

*Full Length Research*

# Assessment of Nomadic Education Programme and Need for Effective Art Education for Herdsmen in Imo State

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Nomadic Education Programme was designed to serve the educational needs of the Nigerian nomads as well as close the existing gap in the conventional approaches and strategies of the mainstream formal education system to achieve the nation's educational objectives. In view of the above, the paper examines the objectives of Nomadic Education Programme (NEP) and its level of implementation in Imo State. On-the-spot assessment visits to the various nomadic schools in the area to determine their level of compliance regarding the implementation of the policy objectives were carried out. It is a descriptive study that used observation and interview to gather the data. It was discovered that compliance by beneficiaries and resources development are too poor and these have affected the aims and objectives of the programme to a greater extent. Conclusively, the inability to utilize the above factors successfully has contributed drastically to the menace of incessant maiming and killing of innocent farmers and their family members by the herdsmen in Imo State. The study recommends among others that effective teaching and learning of art skills and crafts in Nomadic schools will go a long way to engage the herdsmen and their family members meaningfully thereby bringing down their menace in the affected areas.

**Keywords:** Nomadic Education, Art Education, Herdsmen.

## INTRODUCTION

Presently, insecurity is about the most recurring national problem that cuts across all parts of Nigeria. Ranking topmost is the brutal killing and maiming of innocent citizens by herdsmen which started in the North-East, and South-East States, but at the moment, has spread throughout the other states of Nigeria. The federal government has made several efforts towards

curbing the menace but the efforts are yet to put a stop to it. The herdsmen move with their herds into rural communities searching for pastures and at the same time attacking and killing the villagers. Apart from those who died instantly on the attacks, millions of the inhabitants have been rendered homeless and are presently living in internally displaced peoples' camps

(IDC) for safety and up keep. Their up keep has been a serious burden both on individuals, organizations, Federal and State governments who make extra budgets for relief materials and shelter.

Worthy of note is that the herdsmen limit their resources and livelihood to herds rearing without bothering to diversify, even though they have the potentials to do so. The Northern people of Nigeria are endowed with the skill of making arts and crafts with numerous materials found in their locality such as hides and skin, dry grasses, wood, as well as local colours, and dyes for ornamentation. These are skills that can be developed with effective art education in Nomadic schools in Imo State and Nigeria in general. The paper is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Who are the herdsmen?
- What is nomadic education and what are its objectives?
- What is art education and its objectives?
- Assessment of the operations of nomadic schools in Imo State.
- Need for effective art education in nomadic schools

### **Statement of Problem**

The herdsmen and their wards are expected to acquire formal education from Nomadic schools provided by the Federal Government of Nigeria in order to be changed positively. The policy on Nomadic Education Programme (NEP) was designed to serve the educational needs of the nomads (including the herdsmen), supervised by a body named National Commission on Nomadic Education (NCNE). However, inspection visits to Nomadic schools in Okigwe, Orlu and NgorOkpala show that the migrant herdsmen are not interested in acquiring formal education and as a result, they don't attend classes. This, consequently elude them the desired positive changes.

Again, art education which is one of the subjects in NEP that develops the affective domain of the learner has been neglected drastically. A clear proof of the above ascertain is the fact that there is no single art teacher in all nomadic schools visited. The result being that the herdsmen lack the sense of "feelings" and "affection". This may be the reason for the cases of bloodshed and destruction of property recorded in Nigeria. This paper therefore examines the need to effectively teach art education in nomadic schools in order to instill the sense of "feelings" and "emotions" on the learners to achieve the desired positive changes.

### **Methodology**

The paper is a descriptive study which used observation and interview to gather the data.

### **Who are the Herdsmen?**

The Herdsmen are people with a conventional life style which makes them to migrate from one location of the country to another seasonally. They are pre-occupied with cattle rearing. They usually live in makeshift or temporary tents or huts constructed with dry grasses or mud, scattered in the bush. Their lives and livelihood are centered on their livestock and animals. Their occupation makes them to move from one location to the other in search of green pastures for their cattle throughout the year. This life style has made it pretty difficult for them to adjust to the normal educational programmes both their adults and children hence, the introduction of nomadic Education. The enrollment rate of nomadic children in formal and non-formal education according to Tahir, Muhammad and Mohammed (2005), is very low and the illiteracy rate is between 0.2% to 2.0%. Alabekee (2013) also affirms that out of estimated population of 9.3 million nomadic people in Nigeria, about 3.1 million which constitutes one third (1/3) of them are children and pre-school ages who may need to be enrolled in school, but unfortunately, the reverse is the case.

