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Improving Pastoral Education Program for Sustainability in Nigerian Economy

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Abstract

This paper seeks to discuss the relevant of pastoral education program and its impact on Nigerian economy. Nigeria as a nation in Africa have been struggle to improve pastoral education program which was linked to her education system as a step forward towards improving sustainable economy and as well as to improve literacy rate among pastoralists population nationwide. Pastoralists are category of people which their occupation does not make them to be stable in one place rather they move from one place to another for their livelihood. Pastoralists are mostly Fulani herdsman which were left behind in Atlantic race of education. Despite several intervention by the federal government on pastoral education, there are many factors sounding the implementation of pastoral education comprises attitudes of the pastoralists, under funding of pastoralists education program and activities, poor infrastructural facilities, lack of qualify teachers, low enrolment and low literacy rate among others.. This article suggested the way forward towards improving pastoral education program which include proper orientation, public enlightenment, proper funding, qualify teachers and review of basic curriculum among other that would help in improving education of nomad/pastoralists population in Nigeria.

Introduction

Nomads are people who move from one place to another, instead of living in one place. Nomads travel around from place to place without having a specific place to settle or live. Some are hunters, some are fishermen and a large number of them are herders of domestic animal. Sometimes, nomads do stay in one place in all summer period and only travel in the winter, or the other way round. Most nomads are family men herding their livestock, such as cattle, horses, donkeys, goats, camels, or sheep. Nomads who follow their herds usually live in tents with very few items inside¹.

Pastoral nomads constitute an important segment of Nigerian population and make an immense contribution to the socio-economic development of the nation just like other special groups. They are found in virtually all the regions of the country, with a large concentration in the north-eastern, north-western and north-central². The activities of nomads involve both men and women and the men usually own the cattle while women own the dairy product, making it their duty to sell the milk. Pastoral nomads, like other people in the world need basic education as enshrined in the motto of Universal Basic Education programme (Education for all is the responsibility of all). The nomadic education program started officially in November 1986, after the Yola National Workshop on Nomadic Education.

The workshop resolved that: "the nomads needed a fair deal through the provision of western education and other social amenities to reciprocate their contributions to nation building", accordingly, the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) began functioning in January 1990 with 206 schools, 1,500 pupils, and 499 teachers. Ninety-seven of the schools had permanent buildings. The rest of the schools operated in temporary structures or under the trees. Some schools had furniture, others used mats. The schools taught a modified curricula in English, arithmetic, social studies, and primary science, developed by the Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto (NCNE, 1991). To adapt to the work rhythms, nomadic schools run morning and afternoon shifts, and pupils rotate between herding and schooling. By January 1991, the NCNE had spent 72,930 naira to produce textbooks in the four curricula areas. The first prototype of a collapsible, mobile classroom manufactured by the Federal Science Equipment Manufacturing Center, Enugu, was tested on April 23, 1991.

The nomadic parents are locked into their own traditions and were stubbornly opposed to any change or push for innovation. At best, they are seen as very conservative and slow to embrace the new national society in historical settings in which "the rest of the country cannot wait for them to develop". One of the manifesting ways to resist change is to reject education and such rejection is understood as ultimately based on ignorance because they don't know the value of education". Pastoralists' attitude towards school is described as irrational against their own interest. They do not see the importance of being 'enlightened' so as to be pulled out of their primitive darkness into the modern world³

They do not even believe that education will provide the family with a source of income that will 'make them less dependent on livestock'. For example, they avoid sending girls to school because of the belief that an educated girl will not fetch cows on the day of her marriage: "they attached more importance or value to livestock more than anything else even human lives". They are said to persist in accumulating huge herds of cattle without caring about their quality.

The animals are thin, ill, full of ticks and hardly marketable. Large herds force the nomads to live in a nomadic way of life so as to be able to feed their livestock and as such, they cannot live in a proper house, have easy access to schools for their wards and other services such as hospitals, portable water and electricity⁴. In the words of a government officer: ‘we advice them to have small, high quality herds and settle in one place but they are conservative with the traditional conviction that the number of cattle one has determines his wealth without taking cognizance of the quality of the cattle.

The pastoral nomads tend to have erroneous belief that the nature of the physical environment is suitable only for grazing purpose and not for any educational activities. This is capable of influencing their attitude towards any educational program unless adequate measures are taken to change their attitude in one way or the other⁵.

