and sensitisation campaigns started with a view to getting the support of the affected people for the programme. The goals of the programme, according to Tahir (1998) are, namely:

- Integrating the nomads into the national life by providing them with relevant and functional basic education. This means that the type of education to be provided to them should be such that they require for life and development.
- Improving the skills for the survival of the nomads through improved methods of animal husbandry. The provision of education to nomads is capable of increasing their techniques and skills of handling their animals, such as method of milking and disease control.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 further strengthened the justification for the provision of education for all Nigerian citizens and thus stated that education is a Fundamental Human Right. However, this point justifies the aim for the creation of the Nomadic Education programme which was evidently backed up by Decree 41 known as the National Commission for Nomadic Education Decree of 1989. Under this provision clear guidelines were outlined to meet the stated aims which are specifically targeted towards integrating the nomadic people into the mainstream Nigerian society.

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The aims and objectives of the education of the nomads (either in a formal or non-formal setting) according to Filani (2007) were derived or drawn from the National Policy on Education (2004), which has the following broad objectives:

- the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
- the inculcation of the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
- the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around him that is training in scientific and critical thinking and
- the acquisition of appropriate skills, and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competence as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

As earlier mentioned, the education of the nomads clearly justifies the country's drive for the universalization of education. The educational programme of the nomads seems to be flexible and accommodative to their pattern of life and is targeted towards a purposeful living.

However, the issue of educating the nomads is not the only concern of the nomadic people, the process of safeguarding their cattle, culture and general norms and values and their way of life is of course very fundamental, while education is considered as a secondary factor. No doubt, education remains the prime factor that will help the pastoralists to improve their lot. This has made the government to make concerted efforts to provide concrete plans to educate the nomadic groups and their children. It is pertinent to mention that the provision of education to the nomadic children is in line with the formal school structure which, as mentioned earlier brought about the setting up of the National Commission for Nomadic Education by Decree 41 of 12 December 1989. This is with a view to integrating them into national life and equips them with skills to better their life to be able to make meaningful contribution to the development of the society.

According to Akinpelu (1994), in Mahuta (2004:96);

From 1989 to 1993, a total of 661 schools have been established in 24 states including Abuja; 24% (165) of the schools have permanent classrooms; 46% (293) have temporary classrooms of grass, mats, tarpaulin and so on; while as much as 20% (139) hold lessons under the shades of trees. Of recent, mobile collapsible classrooms have been procured. Altogether, the 661 schools have an enrolment of 46,982 children taught by 1,896 teachers.

The National Commission for Nomadic Education is responsible for the provision of basic education to nomadic groups in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the Commission are as follows:

- a. formulate policy and issue guidelines in all matters relating to nomadic education in Nigeria;
- b. Provide funds for:
 - i. research and personnel development for the improvement of nomadic education in Nigeria
 - ii. the development of programmes on nomadic education
 - iii. equipment, other instructional materials (including teaching aids and facilities), construction of classrooms and other facilities relating to nomadic education
- c. arrange effective monitoring and evaluation of the activities of agencies concerned with nomadic education;
- d. establish, manage and maintain primary schools for nomadic children;
- e. determine standards of skills to be attained in nomadic education;
- f. collate, analyse and publish information relating to nomadic education in Nigeria.
- g. prepare reliable statistics of nomads and their children of school age; and
- h. act as the agency for channelling all external aid to nomadic schools in Nigeria (NCNE, 1989).

However, it is sad to note that the level of participation of nomads in education is very low, though the (NCNE, 1989) maintains that the major constraints to their participation in education may be due to the reasons below:

- the constant movement or migration of nomads from place to place in search of food and water for their animals in case of pastoralists and fish in the case of migrant fishermen.

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- the irrelevance of curriculum to their values, problems, needs and life styles. The curriculum of the conventional schools does not take cognizance of their peculiar needs and aspirations. Thus, making such education for the nomads as irrelevant to their needs.
 - the centrality of child labour in the nomadic life style. Nomadic children are used for cattle rearing instead of schooling. Nomads may not be willing to abandon their occupation for schooling.
 - physical barriers particularly the inaccessibility of areas where nomadism is practiced. The nomads mostly live in the bush and in bush encampments. These places may not be accessible thereby making the process of schooling extremely difficult.
 - the nomads (especially the pastoralists) have remained unconcerned with the system of land holding. The nomads are constantly on the move, with no permanent home or domicile.

