

## Agro-Vocational Reforms and Funding of Nomadic Education for Implementation in School Curriculum in North Central Nigeria

G.E. Ekele\*, W. Longshal and H. Suleiman

*Department of Vocational Agriculture & Technology Education. Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State – Nigeria*

**\*Corresponding Author:** *Department of Vocational Agriculture & Technology Education. Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State – Nigeria, Email: ekelegarba@gmail.com*

### ABSTRACT

*The study x-rays agro- vocational reforms and funding of nomadic education for implementation in school curriculum in North Central Nigeria. There exists several vocational opportunities in Agriculture which the nomads and pastoralists could explore to enhance their standard of living. It is in pursuance of this and other goals that the nomadic education programme was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The study focuses on agro-vocational reforms and further look at the challenges of funding nomadic education and ways of better funding of the programme. The study also recommended ways of maximizing this expertise of agricultural educators, seasoned educationalists and agricultural extension agents, the nomadic education programme may only exist for scoring cheap political points.*

**Keywords:** *Vocational agriculture, funding, nomadic, education, opportunities and sustainable development.*

### INTRODUCTION

The population of nomads in Nigeria is geometrically increasing. They are wholly for their livestock and are compelled to move about for the wellbeing of their livestock. They are sometimes referred to as cattle Fulani and because they are known to be people on the move in search of pasture and water for their livestock, no arrangement in place for the education of their children. A nomad is a person who chooses as a way of life and making a living movement from one place to another (Igwue and Adejoh, 2014). Nomadism in the opinion of Adeyemi, Oribabor and Adeyemi (2012) was brought about by economic necessity such as hunting and food gathering or cattle rearing. The author posits that nomadism in Nigeria is mainly dictated by livestock rearing activities and have been identified within the Fulani ethnic group (many of them are nomads with many settle ones as well).

Nomadism according to Lawan(1991) can adopt the language which they now speak. In another narrative, Junaidu (waziri of Sokoto) in Igwue and Adejoh (2014) reported that the Toronkawa are the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Esau. The authors explained that they speak a language

called Wakuru and after leaving Palestine they migrated through North Africa to Futa Toro in Senegambia where they rested, multiplied and were converted to Islam by Ukubatu who married BajjoMangu, a daughter of their ruler and had four sons by her. These sons were the first to spea Fulfulde. This, the Toronkawa also adopted and they become the ancestors of all the Fulani tribes.

Providing education for all the estimated population of 9.3 million nomadic people in Nigeria is a herculean task. Of this population 3.1 million children are of school age (Nomadic education Bulletin, 1995). It is in recognition of this that the Federal Government in 1986 organized a national workshop in Yola to identify the best way of educating the nomads. Consequently, the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) was established by decree 41 of 1989 to provide primary education for pastoral nomads. The objectives of nomadic education as outlined by the commission are: exposing the nomadic child to the elementary forms of education, inculcating the spirit of humanity and making the nomads child realize himself as a member of the Nigerian society, enabling the nomadic child take part in the development of his immediate environment and

country in general, making the nomadic child able to improve his living conditions and help him modernize his technique of herdsmanhip and animal management, helping the nomadic child to appreciate moral and religious practices, assisting the nomadic child to develop himself rapidly and fully both physically and intellectually to cope with the demands of the contemporary world and developing the initiative of the nomadic child and stimulating in him scientific and analytical mode of thinking (NCNE, 1999).

Meeting these objectives is a big challenge which the government must address. The government of Nigeria believes that learning is the primary means of upgrading the socioeconomic condition of the rural population. This population particularly the nomadic/pastoral Fulani are difficult to educate. Apart from the literacy gulf between the Fulani and non-Fulani, Iro (2012) stated that there is a disparity in the attainment of different types of education among the Fulani. The authorsubmitted that in a sample of 1,998 pastoral Fulani surveyed, about half of them have koranic education, forty percent have no education, and only seven percent have either formal or both mainstream and koranic. In spite of the millions of naira spent by the government in nomadic education programme, Iro (2012) lamented that the measure of educational attainment among the Fulani remains low. According to the author, the quality of education among them is mediocre at best. The nomadic to education is therefore, yet to lift the literacy and standard of living of the Fulani. In attempting to reach the pastoral Fulani through radio and television, Alaeze (2005) affirms that to improve literacy especially in the rural areas, the government supplies the hardware such as radio, television and electric generator. This is because a pastoral Fulani is a captive audience for radio television programme. The literate world can reach the Fulani without disrupting their herding.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY REFORMS

