

Revitalizing Nomadic Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria through Counselling Strategies

MA'ARUF NUHU BATAGARAWA, PhD

Department of Education,
Umaru Musa Yar'adua University,
P.M.B.2218, Katsina. Katsina State, Nigeria
E-Mail: maarufn@gmail.com & maaruf.nuhu@umyu.edu.ng

SHEHU YAHAYA TSAGEM, PhD

Department of Educational Foundations
Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto
P. M. B. 2346, Sokoto.
E-Mail: shehu.yahaya@udusok.edu.ng

Abstract

The study examines the current provision, policies and programme implementation of Nomadic Education in Nigeria versus the prevailing times and circumstances. The study of the Special population groups in Nigeria, whose existence has been characterized by the absence of permanent place of residence and by their culture and occupations of permanency of on the move. The recent spate and frequent harassments, intimidations, conflicts and, in some cases, becoming vulnerable to annihilation in their host communities or while on transit to their chosen greener pastures, because the climate dictates where they are and at what time. In the National Policy on Education (2013), the Federal Government of Nigeria stresses the importance of purposeful and functional education to Nigerians. Although, the agency saddled with the responsibility for the provision of education to these groups of people has achieved some major success, its implementation and monitoring leaves much to be desired. Therefore, it is recommended that, the need to overhaul the approaches and enforce stern measures, in educating the Nomads/ herdsman and sensitize the general populace with a view to facilitating effective sustainable development in Nigeria becomes necessary. Counselling strategies could be employed in this direction.

Keywords: *Nomads/herdsman, postoralism, revitalize, sustainable development, counselling*

Introduction

Education helps the recipients to develop good personality characteristics such as gentility, humility, understanding of themselves and others, their physical and social environment. As a concept, education is the means through which an

individual is brought up in the society to which she/she belong in accordance with the general good of the community. The education can be formal or informal and it is recognition of these roles that, Education has also been considered as an effective instrument of economic, social, political and religious growth as well as for social development and principal means of enhancing the welfare of individual in any given society.

In view of the importance of education, the United Nations Organization General Assembly adopted Article 26th of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1949. As a result of these important developments, Governments and countries all over the world, (developed and developing nations) resolved to accord education the priorities it deserved. In Nigeria, Education has been recognized as one of the formal rights of individuals, particularly at the Primary or the Basic education level. Therefore, significant efforts were made by many countries especially in Africa, to make it (primary education) not only free and universal, but also compulsory.

In recent times, Educationists, Psychologists, Sociologists and Counsellors in particular, have been paying more attention to recurring issues such as; Special education group, Girl-child, Non-formal education, Islamic education (Almajiri, Tsangaya, Quranic their integration) and Nomadic education, etc. Education empowers its recipients. According to Beitliwa, (1995), empowerment is the process and the result of the process whereby the powerless or less powerful members of the society gain greater access and control one materials and ideologies of discriminating and subordination and transforms the institutions and structures through which equal access and control over resources is sustained and perpetuated. This type of empowerment can only be acquired thorough qualitative education. Czerny (2013) in Ihedioher & Ehemere (2016) further posits that, empowerment means the ability of one to make possible decision for himself and having the ability to turn that decision into action.

Successive Governments in developing countries particularly in Africa have made concerted efforts to establish, provide and ensure concrete and more purposeful direction aimed at enhancing greater and philosophy of equal educational opportunity to all, irrespective of gender, class or creed. However, in spite of these efforts made by various African Governments and their constant reaffirmation of their commitments, to provide equal opportunities in education to their citizens; many countries are systematically failing to address extreme and persistent educational disadvantage that leave large section of the society marginalized, abandoned or segregated (UNESCO, 2010).

Under International Human Rights Conventions, Nations are obliged to act on those commitments. But, cultural, religious and economic factors, among other factors are often cited as reasons for unequal access to, or quality education to all the citizens. In the light of this the Government introduced Nomadic Education to cater for the children of the nomads who have not benefited from the formal school system because of their entirely different ways of life (UNESCO, 2012).

