Abstract

One of the most competing issues underlying Nigerian society is that of the glaring differences among people in educational opportunity and attainment. Equality of educational opportunities has been an enduring concern of all post-colonial governments in Africa particularly Nigeria. Since independence in 1960, huge investments have been made in education in order to reduce inequality of access reeducation among different societies and ethnic groups in the country, it is against this background that the government is determined to bring education to every Nigerian child including pastoral nomads and the migrant fishermen's children. The paper therefore, looks at the following areas: the concept of sustainable development; the role of education in sustainable development; who are the nomads and migrant fishermen; the aims and objectives of nomadic and migrant fishermen children's education and the conditions for refocusing nomadic education in Nigeria.

Introduction

Education is a veritable instrument for individual's improvement and sustainable national development. Unfortunately, there is a crisis in our educational system at various levels. This paper entitled "refocusing nomadic/migrant fishermen children's education for sustainable development in Nigeria" examines the concept of sustainable development the role of education in sustainable development and an explanation of whom nomads and the migrant fishermen are. It went further to state the aims and objectives of nomadic and migrant fishermen children's education. Finally, a point by point condition for refocusing nomadic education in Nigeria is explicated.

Concept of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development has been one of the current issues in contemporary environment and social development studies. The term "Sustainable development" was popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission in its 1987 Report entitled "our common future").

According to Brundtland Commission Report of (1987), sustainable development is defined as economic and social development that meet the needs of the current generation without endangering the ability of future generations satisfying their needs and choosing their lifestyle. This definition adequately fits into the lifestyle of nomadic people in general and of migrant fishermen in particular. Sustainable development has much to do with improving the peoples’ way of life now and for generations to come. Bryant (2003) describes sustainable development as infrastructure, policies and behaviours that are conceptualized, instituted, maintained overtime and which are considered essential to the vitality, general welfare and continued existence of a people and the environment.

White and Whitney (1992), in Oruwari (1996), proposed a broader definition which emphasizes both integrated planning and political viability that draw on the support of both the people and their institutions. In the same vein, Ango (1992) stipulates that development connotes improvement of the total circumstances of men on the earth satisfying his social, economic and material needs and granting him mastery of his environment.

Sustainable Development Approach (SDA) is about improving the quality of life without compromising the needs of the future generation. It emphasizes the need for all to continue to pursue our daily needs very aggressively. Clayton (2001) informs that a commitment to meet the needs of present and future generations has various implications. Meeting the needs of the present means satisfying:

(i) economic needs;
(ii) social, cultural and health needs and
(iii) political needs.

Similarly, (here is also the growing consensus that sustainable development means achieving a quality of life that can be maintained for many generations because it is:

(i) Socially desirable - fulfilling peoples’ cultural, material and spiritual needs in equitable ways,
Economically viable - paying for itself, with costs not exceeding income; and
Ecologically sustainable - maintaining the long-term viabilities of supporting ecosystems (Ekong 2002:7).

As postulated by Thin (2002:13) sustainable development objective involves four core elements viz:
(a) Progress: improving the quality of life (multidimensional and better than a basic minimum).
(b) Justice: universal human rights for present and future generations and equity more generally.
(c) Durability: achieving progress that is lasting and which does not unduly restrict options for several generations to come.
(d) Stability/Resilience: being adaptive and avoiding excessive fluctuation, ability to recover quickly from shocks.

The Role of Education in Sustainable Development
Education plays a very significant role in sustainable development. The United Kingdom Government Department for International Development (DFID) in its policy paper of 1999 acknowledges that education has much to contribute to sustainable development and that skill development enhances sustainable livelihood (Taylor, 2002). The role of education in sustainable development is further highlighted by the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) cited in Taylor (2002: 91-92), thus:

Sustainable development is now widely perceived as the only way to guarantee humanity's well being now and in future generations. Sustainable development means development that continues to meet today's needs in ways that will not jeopardize future generation. The first step toward sustainable development is to encourage attempts to find solutions based on a firm understanding of the present state of the environment and the causes of environmental problems. Because environmental problems directly affect people's interests, however, it is important to disseminate correct knowledge and promote divers approaches to these problems and education is an important step toward the achievement of these objectives.

