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**Assessment of Policies on Nomadic Education in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Way
Forward**

***ADELAKUN, Iyanuoluwa Samuel**

iyanuoluwa.adelakun@fuoye.edu.ng

Phone Number: 07035694545;

ADEYEMI, Oluwatoyin Victoria

oluwatoyin.adeyemi@fuoye.edu.ng

+2348063151020;

ANISULOWO, Bukola Olumide

bukola.anisuolowo@fuoye.edu.ng

+2348069290770

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS STUDIES,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OYE-EKITI NIGERIA

Abstract

Education remains a source of liberation from crude ways of life to highly advanced ones. Education for all by the Federal Government of Nigeria is stated in the National Policy on Education (2013). Nomadic education is one of the ways of reaching out to all by ensuring even cattle rearers in every corner of the country are expose to Basic Education which will enable them to be useful and acceptable member of the society. Unfortunately, the actualization of the policies of nomadic education seems to be confronted with a lot of challenges. To this end, this paper is to examine what nomadic education is, its issues and challenges facing the programme. Recommendations were made as way forward.

Keywords: *Nigerian Education, National Policy on Education, Nomadic Education*

Introduction

Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE) from inception in 1977 has been laying emphasis on providing unrestricted access to basic education to all Nigerians aimed at ensuring such person irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, occupation, colour, social-economic class and religion receives needed basic knowledge to become useful and acceptable member of the society. Over the years, this sequence of spreading the gospel of education for all kept on increasing especially in them modern and more civilized region of the country. Education is light and life they say; the existence of education in any region of the world is always leading to liberation from crude ways of life to highly advanced one. Part of the policies embedded in the national policies on education is the move to ensure even cattle rearers and fishermen have equal access to education. The nomads are the pastoral cattle rearers and fishermen who move from one geographical location to another due to the nature of their job. These set of people appear to be marginalized educationally by the migrant nature of their job. They are always on the move to get green pastures for their cattle throughout the seasons of the year. According to NCNE (2023), out of the estimated 10.4 million migrant groups in Nigeria comprising pastoralists, migrant fisher folks and migrant farmers, about 3.6 million are children of school age of which only 519,018 are currently enrolled in schools. It was noted that some of this few currently enrolled in schools do skip school on some occasions as a result of their nomadic activities. Nomadic education in Nigeria focuses on educating the likes of Bororo, The Shuwa, The Buduman, The Kwayan, The Badawi, The Fishermen and other related tribes. This is to further keep them up to date with the dynamic trends of the sustainable development of the world. The focuses of the programme is to integrating the nomads into the national development by providing them with pertinent and useful basic education that will further improve their means of livelihood. The programme has a target of incorporating them with new and relevant skills that will enable them to compete with socio-economic and political affairs of the nation and the world at large (NCNE, 2017) The programme is to ensure qualitative education as stated by Universal Basic Education (UBE) is given to the nomadic population in all regions in the country. The actualization of these policies seems to be confronted with a lot of challenges in the recent time and the purpose of establishment seems not to be achieved any longer. The study is to evaluate what nomadic education is and the current state of the programme in the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Nomadic Education in Nigeria

The Federal Government of Nigeria realized that the provisions of the 1979 constitution and National Policy on Education which strongly urge the government to provide equal educational opportunities to all Nigerians cannot be achieved unless a special educational provision was made for everyone including people in core remote areas of the country including nomads in order to access both formal and non-formal education. The implementation of the Nomadic Education Programme (NEP) was then aimed at providing access to quality basic education for nomads in Nigeria, thereby boosting their literacy and exposure levels.

The National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) was set to achieve the following objectives via Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria:

- To expose the nomadic child to the elementary forms of modern education;
- Enable the nomadic child take part in the development of his immediate environment, in particular, and the country in general;
- Make the nomadic child self-reliant to improve his living conditions, thus eliminating the hardships and constraints in his/her life;
- Help nomadic child modernise techniques of animal management, fishing or farming;
- Assist the nomadic child to develop rapidly and fully, both physically and intellectually, to cope with the demands of the contemporary world; and
- Develop the initiative of the nomadic child and stimulate in him/her scientific and analytical modes of thinking. (NCNE, 2017).

Nomadic education employs different approaches to accommodate the nomads way of life and peculiarities. It employs regular school, on-site school, mobile school, distance learning, radio and television education. (Usmam & Amir, 2022)

According to NCNE (2023), the following are the broad goals of nomadic education programme in Nigeria:

- To integrate nomads into national life through relevant qualitative and basic functional education.

