



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF GOVERNMENTAL ATTITUDES ON THE EDUCATION OF THE NOMADIC CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF GORU/KALGO MIGRANT FULANI IN KEBBI STATE

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ABSTRACT

The attempt to educate the nomadic Fulani in Nigeria was initially made a national policy that became popular at a period. With time it became mere political propaganda, the research was conducted to find out the implications of governmental attitudes to the programme using Goru/Kalgo area of Kebbi State. It is discovered that lot of problems like finance, lack infrastructure, etc are a serious threat with the attendants problem of cattle rustling, kidnapping etc. The research recommended amongst other a collaborative efforts by all stake holders to provide not only functional education but one that will incorporate their nomadic features.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a worthwhile venture as it is recognized worldwide as the most important engine that propels technological and natural development in modern societies, education has been a major instrument to change and development, it has also been identified as a right and indispensable means to realizing other human rights. It also plays a vital role in empowering the child economically, socially and assist those marginalized adult out of poverty. Education also provides them (children) with the means to participate fully in their communities (UNESCO, 2000). Education, according to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), is a fundamental human right and a key factor in reducing poverty and child labour as well as promoting sustainable development. In Africa, like elsewhere in the world, not all children have access to education, the nomad child access to education is influenced by traditional considerations and attitude which make them under – represented. A nomad child is usually the first to be pulled out of school when the family suffers some financial or cultural loses or constraints. (Aminu, 1991).

The idea of a nomadic Education programme for the country was first discussed at the 1976 meeting of the National Council on Education held in Lagos about the same time that the universal Primary Education became a Federal Government Policy. However, nothing tangible was done until 12 December, 1987 when the Babangida administration came out with a bold policy on nomad education. Various reasons could be adduced for this sudden action of government. These include:

- The economic situation in the country which affected animal production;
- Emergence of the cattle disease, especially around 1987 when many animals died;
- Importation of cattle from neighboring Niger and Chad republics became more difficult and more expensive; and
- The ever migrating nature of the cattle Fulani and the need to get them settled and educated.
- Blueprint on Nomadic Education

In line with the resolution of government to start the programme, the Federal Ministry of Education Published a blueprint on Nomadic Education in December 1987 after Federal Government had formally launched the programme in Yola, Gongola State. The ministry distributed the Blueprints to

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all State Ministries of education in the country. Section one of Blueprints highlights the aims and objective of Nomadic Education as follows:

- The inculcation of the national consciousness and national unity;
- The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around him, (i.e. training in scientific and critical thinking); and
- The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities, and competence, mental, social and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in his society and to contribute to its development.

Because of the distinctiveness of the nomads' ways of life, the blueprint further breaks the above objectives into two: Short Term Objective and Long Term Objective. Those aims and objectives of the programme which are achievable within a short time are classified as Short Term while the Long Term ones are those which could only be achieved over a relatively longer period of time. For example, the Short Term aims and objectives as identified from the general objectives can be summarised as follows:

a. Acquisition of functional literacy and numeracy in order to comprehend the activities.

- About payment of tax.
- About instruction in health and animal treatment.
- About information in national dailies.
- On simple instruction about voting and choices.
- About communication with relatives, agricultural officers and other government agents.
- About record keeping on statistics of herds, lands, births and deaths.

b. Development of scientific outlook.

- To their problems
- To issues affecting their relationship with government and her agencies.

There is no doubt that a great deal of patience; consistence and strong determination are necessary to achieve Long Term objectives. In ensuring a successful implementation, therefore, provision was made for the setting up of two very powerful bodies. The first is the National Commission on Nomadic Education, which is empowered with the implementation of the programme nationwide. The commission is to be made up of 25 members; one of which is the Chairman appointed, by the President on the recommendation of the Honourable Minister of Education. The second body is the Centre for Nomadic Education. It is expected to conduct researches into the culture of the Nomads to develop and select curriculum contents to train Nomadic Education personnel to evaluate (on regular basis) the Nomadic Education Programme and so on. This centre has, already been established and located in the University of Jos, thus satisfying Section 2.6 of the Blueprint on Nomadic Education which provides that the Centre must be located "in a University with adequate facilities." (Abubakar, 1996)

