NOMADIC EDUCATION AS A PRECURSOR TO SOCIO-RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract
Education is taken here to be the transmission of the cultural values of the society from one generation to another, i.e. it is the process of socialization. Thus, socialization is seen as a process by which changes occur in the norms and values of the society. The nomads receive training through which an individual is helped to acquire skills and information that can enable them meet the demand of the society. It helps them maximise potentials, be well integrated, useful and dynamic in their society. Religiously, education aids them to meet the spiritual needs of the society. Culturally, education has provided them with new knowledge and skills. The paper will define concepts, trace the genesis of nomadic education in Nigeria, give the features of education, the success of nomadic education. Also examine critical the education as a precursor to socio-religious transformation. Finally in conclusion with Universal Basic Education (UBE) now, more nomad’s parents are to be encouraged to send their children particularly daughters to school since they did not have to pay school fees. Here one recommends that there is need for more enlightenment programmes about the need to encourage nomads to acquire education. Textbook writers and Measurement and Evaluation specialists should ensure that role-modelling and test construction is not nomadic based. Guidance counsellors should enlighten nomads on the need to choose courses according to the individual’s potentials.

A nomad is a member of a tribe that travels from one place to another with the aim of finding grass for loss animals. Thus, nomads are seen often moving from one part of the country to another in search of greener pasture and better climatic conditions for their cattle. They hold greatly to their cultural values and belief and are prone to getting suspicious of people with the opposite views. Education aims at inculcating in the nomads those desirable knowledge, skills and other capabilities to make them to become useful to themselves and the society. Thus, education in any society plays the role of transmitting the norms and values of the society from one generation to another. In effect it serves as a means of socialization, the importance of nomadic education is to transmit the norms and values of the society from one generation to another. As these norms and values are vital elements of culture. Here culture serves as a body of ideas.
and knowledge that can only be assimilated through learning. While education, whether formal or informal gives opportunities for individuals to learn the culture of the society.

Thus, through nomadic education the nomads are given the awareness and appreciation of Nigeria’s cultural heritage. With this education the nomads are taught about various ethnic/interest groups, this aids them to live together peacefully, while religiously, religious tolerance is taught to the nomads. The paper will define concepts, give the genesis of nomadic education in Nigeria, state the features of the education, the success of this education, then examine nomadic education as a pre-cursor to socio-religious transformation. Finally round up with the set backs and give conclusion.

**Definition of Concepts**

A nomad: according to longman Dictionary a nomad is “a member of a tribe which travels about, especially to find grass for loss animals”. This class of people can be called pastoral nomads. They are mostly cattle rearers from Shuwa Arab, Fulanis, Badau, Buzzi, Koyam and Fulanis. They are always on the move in search of greener pasture and better climatic conditions for their cattle. At times this movement is caused by an outbreak of diseases like rinderpest, foot and mouth diseases, biting flies like tsetse flies, land disputes or farmers whose farms are often ravaged by their cattle and unfavourable temperature.

In Nigeria nomads are mostly Moslems. They hold firmly to their cultural values and beliefs and are always suspicious of people with contrary views. Many of them are illiterates base on several factors like the mobile nature of their occupation, their care-free attitude, poor relationship with neighbours and delay in recognition of the peculiarity of their case by the government. They cannot enrol in conventional schools.

Education: according to Dzurgba, education is the process through which ones mind develops through learning at a school, college or university. It is the knowledge and skills a person gets from being taught. Education is also an acquisition, management and application or utilization of knowledge and skill. Thus education is concerned with the transmission of skills, knowledge, vocation and culture and this is done through teaching, learning, research and dissemination of the findings for ultimate utilization.

**History of Nomadic Education in Nigeria**

The essential of nomadic education in Nigeria goes back to the colonial period. Schools at this time were established in some nomadic communities. For instance one of such schools is Karakartu Nomads Primary School in Dura Local Government in Katsina State, which was established in 1953. But this did not last long based on the fact that the peculiarities of nomads were not put into consideration by psychological principles. Like in 1979, some nomads sent their children to schools created by Universal Primary Education (UPE). In the long run this did not help them much as the schools were conventional schools. Thus, majority of them dropped out.

Then in 1986 they came to limelight, when the federal government became directly involved in providing special education for them. This had to go in line with the National Policy on Education that states that, Education is a birth right of every Nigerian
child and that education “should be brought close to the environment of the child”. Thus, the Nigeria’s philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen; the full integration of the individual into the community and 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.

To seek how to make this possible more than two hundred nomadic leaders nationwide were summoned for a workshop in Yola, Adamawa State. The communiqué from the workshop gave birth to a blue print on nomadic education tagged “Fair Deal for Nomads”. This was followed by a massive enlightenment campaign on the need for nomadic education. in this line, nomadic schools were formally launched in Yola in July, 1987. With this experiment schools were set up, then researches about culture and life style of nomads were carried out between 1987 – 1989.

