

NOMADIC EDUCATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

This paper examined the nomadic education and the incidences of herdsmen attacks and national security issues in Nigeria and the way forward. The purpose of government is to protect the lives and property of Nigerians irrespective of tribe, religion or political affiliation. Nomadism is a form of agriculture that involved rearing of domesticated livestock which migrate in an established territory to find pasture for their animals. The Fulani are the largest semi-nomadic group in Nigeria. Over the years, they herd their animals across vast areas, frequently leading to conflicts and clashes with local farming communities in different parts of Nigeria. The conflicts have posed national security challenges in Nigeria. This paper examined nomadism as a national security challenge in Nigeria and the role of nomadic education in providing functional education for the nomads. The paper recommended that the nomadic education should be repositioned for effective delivery. It was also suggested that the three tiers of governments should come together to critically examine the conflicts between the nomads and host communities in order to take decisive measures for improved national security. Among the recommendations include, making the nomadic education functional and accessible,

sensitizing the nomads on the need for formal education, resolving disputes between the nomads and host communities early enough and the establishment of ranches and grazing areas as well as the passage of anti-grazing laws by the various governments in Nigeria.

Key words: Nomadism, Herdsmen, National Security, Challenges, Nomadic Education.

Introduction

Education is that process that enables people to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, interest, abilities, competence and the cultural norms of a society and is transmitted to the coming generations so as to enhance the development of the society (Ajayi, 2017). Education is a measure of development. The higher the level of a nation's educational attainment, the greater the level of its development (Alagbe, 2018). Education remains the catalyst of social change in that it is a medium through which societal norms and values could be transmitted to future generations (Akhueomonkhan, Raimi, & Dada, 2014). It is still a means through which economic growth, technological progress, and individual capacities could be boosted to the desired level for the overall national and or international development (UNESCO, 2014).

Pastoral nomadism is the traditional occupation of a large and distinct ethnic group known as the Bororo Fulbe (Fulani) and it is also the principal way of life of the Shuwa Arabs of Borno State (Husain, 2012). The Shuwa Arabs rear cows, goats and sheep around the shores of the Lake Chad. The recession of the lake recently has seriously affected their activities as they often follow the lake water as it recedes from the areas (Ajayi, 2017). The dominant groups that engage in pastoral nomadism are the Fulani, who keep cattle, sheep and goats and live in temporary camps across northern Nigeria. They produce locally dairy products such as fresh milk, sour milk (called *nono* in Hausa) and cow oil (called *man shanu* in Hausa) which are sold at local markets by their womenfolk. From July to December they operate in the northern zone and moving to the Southern Zone from December to June. However, in recent years, the Fulani are moving beyond the derived savannah to the forest zone of Southern Zone of Nigeria. This makes them to come in contact with the farming communities of the Southern Zone. The movement of the Fulani herdsmen towards Southern Nigeria is mainly attributed to the rapid depletion of natural fodder in Northern Nigeria due to the climate change in the world today. The herders are compelled to seek for pastures outside their traditional savannah vegetation zones. The Fulani herders have resorted to staying for long period in the Southern Nigeria where the rainy season lasts longer than the in Northern Zone. However, in the process of staying in the South Zone, they trespass on farmers' lands (Odua, 2016). This has resulted to series of clashes between the pastoralists and farmers in States such as Anambra, Cross River, Delta, Enugu, Imo and Oyo States.

The conflict between herdsmen and farmers is now increasing in frequency with deadly clashes between the two groups. The conflicts have also widened in geographical scope to

include not only the northern regions but also the middle belt and further in the southern part of Nigeria.

The objectives of this paper are to:

- i. highlight the Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria
- ii. discuss the Security challenges associated with Nomadism
- iii. discuss the role of Nomadic Education on National Security
- iv. explain the role of Nomadic Education in checking insecurity in Nigeria
- v. provide the way forward in overcoming this National security challenges

Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria

The aims of the Nomadic Education programme (NEP) in Nigeria are to provide access to quality basic education for nomads and equip them with skills and competencies to enhance their well-being and participation in nation building. The National Education Programme remains one of the key programmes of the Federal Government of Nigeria in its efforts to attain the Education for All (EFA) goals. The National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) was established by Decree 41 of 1989 given the mandate to carry out the following functions towards the successful implementation of the National Education Programme:

- a. Formulate policies and issue guidelines in all matters relating to nomadic education in Nigeria.
- b. Provide funds for research and personnel development for the improvement of nomadic education and the development of programs on nomadic education.
- c. Determine standards of skills to be attained in nomadic education.
- d. Arrange for effective monitoring of agencies concerned with nomadic education.
- e. Establish, manage and maintain primary schools in the settlements carved out for nomadic people.
- f. Collate, analyze and publish information relating to nomadic education in Nigeria
- g. Ensure effective inspection of nomadic education activities in Nigeria
- h. Prepare reliable statistics of nomads and their children of school age and
- i. Act as the agency for channeling all external aid to nomadic schools in Nigeria.

These have aided the expansion and strengthening of access to basic education of the Nomads. With these laudable functions of Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria, it is still faced with a lot of challenges. The challenges are discussed below.