The National Policy on Education

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013), described education as an *instrument per excellence* for effective National Development of individual into sound and effective citizens and equal opportunities for all citizens. It stressed that purposeful and functional education should be given to Nigerians.

The Goals of Education in Nigeria as contained in the policy are:

Free and democratic society
A just and egalitarian society
A great and dynamic economy
A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

Therefore, it can be asserted that education is a critical component of the social service with two main expected outcomes of delivery priority:

Policies, investments and institutional changes enable access to quality social services to achieve national development targets, including progressive realization of MDG's (or rather SDG's as the case, is currently) and
Changes in individual /household behavior, reflect group public engagement – especially of the poor and disadvantaged in the achievement of better social outcome (UNESCO, 2012).

Challenges of Providing Equal Access to Education

In spite of all the efforts made in an attempts to ensure that basic education is provided to all citizens in Nigeria, Obanya, (2011) observed that, the major problem with the Nigerian ambitious UBE programme (Primary education), including Nomadic Education is that of access. Access simply means. A way of getting near , at, or to something or someone. Thus, to provide equal access to education, simply means the efforts government is making to ensure that all its citizens are educated through the provision of classrooms, qualified teachers, instructional materials etc. However, for the purpose of clarity, access is here defined as the number of school-age children aged 6-11 who can reach school

within thirty (30) minutes, using any means of transportation. There are several dimension of access such as:

Economic access: Poverty and poor economic conditions, especially at the household level, create great problem in generalizing access. This is to say, if the parents are not economically capable (having money) it will be difficult for them to send their children to schools. Therefore, even if the government has made provision in terms of classrooms, teachers etc, to these groups of parents, access to education is difficult.

Physical access or geographical barriers (to expanding and generalizing access): The problem is usually of long distance between home and school. The implication of this problem is that, due to long distance or presence of a river in-between where the school is located and the village/town, there is no way all children can go to schools regularly.

Sociological access: Even when educational facilities may be physically (or geographically) within reach, the potential beneficiary's social conditions could either be a help or a hindrance.

Psychological access: Educational facilities are "accessible" only when the school is able to respond appropriately to children learning needs and learning styles.

Cultural access: As a barrier to access seemed to have derived mainly from aspect of Colonial education.

Based on these clarifications therefore, it can be seen that, 'Access' is a very broad term. Even though, basic education was and still is meant to be universal, free and compulsory for everyone, irrespective of culture, ethnicity, religion, environmental, etc, education, always has some overt/hidden, direct/indirect, legal/illegal cost for individual families (Obanya, 2010). These invariably make the poor parents, the special population, the physically isolated, the disadvantaged group in this case the Nomads – who often find it difficult to send their children to school – etc, while the other people and the sedentary (staying in one place instead of moving to different places) group of people can easily do so.

It has also been argued that, a number of people or some segments of the population in some parts of the country are socially deprived, denied, disadvantaged, marginalized and abandoned/and or/ underserved. In terms of education they were not catered for. These groups of people are by their nature special population. A special population is any group of people identified as different from other people. Mallum (2000) explains that, they are the ones identified with certain empirical evidences or features that, distinguished them from the normal persons and makes the Special Population or Special Target

group, that we cannot help admiring them in a Special way, due to features that make them strange from all others. This does not only involves only the negative qualities. The positive qualities are also included to some extent, for example, if you are very bright or gifted; you are a Special Population.

When one challenged in any way, this makes him a special population. Some become special population through accident, illness or other natural causes. Therefore, the educational needs and challenges of these groups of people require special attention, care, support, training, education and counselling services etc. The focus in this study is on the Nomads and the Nomadic Education in Nigeria. As a result of these and other considerations that, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) and the relevant parts of the National Policy on Education (1981), states that every citizen has equal rights and privileges and that “ Education is the birth right of every Nigerian child and should be brought close to the environment of the child” respectively.

Therefore, in ensuring successful implementation of the Nomadic Education programme, provision was made for the setting of two important bodies; The National Commission for Nomadic Education and the Centre for Nomadic Education.