Research Area Profile

Kebbi State is a state in the North western Nigeria. It's capital is in Birnin Kebbi. The State was carved out of former Sokoto State in 1991. The State is bordered by the new Sokoto state, Niger state, Zamfara state and the Republic of Niger and Benin. It has a land area of 36,000 KM. with 21 Local Government Councils, Kalgo, our research area is one among them. Four Emirate councils (Gwandu, Argugu, Yauri and Zuru) and 35 districts. The state has a population of 2,062,225. The take-off of the nomadic education programme in Kebbi state followed similar pattern with other states of the federation, which was done through launching of the programme in consultation with the Fulani through their umbrella organisation, The Miyati Allah cattle breeders association. The launch was done by essentially enlisting the children of the Fulani into the few schools that were established for that purpose.

Objectives and Limitations

The Objectives of the Projects were:

- To establish the extent of literacy level (western or conventional) among the nomadic children Goru/Kalgo.
- To encourage the political community (Government) increase educational measures or policies on nomadic children Goru/Kalgo.
- To make recommendations towards improving and strengthening the farmers- nomadic (Fulbe) relationship.
- To encourage Nomadic culture.

Limitations: The challenges are the fact that the area to be covered for the study was wide, in addition to the un motorable terrain made the project difficult. Secondly, there was the uncooperative attitudes of the respondents. This is so because they find it difficult to trust people other than their people, this required a lot of talking to be able to get their confidence to volunteer information. Thirdly, there was the problem of un accessibility of the government officials whose functions were relevant to the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The principal instrument of data collection for the research was through interview method. In addition, both formal and informal discussions were held with persons knowledgeable about the issue. Key community and opinion leaders from the research area were identified and interviewed by the researcher using probing, listening and note taking skills. The study was undertaken using both primary and secondary instrument of data collection. The primary source data consisted mainly of a questionnaire administered to a selected group of respondents. Secondary data on nomadic education was obtained from the following sources: relevant literature on the research area, articles newspapers and magazines. The secondary data was analysed using the content analysis method and is presented in narratives.

Population of the study: The population of the study consists of some of the sixty households of Fulani scattered in the bushes of Goru village and unguwar na Kalgo and seventy households of Fulani in Kalgo village. On this note, the

research utilised the population of the Fulani in this research area for the purpose of this study.

Nomads: A nomad could be defined as a livestock owner who keeps the productivity and survival of his herds through extensive yet cyclic wandering in areas where there are not enough resources to remain in one place permanently. This lifestyle and form of livestock production has survived through centuries, and even today pastoral nomadism is recognised as an efficient method of utilizing marginal lands. Nomads have special ways of adapting to the arid and unreliable climatic conditions. Through this method they have survived long droughts, epidemic diseases and all kinds of hardships. They have a functioning and self-contained system based on individual abilities and strong and well-balanced social structure, based on the economy of affection where the needy is supported through clan or marriage relationships. Over the years, they have developed their methods of treating livestock with fair degree of success. They acquired accumulated knowledge on various herbs to treat people and to cure their animals.

Findings from the study

- Children of pastoral nomads go without modern education, but not without education at all. They receive traditional education that is oriented to their ways of making a living and which contains the cultural and societal value of society. For example, herd boys learn the value of different kind of grazing for each species of stock by watching animals and their environment and through direct teaching by male elders, while girls acquire household related activities from their mothers and sisters.
- The Koranic school is by far the most pervasive, steady and permanent education facility in the country. Since the advent of the Islamic religion, the nomadic children received some sort of formal education, which has shown some success. This was the teaching of the Koran. In general, this play a very deferent role the children live those involve in modern or formal schools, because such teaching takes place in a familiar environment and carried out by individuals from the same neighborhood.