Challenges in the Implementation of Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria

Governments has shown commitment to the access to basic education and the provision of quality basic education to the nomads and other educationally disadvantaged groups in Nigeria. The major constraints to the Nomads participation in formal and non-formal education as identified by the National Commission for Nomadic Education (1989) are as follows:

1. The Nomads constantly move in search of water and pasture.

2. The Nomads use of child labour in their production system, thus making it extremely
 - a. difficult to allow their children to participate in formal schools
3. The irrelevance of the school curriculum towards the educational needs of Nomads
4. The Nomads operate largely in inaccessible physical environments
5. It is difficult for the nomadic people to acquire land and settle in one place due to the Land -tenue system.

The National Education Programme is also affected by many other problems such as defective policy, inadequate finance, faulty school placement, incessant migration of students, unreliable and obsolete data, cultural and religious taboos. According to Ibanga (2016), nomadic education in Nigeria suffers from multi-dimensional obstacles which include defective policies which have not been able to translate the objectives of the programme in to tangible realities.

National Security Challenges of the Practice of Nomadism

National security is the state of a nation being free from any harm or danger, criminal activities or violence. According to Oduah, (2016), the security of a nation could be perceived when such a nation feels safe and secured from any harm or danger, whereby the defence protection and preservation of core values and the absence of threat to acquire values prevail. Bashar, Sambo and Ibrahim (2017), stated that national security is the state being free from any threat to life and be capable of preserving the nation's core values in the society so as to enjoy a better life and benefit one's self, society and the nation at large. To this end, Nigeria as a multi-ethnic, multireligious, multi-linguistic, multi-cultural and multi-identity (Abdulrahman, 2016), recognizes and pledged more commitment towards providing equal education opportunities for all its citizens including the nomads.

National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power (Freebase, 2011). It is equally the absence of threats to the core values and the prevention of public disorder Idris, (2018). National security is only achievable if the schools that provide learning to the teeming students are properly managed. National security could never be fully achieved until every citizen knows his or her full responsibilities and this could be known through formal education in this case nomadic education.

The triggers of the incessant clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers are often based on alleged trespass on farmlands for grazing purposes which destroys crops and farm lands. Disagreement over grazing routes, land issues and encroachment of cattle into the farmlands of the host communities are not always amicably settled leading to violent clashes. The two potential periods of conflicts with farmers in the Middle Belt and Southern Nigeria is from February to July during the hot dry season and the start of the rainy season (Ajayi, 2017). These are the two periods when the nomads are on the move and therefore

encounter settled farmers on the way. These are important for the watering of the cattle as they move in transit to and fro to the southern parts of Nigeria.

These conditions are fulfilled in areas where much of the land is under cultivation leading to conflicts with farmers (Dingba and Adamu, 2007). The Fulani nomads have settled in many states of the Middle Belt and Southern Nigeria where the length of the dry season is shorter and water is available along Rivers Niger, Benue and their tributaries where there is green vegetation to feed the cattle. These states include Niger, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Adamawa, Taraba, Benue and the Southern State of Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi, Cross River and River States.

These recurring conflict situations and clashes have become a national security challenge in Nigeria. The Fulani pastoralists or farmers conflicts have posed serious security challenges because for decades governments at Local, State and Federal level have not been able to overcome these challenges. The conflicts continue leading to disruption of peaceful co-existence, destruction of properties, loss of lives and displacement of people from their homes and villages to internally displaced camps scattered across Nigeria. Among the national security challenges of the practice of Nomadism include the following. The security of lives is a common occurrence in the areas where the conflicts between the pastoralists and farmers occurred. According to Usman (1999) 69 people lost their lives while 99 people were injured from bow and arrow shots as a result of these clashes in Jigawa State from 1993 - 1995. In Taraba State 266 people were killed and 350 others were injured between April to June, 2014. (Mac-Leva, 2014). The Fulani and Agatu clashed in Benue State leading to the loss of 50 people (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). In June 2018 Fulani herdsmen killed 86 people in Plateau State as retaliation over the killing and theft of 300 cows by the Birom youths. According to Aliyu, Ikedinma and Akinwande (2018), seven villages were attacked in Nimbo, Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu state on April 25, 2018 resulting in the death of 40 persons while in June 20, 2018, 59 persons were killed in Ugundu, Turo and Garbo-Nenzev in Logo Local Government Area of Benue state. According to Madubueze, Okafor, Okpalaibe and Umetiti (2020), 141 persons were killed on February 11, 2019 in Kajaru Local Government Area of Kaduna state.

The Nomads and farmers clashes have resulted in the destruction of properties worth millions of naira in various parts of Nigeria. Such properties include household properties, motor vehicles, motorcycles and many houses and huts, farmlands and food barns, economic trees, and several valuable items belonging to the host communities. Okoli and Atelhe (2014), stated that in Nasarawa State, many properties including houses, motor vehicles, homesteads, and household properties were burnt as a result of the pastoralist and farmers clashes in the State.