In 1988 the federal government inaugurated a 32-member National Advisory Committee on Nomadic Education, with Retired Col. M.B. Khalief as Chairman. On the 12th of December, 1989, the federal government enacted decree 41 that established the National Commission for Nomadic Education. Other members of this committee were absorbed into the commission. Then on the 10th of June 1991 objectives and functions of the commission were given. All was geared towards the smooth running of nomadic education. Thus, in 1995, a university-based Nomadic Education Committee was established to strengthen the relationship between and the commission. This also aided research work on how to improve nomadic education.

The Features of Nomadic School

These schools are limited to primary school level, while successful graduands are absorbed into conventional post-primary institutions. Permanent nomadic schools are built for settled and semi-settled nomads wherever they are found in large numbers. Mobile structures and tree shades are used as their classrooms, vacation schools and adult literacy classes are provided for them.

With special teachers who are trained to meet up with their goals. The teachers are provided with means like bicycles to aid them move around when the need arises. The syllabus of conventional schools is adopted to suit them. Subjects such as animal husbandry are taught. The mass media particularly the radio has greatly been used for nomadic education. Thus, researchers have suggested the use of open-broadcast and radio forum to teach nomadic isolated in grazing land. While textbooks on primary Mathematics, Primary Science and Social Studies have been written for nomadic schools by many experts. Thus, the Federal Government has suggested developing grazing lands to enable nomads to be more stable though their search is not limited to that of grass for their animals.

In this view it is not only the federal government that plays the role of developing nomadic education. Other international organisations like UNESCO have shown interest in this education, as they have helped the programme a lot, by sponsoring different researches conducted through universities of Jos Centre for Nomadic Education. Thus, the desire to acquire western education has started growing
within the nomads. Today, they are encouraged to form self-reliant organisations and their girls now take part in the rearing or grazing of their cattle just as their boys used to do. In effect, this has received positive reaction, one of such organisation is Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria which has really encouraged nomadic education. On financials, the funding of these schools based on decree 41 of 1989 was to be done or the responsibility of the federal, state and local governments with the assistance of the community. While the International bodies and private bodies could also give voluntary aid.

The Prospects of Nomadic Education in Nigeria

Nomadic education in Nigeria has achieved a lot of progress. For instance in 1995 over 800 schools with a population of over 65,000 pupils and more than 2,822 teachers had been recorded nation-wide. States that actively participates are Kano, Kaduna, Kebbi, Sokoto, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Kwara, Benue, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Cross River, Anambra, Enugu, Abia, Plateau, Kogi, Katsina, Niger, Yobe, Taraba and Abuja. In this line monitoring teams are regularly sent to find out problems that may come up in any of the schools, while criticism and recommendations are accepted.

Nomadic Education as Precursor to Socio-Religious Transformation

Nomadic education despite its shortcomings, it is clear that there are benefits derived by individuals and the nation from hides and skin, beef and milk provided by their cattle. There is no doubt that if educated they will be able to raise better cattle, help in other aspects of national development and cause less damages to farmers. The education helps to add meaning to the essence of education thus bringing it to bear on human existence. Nomadic education has change the nomad’s society, the society is always changing due to improvements in man’s awareness and understanding of the environment. Consequently, new ways of doing things are discovered. These could be in material form such as the use of machines or the form of attitude such as changing consciousness.

Thus, the nomadic schools re fulfilling their purposes of transmitting their culture from one generation to another and improving this culture by producing generations of people who are more refined and enlightened than their parents or forefathers. The schools have help in socialization of the nomads. As it helps them to develop the desire moral values which are necessary for their acceptance and survival in the society. The schools help to provide them with skills necessary for survival such as reading, writing and counting. The nomads are conditioned to hard physical endurance, their dress are made simple, and functional. They dwell in tents with very little and simple furniture made up of straw mats, some pots for cooking. Cereals serves as their stable food, milk and its derivatives made up a very substantial part of the daily menu.

Thus, the chief occupation of the nomads is cattle breeding, sheep raising and the activities associated with pastoral life. Sheep and goats are pastured together. This call for physical stamina and for courage and patience to endure suffering. They need to over-come dangers due not only to hostile people and things of the earth, but also to hostile supernatural beings which they believe are all about them, this makes them to be
religious, that is sensitive in their recognition of the existence of a God or gods having power over their lives and well-being and their destiny which they require service, recognition, honour and obedience. Thus, the nomadic shepherds, attitude to the world about them is religious.

The nomadic background influences their culture and give content to it. The people are extremely sensitive to supernatural forces acting on them, either for better or for worse. In view of this, they are prone to having mystical religious experiences which prompt them to a devout act of worship – what we may call a feeling of total dependence on a higher mysterious power. Nomadic education has brought social change to the nomads. As it is supposed to help individuals to acquire experience, knowledge, ideas and skills which would help them understand and manipulate their environment to their own advantage. With this new needs or problems may arise calling for new approaches of solving them. All the same, nomadic education tends to alter the social, economic and political systems of this society. For example, huge amount of money are needed to site these schools, appoint teachers and provide equipment for their rapidly growing school populations. In effect, in the course of socialization, they become more aware and are able to analyse existing situations and possibly come up with innovations. For instance, it is common in the villages to find that majority of those who lead in nomadic meetings, and in community development projects are those with some formal education, they have acquired from this education. This is because their initiative and innovation capacities have been developed through education.

