

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)4 among Female Nomadic Children in Nigeria using Open and Distance Learning Strategies

By

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Abstract

Education is a basic human right that every child ought to enjoy. Sustainable Development Goal 4 is also to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by year 2030. Nigeria recognizes education as a fundamental human right and is signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In 2003, the Government of Nigeria passed into Law the Child Rights Act aimed at facilitating the realization and protection of the rights of all children. Nigeria also enacted the Universal Basic Education (UBE) law, which provides for a 9-year free and compulsory basic education to fast-track education interventions at the primary and junior secondary school levels. Nomads have been defined as people; who mainly live and derive most of their food and income from raising domestic livestock.

They move from place to place with their livestock in search of pasture and water. Because of this, sending their children to school becomes a big issue for them and the girl child is the worst affected. Girl-child education is the education geared towards the development of the total personality of the female gender to make them active participating members of economic development of their nation. Education also helps girls to realize their potentials, thus enabling them to elevate their social status. This paper which adopts descriptive research design examined the factors hindering adequate participation of the nomadic girl child in formal Education. Religious factors and beliefs, poverty ,Parents' attitude, underdevelopment and insecurity, Educational policy and

home-based factors, were some of the hindering factors identified, among others. Ways of enhancing their participation were suggested and recommended, such as training in literacy and vocational skills, mobile education and improved political will. These will make the girl child become functional in the society.

Keywords: SDG4, ODL, Female and Nomadic Children

Introduction

Education has been widely recognized not only as a fundamental human right but also as a reagent for sustainable development and a vehicle for confronting the challenges facing societies in terms of socio-economic realities. Education is the first step in sustainable development and a very significant step in improving a generation of people. As a corollary, Sustainable Development Goal 4 have been identified as constituting a force contributing to social and economic development. SDG4 is embodied with 10 definite targets/objectives which includes ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. The provision of 12 years of free, publicly-funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes should be ensured for all, without discrimination. SDG4 also aims at ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Sadly, Nigeria is still very far from achieving SDGS goal 4. A survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2018) indicates that the population of out of school children in Nigeria has risen from 10.5 million in 2010 to 13.2 million in 2018. Besides, the Nigerian Education Data Survey in 2014, indicated that only 36% of rural children are in school. This is corroborates with the National Literacy Survey in 2015 which illustrated that an estimate of 64% rural dwellers have never attended school. The above trajectory clearly suggest that Nigeria's educational system is not inclusive of disadvantaged children especially the girl child.

The girl-child education is becoming a major issue of discourse in academic and political spheres in Nigeria. The girl-child face significant obstacles in accessing proper education, there is a serious

gap between the boy-child education and that of the girl-child due to inherent societal values placed on the boy-child over the girl-child. The girl-child has her destiny sealed by both tradition and culture on account of biological sex as opined by Ihuoma, (2019). Often times, the female children are confined to domestic chores. They are considered to be fit only for the kitchen and the house and not for the school. Her role is considered to be that of a house keeper. This orientation makes her not to realize her full potentials. Cultural misconception is a tool that has been a hindrance to a lot of girls getting education. Illiteracy is another major challenge of girl-child education. There is poor enlightenment about the benefits of educating a girl-child and so many illiterate parents see no reason a girl-child should go to school. For instance, report by UNICEF (2016) indicated that in two states in northwest Nigeria, a wider gender disparity of 65.6% of male being literate against 39.5% literate females. Despite the launching of the Universal Basic Education Scheme in 1999 and the enactment of the UBE Act in 2004, progress in the enrolment into Junior Secondary Schools has been very slow. From a total enrolment of 218,597.4 in 1999, it rose to 368,464.4 in 2003 and declined to 282,680.0 in 2008. Female enrolment equally registered very small increases from a figure of 104,289.4 in 1999, it peaked at 163,977.6 in 2005 only to fall to 127,086.5 in 2008.

Although, National Policy on Education (2014) clearly states that access to education is a right for all Nigerian children regardless of gender, religion and disability, notwithstanding, a large group of disadvantaged children are excluded from quality education. Prominent among the excluded are girl-children of the nomadic society which comprises pastoralists and migrant fishing groups. According to National bureau of statistic (2017), Over **5.2 million nomadic children** are out-of-school despite government interventions, such as the National Nomadic Education Commission (NNEC). Constant mobility of this group in search for economic opportunities is a key challenge. With frequent migration across states, policy interventions by the state and local governments are rendered ineffective.

