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**LITERACY AND NUMERACY EDUCATION NEEDS OF KAMBARI
ADULTS IN KEBBI STATE**

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Abstract

The main thrust of the study was to examine the provision of literacy and numeracy education for the indigenous Kambari. The study assessed the educational needs of the indigenous Kambari in the area of literacy and numeracy using qualitative research methodology (participant observation, ethnographic interviewing and focus group discussions). Kayiwo and Masamale villages in Kebbi State were used for the study. The study identified that most of the indigenous Kambari are illiterates and thus require literacy and numeracy education. One of the recommendations of the study is that, the Kambari should be provided with functional literacy and numeracy education.

INTRODUCTION

Minorities and indigenous people irrespective of their socio-cultural and socio-economic background should have equal educational opportunities like their counterparts in the country. Wagley and Haris (1958) in Ardo (1991) maintained that the concept of minority has been defined and described as follows:

- i. Minorities are subordinated segment of complex state societies.

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- ii. Minorities have special physical or cultural traits which are held in low esteem by dominant segment of the society.
 - iii. Minorities are self-conscious units, bond together by the special traits, which their members share, and by special disabilities, which they bring.
 - iv. The socio-economic disadvantage of the minority group constitutes a fundamental aspect of their experience.

In a related development Dejardo (1997) stated that:

*Indigenous peoples are the discovered,
the encountered, the colonized and
Subordinated.....p.47*

There are quite a number of ethnic minorities and indigenous people in developing nations of the world. Thus, there are various educational provisions for them despite ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Example of ethnic minorities and indigenous people in the developing nations are: The Tuarage, in Libya, the Massai and Tuekana in Kenya, Fulbe, Shuwa Arabs, Buduma and Kwanyan and the Kambari in Nigeria. The education of the minority and indigenous peoples are affected by their social and educational rights and privileges. In many parts of Asia, Turkey and Afghanistan in particular, mobile education schemes have been made for mobile group by a considerable mass movement from summer to winter grazing while the period of migration is treated as school holidays. In Nigeria, both the mobile and primary school boarding projects are practiced; while in Libya, the boarding model has been adopted.

However, it would not be out of place to state that, various countries have different ways of tackling the problem of educating and integrating the wandering minority groups. The most important thing is that education for minority groups is planned according to the peculiarities of the groups. Thus, it has to be geared towards meeting the needs and aspirations of the concerned people. In the light of education for the minority and indigenous groups, three (3) main approaches are being adopted at different times by various governments. They are:-

- i. Assimilation, which is the process of absorption and observing the traditional values of the dominant society (Hamilton, 1972)

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- ii. Accommodation or integration which is aimed at producing a culture society to eliminate differences which is the ultimate goal of assimilation (Junaid, 1987).
 - iii. Cultural pluralism or multicultural education, which is aimed at promoting awareness and acceptance of diversity. This is meant to eliminate prejudice and discrimination (Kirp, 1979 and Bullivant, 1981).

Many African countries have taken measures to educate their minorities. For example, Ezeomah (1995) maintained that Algerian government has recognized the educational disadvantages of nomads, which led to enacting an ordinance in September 1967 fundamentally aimed at reducing the educational imbalance among its peoples. This therefore encouraged equality of access to schools for all children.

The provision of education for the nomadic population of Ethiopia has also gain a great priority. The strategy that was found appropriate to attract the children of nomadic population for basic education was opening schools at significant points of population concentration and providing the students with shelter, clothing, food, stationery, and other educational facilities free. Other alternatives include the establishment of boarding and day schools combined with the pastural environment. These methods and strategy have been recognized as one of the best to overcome or at least to minimize the problem of educational development in the nomadic areas (Defege and Kidane, 1995).