It is pertinent state clearly that the basic responsibility of the commission is to provide primary education to the children of the nomadic groups. Currently this responsibility is shared with the states and local governments that are having nomads in their respective areas. However, in order for the goals of the provision of education for the nomads to be achieved, feasible strategies were mapped out which included, on site schools, the shift system, school with alternative intake and Islamiyyah schools. The nomadic education system has many arrangements designed to meet the peculiar socio-cultural characteristics of the children of nomadic pastoralists and migrant fishermen. Daramola (2008:217), posits that;

The herdsmen have to move in the dry season to the few sources of green pastures. The constant movement of the herdsmen from one place to another in search of Greenland does not encourage permanent homes for them, although both the Federal and some state governments have at one time or the other made frantic efforts to settle these nomads. For example, the Federal government under General Gowon in the 1970's attempted to settle the herdsmen in some states of the Federation. These states include, Cross Rivers, Benue, Anambra, Edo and Oyo states.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to mention that the aims of Nomadic Education are derived from the National Policy on Education, thus, specific objectives of nomadic education are:

- to expose the nomadic child to formal education.
- to inculcate the spirit of humanity and make him realize himself as a member of the Nigerian society.
- enable the nomadic child take part in the development of his immediate environment and the country in general.
- make the nomadic child able to improve his living conditions, thus eliminating the hardships and constraints in his life.
- to help modernize his techniques of herdsmanhip and animal management.
- to help the nomadic child to appreciate moral and religious practices.
- to assist the nomadic child to develop himself rapidly and fully, both physically and intellectually so as to enable him cope with the demands of the contemporary world.
- to help the nomadic child to develop initiative.

However, when properly organised, nomadic education is capable of helping the nomads in many ways, such as the following:

- to be assimilated or integrated into other national cultures and generally into mainstream Nigerian society.
- to realize the importance attached to economic growth, by contributing their quota to national development.
- to improve on their attitudes towards self-reliance, development and self sufficiency.
- to be able to participate in the political activities of their localities and also acquire political awareness through education.
- to acquire land permanently for their home, herds, and also acquire permanent grazing fields.

On the other hand, lack of proper implementation of the nomadic education programme is capable of exposing the nomadic pastoralists to the following predicaments:

- the nomads are exposed to extreme harsh weather conditions; both heat and cold, and to date many have no permanent houses or land for building houses.
- they live under unprotected and inadequate shelter; their entire families are endangered, by being exposed to various environmental hazards including insect bites and pests.

Over the years Nigeria has continued to record impressive performance in providing more access to basic education for nomads. For example, school enrolment figures have risen from 163,361 in 1999 to 229,944 in 2002 (see tables 1 and 2 on appendix). Furthermore, the number of nomadic schools has increased from 1,098 in 1997 to 1,680 in 2002 (see tables 1 and 3 on appendix). The tables in this paper reveal that there is a substantial increase in enrolment and in the number of nomadic schools in Nigeria. This is indicative of the tremendous achievement in opening and strengthening access to basic education for nomadic children (boys and girls). Another major aspect of the nomadic education programme is ensuring that the education provided is qualitative and relevant to the needs and aspirations of the nomadic population. In addition, according the monitoring and evaluation reports (19990 – 2002) it is indicated that classroom interaction in nomadic schools was generally poor, learning achievements low, and the pupils were not acquiring the needed knowledge and skills.

Challenges of Nomadic Education in post independence Nigeria

There are so many challenges facing the provision of education for nomadic groups in Nigeria, thereby inhibiting the efforts of the National Commission for Nomadic Education to educate the nomads. According to Tahir (1998), nomadic education is confronted with myriads of problems, namely:

- i. there is dearth of teachers in terms of quality and quantity. Most of the nomadic schools have no teachers and most of those available are unqualified. There is the presence of other categories of teachers in nomadic school other than Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) and Teachers Grade II (TC II). These teachers are, namely: Higher Islamic Studies Certificate Holders (HIS), Locally

Trained Arabist (LTA), First School Leaving Certificate Holders and Secondary school leavers. Insufficient teachers and low level of the required skills and competences among the available teachers.