However, the pastoral nomads are well known for their constant movement from one area to another in search of pasture for their cattle. They find this as a normal way of life that has passed from one generation to another. As a result of this migratory way of life, Chukwuma observed that the nomadic community may feel indignant about education, seeing it as a hindrance to movement for the welfare of their cattle⁶. Although many showed commendable interests and zeal to learn how to read and write, yet this zeal is challenged when the need to leave a certain area arises.

Educating pastoral nomads is confronted with many challenges due to their conservative attitude. One of the contentious issues in the pastoral nomadic education programme in Nigeria is how to change their attitude towards nomadic education in order to encourage their participation and thus benefit from the programme. For instance, Adriansen and Nielsen argued that “Nomadic fulani use their children for different roles in the maintenance of herds, thereby depriving them of pursuing education⁷”. They further pointed out that children start herding at age of five. This herding responsibility to children, therefore, has some repercussion on their participation in nomadic education. Obviously, the consequence of this situation could be devastating. These children will not have the opportunity to participate in nomadic education programme. It is therefore, worth noting that as a result, mass illiteracy has now become an endemic symbol of underdevelopment; a disease which is intractable and a phenomenon much prevalent in developing or non-industrialized countries of the world”.

The provision for nomadic education became necessary as a result of the attitude of nomads towards Universal Basic Education partly occasioned by their socio-economic life of moving from one place to another in search of greener pasture and water for their livestock. In that case, the regular schools could not suit the educational needs of the nomadic children. Education will be provided to cater for all sons and daughters of Nigerian Citizens” nomadic people inclusive⁸. To cater for those who may not have access to regular schools, the National Policy on Education 2014 revised edition states that, wherever possible, arrangement would be made for such children to assist their parents in the morning and go to school in the evening, special and adequate inducement would be provided to the teachers in rural areas to make them stay on the job⁹. A national Policy on Nomadic Education was drawn up under the contention that nomadic education could be an indirect solution to many, if not all, of the nomads’

problems. According to Ezeomah, it is only through education that the nomads' lifestyle could be improved. In author's view, the benefits of nomadic education as set out include:

1. To learn to stand up for their grazing rights and to improve the land they do own;
2. To have 'scientific' knowledge about disease and how to avoid it;
3. To learn how to better feed and manage their herds;
4. To learn how and when to sell their livestock and how to increase milk production, that is, to maximize their profits;
5. To know more about health care for their families and animals;
6. To be taught leadership abilities so that they can participate actively in development programmes;
7. To become aware of avenues of settlement should they decide to settle¹⁰.

According to Musgrave, nomadic children that come from homes with educated members would follow the steps of the family members. This is true in the sense that many children would like to associate themselves with their parent's education and even need to achieve higher¹¹. This increases the child's desire for schooling just as the parent would also desire his or her child to be enrolled and attend school. Education is supportive to development thus; enlightened nomadic parents would not wish to be at home with children, they desire to be the key models in the society. This context when keenly taken, it can boost enrolment, attendance and participation of primary school children. In addition, nomadic parents with high level of education tend to be above average socio-economically¹². This means they can fund their children's education with an ease as compared to those with low educational status.

Income level of nomadic parents has an influence also on parents' ability to pay fees and provide other school-related levies, such as uniforms and stationeries used in school. According to Nair and Rekha, poverty has a negative impact on school readiness, environmental influence on child development, school development programmes and can lead to emergence of slum¹³. Ferguson also posited that nomadic children from low income families start school behind their peers from affluent families and are less likely to remain in school as compared to those from rich families¹⁴. Father's income has a great impact on nomadic children's retention or attrition from school. Children from poor families immersed in credit constraints are three times more likely to drop out of school in rural China¹⁵. School fees and other costs may cause children's dropout from school when their parents cannot handle these costs. Colclough, Rose and Tembon¹⁶ submitted that parental inability to pay fees was the main cause of not attending schools by many children in Nigeria while Miako (2012) also added that school levies lead to absenteeism, poor transition from primary to secondary schools and even drop outs because many parents are affected by their earnings.