It is interesting to note that various developing countries are making concerted efforts to provide education for its marginalized population. These efforts include programmes/curricula material, training of teachers, funding action oriented research need (Bugeke, 1995). He contended further that:-

*There must be deliberate involvement of communities
In the investigation of their own economic, social, political
Cultural and environmental realities to participate in the
planning, implementation and evaluation of their own
programme through community based education approach
(P. 64).*

From the above view, one observes that Bugeke shares the same view with Tandom (1998) who advocated for participatory research as a philosophy of botton-up approach to social change. The Philosophy will provide the

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opportunity to plan adequately for the concerned group, bearing in mind their peculiar problems, needs and aspirations.

However, Nigeria has made various efforts to educate as well as integrate its advantaged, or marginalized or minority groups. These groups in the educational sense according to Umar (2000) can be categorized as:

Those who have little or no access to formal and non-formal education. Their level of participation in existing educational programmes is generally low. Thus illiteracy among such groups is high since educational services are non-existent or totally inadequate (p. 2).

While there may be different reasons for their low levels of participation in education, Umar (2000) maintained that one of the defining characteristics of educationally disadvantaged groups is their inability to benefit from existing educational services. Examples of disadvantaged groups include the Kambari people, nomadic Fulani migrant farmers, artisans and fishermen and the disabled people.

The Kambari as a good example of the disadvantaged group severely disadvantaged in the provision of education and other welfare facilities because they live in remote inaccessible areas, and because their children follow them to the farm, they hardly attend schools established for sedentary pupils. In recent years, the Nigerian government has seen the need to provide the disadvantaged groups with formal education with a view to integrating them into national life, and equip them with skills to better their lots and enhance their contribution to national development. It is in the light of this that a full-fledged National Commission for Nomadic Education was established in 1989 (decree 41 of 12th December, 1989)

Who are the Indigenous Kambari?

The indigenous Kambari, which is the main thrust of this study is "Ashingini". But the term Kambari, has been used for the purpose of this paper since that is the name they are generally addressed by the people of Kebbi State and the country at large. They are conservatives who stuck to their traditional culture and very reluctant to social change and innovation. They also have temporal

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and spatial migratory patterns. The indigenous Kambari are also pastoralists. The indigenous Kambari are predominantly farmers. They also practice animal husbandry.

The indigenous Kambari are mostly illiterates and are severely marginalized in Kebbi State thereby, making it difficult for their integration into the mainstream society. The provision of literacy and numeracy education for the indigenous Kambari will help them to benefit from the current Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. This will enhance their socio-economic and political contribution to the development of Kebbi State and Nigeria at large.

Methodology

Participant observation otherwise known as field research was used for this study. The researcher collected data by actually staying with the people he was studying (i.e. The target group). Two indigenous Kambari encampments or villages were used for the study. They are: Kayiwo and Masamale Kambari villages. Data were collected and analysed by way of detailed description of themes and events surrounding the Kambari to be discussed.

Literacy and Numeracy Education for Kambari Adults: Discussion of Findings

The present study has clearly identified a high level of illiteracy among the indigenous Kambari parents. The census conducted during the fieldwork showed that there are 208 illiterate adult men and women at Kayiwo village. While at Madamale there are 235 illiterate adults, men and women, making a total of 443 illiterates in the two indigenous Kambari encampments used for this study. Hence, there is the need for them to be provided with adult literacy education. This in turn, is expected to bring about socio-economic development for the indigenous Kambari population. The adult literacy education is to involve both Kambari men and women. In this case, classes are to be organised for teaching the 3Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). This approach is an extension of adult education programme, which is already in operation across the state. This form of adult education is to be conducted in a non-formal way, considering the fact that the recipients are adults and their pre-occupation is farming and animal husbandary. For the education to be accepted by the indigenous Kambari therefore, it has to be relevant and functional to their lives and needs.

Though the Kambari live in the indigenous or isolated bush encampments, yet

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they come to the village and towns around them, thereby interacting with the sedentary people. For example, cases of litigation and taxation, court sermons, bicycle license, all require literacy if they are to operate successfully in the society. Thus, the relevance of literacy to the indigenous Kambari cannot be over-emphasised. Basic literacy is capable of providing them access to information concerning various aspects of their life; for example, their ability to be able to read and write can help in no small measure to operate successfully and also enable them to exercise greater control over their indigenous Kambari existence. Literacy is an important weapon with which people can develop themselves. In addition, literacy education would enable them to participate with understanding in the administration of their own affairs and in their economic, social and political advancement.