- ii. there is general lack or inadequacy of supervision and monitoring by both local and state supervisors and inspectors. This situation has to do with the lack of means of transportation for the purpose of supervision, monitoring and inspecting school performance.
- iii. the NCNE is under funded and even the funds that are approved for it are sometimes not released in good time. Furthermore, there are some state governments who tend to refuse budgetary allocation for the programme.
- iv. decaying of infrastructural facilities, inadequate instructional material, low teacher morale and weak institutional capacity. Inadequate infrastructure and poor conditions of existing nomadic schools.
- v. lack of proper demarcation of cattle routes and grazing reserves in the country hampers the programme, because there is rampant Fulani and farmers clashes, the repercussion of which is displacing the nomadic communities and rendering them unsecured.

In addition, there are other, problems confronting the issue of providing a workable educational policy that will enhance proper and full integration of nomads into the mainstream Nigerian society, especially in socio-politico-economic systems.

Mahuta (2009), listed these challenges, namely:

- i. the absence of modern methods of living, which comprises of the 21st century global technological challenges, initiating and introducing global culture through understanding of the nomads' method of social reality.
- ii. disparities in the development of nomadic education and the conventional education system. The schools in the mainstream society are fast developing than the nomadic schools.
- iii. because the nomadic education programme is special and is for the less privileged people who are isolated, excluded and insulated, the policy needs to be fully boosted, like that of other sectors of the society.
- iv. education of the nomads should equally be integrated into the problems and challenges facing the Nigeria government in terms of providing schools for citizens.
- v. in view of the present globalisation as well as the nature of technological advancement, vis-à-vis their cultural peculiarities, the education provided should utilize ICT applications and efforts should be intensified toward

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monitoring the activities of the nomads, their migratory patterns as well as their security.

- vi. Sometime the curriculum seem to be in appropriate and irrelevant. Teaching methods and materials sometimes does not take cognizance of the peculiarities of the nomadic groups.

Prospects of Nomadic Education in post independence Nigeria

The marginalised, isolated, insulated as well as excluded conditions of the nomadic groups and following Federal Government's effort to integrate them into the mainstream Nigerian society through the provision of education is one of the major prospects of nomadic education in Nigeria. No doubt the nomads have been marginalized and excluded in the various sectors of the nation's life, such as education, socialization and social integration. The major strategy adopted by the federal government was the establishment of the National Commission for Nomads Education (NCNE) in 1989. This commission was mandated to the provision of education for the nomads (boys and girls). Therefore, the commission has helped and is still helping to address the problem of educational access to the nomadic population, such as, pastoral Fulani and migrant fishermen in Nigeria. With education, the pastoralists and the migrant fishermen and the generality of the nomadic groups will be better able to contribute their quota to the development of their immediate communities and Nigeria at large.

Though the Federal Government of Nigeria has made appreciable efforts to implement what is contained in the National Policy on Nomadic Education, yet there are still problems and challenges facing the implementation of nomadic education. This is very clear from the various efforts made by government in the establishment of nomadic schools across the country as well as the increase in the number of nomadic education teachers. It is evidently clear that pupil enrolment has also risen over the years (see tables).

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The National Commission for Nomadic Education has for several times organised various seminars and conferences where experts meet to deliberate issues on the implementation of government policies on the education of nomads. For example, Tahir (1998), pointed out that in March 1995 experts met to address the problem of nomadic education in Nigeria. The experts produced a blue print from which a five year plan of action for nomadic education, 1996 – 2000 evolved. The plan contains 20 priority projects which the commission began to execute. The implementation of the Action Plan emphasised on capacity building, using non-conventional approaches. Structurally, the commission provides incentives to teachers, in-service teacher training and so on.

Another prospect of nomadic education in the post independence Nigeria, is that the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) has established nomadic education centres in four Universities in Nigeria, namely, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Port-Harcourt and Jos, all with a view to providing academic support services towards the education of nomadic groups in Nigeria. This is addition to the teaching of nomadic education as an academic course in the various universities and colleges of education across the country.

Conclusion

The struggle for human development, profitable and competitive education, economic growth and the eradication of illiteracy in Nigeria, led to the national education policies geared towards universalisation of education. This was as a result of the zeal to universalise education in the country, by providing equal educational life chances irrespective of ethnic group, geographical location and socio-economic status. Nomadic education would undoubtedly help to integrate the nomads into the mainstream Nigerian society as well as provide opportunity for participation for the

development of their immediate communities and Nigeria at large. Nomadic education should not be seen as a programme which is extremely difficult to manage due to the challenges and problems that are connected to its implementation. The nomadic groups should be seen as partners in progress and therefore should be integrated into all aspects of national life such as, political, educational, social and economic endeavours, since to ensure the development of the country is a collective responsibility.