Generally, vocational education is any form of education, training and retraining designed to prepare persons to enter or continue in a paid employment in any recognized occupation that is not profession. Olaitan (1986) believes that vocational and technical education is that form of education, which emphasizes the

development of occupational skills needed as preparation for work. Sacheti (1997) viewed vocational and technical education as the education that provides the skills knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupation. Thus, the primary objectives of vocational education is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations whose training require less than a bachelor's degree. The central purpose of vocational education is to get people into jobs requiring specialized training. Vocational agricultural education in this context refers to a specific education given to an individual to enable him acquire practical oriented skills and scientific knowledge needed to enter and make progress in agricultural related occupations (Ekele and Agbulu, 2004; Lawani, 2000).

Vocational education is expensive because of the tools, equipment and materials that are an important part of the training process. Candidates for vocational education should be selected to ensure that they have the interest and aptitude to benefit from the training. Okoro (1999) reiterates that the establishment of vocational education programmes should be based on needs of the country, the needs of community and the needs of individual citizens. The major purpose of vocational education is not to give certificates, but to train skilled workers who could effectively function in their place of employment. Generally, vocational education consists of six major area viz-trade and industrial education, business and office education, distribution education and health occupations education (Olaitanetal, 1999).

As explained by Okorie (2001), general education is received for the general cultural development of the individual and while it may be useful in several occupations, it is not normally an essential part of most occupational preparations. Both general and vocational education are part of the total education process. A functional education is usually based on a solid foundation of general education. Vocational and general education complement each other. Both are important in the total process of producing and efficient and effective workforce. However, while vocational education may be regarded as that part of the total education process that focuses on individual occupation, general education could be regarded as public or basic education for citizenship. In teaching electricity as a vocational course for example, emphasis is on

## Agro-Vocational Reforms and Funding of Nomadic Education for Implementation in School Curriculum in North Central Nigeria

actual job situations while as in general education, the principles of electricity can be emphasized to enable students use electrical appliances intelligently (Ekele,2011).

Technology oriented agriculture such as mechanization, irrigation and biochemical technology need immediate implementation to solve practical problems. Technology is the application of scientific principles to ease agricultural production. For example, water is pumped to farm land through irrigation by a hard ware technology. The use of organic and inorganic materials such as chemical or organic fertilizers, preservative and fumigants to improve agricultural productivity. it should be noted that technology applied to agriculture could be in form of low level technology as in the use of hand tools, intermediate technology which is moderately advanced (e.g. the use of wheelbarrow) and the advanced level technologies used in mechanized farms (the agro chemicals, herbicides, insecticides and hardware technologies) such as tractors and other equipment (Agbabiaje, 2005). There is urgent need to transform Nigeria's traditional agriculture. At the moment, there is exodus of labour from agricultural sector to other sectors. This is due to drudgery and unattractive working conditions in agricultural sector. To meet up with the rapid industrialization and provide the needed raw materials, technology must be adopted in Nigeria's agriculture. The advantages of technology applied to agriculture cannot be over emphasized. Technology increase individual holdings, increase the acreage of his farms and achieve greater output of production by using farm inputs of improved varieties.

Technology enhances cultivation of crop plants through irrigation and ensures preservation and storage of perishable farm produce. It also enhances productivity of soil and control pathogens, pest and diseases. However, Anthony, Kaigama, Ogbazi and Adesiyani (2002) reports that several factors affects the introduction of technology in agriculture. These factors include:

- Availability of Funds: Farmers and governments require enough money for the purchase of farm inputs. In Nigeria, lack of sufficient capital makes it difficult to apply technology in agricultural production. The land is mostly fragmented making mechanized agriculture very difficult.

- Willingness of the farmers to adopt Technology: For technology to be effectively utilized, the farmers must be willing to adapt now improved practices. Most traditional farmers are conservation and are slow to adopt new scientific farming methods and techniques.
- Education and Research: For farmer to adopt modern methods of farming, they have to be prepared to adopt and apply technological innovations in farming.
- Marketing facilities are needed for disposal of agricultural products.