Moreover, a relevant functional adult literacy and numeracy education may provide the indigenous Kambari the following:

- a. It will help the Kambari to free themselves from the agony of ignorance, think for themselves, to make their own decisions and to execute those decisions for themselves;
- b. It will foster among the indigenous Kambari adults the spirit of community participation in development. Thus, it will make them to appreciate social services as an important and interesting function of educated leadership. It will pave way for the development efforts in their areas;
- c. It will make the indigenous Kambari aware of the need for social and economic improvement, which affects them both in their domestic and social life.
- d. It will allow the indigenous Kambari to conceptualise in their own perspective, the benefits of literacy and education as well as have a positive thinking about education and educated people; and
- e. It will help to allow the indigenous Kambari to further appreciate the need for their children to be educated like their non-Kambari counterparts in the villages and towns around them.

The provision of adult literacy and numeracy has been identified as one of the current educational needs of the indigenous Kambari adults. In an ethnographic study Mahuta (2002) has shown that most of the Kambari adults

and parents (443) can neither read nor write as they are illiterates. This therefore means that they require an adult literacy and numeracy education programme adapted to their basic needs and aspirations. This can further sensitise them to conceptualise and appreciate the value of formal education for their children. Again, making education accessible to the indigenous Kambari adults is another justification that education is not only for children.

The indigenous Kambari adults are not provided with any form of adult literacy and numeracy. They have shown basic interest for literacy and numeracy. The indigenous Kambari have shown their willingness to register for adult literacy and numeracy classes if they get someone to teach them. "We want to be able to read and write". This has been the popular view of the indigenous Kambari adults, Mahuta (2002).

However, the choice of time for the conduct of adult literacy and numeracy lessons has been a serious point of concern for the indigenous Kambari adults. Their popular opinion in this regard has been in the evening and during the dry season. According to them, since farming is their major occupation, they can hardly attend adult literacy classes during the wet season. Some of the indigenous Kambari adults, though very few of them (45) suggested that adult literacy classes can be conducted in the night during the dry season. This positive attitude for adult literacy and numeracy education among the indigenous Kambari adults can rightly be attributed to their realisation that, with adult literacy and numeracy education, they can read, write and do some simple arithmetical calculations, which will help them for a good living. In addition, they will find it easier to relate with other people in the village and towns and in case they travel to other places, interaction will also be much easier.

The ethnographic investigation revealed that workload is a factor, that may likely constitute an obstacle for the indigenous Kambari adults (male and female) in the pursuit of education. While the male adults spend most of the day in the farm, the female adults are very busy doing household activities as well as petty farming activities. However, the conventional school timing is between 7:30 am and 1:45 pm which falls within the daily work period on the farms between 7:00 am and 4:00 pm. The indigenous Kambari adults lack the time to attend schools unless of course they are to abandon their indispensable farming activities. This is practically not possible for them to abandon farming in favour of school attendance. Therefore, adult education as an option for the indigenous Kambari should be organised in such a way that it does not conflict

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with their cultural identity and occupation. In addition, the indigenous Kambari adults have always insisted that unless adult literacy classes are established in their encampments, it will be difficult for them to participate. This is simply because of the nature and demands of their occupation, which is basically farming.

However, bearing in mind the hours within which the Kambari stay on the farms, (from about 7:00 am to 4:00 pm), adult education classes should be conducted in the evening from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. This arrangement would still give the indigenous Kambari adults the opportunity of attending to their farms as well as participate in literacy and numeracy education classes.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to indicate that the current pattern of providing adult education across the state seems to be incompatible with the indigenous Kambari circumstances. This is in consideration of the fact that they have peculiar life styles when compared with the sedentary people. For instance, the issue of regular attendance may be impossible because of farming and other socio-cultural activities which they attach priority to. In addition, the curriculum of the adult education programme should be designed in such a way that it becomes relevant to the needs and aspirations of the indigenous Kambari. Thus, the curriculum design for the provision of adult education programmes for the indigenous Kambari should consider various issues that are capable of making the programme acceptable to them.