Recommendations

The governments at various levels should provide adequate funding to nomadic education programmes.

Teachers of nomadic schools should be qualified, competent and efficient to handle the nomadic education classes. On the other hand, there should be good enough teachers of nomadic schools.

The National Commission for Nomadic education should intensify efforts towards adequate supervision and Inspection of Nomadic Schools. This would ensure quality and performance.

Government should endeavour to provide relevant teaching and learning materials. This will no doubt aid good teaching and learning, which will help in achieving maximum performance.

Nomadic education curriculum should be relevant to the needs of the nomadic population. The content of the curriculum should be related to the needs and aspirations of the nomads. The nomadic peoples should be involved in the present universalization of education through the provision of good structures, qualified teachers, flexible educational strategies and culture favoured curriculum to enhance a positive improvement in their life and that of their communities.

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Government at various level should enforce the payment of special allowances as incentives to teachers who are posted to remote nomadic schools as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004)

Governments at various levels should in collaboration with the pastoral community leaders sensitise and mobilise their peoples in the bush encampments with a view to making them appreciate the need and relevance of formal education for their children. The provision of education for nomads is capable of making them make use of it for personal and national development.

Government should monitor the provision of education by enforcing the utilization of the facilities provided. The citizens of Nigeria should see this change as change for good, which is geared towards eradicating illiteracy, disease and backwardness in the society. There should be a strong working force in collaboration with other agencies so as to achieve the broad aim of education in Nigeria, with a view to joining the rest of the world in the pursuit of education for sustainable development, globalisation as well as Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

The government should take the problems and challenges of nomadic education as a national challenge requiring national attention. Therefore, the nomadic education system should be integrated into the conventional education system bearing in mind the various peculiarities of the nomadic groups.

Since the status of nomadic education programme is fast dwindling in view of various problems facing nomadic education in Nigeria, Therefore, the Nigerian government should urgently take measures to remedy these problems bearing in mind the enormous place of nomadic education in national development.

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Table 1: Statistics of Nomadic Primary School in Nigeria 1990 - 1999

Year	No. of Schools	No. of Classes	No. of Teachers	Pupils Enrolment		
				Boys	Girls	Total
1990	329	329	886	13,763	5,068	18,837
1991	473	556	1,489	25,942	10,559	36,501
1992	649	1,397	2,491	33,463	16,689	50,152
1993	676	1,617	2,362	38,335	15,253	53,981
1994	778	1,727	2,919	42,738	19,094	61,862
1995	860	1,958	3,170	56,759	53,751	91,508
1996	940	3,614	2,919	63,638	40,938	104,577
1997	1,098	4,367	3,355	78,949	56,072	135,02
1998	1,321	4,926	4,208	92,290	65,547	157,837
1999	1,369	5,645	4,353	97,524	65,837	163,361

Source: Monitoring Evaluation and Statistics Department (NCNE) (Kaduna & Tahir, 1999)

Table 2: School Enrolment Figure in Nomadic Schools (1990 – 2002)

Year	Total Enrolment	Annual Difference	Annual Increase Rate
1990	18,831		
1991	36,501	+17,670	95%
1992	51,152	+13,651	37%
1993	53,588	+3,436	8%
1994	61,832	+8,244	15%
1995	92,510	+30,678	50%
1996	103,576	+12,066	12%
1997	118,776	+14,200	12%
1998	155,786	+37,010	24%
1999	163,361	+7,575	5%
2000	193,249	+29,888	15.5%
2001	203,844	+10,595	5.2%
2002	229,944	+23,100	10.2%

Source: NCNE Monitoring Reports (1990 – 2002)

Table 3: Number of Schools and Teachers in the Nomadic Education Programme (1990 – 2002)

Year	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers
1990	329	886
1991	473	1,489
1992	649	2,491
1993	676	2,362
1994	778	2,919
1995	860	3,170
1996	940	2,919
1997	1,098	3,355
1998	1,321	4,208
1999	1,369	4,353
2000	1,494	4,748
2001	1,571	4,907
2002	1,680	4,150

Source: NCNE Monitoring Reports and State Coordinators' Reports (1990 – 2002)

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