The Nomads and Nomadic Education

Nigeria has two broad categories of Nomads; Nomadic pastoralists whose population is estimated to be 6.5 million and Artisanal Migrant fishermen, whose population is estimated to be 2.3 million people. The pastoral category is made of the Fulani (5.3 million), Koyam (32,000), the Badawi (20,000) and the dark Buzu (15,000). It should be stressed that, the Fulani are the largest group of pastoralists in Nigeria and are found in 31 out of 36 states of the federation. The other pastoralists are mainly found in Borno plains and the shore of Lake Chad.

According to Alkali as cited in Abdulrahman (2016), Nomads is one of a group of people with no permanent home, people who travel about with their sheep and cattle. When Nomads are mentioned, it does not refers only to Fulbe (Fulani), but to all groups of other people with no permanent home and the Koyam, the Shuwa Arabs, to include, Abzenawa, dark Buzu etc. Nomads therefore, are people who travel from place to place in search for better conditions for their lives or for their animals. Amadi (2016) sees Nomads, as people who travel around from place to place without having one settled place where they live. Nomads are often shepherds and many are hunters and gatherers. Sometimes Nomads do stay in one place all winter and only travel in the summer or the other way round. But, the

needs or problems facing the animals do force them to go where they can find better condition for them.

Pastoralism is a very prominent occupation among the Fulani or Nomads generally and it refers to the form or mode of productive activities of the Nomads. As a system of livestock production, pastoralism is the extensive rearing of cattle sheep goats and camels on and browsed produced by natural pasture (Ade in Tahir, 1991).

Government is aware of these types of problems facing the Nomads, because in June 2000, a meeting was held in Yola, on the status of the educationally disadvantaged such as nomadic postoralists, fishermen, women, girl-child, the street children, the gifted and the physically challenged persons among others. The National Commission for Nomadic Education, since its establishment, no doubt has recorded appreciable achievements, despite its limited financial resources. The unwillingness of many state governments to support as well as contributes to the programme in their respective states had further compounded the problem of Nomadic Education. The problem of inadequate classrooms, instructional materials, means of transportation for teachers on mobile schools, shortage of qualified teachers and mass mobilization of the herdsmen are some of the issues that call for revitalization of the activities, and implementation of the programmes for Nomadic education to succeed as desired. The re-demarcation and demarcation of cattle routs, re-establishment and establishment of approved grazing reserves should be pursued with vigour by governments at all levels. This will go a long way in reducing constant clashes between farmers and herdsmen, thereby giving more rooms for peace and confidence to allow the herdsmen send their children to schools.

In view of these problems, it has become necessary to respond to the challenges, so that coping skills, training, educational and counselling strategies can be provided, in order to reduce or solve the problems affecting these group of people especially the Nomadic populace that are found almost every in Nigeria today. The objectives are to make them functional, effective education which would facilitates the skills adjustment, self- confident, etc, so that each and every citizen can contribute to his/her own personal and community development, economically, socially and politically. It will also motivate them to overcome self-defeating beliefs, superstitions, insecurities, fears and unlock personal limitations to empower their self-esteem, guide them to pin-point those behaviours and challenges that surround them to clear the path to achieve the highest level of satisfaction in their economic, social and professional endeavours.

Nomads, Nomadic Education and Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development and Counselling will go a long way in bringing about the much needed succor the nomads and Nomadic Education demands. Broadly defined, sustainable development is a systems approach to growth and development and to manage and natural resources, produced, and social capital for the welfare of their own and future generation. Sustainable development, as used by the United Nations incorporates both issues associated with land development and brother issues of human development such as education, public health and standard of living, (Ihedioher & Ehemere, 2016). In view of the importance and necessity of sustainable development, in nation building it cannot be achieved without education. This is because, development is a process economy undergoes social and economic transformation leading to a rise in the standard of living, access to basic amenities for all through knowledge.