This is as a result of their frequent movement from one location to the other in search of pasture land for their livestock. Another militating factor against their enrollment in normal school system according to the above sources is the domestic role played by their children in the economic system of their families that mandates them to lend their support to the family business (herdsrearing) and finally, the inappropriate curriculum designed for the regular conventional learners which does not recognize the peculiarities of their special needs have made it extremely difficult for them to cope with the normal learning system.

### **Nomadic Education Programme and Its Objectives**

As one of the efforts of the federal government to transform all aspects of the nation and for the benefit of all citizens, the Nigerian constitution of 1979 provided for compulsory and equal basic educational opportunities for its entire citizen through the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014 Revised).

The Nomadic Education Programme (NEP) is among the educational programmes contained in the

above document which was designed to serve the educational needs of the Nigerian nomads as well as close the existing gap in the conventional approaches and strategies of the mainstream formal education system to achieve the nation's educational objectives.

The programme is aimed at providing and widening access to quality basic education for nomads in Nigeria, boosting literacy and equipping them with skills and competences to enhance their well-being and participation in the nation-building process (Tahir, Muhammad, and Mohammed 2005). According to NEP, there is need to devise special and innovative methods and strategies to ensure reasonable success on the implementation of the policy. This gave rise to the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in 1989. The body is expected to carry out the following functions:

- a. Formulate policy and issue guidelines in all matters relating to Nomadic Education in Nigeria.
- b. Establishment, management and maintenance of primary schools in the settlement and grazing reserves carved out for Nomadic people.
- c. Determine the standards of skills to be attained in nomadic schools.
- d. To arrange for effective monitoring and evaluation of activities of agencies concerned with Nomadic education.
- e. To liaise and cooperate with other relevant ministries and agencies.
- f. To receive block grants and funds from the Federal government or any agency authorized on that behalf on any formula approved by the Federal Executive Council.
- g. To carry out effective inspection of educational activities in the schools as well as any other action desirable for the promotion of Nomadic education.

From the afore listed objectives of nomadic education in Nigeria, it is apparent that the Federal government is determined on how to improve the welfare of the beneficiaries. The nomadic education programme was set up to make the nomads accessible to high quality basic education. In order to achieve this, some innovations were introduced to the system ranging from the use of suitable methods of teaching, suitable materials for learning, suitable learning facilities, flexible academic calendars and timetables that suit the learners. This is because learners are required to be in school at particular periods of the year and hours of the day due to their involvements in the economic sustenance of their families. The objectives of nomadic education can be summarized thus: to shape the all round development of the demands of the contemporary world and make the Nomadic child self reliant.

## **The Concept of Art Education and It's Objectives**

Art is a means of expression, a language of communication or the use of visual symbols to express concepts (Ogu, 2009).

Art education is an aspect of study that teaches about the theories and practices of art. Simply put, it is the study of the development of creative abilities in the learner and the theoretical knowledge behind the production of art forms. It is the formal process of educating a learner through art (Ogu and Ndebilie 2011).

## **Objectives of Art Education**

Art education in the primary school in Nigeria is not aimed at making the learner an artist, rather it is used as a tool to educate the personality in the child and make him a complete and fully fledged individual. Ekeada (1992) reiterates that the meaning of art education intended for personality development goes beyond the various basic activities and products of art. It is aimed at:

- Developing the creative thinking/abilities of the child.
- Co-ordinating the hand, eyes and the mind in order to represent the thoughts effectively on concrete materials.
- Sharpening the child's sense of perception and power of intent observation.
- Developing the child's manipulative and organizational skills to be self reliant.
- Developing the various dimensions of the human being which include his intellectual, emotional and physical dimensions into a unified action.
- Developing the child's cultural awareness.
- Developing the child's emotions and enhancing his feeling of affections in dealing with human beings, and objects in his environment.