Nomads' religion/culture also plays significant role in nomadic children's enrolment and retention. Enrolment and retention of nomadic children in primary schools showed that the enrolment rate of the children is always lower significantly. In the same vein, the rate of retention also follows the same pattern. This ugly scenario calls for serious concern. Many

factors have been attributed for this negative trend. Cultural and religious beliefs beside the widespread poverty level of most parents and guardians are responsible for this condition. It has been an old time belief that the nomadic children should not be enrolled in school but should be married out or graze cattle. Based on religious beliefs, many nomadic parents are always against enrolling their children in schools in order to acquire western education. In the same vein, retention of the nomadic children in primary schools has been on the decline over the years.

Another cultural factor is the ethnic group which is the highest echelon and the conflation of the kinship groups. It embodies all members with a common origin, sharing a founding ancestor whose personage may or may not be known, or whose genealogical link may not be traced to individual members. The clan is the sub-unit of the tribe, which anthropologists defined as the "collective descendants of a vaguely known historical ancestor" The clan members, by tradition, share mythical historical ancestry. Each clan consists of about a thousand to five thousand members. Genealogical ties among clan members are obscure. A clan consists of several lineage groups, although in language and territory, the distinction between the clan and the lineage is blurred.

Migration which is the action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically to lowlands in winter and highlands in summer also affects enrolment and retention of pupils in schools. Migration is a type of pastoralism or nomadism which has to do with seasonal movement of livestock between fixed summer and winter pastures. Generally, only the herd's travel with a certain number of people necessary to tend them, while the main population stays at the base. In contrast, horizontal migration is more susceptible to being disrupted by climatic, economic, or political change. Traditional or fixed migration has occurred throughout the inhabited world, particularly Europe and western Asia. It is often important to pastoralist societies, as the dairy products of migration flocks and herds (milk, butter, yogurt and cheese) may form much of the diet of such populations. In many languages, there are words for the higher summer pastures. This migration generally has effect on enrolment of nomadic children in school. Even if they are enrolled, the incessant movement searching for fodders for the grazing animal will also affect their retention in schools.

As a result of the aforementioned problems, many nomads became adamant in their opinion and prefer keeping their children at home rearing animals than sending them to schools to acquire western education. Fortunately, the few ones that attended and completed schools among the nomads were successful. These successful nomads today are considered as the leaders who represent the nomadic community in national and international issues.

Need for pastoralists education in Nigeria

Education occupies a center stage in Nigeria's social and economic development. The importance of education has been adequately documented in the literature. Education serves as the spring board for social and economic change. "All who have mediated on the art of

governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empire depends on the education of the youth¹⁷. The importance of education in Nigeria is evident from the large budgetary allocation in the national Development Plans. The government of Nigeria believes that learning is the primary means of upgrading the socio-economic condition of the rural population. This population, particularly the Fulani, is difficult to educate. With less than ten percent of the men and two percent of the women Fulani formally literate and numerate, the number of lettered men and women in western-style education among the Fulani falls below the national average.

Apart from the literacy gap between the Fulani and the non-Fulani, there is a disparity in the attainment of different types of education among the Fulani. In a sample of 1, 998 pastoral Fulani surveyed in this study, about half of them have Koranic education. Forty percent has no formal education and only seven percent has either formal or both mainstream and Koranic education. To remove the chronic illiteracy among this mobile population of Nigeria, the government introduces the nomadic education program which has three broad goals: to raise the living standard of the rural community; to harness the potentials of the Fulani; and to bridge the literacy gap between the Fulani and rest of the society.

In reaffirming Article 26 of the United Nation's 1984 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, that "everyone has the right to education," the government of Nigeria has committed itself to literacy enhancement of the Fulani. The national policy on education stresses that "...education is the birth right of every child, and [education] should be brought close to the environment of the child¹⁵." The policy enjoins that: Whenever possible, arrangements will be made for such children to assist their parents in the morning and go to school in the evening. Special and adequate inducement will be provided to teachers in rural areas to make them stay in the job.

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria demands that the government ensures fair learning opportunities for its citizens. A former federal minister of education, Professor Jibrin Aminu, declares:..Wandering clans of Nigerian cattle Herders are as much a part of Nigeria as any major tribe¹⁶. Therefore, it is only right that they also partake of the same rights and privileges as the rest of us. The nomadic education program started officially in November 1986, after the Yola National Workshop on Nomadic Education. The workshop resolved that: "...the nomads needed a fair deal through the provision of education and other social amenities to reciprocate their contribution to national building..."