Counselling, is seen as a mutual and interpersonal relationship through which clients (normally with disaffection, worries, problems, etc) are assisted by Counsellors to attain proper development and maturity, improved functioning and ability to cope with life situations. In this regard, Agi (2013), as cited in Ihedioher & Ehemere, (2016), further argues that, Guidance and Counselling is a revisable tool that cannot be ignored because, it equips the individuals with necessary skills for sustainable development of a nation. In particular, Counselling is an indispensable instrument for sustainable development in view of the fact that, Counselling education facilitates empowerment process, improves nation's economy, provides job opportunities, reduces crime rates, encourage creativity and competitiveness, in nation building, increases public health etc.

Reasons for the Frequent Movement of the Nomads

Educationists, Sociologists have explained the reasons/factors which necessitate, make or force the Nomads to travel, migrate or move from one place to another. The fact of the matter is that, Nomads resides all over Nigeria, but because the Northern arid region rears cattle, the search for grazing land and greener pasture for their cattle have made most of the herdsmen a mobile population (Aminu, 1991, Tahir, 1991, Kosko & Klochko, 1994, Kunanbaeva & Amadi, 2015 and Abdulrahman, 2016). Some of the factors/reasons include:

the need to get better condition, posture for themselves and their animals.
outbreak of diseases such as malaria, render pest and Tse-tse flies,
Conflicts/clashes between the Nomads and their host communities e.g. farmers,
Over taxation (payment of Jangali)

problem of land tenure system which often make it difficult for the Nomads to acquire land or grazing reserve. Etc.

Nomadic Education

Having realized the need to cater for the marginalized group of people such as the Nomads, a number of measures were made or take by the Federal Government to address the issue. Aminu, (1991), observed that, the first step taken was the sympathetic understanding of the Nomadic way of life and the plights of Nomads way of life, as well as, the problems of Nomadism. Nomadism has arisen in response to ecological and climatic factors –first and foremost; inadequate food and water resources. Thus migration with livestock is an unavoidable fact of survival and during the process natural and forced selection of sheep, goats, cattle, camels and horses has been selected for their suitability (Kunanbaeva, 2010).

From the Government’s side, a number of meetings, conferences, workshops and the seminars were conducted and the various stakeholders the Nomads, Hardos, teachers and other community leaders were involved. At the end of all these a national report titled Fair Deal for the Nomads was produced and adopted by the government.

It should be stressed that, Nomadic Education is a well thought-out programme designed for social, political and economic development of all groups of people without permanent home.

According to Gana as cited in Kosko & Klochko (2010) Nomadic Education programme is basically a Primary and Adult education programmes in conforming to the past UPE and present UBE programmes which were designed to wipe out illiteracy, but also designed to improve the productivity of the Nomads, promote social justice and equity and sensitize them to their basic human and constitutional rights as *bonafide* Nigerians.

Scope of Nomadic Education

The National Policy on Education, (2013) in Section 4 discussed in details, Mass and Nomadic Education. Specifically, the Policy explained that Nomadic Education is the first six years of Basic Education provided to the children of the disadvantaged Nomadic population in the country.

The Nomads are classified into three groups namely;

the Nomadic pastoralists,
the migrant fisher folk ; and
the migrant farmers.

The Goals of Nomadic Education

Provide Nomads with relevant and functional basic Education; and improve the survival skills of the Nomads by providing them with the knowledge and skills that will enable them raise their productivity and levels of income and also participate effectively in the nation's socio-economic and political affairs

Importance of Nomadic Education

Nomadic Education should be seen as an important exercise, considering the strategic position of the Nomads population in Nigeria, as the major supplier of protein. Changes in world economy, outbreak of animal diseases, globalization and integration, etc could be some of the reasons Nomads should be enhanced to respond to these changes. Moreover, education is a key, weapon, empowerment, as well as an instrument of positive change.

Therefore, literacy and numeracy (education) will help them to read and write and even access not only the education facilities, but also other important issues like the internet to know not only how to prevent diseases, but also the sale of their products; milk, cheese, butter, hides and skin, as well as, their animals.

Major Problems of the Nomads

The following are some of the problems associated with the Nomadic population in Nigeria:

their constant migration/movement in search of water and pasture in the case of the pastoralists; and fish in the case of the fishermen.

their physical isolation, since they operate in largely inaccessible physical environments.

land tenure system that makes it difficult for the Nomads to acquire land and settle in one place.

