



# ACHIEVING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NOMADIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

The main thrust of this paper is to place an effective need for quality assurance of nomadic Education Programme for national development in Nigeria. The study examined the various principles and policies that made education accessible to every child of school age both male and female. It emphasised that every Nigerian child should have a right to equal educational opportunity irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities. The paper therefore, considers some attributes for effective quality assurance, which includes; policy planning, adequate manpower, good curriculum design, teaching method, fund, as well as management of available fund. The paper is of the view that if Government in its sincerity abides by the recommendations as suggested and the nomadic students being made to find the assistance responsive to their needs and well-being, great quality assurance will be achieved in the Nomadic Education (NE) programme in Nigeria. These in no small measure will affect the present status of Nomadic Education in Nigeria. The paper's recommendations will enhance the quality assurance of Nomadic Education in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Quality Assurance, Nomadic Education, Educational Growth, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria is an instrument “per-excellence” for effecting national development (NPE, 2004). Literacy they say is ‘the key to life, an eye opener that liberates individuals from experiencing death while alive’. Everyman therefore has a natural right to education in line with article 26 of the United Nations 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.( Muhammad & Ardo, 2003) In a bid not to jeopardize peoples changes for productive employment and subsequent capital development, all the potentials of the entire Nigerian citizenry irrespective of whether they are nomads or non-nomads should be developed through the acquisition of requisites knowledge, skill and attitudes: which will enable them function effectively in whatever circumstances they find themselves in life. The realization that education is the key to economic cultural, political and social development has propelled different countries including Nigeria to provide a quantitative and qualitative education for all citizens. (Alkali, 1988)

Worthy of note is the fact that the child right of education is somewhat special because the denial of the right to education may lead to permanent impairment of the individuals and cause serious problems for the corporate entity (Maduewesi, 2005). In line with the above, Ekeh (2004) posit that; the child right to education must be interpreted and handled with utmost sensitivity and seriousness. (Ekeh, 2004: 76)

The National Policy on Education as well as the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria emphasizes equal access to education for both male and female in Nigeria. For instance, the provision of section 1 subsection 4(c) of the National Policy on Education (2004) provides that, every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability. While subsection 5(c) emphasized the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. (NPE, 2004)

The main focus of the paper is the place of an effective quality assurance for Nomadic Education Programme for National Development in Nigeria. In doing this, the paper highlights some problems and solutions of Nomadic Education. At the end recommendations and conclusions were made.

## **The Concept of Nomadic Education in Nigeria**

Nomadic Education is a recent development in Nigeria. The Nigerian Constitution of 1999 recognized the right of every Nigerian child to education; stressing the need for government to direct its policy towards ensuring equal and adequate educational opportunities. (Alkali, 1988)

Due to the above policy of the federal government, educational programme was inaugurated in 1986 for the nomads. The main aim of this programme is to involve the (marginalized) nomad's children in the main-stream of educational programme irrespective of their cultural background. To give the nomadic child this equal educational opportunity, the educational programme must provide a special form of learning-experience that does not adversely disrupt his life style. The education should integrate him in the main stream culture and economic roles. This does not mean that he is granted meaningful equal education opportunities, which his sedentary counterpart has. Nomadic education is not an educational system per-se but an intervention strategy. (Ezeomah, 1983) It is a specialized educational programme designed to provide access to basic education among those segments of our population that are difficult to reach with education.

Eduwen (2003) define nomadic education as the Educational programme designed for children and adults of the nomads in response to their mode and cultural pattern of life. Eduwen (2003) opines that nomadic education is a well thought-out programmed designed for the social political and economic development of all groups of people without permanent homes; people who travel about with their animals, cattle goats, camel, sheep, etc.

## **Values attached to Nomadic Education**

The importance of nomadic education cannot be down played. It is seen as a means by which society eradicate illiteracy and enhance the socio-economic condition of the rural population. It was introduced for the following reasons:

- To raise the leaving standard of the rural community.
- To harness the potentials of the nomads.
- To fill the literacy gap between the nomads and the rest of the society.

The federal government in its bid to eradicate literacy enhancement of the nomads, enshrined Nomadic Education in the National Education System with the following specific objectives;

- To expose the nomadic child to the elementary forms of modern education.
- To inculcate the spirit of humanity on the nomadic child to realize himself as a member of the Nigerian society.
- To enable the nomadic child take part in the development of his immediate environment and the country in general.
- To make the nomadic child able to improve his learning conditions, thus eliminating the hardship and constraints in this life.
- To help him modernize his techniques of hardship or animal management.
- To assist the nomadic child to develop himself rapidly both physically and intellectually to cope with the demands of the contemporary world.
- To develop the initiative of the nomadic child and stimulate in him scientific and analytical modes of thinking. (NPER, 2004)

### **The State of Nomadic Education in Nigeria**

It is disheartening to note that inspite of the lofty plans put in place by the Nigerian governments to give basic formal education to the nomads for a better leaving, the standard of nomadic education in Nigeria is still at its low ebb. Reason been that very many Nomads are still very backward academically as many are unable to read and write let alone communicate effectively. (Ezeomah, 1983)

According to Ismail (2002), the measure of educational attainment among the nomads remain low as the quality of education among them is mediocre at best. Nomadic education therefore, is yet to lift the literacy and standard of living of the Fulani. What are possible the causes one may ask? A look at the constraints in the next phrase will probably help to answer this question.