The Rationale of the Study

The rationale of these paper therefore is to examine ODL strategies for achieving sustainable development goal (SDGS) 4 among female nomadic children in Nigerian

The state of the Nomads in Nigerian

In Nigeria, the nomadic pastoralists are made up of the Fulani (5.3m), Shuwa (1.01m), Koyam (32,000), Badawi (20,000), Dark Buzzu (15,000) and the Buduma (10,000). The Fulani are found in 31 out of the 36 states of Nigeria, while the others reside mainly on the Borno plains and shores of Lake Chad. The migrant fishing groups number about 2.8 million, comprising numerous tribes, and are found in the Atlantic coastline, the riverine areas and river basins of the country. These nomadic groups in Nigeria have similar traits with other nomadic and migrant peoples in West Africa; the Masaai, Turkana and Karamajong in East Africa; the Travelers/Gypsies in Europe and Show people in Australia. Their lifestyle and form of livestock production has survived through centuries, and even today pastoral nomadism is recognized as an efficient cost-effective method of utilizing marginal lands. Nomads have special ways of adapting to the arid and unreliable climatic conditions. In Nigeria, the nomads are constrained from participating in existing basic education programs because of migration/movements in search of water and pasture for their livestock, in the case of the pastoralists, and for fish and other aquatic animals, in the case of the migrant fishing groups; The critical role of children in their production systems, which makes parents and guardians reluctant to release them to participate in formal schooling

The Federal Government of Nigeria realized that unless a special educational provision was made for the nomads, they would have no access to formal and non-formal education. Thus, in line with the provisions of the 1979 Constitution and the National Policy on Education, which strongly urge the government to provide equal educational opportunities for all Nigerians, and in order to ensure that nomads have unfettered access to basic education, the Federal Government established the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in 1989. The NCNE is charged with the implementation of the Nomadic Education Programme (NEP). The NEP 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. To meet this challenge effectively, the Commission devised a series of innovative approaches and strategies. The broad goals of Nomadic Education Programme are:

1. To integrate nomads into national life through relevant, qualitative, and basic functional education.

2. To raise both the productive and income levels of nomads, as well as boost the national economy through improved knowledge, skills and practices of nomads
3. Expose the nomadic child to the elementary forms of modern education
4. Enable the nomadic child take part in the development of his immediate environment, in particular, and the country in general
5. Make the nomadic child self-reliant to improve his living conditions, thus eliminating the hardships and constraints in his/her life
6. Help him/her modernize his/her techniques of herdsmanship or animal management, fishing or farming as the case may be
7. Assist the nomadic child develop rapidly and fully, both physically and intellectually, to cope with the demands of the contemporary world
8. Develop the initiative of the nomadic child and stimulate in him/her scientific and analytical modes of thinking

The National Council for Nomadic Education is exceptional because it gave credence to the (nomads) migrants who have been omitted in other educational programmes like the National Primary Education Programme managed by the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) and the Mass Literacy and the Non-Formal Educational Programmes organized under the National Commission for Mass Literacy and the Non-Formal Schemes (NMEC)

Unfortunately, the challenge of increasing the literacy level of nomads still stares the NCNE in the face since almost all the measures adopted have not yielded result. A study which was carried out in seven states of the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, indicated that the literacy scheme is just there and has not actually addressed the problem for which it was established. For the nomads, they have not been properly accommodated in the policies and programmes of the nation. Yet, they constitute such a substantial proportion of the population that there is need to attend to them immediately if illiteracy must be eradicated in Nigeria. Any further deprivation of this largely non-literate people will be a setback in the nation's educational plans towards national growth and development.

Barriers to education among Female Nomadic children in Nigerian

A major problem that affects female nomads' accessibility to educational facilities in Nigeria is the urban-orientation of the educational system. Almost all educational facilities were built in towns or major villages that served settled communities. Considering the routine grazing treks, some schools that seem close enough to the homestead may actually be beyond the walking distance of the children. Daily grazing movement and the lack of labor substitutes can't allow them fit in with the school system. Unlike farmers who use child labor marginally, the Fulani rely heavily and continuously on children for labor. A Fulani man will not send his child to school even if an adult is available to tend the animals because the child needs to learn the herding skills. The boys go about the business of rearing cattle, while the girls engage in milk processing and hawking

Poverty and economic issues, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, inadequate school infrastructure and cultural and religious misinterpretations are the other issues that prevent nomadic girls from going to school. With almost 70 per cent of the Nigerian population living below the poverty line, girls are often sent to work in the markets or hawk wares on the streets. Early marriage and teenage pregnancy also prevent girls from going to school. A lot of girls drop out of school before reaching primary class six.