From the excerpt, it is obvious that the activities that promote sustainable development lie beyond the environmentalists lobby to that of education that seeks to raise awareness deepen understanding and influence behaviour.

The UNESCO discussion on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has it that ESD must give people practical skills that will enable them continue learning after they have left school to have a sustainable livelihood and to live sustainable lives. It went further, to list the type of skills pupils will need as adults for sustainable development - environmental, social and economic. These skills are:

* the ability to communicate effectively (both orally and in writing),
** the ability to think in time to forecast, to think ahead and to plan,
*** the ability to think critically about value issues,
**** the capacity to move from awareness to knowledge in action,
***** the ability to work co-operatively with other people,
**** the capacity to use these processes, knowing, inquiry, acting, judging, imagining, etc.

Therefore, the nomadic education programme came about as a result of Federal Government dissatisfaction with the rate of development of education among some itinerate groups in the country, knowing fully well the importance of education. The scheme is designed by the Federal Government to afford basic formal education to mobile herdsmen and their wards where economic occupation necessitates unsteadiness on the spot in given seasons. The nomadic education programme is in recognition of the fact that basic education is a birthright, which no serious and democratic nation must undermine or deny its citizenry.

Who Are The Nomads And Migrant Fishermen?
Nomads can be described as communities of people that move from one place to another in search of livelihood (Gbamanja, 1997). Nomadism is considered as the constant movement from place to place with the herds in search of pasture and water. Other reasons for nomadism is to avoid seasonal diseases which affect and extinct the animals, reduce incessant competition and avoid external authorities. Such wandering from one place to another usually cuts across local, state and political borders. Lar (1989:2) asserts, "Early men were nomads who moved from place to place with their cattle in search of pasture. Lar (1989:4) further states, "the nomadic people are a traveling population, the migratory group, itinerant group and the wandering people".
In the same vein, Akinkugbe (1994: 163) refers to nomads "as ethnic or socio-professional groups which travel and migrate in large or small class groups in search of means of livelihood within a community, a nation or across international boundaries".

Nomadism could also refer to any type of existence characterized by the absence of a fixed domicile. Examples are the hunter / food gatherers, itinerant workers, the pastoralists and the migrant fishermen (Ezeomah, 1995). According to Awogbade (1991), nomadism or wandering pastoralism is the mode of existence of human communities totally or practically dependent on the husbanding of one or more species of domesticated animals. Pastoralists are a people who depend for their livelihood, on the management of their cattle and in doing so, their daily lives are determined by the needs of their animals for foods, water and production. A society is pastoral to the extent that the needs of the animals set the pattern of activity.

The term "migrant fishermen embraces both the fishermen or women and their children who are probably of formal school age, living and engaged in fishing activities with their parents as they move from one fishing port to another. In this regard, there are two categories of people involved -the adult fishermen and women, and their children. Mobility allows nomads' freedom inconceivable to peasant or settled groups. Therefore, it is vividly clear that nomadism include both the Fulani cattle rearers and the migrant fishermen of the Atlantic Seaboard due to their peculiar "socio-professional" and migratory lifestyle in large or small class groups in search of means of livelihood and survival within a community.

Akinkugbe (1994: 163) identifies six normadic groups in Nigeria - the Fulani (5.3 million); the Shuwar (1.01 million). The Budtiman (35,000); the Kwayan (20,200), the Badawi whose population concentration is not yet ascertained; and the fisherman (2.8 million) concentrated in Rivers, Ondo, Edo, Delta, Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Ogun and Lagos States. He informs that, of the estimated population of 9.3 million nomadic peoples, a third (3.1 million) are children of school and pre-school age. Akinkugbe (1994) further assertes that the literacy rate of the pastoral nomads is 0.28% while that of the nomadic fishermen is about 2.0%. These groups are severally disadvantaged in the provision of education and other welfare facilities.

