

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR KAMBARI IN KEBBI STATE: A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

By

Dr. M.G. MAHUTA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO

ABSTRACT

The main thrust of this study was to examine the educational provision for Kambari people of Kebbi State and the problems militating against their educational provision. Participant observation was used as the methodology for the study. In this approach the researcher collected data by actually staying at Warah, Libata, Kwanga, and Yadi respectively for a period of one week. The ethnographic data collected was analyzed using detailed description of events. The major findings of the study include, low level of literacy which resulted to negative attitude towards education among the Kambari and the

school curriculum has not taken recognition Kambari culture as well as their peculiarities.

It was recommended that the system of Adult education should be vastly improved. The Kambari adults needs adult literacy and functional education programme that will be adapted to their basic needs. This can further sensitize Kambari adults and parents on the value of formal education.

INTRODUCTION

The right to education is one of the basic freedoms guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948. A major concern for all nations of the World since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights more than fifty (50) years ago is to work out strategies for achieving their professed goal of education for all. At the Addis Ababa conference of African Ministers of Education in 1961, the year 1980 was set as the target for all African countries to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) (UNESCO, 1961). This led to Nigeria's UPE scheme in 1976, as one of the steps aimed at translating the various ideological statements into concrete observable action. Its primary aim was to bring formal educational opportunities to the doorsteps of every Nigerian child at very minimal cost to parents. More recently, this commitment to the provision of basic education for

all was renewed at the 1990 Jomtien, World Conference on Education for all, and new vigour, determination and zeal were injected into the movement towards education for all by the year 2000 (Junaid, 1993, p. 145).

Today, after more than two decades of the implementation of UPE in Nigeria, a number of successes have been recorded. Universal education has, for instance succeeded in bridging the wide educational gap between the Northern and Southern regions of the country. As noted by Junaid (1993),

Subsequent to the implementation of the UPE scheme all states achieved considerable increase in primary school enrolment. This massive expansion of the primary sector is aimed at providing everyone with the opportunity offered by the education system for basic education (p. 37).

Considerable success has been achieved in the provision of formal education among social groups in Nigeria (for example, the Fulani and migrant fishermen). In recent years, the Federal Government has seen the need to provide the nomadic groups with formal education with a view to integrating them into national life, equipping them with skills to better their lots and enhance their contribution to national development. A significant development was made with the creation of full-fledged National Commission for Nomadic Education in 1989 (Decree 41 of 12 December, 1989). Akinpelu (1994) pointed out that, from 1989 to 1993, a total of 661 schools for nomads had been established in 24 states including Abuja; 24 % (165) of the schools had permanent classrooms; 46 % (293) had temporary classrooms of grass, mats, tarpaulin, etc while as much as 20 % (139) held theirs under the shades of trees (p. 164).

Furthermore, the area of special education has also received appreciable attention from the Federal Government. The

National Policy on Education of 1977 (revised in 1981) formally set out on special education in section 8 of the document. The rational was to equalise educational opportunities for all children, their physical, mental and emotional disabilities notwithstanding, in order that they may fully play their roles in the development of the nation Akinpelu (1994) noted that:

The enrolment of handicapped children into schools has risen sharply; and about 59 % of an estimated enrolment of 15,000 handicapped persons at different levels of education in Nigeria are integrated into the regular school system (p. 168).

However, despite these laudable achievements, there are still social groups that seem to be excluded from formal education. One of these social groups is the Kambari ethnic group found in Kebbi State. The Kambari are insulated from the developments taking place around them (for example, in education and politics).

The Kambari appears to be insulated from developments taking place around them and more especially in the area of education. Education is central to the provision and sustenance of manpower in the modern world. There has been reasonable investment on education since independence. Yet, many parts of Kebbi State lag far behind in educational attainments. The Kambari group appears to be one of those peoples affected in this respect. This trend has many implications, which include inadequate and unskilled manpower and of course marginalisation of the group. Hence, the chances that the group will contribute their quota to the developmental process of the state are little.

However, the main objectives of this preliminary investigation are as follows:-

- i. To examine the educational provision for the Kambari people, and
- ii. To examine the problems militating against the educational provision for Kambari.

This study is significant because one of the major functions of education is social integration. It is therefore believed that the provision of education for the Kambari will make their integration into the mainstream society much easier. Thus, a study on the educational provision for Kambari people is evidently an educational problem that require investigation.