The adult education programme for the indigenous Kambari should be delivered in non-formal approaches. This means that it does not require the strict school routine or rules and regulations, which are characteristics of formal education. The education for the Kambari adults does not have to take place in the classrooms of the conventional schools. They can be taught in their houses, under the shades of trees, and in a lot of various strategic places the Kambari consider most appropriate.. In addition, it requires the use of appropriate people to disseminate the needed information to the Kambari. This clearly means that the existing way through which adult education programmes are delivered need to be re-organised in the case of the Kambari for their maximum benefit. Their socio-cultural, educational, and ofcourse their general life style, have to be considered in designing an educational programme, if it is to be made relevant to the Kambari's existence. If adult education is re-designed to meet the needs of the Kambari, they would accept it. Junaid (1987) maintained that:

Although this concept of adult education is generally accepted as necessary in the work place for all workers and professionals as stated in the new National Policy on Education of 1981, it should also be recognised as essential for the pastoral Fulani, who are equally outside the formal school system. (P 408).

As earlier shown that most of the indigenous Kambari are illiterates, they can benefit from the adult education programme if designed in their own perspective. The programme should first of all consider or identify their needs and of course allow them to participate in planning for their education and that of their children. The curriculum for the indigenous Kambari adult education programme should be open, flexible and quite relevant to the contemporary needs and problems of the indigenous Kambari adults.

It is pertinent to demonstrate that in order to reach out to a greater number of indigenous Kambari communities, it is essential to establish as many centres as possible. Equally important is the need to recruit and train a large number of instructors to handle the programme. The training of instructors for the indigenous Kambari adults would have to take cognisance of their socio-cultural bearing as well as the place they live in. This implies that there is the need to train special teachers or instructors from amongst the indigenous Kambari or instructors who are of Kambari origin. In this case, the problem of socio-cultural misunderstanding can be reduced to a great extent.

It is important to mention at this juncture that issues relating to the aim, pedagogy, and of course resources should be well addressed by educational planners if the potential aim of providing education for the Kambari is to be achieved. Activities and programmes should be introduced that are geared towards their social integration.

Summary of the main findings

1. The indigenous Kambari population have been isolated and excluded in the area of education and in the provision of other social services; hence, there is low level of literacy and numeracy, which has resulted to the marginalisation of the indigenous Kambari in the State.
2. There are no schools in the indigenous Kambari encampments or

- villages at all.
3. The indigenous Kambari adults need functional literacy and numeracy education.
 4. There is a top-bottom approach in the provision of education and other facilities for people in the state.

Conclusion

From the presentation and discussion of the ethnographic investigation, it can be concluded that:

1. The formulation of special educational policy in the area of basic literacy and numeracy for adults can make the indigenous Kambari to be integrated into the modern education system.
2. The indigenous Kambari require a developmental policy that will improve the quality of life of the Kambari.
3. The indigenous Kambari require a special form of mobilization with a view to sensitise them to appreciate the need for and value of functional literacy and numeracy education.

Recommendations

Following the assessment of the provision of literacy and numeracy education for the indigenous Kambari adults, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The indigenous Kambari needs adult literacy and numeracy education. This can further sensitise them on the value of formal education for their children.
2. In order to ensure adult literacy and numeracy education among the indigenous Kambari, the government should endeavour to provide them with basic social amenities such as water, health care services and fertilizers.
3. Schools should be established in the indigenous Kambari

encampments. This will help to make them participate in modern education.

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4. In view of the peculiarities of the indigenous Kambari, government should think of adopting a bottom-up approach in developing adult literacy and numeracy education for Kambari adults.

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