- To raise both the productive and income levels of nomads, as well as boost the national economy through improved knowledge, skills and practice of nomads.
- Formulate policy and issue guidelines in all matters relating to nomadic education in Nigeria.
- Provide funds for:
 - The research and personnel development for the improvement of nomadic education in Nigeria.
 - The development of programmes on nomadic education.
 - The provision of equipment and other instructional materials, construction of classrooms and other facilities relating to nomadic education.
- Establishment, management and maintenance of primary schools in the settlements and grazing reserves carved out for nomadic people,
- To determine the standards of skills to be attained in nomadic schools.
- To arrange for effective monitoring and evaluation of activities of agencies concerned with nomadic education.
- To liaise and cooperate with other relevant ministries and agencies.
- To receive block grants and funds from the Federal Government or any agency authorized on that behalf and allocate same to nomadic schools based on any formula approved by the Federal Executive Council.
- To act as an agency for channelling all external aids to nomadic schools in Nigeria.
- To ensure effective inspection of nomadic education activities in Nigeria through the sections in the Federal and State Ministries of Education performing duties relating to nomadic education.
- To collate, analyse and publish information relating to nomadic education in Nigeria.
- To undertake any other action desirable for the promotion of nomadic education. (NCNE, 2023).

Policies on Nomadic Education in Nigeria

Adoption of education as a tool for human and national development has led to formulation of several policies to widen access to formal education. In an attempt by the Federal government to fulfil its obligation in providing unfettered education to all its citizens as stated in

the 1979 constitution that "the government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels and that government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy among Nigerians" established National Commission for Nomadic Education. The commission in 1989 was established through Decree 41 now Nomadic Education Act, CAP 243 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004. (NCNE, 2017). The commission was established to cater for the educational needs of the nomads through Nomadic Education Programme (NEP). The broad objective of nomadic education is to properly integrate the nomads who were marginalized educationally into national life through relevant, qualitative, and basic functional education and to raise the productive and income levels of the nomads, so as to boost the national economy through improved knowledge, skills and practices of the nomad. aimed at providing basic education to the nomads. Nomadic education is an inclusion of basic education to the nomads in Nigeria.

Policies on Nomadic Education in Nigeria

Various policies have been formulated on nomadic education from its inception. The following according to NCNE are major policies guidelines on matters relating to nomadic education.

- The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979).
- National policy on Education (1976) revised in 1977, 1981,1987 and 2004.
- Blue print on Nomadic Education; fair deal for the nomads, 1987.
- The enabling law establishing the Commission captioned decree 41 of December, 1989 now acts Cap 243 law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- The policy directive of incorporation of education of children of migrant fisher folks into the Nomadic Education Programme, 1990.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Blue Print,1995
- Blue print for the Education of migrant fishermen (1998).
- The policy directive of incorporation of education of children of migrant farmers into the Nomadic Education Programme, 1998.
- Blue print for the Education of migrant farmers (2000).

Osokoya, Atinmo, Ajayi and Sarumi (2010) identified the major reasons for nomads' exclusion/ non-involvement in formal and non-formal education to include the following:

1. Constant migration of the nomads (pastoral cattle rearers and fishermen) in search of food and water for their animals
2. The use of their children in the production system (child's labour) makes it difficult to allow their children to go to school.
3. The irrelevance of the school curriculum to meet the educational needs of the nomads. It was designed to meet the needs of the sedentary groups.
4. Their physical isolation because they operate in a very large span of physical environment which are not easily accessible.
5. The non-practice of land tenured system that make it difficult for the nomads to acquire a land and settle in one place.

Challenges of Nomadic Education in Nigeria

Afolabi and Yusuf (2018) identified teachers, supervision, funding, responsibility, land use, lack of facilities, languages, library facilities and unpreparedness of the nomads as some of the constraints to proper implementation of nomadic education policies. Also Ajah and Nnamchi (2021) as cited in Aleke (2014) identified inappropriate curriculum, cultural issues, attitude and value, low population density, un-conducive learning environment, improper supervision of teachers, insecurity and community clashes/conflicts as some of the challenges militating nomadic education. Osokoya, Atinmo, Ajayi and Sarumi (2010) stated the major constrains to nomadic education programme identified by the stakeholders to include inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, haphazard transfer of teachers, teachers' truancy and lack of incentive for the teachers and supervisors. According to Adeyemi, Oribabor and Adeyemi (2021), in spite of the laudable objectives of Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria, the programme has not been progressive in the country due to challenges such as, lack of manpower and educational resources, poor supervisory practices, inability and unwillingness of nomad children to access nomadic centres, effect of communal/ethnic crises on nomads and the inability of the programme to impact on the socio-economic life of nomads. The following can be deduced from the above submission as challenges of nomadic education policies.

1. **Inadequate Funding:** Inadequate funding of education has been one of the challenges militating against effective implementation of nomadic education policies. Lack of fund is responsible for inadequate instructional and infrastructural facilities required.