METHODOLOGY

Participant observation, which lends itself to the study of human groups or societies in the various social context, forms the basis for this pilot study. In this approach the researcher collects data by actually staying with the groups and making direct observation on a firsthand basis. In other words, the researcher studies the community in action. In this method both questions and answers are discovered in the social setting being studied (Spradley, 1980).

For the purpose of this study I spent one week among the Kambari communities in Ngaski Local Government Area. I spent three days at Warah, two days at Libata, one day at Kwanga and one day at Yadi respectively. The method provided me the opportunity of some knowledge of their peculiar circumstances and culture, especially as they affect/influence the education of their children. The preliminary investigation consisted of brief visits to some Kambari households, visits to schools, interviews, visits to the traditional leaders at Libata, Yadi, and Kwanga, as well as classroom interaction with pupils etc.

The fieldwork required a lot of writing, quite sometime was spent in note taking writing detailed notes of events, putting on record my informal discussions with the people as well as describing what I saw and did in the process of the study. This I did with great care not to do it openly as it may create suspicion in

the minds of the people under study. For example, I may be suspected to be a government agent and therefore may face the problem of acceptance. Another aspect of this investigation is to briefly explain who the Kambari are. This is briefly done in the next section of this paper.

THE KAMBARI PEOPLE

In Kebbi State the Kambari people are found in the southern part of the State. More specifically they are found in four Local Government Areas namely Ngaski, Yauri, Shanga, and Sakaba. Though there is higher concentration of the Kambari in Ngaski Local Government Area.

Kambari are prominent farmers and it is the occupation of almost all. They are also pastoralists. Their major crops include Millet, Guinea corn, Maize, Rice, G/nut, Yam, Cassava, etc. Kambari live in traditional settlements and in their natural life. They embark on hunting immediately after the harvesting period. The Kambari are prominent farmers who produce crops in large quantities as contribution to the economic development of Kebbi State. However, in spite of the large contributions of the Kambari to national economic development they seem to have been marginalised socially and educationally. Though they participate in economic activities with the sedentary population in society, yet their social life has not been influenced to appreciate the need for and value of formal education.

The Kambari stick to their culture wherever they find themselves. The discussion I had with some educational practitioners indicated that the Kambari are well known to be conservative and very reluctant to social change in society. However, such conservatism may be due to socio-economic and cultural variables. This therefore, calls for special strategies in order to achieve success in bringing about desirable social change and reorientation of the Kambari social group. Their socio-cultural situations include, the Kambari in the bush seem to be cut-off from

the sedentary population, they are conservative people who are stucked to their traditional culture. Another characteristic of Kambari is temporal and spatial migratory patterns. Pastoralism is yet another feature of the Kambari. In this case they have similar characteristic with the Fulani pastoralists.

The various governments efforts to build schools in and around Kambari towns and villages have failed to bring them within the fold of formal education. This failure may not be unconnected to the dominant official approach to change, which tends to emphasise the perspectives of those promoting change. In this regard Tandom (1998) has rightly observed that:

Knowledge systems and knowledge producing institutions have been at the forefront of defining and organising such perspectives. In most societies and periods of human history, the elite have maintained hegemonic control over such perspectives for understanding and changing social reality have mostly been the perspectives of those in position of power in a given society. Thus, dominant knowledge about the perspectives on social reality have largely been those supported by the elite and the powerful in a given society (pp. 85 - 56).

There is therefore, the need for a new approach in order to provide formal education for the minority groups and their children. This new approach should focus on the subaltern or bottom up perspectives, rather than emphasising the perspectives of the official approach. Education is a right to all irrespective of sex, socio-cultural or economic backgrounds, all people also need

95

it at every stage of life. Education will help people to cope with the complexity of choices in our rapidly changing society.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR KAMBARI

The existing policy

There is no special recognition given to Kambari culture and their peculiarities in relation to the provision of education. The objectives of the educational policy are that of providing universal primary education with a view to providing basic educational opportunity for all children as well as the integration of all social groups into the mainstream Nigerian society. By implication therefore, this means that the Kambari who live in bush encampments would have to abandon their culture and their peculiar circumstances to settle in the town for them to be educated.