The summary of the above aims of art education is that a child who passes through it is a complete being who is balanced physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

## **Assessment of the Operations of Nomadic Schools in Imo State**

An assessment of the operation and functionality of nomadic schools in Imo State was carried out in this study to ascertain the effectiveness of the policy implementation. It was discovered that in principle, there are nomadic schools scattered all over

the Local Government Areas in the State. It was also gathered that the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) usually releases allocations to the schools for operation. However, inspection visits to the schools in Orlu L.G.A, Orsu L.G.A, NgorOkpala L.G.A, Okigwe L.G.A and Obowo L.G.A reveal that the schools are partially in operation. It was observed that there are very low enrollment figure of learners as well as teachers.

Interviews granted by a few individuals on the locations who pleaded anonymity revealed that there are very limited numbers of teachers in the schools. This is because a good number of them reject posting to the schools because they don't see the nomadic schools as fertile grounds as well as possible attacks by herdsmen. It was also discovered that the few teachers in the school put up lackadaisical attitudes to work as a result of the scanty population of the learners.

On the resource development, organization and administration, it was discovered that virtually, little or nothing is happening there. The infrastructures, such as classrooms, offices and other facilities are in very poor conditions and fall below the expected standard. The few blocks of buildings erected there are underutilized. There are no new structures there apart from the ones erected on assumption of the schools. The headmaster in the nomadic school at Okigwe L.G.A. reported that the few teachers posted to his school find it difficult to come to work because of a number of problems ranging from transportation and long distance from their homes. According to him, the school is located on the outskirts of Okigwe town making it difficult for his staff to come to work on daily basis. However, of all the nomadic schools in Imo State, Okigwe centre is the only one that has few Herdsmen and their family members in attendance. Perhaps, this is because the school is located in their make-shift settlement.

A critical analysis of the situation on ground during the visits to the nomadic schools in Imo state and the objectives of the policy as stated earlier reveal that the goals of nomadic education policy are farfetched. The policy has rich intentions for the learners but very poorly implemented. The practice in the schools visited is only but a show of shame when compared with the provisions of the policy in principle. At Okigwe nomadic school centre, the herdsmen live in clusters with their family members along the Enugu-Umuahia express way. For ease of compliance and proximity, the school was established in the same location. Ironically, there is still very low compliance. In an interview granted by a parent in the school on why their wards are not in the classroom as at the time of visit, he simply said that they are too busy with their

herds which is more important to them than going to school. The policy is meant to provide the learner with modern education, help him develop his immediate environment, develop his initiative and stimulate in him scientific and analytical modes of thinking, help him develop both physically and intellectually as well as making himself reliant. In spite of all the above benefits accruable to the beneficiaries of nomadic education, the fact still remains that the herdsmen and their wards are not ready to comply making it difficult to implement the policy.

### **Need For Effective Art Education in Nomadic Schools in Imo State**

Having seen the report on the state of nomadic schools in Imo state, it is apparent that the content of the policy is not implemented fully as a result of the general factors mentioned in the introduction. Those factors include, poor compliance by the herdsmen and their family members (the expected learners), and the teachers and school authorities.

There are also poor infrastructural development as well as poor organization and administration of the system by both the supervisory body and the school authorities. A critical study of both the objectives of nomadic education and art education shows that if well implemented, the beneficiaries of nomadic education in Imo state and beyond will be as successful as beneficiaries in the conventional educational system. The policy has provided in principles, all it takes to live a full fledged life but has failed in implementation. The Fulani herdsmen have refused to benefit from the rich provision of the policy and the positive change that formal education brings.

Art education as one of the subjects in the school curriculum has similar objectives with that of Nomadic Education Programme such as producing a self-reliant individual, developing him rapidly and fully both physically and intellectually to cope with the demands of the contemporary world as well as developing his initiative and analytical modes of thinking. If effectively taught in nomadic schools, art education exposes learners to various skills such as craft, sculpture, textile designing, pottery, painting, graphics and illustrations, mosaic, carpentry, leather work, bead-making and a lot of others. Okpara (2011) agrees with the above and in addition, he says that our personal, social and cultural environments are shaped through our knowledge of visual art, from the design of a simple birthday card to a wall painting, to ceramic wares, to tie and dye cloths and cultural dance costumes. Knowledge of art serves as a link between "thought" and "action". Also, Ikwuegbu (2012) and Madu (2011) remark that art education, no doubt helps

in child's development and education in that it helps to develop cognitive and psychomotor skills, creativity and intelligence. For Okere (2017), art is virtually a reality that can neither be ignored nor eroded. Obviously, it is an inextricable part of life in all its ramifications.