Maduewesi and Ofejobe (2022) identified poor funding as factor affecting availability of resources for implementation of nomadic education with a claim that the allocated funds annually for nomadic education is hardly enough to purchase the infrastructure needed and to replace the damage ones. Government over the years have not been allocating the recommended portion of the national budget per year to education, currently the allocated percentage of the national budget for 2023 is 5.14% of the National budget as against the recommended 26% by UNESCO, and this is far too low to have a successful move in the educational sector of the country. To corroborate this, Ajayi and Ekundayo (2006) penned that Nigerian government over the years has not been meeting the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the total budget allocation to the education sector. Though Ismail (2023), noted that some public officers in charge of improving the welfare of the nomads are greedy and corrupt therefore resources and amenities meant for nomads are mismanaged diverted to personal us in some occasions. Also, Ogbondah (2018) expressed that nomadic communities are often economically marginalized, facing poverty and lack of resources. This directly affects educational opportunities as families may not have the means to support their children's education or meet basic needs. This may leads to inadequate public and private funding to implement nomadic education. The implication of this development is that there won't be adequate fund to implement policies of education and nomadic education in Nigeria.

2. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Nomadic communities often lack basic infrastructure such as schools, classrooms, and learning materials. This makes it difficult to provide quality education to nomadic children. Availability, adequacy, accessibility and utilization of school facilities are very pertinent to the implementation of policies on nomadic education in Nigeria. Owoye (2021) noted that availability and adequacy of school facilities is a strong variable to the achievement of quality nomadic education in Nigeria. Kana (2022) in a progress report on nomadic education programme in northeast States in Nigeria submits that inadequate classrooms, inadequate furniture, shortage of instructional materials such as chalk, chalkboards, textbooks, audio-visual visual and audio aids are the most acute problems of the nomadic education programme. Thus, may be very difficult to fully implement the policies for nomadic education in this region of

the country. Infrastructural facilities are grossly inadequate to support the implementation of policies on nomadic education in Nigeria (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Drawing inference from the above, one can then assert that the implementation of policies on nomadic education in Nigeria may not be possible if there is continuous state of inadequate school infrastructure.

3. **Unsuitable Curriculum:** The curriculum focuses majorly on history and cultures of the society rather than teaching on pastoral procedures. The contents of the curriculum are considered unsuitable for the nomads children. It does not provide practical skills to improve their means of livelihood. Mbayuav (2023) stated that the use of English language as medium of instruction at the elementary level does not cater for the nomads' peculiarity. The nomads have certain attitudes towards their education. It is not that the people do not appreciate government's efforts towards the education of their children; but they reject any programme or system that is inimical to their way of life. This may be attributed to nomads not fully involved in the decision making on the policies that affects their lives. The implication of this is that it will be very difficult to implement and impose policies on nomadic education on the nomads since programmes involve doesn't captures their interest. According to Lawani, (2015), the high illiteracy level of adult nomads makes schooling meaningless to them which make it difficult to motivate their children towards formal learning since they feel in most cases they are not being involved in decision making that has to do with them. Rather, the children are often engaged in the tasks of rearing animals and fishing at the expense of schooling, thereby making activities of the government in implementing policies of nomadic education futile.
4. **Limited Access to Education:** Nomadic communities are often located in remote areas, making it challenging for children to access educational facilities. Lack of transportation, inaccessible roads, bad terrain and long distances from schools further exacerbate this issue. According to FRN (1999) noted that the major constraint faced by the nomads in their participation in formal and non-formal education are the centrality of child labour in their production system, and their physical isolation since they operate in mostly inaccessible physical environment. Also insecurity seem to be dominant in some arrears where nomads reside in Nigeria, some nomadic communities live in areas prone to conflicts or insecurity, which can disrupt educational activities and pose risks to the

safety of students and teachers. Also because of cultural barriers of some nomads which they often prioritize traditional livelihoods such as herding and farming over formal education, this can lead to resistance or lack of interest in sending children to school, hindering enrolment and retention rates.