### **Challenges attributed to Nomadic Education**

Nigeria like many other countries has adopted the policy of providing equal educational opportunities for all citizens through her national policy on education. However, the

implementation of this policy has not been easy. The wide disparity in needs, cultural orientation and human capabilities has been identified as a major obstacle to the implementation of equal education opportunity for all. One of the major challenges is that these are people constrained by circumstances not to benefit from the regular school system for instance, the migrants such as the pastoral Nomads cannot reside or settle in one place for long due to the nature of their occupation which is cattle rearing. They move from place to place with their families in search of greener pasture for their cattle and other animals like sheep, goat etc. and as such cannot benefit from normal school system.

For the migrant farmers, some of them withdraw their children from school during farming (planting and harvesting) seasons. Some fanatical Muslims for fear of being converted to Christianity discourage their children from going to school based on western education curriculum. In spite of the tremendous enthusiasm shown by the stakeholders their education programme is confronted with myriads of challenges which include:

- **Negative attitude towards formal education by these Nomads:** The value of education has not been realized among the Nomads because schooling is not a priority in their traditional way of life. Parents do not see the impact of what children learn at school on the solution to their daily problems.
- **Lack of relevant curriculum:** The content of the curriculum is completely different from their culture and environment. In the words of Harris (1971) it is academic suicide to teach children content that is completely divorced from their culture and environment. They see education as not meeting their need because the curriculum is developed for sedentary children and this has little relevance to their lifestyle. The Nomadic pastoralists for example have distinct culture and whereas their distinct culture has not been recognized and considered in their educational provision. Failure has certainly been recorded under achievement and high drop out of school. The Nomads i.e. pastoral nomads, migrant fishermen and migrant farmers are constantly on the move. The inaccessible nature of their settlement makes meaningful formal education difficult.
- **The lack of enough qualified teacher is also a challenge:** Even as a trained teacher the inability to speak the language of the learner or having no knowledge of their lifestyle, culture and norms of the people create a problem for the people they are to teach. Many

teachers do refuse posting to such areas due to the remote nature of such areas usually there is lack of social amenities such as electricity, good roads and network etc.

- **Inadequate material supplied to schools is another challenge:** The Nomadic schools where available are provided with insufficient quantities of relevant books.
- **Lack of up to date statistics:** There is no up to date statistic to guide effective planning in term of finance, personnel, infrastructure, materials and enrolment.
- There is also lack of developed policies aimed at providing the Nomads the education suited to their lifestyle.
- **Lack of sufficient funds:** There is lack of sufficient funds. Lots of money is needed for the provision of instructional materials and equipment for the programme.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** There is difficulty putting up school buildings in these areas because of the terrain. Only few schools are built and sometimes such schools are not within the reach of the children from areas envisaged.
- **Lack of adequate supervision and monitoring by both the local and state supervisors and inspectors respectively.** This challenge also has to do with lack of means of efficient mobility to supervise and monitor the schools.

However, in order to satisfy the educational needs and interest of the nomads and promote educational equity and access, the following should be done:

- The use of regular schools
- On site schools
- Mobile schools
- Correspondence schools
- School of the air (Radio Programmes)
- Adult educations for men and women
- Once teacher visiting school
- Market day school
- Mobile units school
- Regular traditional school
- Distance learning

To achieve meaningful result, the NENE need to cooperate with the state, local government and the local communities. The NCNE also need to maintain cordial working

relationship with such other urgencies as the National Mass Education Commission (NMEC), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA) and State Agencies for Adult and Non-Formal Education and other relevant agencies.

### **Recommendation**

A deep consideration of the willingness of the Nomads to go to school reveal that the removal of the enumerated challenges will to a large extent ensure the nomadic education striving with the objectives fully achieved.

Below are some recommendations:

To enhance the effective and efficient quality assurance of the Nomadic education in Nigeria, the paper suggested the following recommendations:

1. Inclusion of the Fulani in the National planning and decision making policies on issues that concern them. A good representation of the Fulani should be made in any decision making forum so that they can express themselves and indicate their interest, needs and values for their total well-being.
2. The government should create an avenue for feedback from the people as regards any development on the programme as public opinion goes a long way in reporting daily events to the government who incidentally can make amend where necessary. An effective supervisory body should be set up by NCNE to oversee the Nomadic Education Programme.
3. The National Commission for Nomadic Education should train and recruit more teachers and deploy them to all nooks and craning of the nation where Nomadic education is being practice with good incentive to boost their moral and effectiveness.
4. Government should make fund available for the programme since it is capital intensive and good salary should be paid to mobile teachers.
5. Permanent and good school structure should be built for the children of the sedentary nomads having permanent settlement.
6. Use of information and communication technology: since the Fulani Nomad stay mostly in the bush and always on the move with their families, information and technology (ICT) based distant teaching and learning may be a great help in bringing educational information,

knowledge and skills to this ever-moving group of Nigerians to improve their socio-economic life and herding techniques.

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the educational provision and training opportunities for the nomads needs to be given the desired attention that it requires in order to satisfy the educational needs and interest of the nomads. It must be realized that unless the education and training problems confronting the nomadic men and women are considered as part of an integrated development approach of the nations concerned. However, they must play a major role in the socio-economic, political, technological and overall development of the nation.





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