

# THE ROLE OF LIBRARY IN NOMADIC EDUCATION I IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

The effort of the Federal Government in inaugurating nomadic education is commendable. However, it is noted that in the National Policy on Nomadic Education, library was not included in the programme. This reveals nothing but lack of adequate planning by the government and other agencies involved. As no process of education is complete without a library. This paper argued that the lack of sustained interest to education exhibited by the nomads can be tackled through the medium of library.

## **Introduction**

Nomads are people groups who do not live continually in the same place but move either cyclically or periodically in search of means of livelihood within a community, a nation or across international boundaries. In Nigeria we have various nomadic populations that are mostly pastoralist while the minority are either migrant fishermen or farmers. Investigations have shown that out of the estimated population of 9.8 million nomadic peoples in Nigeria, 3.1 million are of school age (Omar, 1997:242). The total literacy rate among the nomads is about 2.02 percent. The fact that they are most of the time on the move have been a major constraint to acquiring either formal or non-formal education.

The total population of the non-literate among the nomads is too high to be ignored considering the government's concern for nation building. Moreso, when one considers the fact that a nation cannot be built on illiteracy. Hence the inauguration of nomadic education in 198X with a decree promulgated in 1989 in order to give it the attention it deserves. Indeed this is a laudable programme and worthy of commendation. However, conspicuously missing is the mention of library in the implementation of nomadic education. Since library in a formal school setting is regarded as a necessity one wonders why no mention was made of it in nomadic education. These writers hold the opinion that library can play a significant role in the success of nomadic education for nation building.

## **Why Nomadic Education?**

Nomads have a right to education like every other Nigerian. Professor .fibril Aminu, a onetime Minister of Education and a strong advocate of nomadic education claimed that Mbororo Cattle Fulani are socially deprived, denied and disadvantaged. They are also educationally deprived and that since education is the right of every Nigerian child they deserve some form of education.

Moreso, these nomads contribute in no small way to the economy of the nation. The cattle Fulani nomads own 95 percent of the 12 million or so heads of beef, milk, hide and skin, as well as mutton. Farming and fishing nomads equally contribute to the economy of the country. Apart from their contribution to the economy of the nation they are also subjected to paying tax. Also, the nomads are made to bear a heavy burden of tax in form of "jangali". Since they pay tax and yet their migratory nature deprive them from enjoying the social amenities provided with the tax payers' money, it will be a great injustice if efforts are not made to provide education for them in an increasingly literate world.

## **National Policy on Nomadic Education**

As the nomads are constantly on the move they do not own any land of theirs. So settlement is difficult and without such settlement, schooling for their children is near impossible. Hence the need for a carefully planned education for nomads (Lar. 1989:30).

According to Omar (1997) nomadic education has been in existence in Nigeria as far back as the colonial era but the programme never received national attention until the coming into effect of the 1979 constitution. A relevant section in the constitution inter alia, states that "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities" (section 18 sub-section !). In this regard and in line with the objective of the 1976 Universal Primary Education programme, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1986 under the concept of a Fair Deal for the

nomads issued national policy guidelines for the education of pastoral nomads. In order to show Federal Government's determination to ensuring that nomadic is given the attention it deserves a

decree was promulgated in 1989 (Decree No 41 of 2 December, 1989). The following were the objectives:

1. To eradicate illiteracy through the ability to read and write;
2. To expose the nomadic child to elementary form of modern education;
3. To help the child to adapt to any school and physical environment;
4. To help the child accept his social environment and accommodate other people;
5. To develop the child's ability to manipulate innovations within the nomadic setting;
- (6). To develop the child's initiative and scientific thinking and promote technological awareness among the nomadic children in use of modern methods of livestock keeping; 7. To inculcate in him the spirit of humanity through education.

In order to achieve the objectives some subjects were recommended for the programme which are:

- (i) Language
- (ii) Mathematics
- (iii) Social studies
- (iv) Elementary science
- (v) Creative arts
- (vi) Health and physical education
- (vii) Agricultural science
- (viii) Religious and moral instructions
- (ix) Home economics.

Two types of nomadic education were equally introduced namely:

- (i) Vacation school; and
- (ii) Mobile school.

The Vacation School catered for nomadic children who cannot devote full time for the entire school year due to herding engagements. While the Mobile School type is not permanent. The nomadic mobile school is that which is provided concurrently as nomads move from one place to another followed by the nomadic teachers.

The programme recorded major success but in spite of this, it has some teaching problems. Olawole and Olaniyi (1998) outlined the problems as follows:

1. Lack of sustained interest;
2. Financial predicament;
3. Falsification of date;
4. Insufficient personnel;
5. Undue criticism.

### **The Role Of Library**

Sustaining the interest of the nomads is very crucial lest the efforts been put into the programme be in futility. This is where the role of library should not be undermined. If every other thing is in place and the interest of the nomads cannot be captured of what use is the programme?

As a matter of fact the process of education is not complete without a library. The function of a library makes it an indispensable organ in promoting nomadic education. In this regard the library referred to here is the school library as it has to do with primary school. A functional school library has the following functions: (i) It serves as information centre;

- (ii) It provides vocational information for a choice of career;
- (iii) It stimulates reading interest;
- (iv) It encourages recreational reading through the provision of interesting and challenging materials;
- (v) It provides recreation for users through audio visual materials and indoor games.

A school library can only play an effective role when these items are put in place:-

- (i) Books - general reference, non-fiction and fiction
- (ii) Periodicals;
- (iii) Pamphlets, handbills, ephemeral notices etc;
- (iv) Audio materials - disc, phonographic records, audio tapes on reels and cassettes;
- (v) Graphics - art prints, pictures, photographs, maps, charts and overhead transparencies;
- (vi) Video materials - video - tapes on reels, cassettes and cartridges as well as video disc;

(vii) Microforms - Micro film, Micro fiche and Micro - card.

The latest addition to the library is the computer data bank or educational computer cassettes or floppy disc with monitoring facilities for viewing and interacting with the computer. With all these in place the library will-double as a resource centre.

From observation audio - visuals do not only make teaching and learning effective but also serve to capture the attention of learners. Interestingly, these electronic gadgets could also be a means of exposing the nomads to new technology as slated in the objectives. Incidentally the listed electronic gadgets can be operated using a portable generating plant where there is no electricity.

Library also provides relevant materials to help reinforce what a child has learnt in the classroom. It also helps to inculcate reading habit in an individual. It provides good avenue for teachers as well to refresh their memory.

The colourful posters on the walls coupled with a good organization of the materials will make the library attractive to the users. As this will help create a user-friendly atmosphere.

A trained teacher/librarian is needed to man the library. While he is involved in teaching he equally double as a librarian: His job as a librarian is to select relevant materials for both pupils and teachers, he organizes the materials for quick information retrieval; he also provides user education to both teachers and pupils; The teacher/librarian will also be involved in public enlightenment to nomads using library materials as they relate to their professions.

### **Conclusion**

Considering the above it is expedient on the part of Federal Government to begin to appreciate the school library as a possible solution to the lack of sustained interest on the part of the school - going nomads.-

Since the aim of inaugurating nomadic education was not to provide a substandard education for nomads but that they might be at par with children in other schools then library is needful. Moreso, it is assumed that other schools are provided with library considering the Federal Government's requirement for registering schools.

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