5. **Lack of Trained Teachers:** Nomadic education programmes often face a shortage of qualified and trained teachers who are familiar with the specific needs and challenges of nomadic communities. According to Tahir, Muhammad and Mohammed (2018), nomadic education has a history of inadequate manpower to implement the policies of nomadic education programme. Some available teachers seem not to be trained in the areas of nomadic education. Since the programme required extra commitments, security challenges and the risk of been totally subjected to remote ways of life, teachers seems to be scared of presenting themselves from training that will further qualify them for nomadic education. To corroborate this, Maduewesi and Ofejobe (2022), penned that nomadic teachers face dangers and hazards in the bush and they are not being motivated by the government with underpayments. In quest of seeking comforts, many of them worked and negotiated their transfers to conventional schools in urban regions of the country. The continuous existence of this trend makes an already difficult task to become even more difficult over the years. Government have to spend much funds in the retraining of teachers for the nomadic schools. Adeyemi et al (2021) also lamented that after huge funding in training/retraining of teachers for the nomadic schools by NCNE; most of them are transferred indiscriminately to conventional schools after being faced with the realities of the job. This led to reduction in the number of special teachers in nomadic schools which affects the quality of education offered to nomadic children. The lasting effect of this development is that implementation of nomadic education in Nigeria will be more difficult since there is no adequate human capital for the programme.
6. **Constant Migration of Nomad Students:** Due to the nature of the job of the nomads such as cattle rearing, some of them relocate at any time of the year depending on the climatic change and season in search of greener pastures, water for their cattle and fishes in case of fishermen. According to Aderinoye, Ojokheta, and Olojede (2007), the inability of nomadic pastoralists to participate effectively in education is mainly the consequence of their migratory way of life, which involves moving their herds and flocks

of animals in search of water with the seasons. Though, products from their animals such as fresh milk, butter, beef, hides and skins do contribute to the economic development of the nation, but their constant migration may affect them in having access to good education that can aid them to have professional methods of preservation and quality to meet the standards of market. Unscheduled migration of nomads due to environmental failures or conflicts between farmers and nomads disrupts school operation and nomadic education policies implementation (Afolabi, 2011).

Conclusion

Drawing inference from the discussions above, it should be noted that nomadic education is highly needed to boost the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Policies play a vital role in the sustenance of nomadic education in Nigeria. Unfortunately, one could conclude that policies of nomadic education in Nigeria are being confronted with a lot of challenges which have affected proper implementation of the policies. Challenges such as shortage of funds, shortage of staff, rigid attitude to change, inadequate infrastructure, unsuitable curriculum, limited access to education, lack of trained teachers, constant migration of nomad students were identified as hindrances to the implementation of the nomadic education policies in Nigeria. If these should continue, Nigeria may be sitting on a gun powder because it may lead to an irreparable state of nomadic education and the Nigerian education system at large. Because uneducated nomads may become instruments used against peaceful socio-economic development of the country.

Recommendations

To address the above identified challenges of nomadic education in Nigeria, several solutions can be implemented:

1. **Adequate Funding:** government should ensure more funds are allocated to the education sector at large. The recommended 26% of the annual budget by UNESCO should be strictly adhered to without further delay. Once this is done, there will be adequate funds to implement the nomadic education in Nigeria. Private organizations and host communities should as well be sensitised on the need to adequately finance nomadic schools in Nigeria.

2. **Infrastructural Development:** government, parents, private bodies, and host communities should invest in the development of educational infrastructure for nomadic education. The likes of classrooms, and other learning materials should be provided without further delay. This will create a conducive learning environment, improve access to education for nomadic children and enhance smooth implementation of nomadic education policies in Nigeria.
3. **Culturally Tolerant Curriculum:** Developing a curriculum that is culturally sensitive and relevant to the needs and aspirations of nomadic communities is very essential. This includes incorporating local languages, traditions, and practical skills into the curriculum, making it more engaging and meaningful for nomadic children. Also engaging nomadic community leaders in the education process is very vital. If they are involved decision-making, they may be encouraged to support nomadic education in their communities, and they may even send their children to established schools in their community. If the curriculum is permissive, sensitive and tolerance nomads' needs, the atmosphere will be peaceful for successful implementation of nomadic education policies in Nigeria.
4. **Mobile Schools:** Establishing mobile schools that can travel to different nomadic communities can help overcome the challenge of limited access to education. These schools can be equipped with basic learning materials and staffed by trained teachers who can engage with nomadic children on a regular basis. Distance learning platforms which can overcome geographical barriers to provide access to education for nomadic children can be encouraged among nomads. Online learning modules, video lessons, and interactive platforms can be utilized to facilitate learning even in remote areas. Nomads should be trained on the use of related information technology learning tools which will help them learn faster in any region they find themselves even when they migrate in search of water and pastures for their cattle. With this nomadic education policies will still be implemented without hindrance.
5. **Teacher Training:** specialized training should be given to nomadic education teachers to better equip them to understand the unique challenges faced by nomadic children and adapt their relevant teaching methods accordingly. This can include training on intercultural communication, use of related learning ICT tools, inclusive teaching

practices, and community engagement. This will further aid the implementation of nomadic education policies in Nigeria.

By implementing the above recommendations, it is possible to improve the access to and quality of nomadic education in Nigeria, thereby leading to proper implementation of nomadic education policy in Nigeria.

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