**Aims and Objectives of Nomadic and Migrant Fishermen Children's Education**

With the involvement of the Federal Government, a National Commission for Nomadic Education was established with headquarters at Kaduna to oversee the programme. The Commission is backed by Decree No. 41 of 12* December, 1989. The objectives of the commission according to the Decree (NCNE 1989: 2) include:

1. To formulate policy and issue guideline in all matters relating to nomadic education in Nigeria.
2. To provide funds for:
   (i) research and personnel development for the improvement of nomadic education in Nigeria; (ii) the development of programme on nomadic education; equipment and other instructional materials (including teaching aids and amenities) construction of classrooms and other facilities relating to nomadic education.
3. To arrange effective monitoring and evaluation of activities of agencies concerned with nomadic education.
4. To establish, manage and maintain primary schools for nomadic children.

The Commission has issued a report on the status of nomadic education in Nigeria (1995:96) and the goals of nomadic education can be summarized as:

(a) The integration of the nomadic life by providing them with relevant functional basic education.
(b) To improve their survival skill through the acquisition of appropriate methods, abilities, competence -mental, social and physical which are relevant to their life-styles and occupational roles as nomads.

In order to realize these goals, section 10 (1) of the Commission provides for the establishment of four nomadic centres at:

(i) University of Jos to conduct research in nomadic life-styles and their occupation and basically serve as feeder centre to all other centres,
(ii) Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto that is concerned with curriculum development through the Jos centre.
University of Maiduguri, which is concerned with training programme,
University of Port Harcourt, which is primarily concerned with migrant fishermen.

It should be noted that with these arrangements in place and with the establishment of NCNE as the monitoring and supervising body, the Federal Government had put in place, a scheme capable of reducing the level of educational disparity within the country.

Conditions for Refocusing Nomadic Education In Nigeria

There are basic conditions necessary in order to refocus nomadic education in Nigeria as identified by Gana (1991: 66-67):
1. The development of a master plan for the nomadic education programmes.
2. The production of appropriate syllabus, schemes of work, textbooks and instructional materials based on the culture, tradition, social norms and the lifestyles of the nomads.
3. The availability of native teachers and administrators who can communicate effectively with the nomads.
4. The provision of alternative incentives for nomadic teachers in order to retain them.
5. The establishment of adequate welfare facilities for the students and the teachers within the school environments. Medicare, water, conveniences, mobility and accessibility of the school, constitute some of the basic needs.
6. The location of the nomadic schools within identified and accessible areas of concentrated nomadic settlement.
7. The direct involvement of the nomads and their local communities.
8. Mass public support through adequate publicity and public enlightenment about the nomadic education programme and its aims and objectives.
9. Precise identification of the roles, functions and responsibilities for nomadic education programme between the governments, the local communities, (he nomads, (he private sectors, etc.

The above nine-point conditions will go a long way in refocusing and repositioning nomadic education if adequately implemented.

To add to the above there is need for:
1. Identification and utilization of the suitable and effective educational delivery methods.
2. The utilization of flexible techniques for teaching and learning based on the concrete realities and life-style of the nomads particularly the use of collapsible mobile classroom structures and boat schools for the more mobile groups and permanent and semi permanent structures for the semi-sedentary groups.
3. GDFlexibility of learning period, which implies that teaching and learning should take place at the time of the day as agreed by the teachers and parents.
4. Adequate funding through the three-tier of governments, government agencies such as Education Tax Fund (ETF) other agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the hosting communities.
5. Utilization of mass media especially the radio for teaching.

Conclusion
The introduction of education to these disadvantaged groups like the nomads and the migrant people is very laudable and commendable. This paper has discussed the concept of sustainable development, elaborated on the role of education in sustainable development, elucidated on the nomads and the migrant fishermen identified the aims and objectives of nomadic and migrant fishermen children's education. For the programme to be re-invigorated refocused and be sustained, the conditions were vividly slated.

References