### PROSPECT OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Agricultural Education is replete with lots of career opportunities. Agricultural and vocational education is not for the less intelligent people as may have the misconception. For agricultural education, the following areas have career opportunities. Animal production civil service, feed industries, dairy, pig and poultry production, animal research centres, animal pharmaceuticals, self-employment (livestock or mixed farming). Crop production include agricultural estates, banks, self-employment, Agro-based industries such as tobacco companies, teaching, research institutes, chemical companies. Soils and survey has farm planning design, soil testing, teaching in schools and colleges, research institutes, the civil service. Farm Business Management include farm managers, bank officials agricultural consultants, the civil service, research institutes. Agricultural Marketing involves jobs related to agricultural supplies can be found in distribution and marketing of agricultural supplies and equipment, agricultural engineering career opportunities are in government farms, irrigation farms ranches, civil service, research institute. Forestry has career such as resource management and wildlife. Career in fishery include fish processing industry, fish farming, marine fisheries research and consulting firms.

The prospects of vocational education are varied and make work more pleasant and productive. Aside satisfying the personal work needs of the individual, vocational education has the following prospects.

- Wenrich and Wenrichin Okoro (1999) agreed that vocational education does not only lead to employment, it also ensures that the income from working is reasonable. People

need skills in some specific area. Vocational education provides skills in area such as agriculture, road construction, transportation, industry and business.

- Vocational Education is activity oriented. People need activity, and employment and work provide that on a continuous basis. A well trained worker find job very interesting and derive job satisfaction.
- One of the chief aim of vocational education is employment which gives the individual self respect and dignity. Society patronizes the work of a trained worker who feels pride in himself.
- Vocational education provides social contact and participation. This is because being involved in an occupation helps to satisfy this need for social contact and participation.
- Vocational education promotes creativity. In order to be creative, an individual must thoroughly understand his job and must feel that he is making a contribution to society.
- Vocational education enhances the availability of jobs for the highly trained or skilled. There are no jobs for the untrained.
- Vocational education is relevant to the needs of Nigeria in respect of advancing technology, geographical and occupational mobility and high rate of unemployment.

### **VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NOMADS**

Vocational opportunities for nomads refer to the various options in agricultural occupations especially animal productions for nomads, Ekele (2015) asserts that it requires skill acquisition, knowledge and attitude for profitable performance on the part of one who practices it. The author reiterates that it involves learning the skills needed for a specific vocational option in agriculture. In animal production for instance, rearing of cattle for meat is a vocational option, while diary cattle raring of milk is another vocational option. Thus, the combination of various vocational options in animal production gives the Fulani nomads the opportunities to make choices. However, most cattle Fulani in the opinion of Lar (1997) have been conservative in their methods of animal husbandry as a vocational opportunity. The author further observed that they have not attempted to provide water and grazing area for

their herds through scientific methods but have depended on natural provisions of water and grass obtainable through continuous seasonal movements. The cattle Fulani are well known for animal rearing. Some of the domesticated stocks include sheep, bovines (*Bostaurus*, *Bosindicus* and yak). Equines (Horse, Ass) and camels. Products obtainable from these animals according to Nwabuisi and Ekele (2002) are meat, milk, fats and leather.

The most perplexing issue is that instead of teaching pastoral procedures to achieve the vocational opportunities for nomads, formal schools spend too much time on teaching history and cultures of societies the pastoralists least understand. Consequently, Ezeomah (1998) noted that conventional education ignores the desirability of the apprenticeship model, thereby hindering skill acquisition by nomads. This implies total neglect of vocational education for nomads.

Vocational education as explained by Ekele (2014) is the education intentionally designed for people who have chosen occupations and wish to improve on them. From the Fulani nomads perspective and from their pre-colonial history, there was no vocational education rather what existed mostly were vocational training or on the job training. The need to equip the Fulani nomads strongly, to grapple with the complexity of demand in their environment, gave rise to the emergence and development of vocational opportunities that result in vocational education. Vocational education in its traditional role, facilitates the adjustment of skills and knowledge of man to the changing demands within the society. The major concern of vocational agriculture is the teaching and learning of skills which will make for proficiency in agricultural occupation (Osinem, 2018). The nomads and pastoralist through the process of learning can be changed. The activities and experiences the nomads engage in are very vital as they enable them to develop adequate manipulative skills for agricultural productivity. This will consequently make for better living in the society. The nomads and pastoralists need skills in vocational agriculture to improve the production of crops, animals, fishing and raw materials for man and industries. In this context, it is the responsibility of agricultural educators (who ought to be part of implementation team of nomadic education programme) to determine the right skills needed by the nomads and pastoralist to enable them

become self-sufficient. With the rapid increase in world population, the nomads and pastoralist need to go a step further in their production ability, there is therefore need for increased production of crops and livestock and this is achievable by acquisition of manipulative skills for various skill occupation and opportunities in agriculture. Ekele (2011) asserts that skills are performance capabilities through psycho-productive activities. Explaining skills, Osinem (2008) enumerated the importance of skill acquisition in vocational agriculture to include economic importance, political importance and social importance.