Inspite all these, social change influences nomadic education. as the social system is altered, now changes are created, some of which have to do with new social roles, norms and values. Culturally, culture as a way of life demands that means are evolved for patterning or moulding human activities and relationships to guarantee the continued existence of the society. Thus, not only are individuals prepared or trained to play their roles in the society, they are also acquainted with the rules and regulations, in order to avoid conflict. In effect, nomadic education provides them with the knowledge and skills with which to understand and influence their social and physical environment. Thus, it also ensures that the knowledge and skills so provided are capable of being preserved and transmitted to generations to come. This aids to guarantee continuity.

It is clear that culture is the product of the past, it is not the end product. But culture is dynamic or capable of changing. It is like a living thing. Today the nomads are exposed to other people’s culture through nomadic education, travel or mass media (radio) has caused some changes in their old way of doing things. Here it is important to note that nomadic education serves as an agent of cultural change. It is clear that nomadic education does not provide nomads with knowledge and skills for their own sake. But these knowledge and skills are supposed to help them develop new ideas and ways of solving problems, social innovations. For instance, some nomads have settled in certain communities with an improvement on the nature of building their houses in those days of grass and leaves with no windows. That is they dwelt in tents with very little and simple furniture made up of straw mats, etc. With the belief that wider windows or doors would make the homes accessible to evil spirits. In fact through
nomadic education, nomads have learnt about the need for ventilation in their homes and they now have houses with many wide windows and doors.

The evidence of this interaction nomadic education and culture can be found in different subjects taught in these schools. Like Agricultural Science, Vocational and Technological course are to help them have the know how of promoting food production and technological development, religious education aids them to meet the spiritual needs of the society. Other subjects like Geography aids them to be use for their physical environment, then subjects that deal with violence or military techniques aid them to prepare to fight against external forces and stop internal threats.

**Challenges of Nomadic Education for the Transformation of Nigerian Nomads**

Nomadic education in Nigeria has faced some constraints. For instance in 1990, the monitoring team sent to Niger, Sokoto and Katsina States, could not ascertain the number of available schools, number of teachers and their qualifications, and the type of nomadic schools in specified areas. In years like 1992, 1993 and 1994 teachers audit was only possible in only fifteen states out of the twenty five involved in these programme.

In the process of socialization nomads their society face problems arising from the way they perform their roles. Role conflict arises during socialization when the individual member of the society man, woman, children, imam etc plays many roles almost at the same time. The effect is the member may not be able to perform the two or more roles at the same time; this delays the beneficiaries of his/her performance in a particular social position. For instance, it has been observed that girls within the nomadic families also accompany cattle out for grazing just like the boys, in this case it is not possible for them to go out to market the usual “nun” they are known to sell.

Culturally, there appears to be cultural change within the nomads. Like inventions has given rise to new elements in the culture of the nomads. Then cultural borrowing through contacts or mass media e.g. radio, use of handsets has brought about integration of new elements into their existing culture. Today the nomads experience change in the structural forms of their society. For instance, now there is a class structure or the coming up of new roles or responsibilities e.g. leaders who have to speak on their behalf as nomads from their small communities to national level. With this they are faced with problems of change in instructions or practices. In this view they are faced with the problem of international dimensions. Here it has to deal with change in social relationship in society. As it is clear, that at the eve of the advent of nomadic education, the tendency was the nomads of the same social class to associate. Today forces could bring people of different social classes together. In effect this could bring about a change in social outlook.

**Conclusion**

From the on-going, education has been recognised as a powerful agent of social change. The nomadic schools serves as agents of education, which are established by members of the society to preserve and transmit their culture from one generation to another. Thus, here education becomes the agent for effecting the diffusion of change.
As some changes cannot be over-come over night. Like national consciousness and citizenship education can only be built into the school syllabus and made part of the school’s instructions. With this, they would become permanent elements of nomadic education in the society pretending when the situation will demand change.

References


Pristine


The education of nomadic peoples in East Africa Review of relevant literature. This report was prepared by Roy Carr-Hill and Edwina Peart (IIEP Consultant), under the direction of David Atchoarena, UNESCO-IIEP. Others take the view that, inasmuch as the education system is aligned with modernity, most formal education programmes are confronting for nomadic culture and for what nomadic children need and want to know for their way of life. This contested view of pastoralism has been taken as the framework for the review of the wide range of literature. The general implication for educational provision is that the nomadic groups themselves must perceive what they are being offered as an improvement to what they already have. Providing education for nomadic people in the traditional manner confronts the teaching profession with a series of headaches. School buildings, classrooms, benches, desks, teaching equipment and timetables of subjects and activities for the term are all irrelevant for people who do not stay in one place for more than a few weeks at a time. The nomad is certainly an awkward customer for the services and structures of the modern education system. Education: Does it Help Nomads? The underdevelopment of pastoral communities could be explained as a result of a number of factors, including lack of access to basic education. Yet availability of education cannot be assumed a panacea for the sector’s problems.