The nomadic education program has a multifaceted schooling arrangement to suit the diverse transhumant habits of the Fulani. Different agencies are involved in the educational processes. These agencies include the Ministry of Education, Schools Management Board, and the National Commission for Nomadic Education, the Agency for Mass Literacy, and the Scholarship Board. They work together to offer a mobile school system where the schools and the teachers move with the Fulani children.

Development of Nomadic /pastoralists Education Programme

Prior to 1986, the problem of educating minority populations in Nigeria was practically unheard of, except in some university circles. A few attempts were made by state or local governments to register nomadic children for attendance at school, and some Fulbeardo (Chiefs) were urged to encourage their people's school registration and attendance (Gongola

State 1986). In line with this development, few local governments attempted to erect schools for nomads, which were not supported by the intended participants. Efforts to force school attendance were met with emigration. It was therefore concluded that mobile schools, which cater for the nomads' lifestyle and aim at providing functional literacy to them, should be instituted at the state level. It was also argued that 'the nomads must have a role in planning their own lives and those of their children. Imposed programmes are doomed to failure'. A proposal for a large-scale nomadic education programme was then drafted. In 1984 a very large contribution was made by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) for nomadic education programmes in Bauchi, Gongola, and Plateau States, to be completed in 1986. The UNDP contribution was to be matched by Nigerian government funds.

It was during 1986 that a more open concern for nomads' education emerged. A conference held in old Gongola State on the feasibility of mobile schools and an appropriate school curriculum for nomads drew national attention. Educationists from the University of Jos also received the support of the Minister of Education (who is Fulbe from Gongola). They began to draft a national plan for nomadic education on the grounds that state and local governments were incapable of implementing large-scale programmes, of soliciting international development funds, and of dealing with nomads who move across state boundaries. The team from UNIJOS was then commissioned to expand its research into ten northern states, focusing on plan implementations. Shortly thereafter they informed UNDP that the programme, to which it had contributed, had not begun on schedule and was only about to commence. The completion date was postponed until 1988.

Conferences continued to be held on nomadic education. The debate in academic circles concerned three issues:

1. Should the nomads be settled first before they are educated?
2. Should schools be designed explicitly for nomads, even if it is at the expense of other people's education?
3. Are mobile schools the best and most feasible way of preserving and enhancing the nomadic livelihood while providing nomads with functional literacy?

A national policy on nomadic education was drawn up under the contention that nomadic education can be an indirect solution to many, if not all, of the nomads' problems.

Attitude of Nomadic Parents towards Education

Traditional practices, equated with ignorance or backwardness, are usually indicated as the main cause of disease amongst pastoralists. The nomads are depicted as dirty: they do not wash, but eat with dirty hands, put grease on themselves and their clothes rather than brushing with soap and water, don't build latrines but rather, free themselves behind a bush just like animals, wash utensils with cow's urine and prefer the stagnant water from the ponds to that of the borehole, even when informed about the risks. In a word, they lack the most elementary norms of hygiene. Primers are strong and clear about things like washing hands, and that is one of the first things that children are taught at school. In the school context, hygiene norms are associated with 'being good', that is they are loaded with a *moral* quality: good children wash

their hands, lesser children do not. The teaching is about being civilized (or “developed”) more than about getting rid of bacteria.

One Science textbook for primary school teaches ‘wash hands’ and ‘pray’ amongst ‘the important jobs we must do before and after eating’. The new curriculum, designed to respond to pastoralists’ specific conditions, puts special emphasis in targeting and eradicating ‘unhygienic cultural practices’, like washing cooking utensils with cow’s urine or new born babies with oil, instead of water. These habits should hardly be surprising considering that, as we are informed by the same report, ‘people do not have any disgust for human excreta and as a result freely dispose of it all over the place’. This is said to have a major impact on health, although the main cause of death is reported to be malaria.

Pastoralism and poverty are often associated by force of logic: pastoralism is believed to be an irrational and underdeveloped mode of production; therefore pastoralists are, so to speak, poor by definition. They are believed to depend on food relief for their survival. Indeed, food relief distribution provides a strong argument to the view that the pastoral way of life is structurally flawed and therefore unviable: pastoralists cannot even feed themselves.