### Economic Importance

Skill acquisition is important for harnessing the nation natural resources which will consequently promote economic stability. With nomads and pastoralist, empowering them with skill will enable them harness natural resources properly and productivity is usually maximized there by boosting the economy. It should be noted that the root of poverty is joblessness, and the joblessness is lack of skill in vocational agriculture or occupational skill.

### Social Importance

With current crisis between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers, acquisition of skills by nomads/Fulani cattle rearers and their children will prevent the youths from becoming social misfits. The children of nomads and pastoralist who may have acquired skill get employed and abandon anti-social vices such as stealing and purported killing of innocent farmers in their farmland. The acquisition of skills by nomads will provide them with financial security, psychological security and the development of their intrinsic potentials.

### Political Importance

The level of skill an individual possess determines his political disposition. Acquisition of skill in vocational agriculture by the nomads and pastoralists will enable them command respect from other citizens of the country. This is because they will sell their products to ready market.

Since the nomads and pastoralist require skills in the animal they rear and the crop they plant. It is important to look at the some of the specific skills. Ekele (2011) and Osinem (2008) listed some of the skills in crop production and pest control on the farm. Skills in pest control involves ability to identify pests, read and

interpret a pesticide label, calibrate a sprayer, apply pesticides using sprayer, select sprayer nozzles, use personal safety equipment while spraying, determines economic threshold for treatment, scouts crops for pest infestations, identify the life cycle of some insect pests. Crop production involves ability to-prepare and land suitable for the crop, carry out seed test, carry out seed selection, sort and grade seeds correctly, dress seed/seeding with right chemical and quantities before planting, test the viability of seeds before planting, prepare plant cutting or sets for planting, raise seedlings in nursery, transplant seedling, sow seeds identify weeds and control measure, determine a mature crop ready for harvesting, harvest using the right tool, process harvested crop, construct storage facilities and store. It suffices to say at this juncture that the search for a better job has resulted in mass exodus of Nigerian youths (nomadic youths inclusive) from the rural to the urban cities. Those with requisite skills and education are not jobless, while those without vocational skills live at subsistence level and hence, they constitute nuisance to the society. The acquisition of skills by nomads in nomadic school programme will check this ugly trend.

## CHALLENGES AND REMEDIES IN FUNDING NOMADIC EDUCATION

The pitfall of the present finding nomadic education is evident in the current economic recession. Until the economic recession of early 2016, government apparently did not have much difficulty in meeting its financial obligations to nomadic education. Prior to that period, the oil revenue was coming in to sustain most government development projects and social programme. The downward plunge of the oil revenue made it increasingly impossible for government to implement many projects in the pipeline. The increasing indebtedness of the nation to international financial institutions worsened the competition among public services for scarce resources. Under investment of resources in nomadic education is manifested not only in the fewness of nomadic school places but also the acute shortage of teachers. As stated by Muhammed and Yamata (2011), the laudable objectives for nomadic education programme in Nigeria have not been progressive due to a number of constraints. The authors identified these constraints to include political constraints, financial constraints, lack of facilities and unpreparedness of the nomads. Based upon the issues discussed, the following

strategies are presented for effective financing of nomadic education programme in North Central Nigeria.

### **Diversification of Education Resources**

A wider spread of sources of funds for nomadic education is a sine qua non if nomadic education is to survive the pressure of current tight budgets. It is specifically important to increase business and industry participation as well as the contribution of communities through self-help, levies and taxes. Suffice it to say that diversification of income sources is the only way to broaden the financial base of nomadic education and thus circumvent revenue bottleneck that arise from over dependence on government.

### **Judicious Allocation and Utilization of Resources**

Rather than have several unequipped nomadic education centers where staffs are not adequate, it would be a wiser investment to merge the resources to produce fewer but more effective nomadic schools. All concerned should be educated on the need for quality and not number of nomadic education centres.