The existing policy for the education of Kambari is not different from the conventional educational policy in Kebbi State. Ngaski Local Government which is the target group for this study has a total of forty (40) primary schools and 2 secondary schools. All these schools are concentrated in towns and villages. Thus, considering the peculiar circumstance of the Kambari, they can not fit into the conventional schools attended by sedentary people. There is no special provision for the Kambari children. The nature of intervention is generally that of the top-down perspective whereby schools are established and funded by the government. The views and consent of the Kambari population are not considered or the Kambari are not consulted before establishing these schools. Schools are generally established when those in power feel that a particular place(s) should have school. The views of the recipients are relegated to the background. This official government practice for social change (which is usually initiated and supported by the elite and the powerful), conforms with the observation of Tandom (1998), on the top-down perspective for social change.

Staffing:

There are teachers of Kambari origin teaching in the primary and secondary schools in the Local Government. Generally speaking, there is the problem of shortage of teachers for the conventional schools. The few that are there require training and retraining as only few of them are qualified to teach in the primary school (for example, at Libata I, Libata II and Kwanga Model Primary Schools). A school with a total population of 222 pupils with only eleven (11) teachers is not likely to perform well. This could be attributed to teachers' inability to handle such a large populated school.

In this respect, the training being provided at colleges of education and faculties of education in the Nation's Universities is not adequate for this special education (for Kambari children). This therefore calls for adequate re-training to equip them with necessary ingredients and skills for survival and functioning in the Kambari peculiar situations (eg. Sitting of schools, opening and closing hours, the organisation of the learning content etc).

In addition to the above, the interview I conducted with one of the officials of the L.G.E.A., shows that Ngaski LGA has a total of 235 teachers, 204 males and 31 females. Their qualifications are as follows Grade II 80, Grade II referred 31, NCE 56, Degree 04, others (i.e. ND, HIS, SIS, Grade III, WASC) 64.

Infrastructural facilities

There are forty (40) schools in Ngaski Local Government Area. By the 1991 national census the projected population of Ngaski L.G.A. in the year 2000 was estimated at 94,060. The eligible school age children in the L.G.A. is calculated to be 18,567. The study gathered that the total actual enrolment is 10,073 in 1999/2000 session. The net enrolment ratio was therefore calculated to be 54.25 %. It can be stated that over 50 % of the eligible school children in the L.G.A. are enrolled in school.

97

Physical and instructional facilities are very vital for effective teaching and learning process. This therefore, means that non-availability or inadequacy of it can affect the various efforts aimed at the provision of education to the desired social groups.

Part of the one week was used to conduct both school and classroom observations. The observations clearly indicated that both physical and instructional facilities in the schools are grossly inadequate. For example, at Libata I and Libata II Model Primary Schools, there is no single classroom. Lessons are conducted under shade of trees. There is not even a single furniture for pupils. The pupils sit on big stones. The schools have no Headmaster's Office. Both the Headmaster and teachers sit outside. At the time of my visit there was one table being shared by the Headmaster and his Assistant.

Furthermore, the teaching and learning facilities are grossly inadequate. I was made to understand from the discussion I had with the Headmasters and some members of staff that, facilities such as pupils' textbooks, duster, blackboards, etc were either inadequate or not available at all. These problems facing the schools as well as the poor school environment are unlikely to facilitate high quality teaching and learning. It is important to note that the preponderance of inadequate or non availability of teaching and learning facilities in the schools affect learning environment which is a significant determinant for effective learning. A poor teaching and learning environment presents very limited stimulus to children thereby causing poor performance among pupils.

Curriculum.

This investigation also sought to find out whether the Kambari children are provided equal curriculum exposure or otherwise. It was also investigated whether the curriculum has taken cognisance of the Kambari culture and their peculiar needs and aspirations. Junaid (1993) maintained that a well-planned curriculum is expected to cover all the kinds of knowledge, skills

and other desirable experiences that are defined educational. These include among other things; Technology, Science, Politics and Economics as well as History, Arithmetic, English, etc.

This study found out that the Kambari children are given the same curriculum exposure with the children of the sedentary population. Basically, it is the conventional school curriculum that is being used in all the schools (in both the Kambari and non-Kambari) communities of Ngaski Local Government Area. This clearly means that there is no special curriculum meant for Kambari children.

PROBLEMS MILITATING AGAINST THE EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR KAMBARI

This section is concerned with the problems militating against educating the Kambari children. This is treated in relation to the official view, that is, the views of educational practitioners on the field and the problems from the point of view of the Kambari.

The official view

In my attempt to find out the problems facing the education of Kambari and their children, I conducted interviews and had discussions with some officials of the Local Government Education Authority. In the light of this, the following are identified as some of the problems inhibiting the provision of education for Kambari children.