Within this view, both pastoralism and poverty are dealt with as simple categories, almost synonymous, with no need for internal differentiation. In part, this reflects the prejudicial approach to pastoralism that feeds on generalizations and produces uncritical analysis. In part though, the impression of pastoral poverty is also the result of using poverty indicators that are inadequate for analyzing the living conditions in the pastoral sector.

The emphasis on income, for example, misses the target in an economic reality in which wealth is mainly constituted of combinations of livestock, labour and social capital. Similarly, to look at the number of permanent houses, or corrugated tin roofs, or latrines, makes little sense in a semi-nomadic context in which “houses” are to be moved regularly, whilst very low population density, mobility and burning hot sun all the year round make the idea of a latrine, where all the excreta of the neighborhoods are collected in the same smelly hole in the ground infested by flies, something of an exotic perversion which affects their education.

Problems of Nomadic Education in Nigeria

Nomadic /pastoralists education in Nigeria is affected by defective policy, inadequate finance, and faulty school placement, incessant migration of students, unreliable and obsolete data, and cultural and religious taboos. While some of these problems are solved by policy and infrastructure interventions, most of the problems are complex and difficult to solve. The persistence of these problems is causing the roaming Fulani to remain educationally backward.

A top-to-bottom planning, where the Fulani are the recipients rather than the planners of their education, dominates the nomadic education policies. For instance, during the first national workshop on nomadic education, only a few Fulani have been invited to attend. Ironically, it is at this workshop that far-reaching decisions that will affect the lives of the Fulani are taken. Because of the non-participation of the Fulani in decision-making, a simplistic approach to educational planning is

adopted. Advice on nomadic education is sometimes emotional, tactless, and ill-intentioned.

Poor methods of teaching. Instead of teaching pastoral procedures, formal schools spend too much time on teaching history and cultures of societies the pastoralists least know or want to know about. Conventional education ignores the desirability of the apprenticeship model, thereby closing a vital channel of skill transfer. While the apprenticeship model allows the apprentice and the trainer to have an income from the sales of charms, from donations by philanthropists, and from reciting the Koran and leading prayers in the homes of the wealthy, the formal education instead compels students and parents to make such major sacrifices in labor loss and payment of school fees.

The shortage of funds limits government efforts to provide formal education in Nigeria. States that have started nomadic schools are burdened by the costs. The state governments are finding it hard to pay the teachers, supply furniture, or repair the furniture. Some states are closing down the schools or ordering them to go on extended vacations because the classrooms are inhabitable. Insufficiency in funds has led to inadequacy in education among the rural dwellers. Lack of financing compels the students to bear partial cost of training. As they face more fiscal hardships, the nomadic schools are asking the children to bring their own teaching materials to the school.

Some teachers cannot endure the rigorous movement of the Fulani. The initial zeal among unmarried teachers--and most teachers are unmarried--in nomadic schools fades soon after such teachers marry.

The nomadic educational program is constrained by sectarian and cultural issues. The predominantly Muslim Fulani reject the nomadic schools, fearing that their children will become Christianized.

Conclusion

Indicators of education quality indicate that, despite some commendable improvements and ongoing progress, in many locations across Nigeria, demands for quality outcomes in education have not been met to cover the much needed quality in education and life skills processes. The study found that so many problems militate against effective implementation of nomadic education and enrollment of pupils in the North Central Nigeria. It was however discovered that parental educational background significantly influences the enrollment and retention of pupils in schools. The findings of the study also concluded other factors such as parental income level, religion, migration of nomads and culture of the pastorals or nomads are key factors that inhibit the enrollment and retention of pupils in nomadic schools in North Central Nigeria.

The way forward

- Local Government Authorities should embark on strategic policy reforms that will encourage the participation of Nomadic parents in adult literacy classes.
- School feeding programme should be extended to nomadic schools in order to motivate and retain nomadic pupils in schools.
- There is need for curriculum planners of nomadic education to always take cognizance of the culture and beliefs of nomads in planning the curriculum.
- School authorities and teachers of nomadic schools should always be conscious of the culture and tradition of the nomads in discharging their responsibilities.
- Authorities of nomadic schools in collaboration with Local Government Education Authorities in North Central States should emphasize the teaching of Islamic Religious studies in nomadic schools.

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