Art education is the only aspect of study that provides a balance between the three domains of learning: the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor domains. The development of the affective domain is visibly lacking in the training of the learners in the school system generally, hence, the lack of affection and waste of human lives in Nigeria today. Art education instills in the individual what is called "aesthetic" education, that is, education of the "feelings" or emotions. The training and developed feeling dimension of an individual makes him a complete full man; a man who is rational, sympathetic, civil and devoid of cruelty (Ngumah and Ogu 2010). The fact that art education is not taught effectively in nomadic schools in Imo State and beyond, affective domain and moral education is lacking on the beneficiaries, hence, the indiscriminate killing and maiming of human lives.

Originally, the northern people of Nigeria are endowed with the skill of arts and crafts. They are known to produce bags and shoes with hides and skin. They also practice carving and weaving with raffia, cane sticks and jute as well as painting with indigo and other local colours. Since people from that region are conversant with these skills, it is only logical to say that effective art education in the school where they attend will only develop the talent in them and enhance their knowledge. It is expected that while in the pasture land grazing their livestock, the herdsmen need to occupy both their hands and their minds. Art activities are the secret way to do that. The herdsmen need to maximize their endowed creative potentials positively rather than engaging in destruction of lives and property of the inhabitants where they go. The art of calabash decoration for fresh cow milk storage, preservation and consumption is widely credited to the Northerners. Also the art of body decoration (tattoo) is commonly practiced by them. With effective art education, these art skills can be taught with innovations both on methods, materials and design to make them more lucrative.

## CONCLUSION

From the above critical discussion, it is obvious that the objectives of nomadic education are similar with that of art education. Both of them are emphasizing the development of the learner to be self reliant. This entails the possession of a skill to earn a

living. The nomadic education policy is beautifully formulated in principle but poorly implemented from the information gathered. Art education is that aspect of human endeavor that exposes the learner to acquire life time skills, develop his creative potentials and make him a rational being with affection. The Northern herdsmen are already conversant with art practice through embellishment of both their bodies and utility objects. This fact was buttressed by Waheed (2017) where he made an allusion of the cultural outlay of the herdsmen migratory system in Nigeria represented on sculptural forms. The life style of herdsmen has also always been a favourite concept of artistic expression even on colours. Since they are endowed with artistic talent, it therefore, becomes rational for one to conclude that effective art education in nomadic schools will certainly enhance their creative potentials and engage them meaningfully while grazing in the bush rather than occupying their ideal minds with aggression.

## Recommendations

From the aforesaid, the following recommendations are made for improvement:

- Art education should be taught as often as possible in nomadic schools. Instead of making it a weekly affair, it should be made a daily encounter on the school timetable. This will help to cover a wider range of art skills for self reliance. In addition, affective art education to nomadic learners will help develop their affective domain which will make them to develop love, sympathy and affection on human lives instead of aggression.
- Professional art teachers should be provided in Nomadic schools to help teach the needed skills effectively to the learners. Information gathered from the interview conducted shows that the few available teachers in the schools have no training in arts. This has been a serious barrier to effective art education in nomadic schools at the moment.
- The fact that the migrant herdsmen are being encouraged to attend nomadic schools, the federal government and supervisory body should ensure adequate supply of art materials for demonstration and easy learning of art skills.
- There is also need to organize refresher training and extracurricular activities on all forms of arts and crafts, especially, painting, weaving and designs for adult herdsmen who may not see the reasons to enroll in nomadic school training. This will help enhance their knowledge and proficiency on those crafts which they are already conversant with. It will also motivate them to engage their minds and hands meaningfully.
- Information available shows that professional art

teachers are grossly inadequate in nomadic education schools. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers in the system who do not have adequate knowledge and qualification on art be exposed to it by organizing art and craft workshops in the various centres. This will make them possess the required knowledge in order to teach the learners effectively.

Finally, all the recommendations made should be included in the Nomadic education program and effectively implement them in the system to enhance the quality of the programme.

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