Among pastoral nomads, children (mostly boys) aged 5-14 years are brought together for some hours (normally early morning and or early evening) six days a week to be taught how to recite the Koran by a nomad teacher, who is supported by voluntary annual contributions and who enjoys the respect of the community. Facilities are rudimentary, barely providing shelter and the equipment is simple: wooden slates, ink, and a wooden pen. An advantage of these schools is their mobility; the Koranic teacher moves with his students and his school wherever the new camp is constructed. The Koranic schools, however, face many problems. Teachers are not well trained. Many of them are barely literate and only teach the Koran with no supplementary courses in Islamic studies. The teaching approach is often rigidly unyielding and consists largely of note-taking, memorization and copying. Nomads are not their own masters. They have no control over ups and downs around them that directly or indirectly influence their future. In this country, unequal distribution of resource is the dominant scene, whereby pastoral nomads are impoverished, dominated and underprivileged. The provision of schools for nomads and

the adoption of schooling to the special needs and circumstances of nomadic society, has made less progress in kebbi state and particular, Goru/Kalgo than for other basic needs. Although it has been generally accepted that without proper schooling, pastoral communities (settled communities) will remain poor and discriminated upon, the attempts to solve this problem are more or less politicised. Where nomad children do get schooling, it is at immense personal cost both to the child and it parents. Few benefits from such sacrifices are returned to the nomad community. Most efforts at providing schooling for nomads have been through the extension of ordinary schools into the remote area generally inhabited by nomads. In the first place small town and villages are generally equipped with a day school. The pupils are normally town or village children and children of local official and traders. A few nomadic children, almost invariably boys and generally from richer families or those with an urban connection, attend school and live with kin in the town or village. Assistance and support through the extended family or the "economic of affection" is part and parcel of nomad's means for survival On a general note, nomadic education in Nigeria is affected by defective policy, inadequate finance, faulty school placement, incessant migration of pupils, unreliable and obsolete data, and cultural and religious taboos. While some of these problems are solved by policy and infrastructure intervention, however most of the problems are complex and difficult to solve. The persistence of these problems is causing the migrant Fulani to remain educationally backward.

Enrolment of pupils in Goru/Kalgo nomadic schools

Enrolment of pupils in Goru/Kalgo nomadic schools

Place	Area	No. of Pupils
1, Wuro Doh	Kalgo	_____
2, Tello	Kalgo	_____
3. Dutsen Gwauro	Goru	_____
4. Settinirde	Kalgo	80
5. Wuro Hesso	Goru	_____
6. Unguwar Dikko	Kalgo	_____
7. Mashekari Unguwar Dikko	Kalgo	_____
8. Marfakka	Kalgo	-----
9. Dan Bagga/Rumtoh	Kalgo	40
10. Bangah	Kalgo	-----
	Total	120

The enrolment figures above indicate that there are only very few nomadic children attending the few nomadic schools available in the research area. This is as a result of some of the issues addressed earlier and of course, the following factors; Evidence have shown that nomadic herder number tens of millions of people. They include some of the poorest and vulnerable of all Populations. Reaching them with formal schooling has become a major challenge, and million of nomadic children remain outside the education system despite

their tremendous contributions to the development of the nation in terms of fundamental necessities of life they provide, such as meat, milk, butter hides and skins, food and crops. Educationally they often represent not a significant part in terms of school enrolment, attendance, classroom performance, achievement, continuity to higher education and gender balance, they remained at the bottom.

Factors Related to Pastoral Way of Life

Mobility and Sparse Population: Sparse distribution of the nomad population is the foremost obstacle limiting children's attendance in school. This low population density makes it difficult to gather enough pupil population to make it cost-effective. If facilities are provided to such sparse population, costs per pupil are far higher than schools in towns and villages.

Child labour: Because of the labour-intensive nature of the herding economies, children of pastoral nomads are significant contributors to the household income through their labour, even from an early age. Among these communities children (especially boys) are viewed as an economic asset. Such economic benefits are cultivated in the short term, the children being useful to help the family raise livestock. They look after animal herds (e.g. sheep goats, camel, etc) and undertake most household duties. Therefore, parents need to maintain their children's contribution and at the same time avoid the cost of schooling. Thus a limited number of rich families will be inclined to send their children (preferably boys) to school. Physically handicapped children considered not-fit for the nomadic way of life are sometimes given the chance to attend school in towns or villages.