Centrality of the child labour in their productive system, thus making it extremely difficult to allow their children to participate in formal schooling.

The irrelevance of the school Curriculum which is tailored to meet the needs of the sedentary groups and thus ignore the educational needs of Nomadic people.

Lack of interests of the Nomads especially *fulbe* (fulani) in western education for the fear that, western education will separate their children from cattle rearing and adopt western lifestyles.

The Need for Revitalization of Nomadic Education

The enumerated problems necessitate the need to revitalize Nomadic Education programme. Revitalize, according to Hornby (2016) means to make someone or something active, healthy or energetic again. Going by the slow pace of the programme which according to experts has no recorded the highest level of success.

Abdulrahman (2016), posit that there is a general consensus all over the world that education should make the recipient more knowledgeable, skillful and become better citizen. The Nomads in spite of their population and the appreciable number, that have been enrolling their children in schools, yet they were seen or are still being seen as not only minority, because of their number (population), location (geography) and terrain (accessibility). They are therefore at disadvantaged and underserved in the present circumstance.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The present mode of operation in terms of implementation of policies and programmes of Nomadic education should be revisited or overhauled in the area of enrolment, accessibility, teaching and learning processes, monitoring, evaluation, recruitment and staff development, as well as, training and retraining. This has become imperative, because these Nomads were left behind not because of their own volition, but because of their age-long neglect which made their situation worst socially, environmentally, economically and above all, in the area of education attainment. Considering the number of years since the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education, much is to be desired. Accordingly the following recommendations are suggested:

There is for the training of more counselors among the Nomadic populace who should be charged with the responsibilities of organizing, sensitizing and mobilizing the herdsmen and the general public in particular on the need to embrace education and continue to enroll their children in schools.

Focus on target group counseling thereby creating more awareness on recent development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), animal production, marketing etc.

International and national non-governmental organizations and other funding agencies across the globe should show more concern on the lives and development of the disadvantaged groups, so as facilitates easy integration with the larger society.

Constitutional and other legislative measures should be pursued with a view to coming out with measures that could bring about economic, social, educational and political advancement of the Nomads.

References

- Abdulrahman, Y. M. (2016). Trends and Innovations in Education of Nigerian Nomadic Population. *Foro de Education*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/fde.2016.014.020.020>, **14** (20): 407-428,
- Amadi, D. C. (2015). Nomadic Education in Nigeria: Using English to foster Communal Peace and enhance The Education of the Herdsmen. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, **3** (5): 16-21
- Aminu, J. (1991). *Evolution of Nomadic Education Policy in Nigeria*. In Tahir, G. (Ed.), *Education and Pastoralism in Nigeria*. Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Fundamental Rights*. Enforcement Procedure Rules 2009, with 2011 Amendments.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2013). *National Policy on Education*. Author.
- Hornby, A. S. (2010). *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, 8th Edition, International Students Edition. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ihedioher, L. N. & Ehemere, I. F. (2016). *Counselling Women for Empowerment and Sustainable Development in the 21st Century: The Case of Nigeria*. A paper presented at the 41st Annual International Conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), at University of Lagos between 21st-26th, August, 2016.
- Kunanbaeva, A. (2010). *Nomads*. Accessed and retrieved at <http://www>.
- Kosko, A. & Klochko, V. I. (1994). Nomadism and Pastoralism –An outline Programme for a Discussion. *Baltic-Pontic Studies*, **2**: 1-4.
- National Commission for Nomadic Education, (2001). Report of the 11th Bi-Annual Meeting of State Coordinators and Directors of Nomadic Education. *Journal of Nomadic Education Studies*, **4**: 98-99.

Tahir, G. (Ed.) (1991). *Education and Pastoralism in Nigeria*. Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, Press.

UNESCO (2010). *Reaching the Marginalized: EFA Global Monitoring Report*. London: Oxford University Press.

UNESCO (2012). *Revitalizing Adult and Youth Literacy in Nigeria*. Programme Document 2003-2012. Abuja, Nigeria: UNESCO.