1. Negative attitude:- There is high rate of illiteracy and low level of school attendance. Most Kambari parents are illiterates and tend to show little or no interest in literacy education. The level of school attendance is generally low among the Kambari children. Kambari do not want to attend school. This according to the official view is caused by unemployment and that they sometimes migrate when they hear that a school is going to be established in their community.

2. Isolation from sedentary population:- The Kambari are very reserved people and conservative to their culture. Even in the market (where the Kambari and other ethnic groups meet) they tend to isolate themselves from the sedentary population, and thus, low level of integration.
3. Highly protective of their culture:- The Kambari have negative attitude to other ethnic groups, for fear of being influenced by the culture of sedentary groups.
4. Teachers resist posting to Kambari areas because of many problems associated with these areas. For example, the provision of social amenities is generally very poor (like water, electricity, fertiliser and roads etc).

The point of view of Kambari

During the one-week stay among the Kambari I was able to visit some households at Libata, Kwanga, Warah and Yadi, I was opportuned to talk to heads of the households visited. The discussion with these households revealed the following:-

1. Fear of adulteration of their culture:- The Kambari perceive schools as threat to their culture and values. They are very conservative to their culture and therefore frown at any attempt to social change.
2. Lack of employment for school leavers:- The discussion with the head of households showed that lack of employment for school leavers is another reason why parents show negative attitude for the education of their children. From the investigation it was discovered that Kambari children (boys and girls) are used for cattle rearing and other house chores. The negative attitude of Kambari parents to the education of their children created in the children the problem of lack of motivation for learning.

... to

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The one week preliminary investigation revealed among other things, the following findings:-

1. There is a low level of literacy, which has resulted to negative attitude towards education among the Kambari people.
2. Lack of statistics on the Kambari:- There is no statistics on the population of Kambari in the Local Government Area as well as the number of Kambari children in the forty (40) schools in the Local Government Education Authority etc.
3. Curriculum has not taken recognition of the Kambari culture as well as their peculiarities.
4. There is inadequacy of infrastructural facilities.
5. Teachers are grossly inadequate.
6. Lack of basic social amenities for the rural Kambari and generally in Ngaski Local Government Area. For example, good drinking water, electricity, accessible roads, and fertiliser etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the preliminary investigation conducted and the problems militating against the educational provision for Kambari identified therein, the following recommendations are advanced:-

- i. The system of adult education should be vastly improved. The Kambari adults need adult literacy and functional education programme adapted to their basic needs. This can further sensitise Kambari adults and parents on the value of formal education.
- ii. The government through the National Population Commission should provide statistics of the Kambari population. This would help to plan adequately for their education.
- iii. In the area of curriculum, there is nothing to attract the Kambari for education, which resulted from the non-

recognition of the Kambari culture and peculiarities by the curriculum. There is thus the need to incorporate Kambari culture so as to attract them to enrol into the formal school system. Consequently, new educational provision suited to the need and demands of the Kambari should be devised to meet their peculiar circumstances. For example, school timings so as not to conflict with their occupation (farming).

- iv. Government should provide enough teaching and learning materials. The materials should also be relevant to the needs and aspirations of the Kambari people.
- v. Since teachers are inadequate, the government should through the State Primary Education Board provide more teachers to man the forty schools in the L.G.A. The provision of adequate teachers would enhance performance in schools.
- vi. Government should create employment opportunities for the youths to encourage the Kambari parents to send their children to school.

The recommendations put forward if considered for implementation, would amount to minimise those factors militating against the provision of education for Kambari children in Ngaski Local Government Area of Kebbi State.

REFERENCES

Akinpelu, J.A. (1994). "Education for Special Groups" In D.O. Akinkugbe (ed.) *Nigeria and Education: The challenges Ahead*, Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd.

Federal Ministry of Education (1981). *The National Policy on Education*: Lagos, Federal Ministry of Education.

Junaid, M.L. (1993). *Basic Education in Sokoto: A Situation and Policy Analysis. Report of a Joint FME/UNICEF Research on Basic Education in Nigeria.*

National Commission for Nomadic Education (1996). *Decree 12 of 1989, Kaduna. Kade Communication.*

UNESCO (1961). *Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, Addis Ababa 15th - 25th May 1961, Final Report, UNESCO, Paris.*

Tandom, R. (1998). "Knowledge, Participation and Employment" in H. Hinzen and Samlovsk, (ed.) *Adult Education and Development*, Bonn: Institute of International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association.