Fulani herdsmen attack has resulted in population displacement and social dislocation which is evident in the proliferation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country. Alagbe (2018) reported that from January 2015 to February 2017, at least 62,000 people were displaced in Kaduna, Benue, and Plateau states. Burning down of houses, huts,

homesteads are one of the security challenges associated with the clashes between the two groups thus creating displaced camps. Okoli and Atelhe (2014) stated along a border area of Benue and Nasarawa States, more than 1,000 homesteads were destroyed after a reprisal attack by Fulani herdsmen due to the killing of a traditional ruler and four others. The destruction of houses usually displaced thousands of people especially those who manage to escape the bloodsheds who are then become IDPs in schools, palace of the traditional ruler or public places.

Destruction of farmlands by cattle results in poor harvests. Many farmers lost part or whole of their crops which means reduced yields and low income on part of the farmers (Ofuoku & Isife, 2009). The Fulani herdsmen trespass into farmlands of people thereby destroying the farmlands as the farm produce are destroyed. This means low agricultural productivity in the following harvest season (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014).

The Nomads always retaliate any attack on them or killing of their cows. This has resulted in endless or continuous circle of violent attacks. On 8th September 2017 Anchau village was attacked by Fulani militia leading to the injury of 19 people and the attack was a reprisal over the killing of a boy.

Role of Nomadic Education in Checking Insecurity in Nigeria

Education plays a significant role in national security. According to Nandi (2013), education helps in developing intelligent social actors with the ability to make rational decisions and act intelligently. Education helps to address issues of poverty, violent crimes and illiteracy. It provides the platform for the moral personality of man and equips learners with the skills of moral judgment that in turn guides one's actions and behaviours. Quality education also promotes the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among youths. Through education, it has been discovered that youths develop positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards the entire nation. UNESCO (2014) stated that "No development can be possible without humans, and no humans can reach development without quality education". Thus, proper management of nomadic education in Nigeria will go a long way in improving development and enhancing nation security in the country.

According to Olaniyan (2016), for a nation to be developed and secured, there must be a very considerable proportion of trained educated citizens in that nation not only to act as doctors, engineers, teachers, agriculturist, scientists, and the likes, but also to create a new class sufficiently large and strong to establish its own values of justice, security, selection on merit, flexibility, empiricism and efficiency. To attain this situation the education system including Nomadic education must be practical and very functional in its management. Therefore, quality education is the primary agents of national security and development for bringing the vision of society into reality. According to Mac-leva (2014), quality formal, informal and indigenous education from the grass root level, will reduce these security threats/challenges such as terrorism, riots/civil unrest, demonstrations, intolerance, cult-related criminal acts, religious intolerance, arm robbery, intra and inter-ethnic strife, drug trafficking, human trafficking, kidnapping, hijacks and many other vices

threatening lives and properties. Commenting on the indispensability of quality education to national security, Ozoemena (2016) stated that quality education is expected to help preserve and refine society so that it will be a congenial place for individual members to live and work happily in peace to ensure sustainable development, security and stability of the nation.

The Way Forward

The conflict between the Nomads and host communities occurs in every part of the federation and thus impedes national security and peaceful co-existence of the citizenry. To control this national security challenges imposed by these incessant clashes, these strategies are recommended:

1. The Federal Government should intensify more efforts in making Nomadic education more functional and accessible to the Nomadic children to attend by increasing funding and training more teachers for the programme.
2. Efforts should be made to sensitize the Nomads on the need for the education of their children and not to engage them as child labour in their profession. This will create room for the emergence of educated nomads who will practice their vocation in line with global standards.
3. Governments should resolve disputes between the Nomads and host communities early enough to avoid escalation at the village level within each local government area.
4. Traditional rulers should be strengthened by Government to resolve conflicts between nomads and host communities at the local levels without resorting to the use of courts and the Police activities.
5. Government should encourage Nomads to establish ranches and grazing areas for their cows to reduce their clashes between host communities in a part of the country,
6. The enactment of anti-open grazing laws by various Governments across the country will reduce drastically the incessant clashes between the Nomads and the host communities.
7. The presence of security personnel should be increased in the rural areas where most of the clashes between the Nomads and host communities occurred.
8. Community policing and local vigilante groups should be established and encouraged in various communities and people in the communities must support the activities of the law enforcement agents particularly the Police to forestall any breach of peace.
9. Governments at all levels should ensure that the relationship between nomads and host communities are improved for mutual coexistence.
10. Nomads should be disarmed. In other words government should stop them from carrying arms and ammunitions so that they cannot shoot members of their communities upon every slightest misunderstanding.

Recommendations

1. Nomadic education should be repositioned and made accessible to achieve national security in Nigeria.
2. Government at all levels, nomads, host communities and international organizations should address this issue of continuous clashes in order to find lasting strategies to overcome the challenges so as to avoid the consequences on national security, ethnic, political, religious and food security in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The practice of nomadism has constituted a national security threat in Nigeria. Pastoral nomadism has led to conflicts and violent clashes in both the northern and southern parts of the country which has resulted in loss of lives, destruction of houses, farmlands and resultant food scarcity in the country.

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