Attitude and Values: Nomads in Goru/Kalgo view both schools and schooling as alien things that do not contribute to the way of life. Pastoral nomads' independence and reluctance to change their traditional ways poses a major obstacle. They believe that such facilities will in the end alienate their children from them and the society at large. Parents with such attitudes are illiterate and have never experienced the benefits, if any, of modern education.

School Related Factors

Curriculum: The contents of the curriculum is generally considered inappropriate for the children of pastoral nomads. It does not provide practical skills to improve the livelihood of nomads. Rather, it is believed, it focuses on academic achievements that only suit the needs of urban children. There is a lack of demonstrable practical benefits for the pastoral economy.

Quality of Schools/Teachers: Rural primary schools which pastoral nomads have access to are qualitatively poor in terms of facilities and teaching staff. The management and supervision of officials are not effective either. Low salaries of education personnel creates a reluctance to live away from their urban families, leading to an un equitable geographical enrolment of schools and an unwillingness of younger staff to leave urban centres. It is therefore very difficult to place quality staff in schools accessible to nomads. This programme failed to address the education requirements of this group. Such failure was attributed to a lack of financing, shortage of personnel, deficiency in co-ordination and follow-up and a lack of substantial interest among pastoral nomads. Since there

were few materials to sustain the new reading skills, most pastoral nomads soon degenerated into illiteracy. In spite of the obstacles outlined, there are good signs that the Fulani are gradually embracing education and improving their literacy. Many Fulani are interested in formal education. They admire children who do to school. Interviews with community leaders and the Miyetti Allah officials confirm the enthusiasm of the fulani in western education if the issues discussed are resolved. Most of the respondents consider going to school to be important and beneficial.

Socio- economic implications: There are serious socio economic implications for the high rate of out of school nomadic children in our society generally.

Some of these implications are: An uneducated person has so many enemies such as epidemics, hunger, disorder, crimes, humiliation and many others. Thus an uneducated nomad is a likely curse to the society. This affects the general standard of living of the nation, it's per capital income, gross domestic product, industrialization and development generally. This increases present and future socio economic vulnerability and is a significant factor in the reproduction of such vulnerability through children, passing from generation to generation. Its effects are present throughout life. This has manifested in security challenges in the forms of cattle rustling, farmers-herders conflict armed robbery and other kind of crimes creating social dislocation, poverty squalor and diseases.

Recommendation

Nomads should be provided with functional literacy programs with the intention of helping pastoralists to achieve greater mastery of their occupations, increase their knowledge, advance their careers and continue with their education. Therefore, literacy training for nomads should be complemented by practical lessons on public health care, environmental education (overstocking, overgrazing, etc), nutrition, population education, veterinary knowledge, etc. Functional literacy programs should be linked with income generating activities. Since teachers from urban centers are not willing to work among nomads, they must supply their own teacher-trainees. These teachers should be given special and suitable training for the nomadic environment. The government, and or NGO, has to cover all training costs and supply visual aid materials and salaries which are to be supplemented by contributions from parents. This must be matched with a plan to assist local nomadic communities to make the arrangement sustainable after contributions ceases.

The time table for nomadic education programs and schools for pastoralists should be adapted to their particular environment. The school calendar should be flexible to the pattern of nomadic life, i.e. breaks or holidays are to be taken when children are needed most to help their families. Since the contents of the current curriculum emphasize literacy, numeracy and national language, in order to integrate nomadic children into the modern culture, it only helps children to migrate out of the pastoral sector, rather than helping them make better use of their tribal environment. Therefore, the curriculum must be revised in content and in form. Educational planners must recognize the richness of traditional nomadic pastoral knowledge and techniques about livestock production, and should incorporate some of this science into the future curricula.

Conclusion

Looking at the living condition of the nomads, it could be seen that much needs to be done to improve the precarious situation if they are to get educated. Although their situation is bleak, the study is optimistic that with commitment and dedication nomads could be educated especially if only the political will is there. The research also maintains that, nomadic education programme is not waste of funds. Unlike the unproductive nomads of other lands. Nigeria nomads are economically very productive; they are no beggars, all they need is to be shown the "light" they will definitely be partners in progress. This is not only necessary but vital if we must avert the socio economic implications that could create serious problems to the nation.

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