### **Increasing Private Financing of Nomadic Education Programme**

An important source of funds for the establishment and operation of nomadic education centres is the imposition of user charges or fess. This source, however, raises a lot of controversy much of which borders on philosophical, political and sometimes operational consideration.

### **Increased Revenue Allocation by Federal, State and Local Government**

It will be really disastrous for nomadic education if federal, state and local government sources are ignored in any proposal for financing nomadic education. It is proposed here that these levels of government should step up their allocation to nomadic education. Nigeria can no longer pretend to be self-sufficient, even though this is a noble goal to pursue. Foreign assistance should be encouraged wherever they are found provided the benefits from such assistance justify the cooperation and that no uncomfortable detracting strings are attached.

The enrolment of nomadic children into schools has been slow compared to the estimated 3.1 million school age of nomadic population (Obiesie, 2007). The author states that the

nomadic girl child has a very low level of participation in primary education when compared to boys. The national commission for nomadic education (1999) highlighted some impediments that prevent nomadic children from participating in education. The commission amongst other impediments identified the physical isolation occasioned by inaccessible physical environment, the environmental degradation of Niger Delta area which affects the migrants, the irrelevance of the school curriculum which is tailored to meeting the needs of sedentary groups thereby ignoring the educational needs of nomadic people. Nwangwu (2013) and Obiesie (2007) also identified other constraints such as the centrality of child labour in their production system, making it extremely difficult to allow their children to participate in formal schooling, the constant migration in search of water and pasture in the case of pastoralists and fish in the case of migrant fishermen. The authors further fingered constraints such as the activities of oil companies in the Niger Delta area which affect the environment and the neglect of the development of the school by both states and local government area as being responsible for slowing nomadic education.

### **CONCLUSION**

The National Commission for Nomadic Education was established in 1989 and was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the children of nomads have access to free and compulsory qualitative education. The present situation of nomadic education in Nigeria is not encouraging in view of the aforementioned challenges. State and Federal Government have not shown enough commitment to the education of nomads economic recession notwithstanding. There is lack of political will to engage the right or qualified personnel in the management of nomadic education. There are various vocational agricultural educators or extension agents. These resources persons would ensure proper implementation of nomadic education programme. Suffices to say there are problems which have hindered the development of vocational agricultural education and vocational education over the years. They include teachers poor remuneration and very low motivation, non-job oriented programmes. Lack of co-ordination of programme, unfavourable public attitudes towards vocational education, inadequate facilities for learning have combined

## Agro-Vocational Reforms and Funding of Nomadic Education for Implementation in School Curriculum in North Central Nigeria

in an unholy alliance to rob Nigeria of the beauty inherent in technological advancement via vocational education. 21<sup>st</sup> century implementors of policies in education should understand that a system is good in as much as it achieves the purpose for which it was set or established. The present state of effectiveness of vocational agricultural education and technological development has not been promising since vocational education is education for work, all human and material resources required for the successful execution of this education should be given adequate attention. Until adequate attention is given to vocational education, agricultural and technological reforms in Nigeria will be a mirage.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Policy maker should reject the temptation of classifying secondary schools into Senior Secondary Schools and Technical Colleges. They should rather raise JAMB scores into polytechnics and vocational education departments in Universities higher than courses in management sciences, pure sciences, arts and medicine.
- The nomenclature Technical College should be renamed Senior Secondary Technical with opportunity for both courses in technical and Senior Secondary School.
- Government should evaluate education programme and policies to prevent wastage of human and material resources committed to any education endeavour.
- Administrators of Colleges of Education and Polytechnics should discard tribalism and employ qualified agricultural educators to teach vocational agriculture. By so doing, theoretical agriculture teaching will give way for practical and skill-oriented agriculture teaching.
- State government should eliminate the land tenure system in various communities to allow the nomadic settlers have access to grazing land on the condition that peaceful co-existence will be ensured.
- Grazing reserves should be set aside in conjunction with community leaders to enable the pastoralist settle in peace and access education provided for them.
- Extension agents and agricultural educators should be deployed to all nomadic education settlement area for enlightenment and proper implementation of nomadic programme.
- Nomadic Fulani children and other pastoralist should be given automatic scholarship at every level of education.
- Facilities and instructional materials should be provided by stakeholders to ensure quality education for the nomads.

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## Agro-Vocational Reforms and Funding of Nomadic Education for Implementation in School Curriculum in North Central Nigeria

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