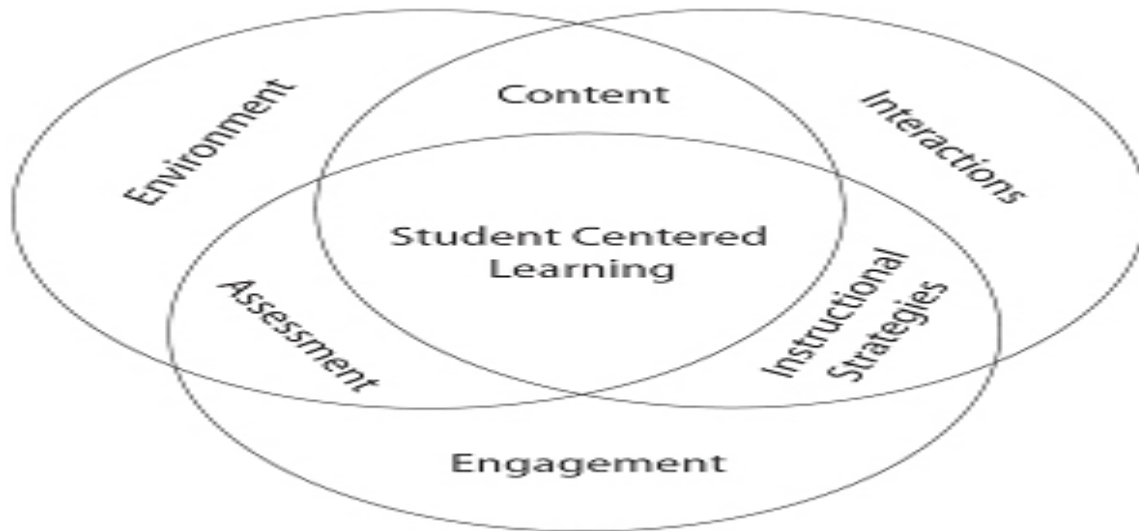
Uncertainties of the movement of the Fulani makes educational planning and student monitoring difficult. Unscheduled out-migration due to environmental failures or conflicts between the farmers and the pastoral Fulani also disrupts school operations and classroom composition.

OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) AS A STRATEGY

The potential of ODL to address education challenges of female nomadic children in Nigeria is premised on the following: ODL

- a. Has the potential to deliver an individualized, learner-centred educational experience that facilitates the communicative and collaborative skills needed by the twenty-first-century workforce for lifelong and independent learning
- b. Is considered a flexible option for non-traditional learners such as home-schooled learners, and a convenient way to deliver remedial courses.
- c. Allows students to actively participate in their own learning
- d. Allows them make decisions about what and how they will learn

- e. Makes them become capable of constructing new knowledge and skills by building on past experiences
- f. Recognizes that all learners are unique and utilize different teaching styles
- g. Facilitates learner's decision-making process



Source: con.media.com

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is a general term for the use of telecommunication to provide or enhance learning. Globally, the academic community is discovering and exploring the Internet, teleconferencing, and related means to achieve an extended classroom or learning experience as students in Nigeria are earning degrees/ certificate from a university in Australia. Post-Primary students are exchanging e-mails across continents as a supplement to their formal studies. Students and teachers at all levels are taking part in teleconferences and forming associations that would have been unlikely few years ago. A number of world conferences have been held on ODL and many experimental projects are underway.

The United States Distance Learning Association (2017) has its own formal definition of "distance learning" it is defined as:

The acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance.

NPE, (2014), Awe (2013), Nwaocha and Iyiama (2008), all expatiated on the importance of ODL to Nigerian Education to include the following:

Access: It increases people's access to education. People who would have found it impossible to attend the conventional school system benefit from ODL. Many stakeholders in the education sector are interested in open and distance learning because it allows greater access to educational opportunities. This is in keeping with the stated objectives of the National Policy on Education that 'maximum efforts shall be made to enable those who can benefit from higher education to be given access to it. Such access may be through universities or correspondence courses or open universities or part time, e learning and work study programmes ,(NPE, (2014),

Social Enhancement: Open and distance learning schemes hold a number of potential benefits for various stakeholders in the education and development process. To the learners, ODL means more freedom of access as well as a wider range of opportunities for learning and qualifications, thereby improving their social status. It is often a cheaper means of attending school for the student since some people may not be able to leave their places of work to go to school full time. Men of the armed forces and other security agencies are registered in large numbers for distance learning to enhance their social status.

Instructional Techniques That Can Address the educational challenges of Female Nomadic Children In Nigeria

Though there are lots of learning (and teaching) options online, there are a few types that are well supported by existing systems and established pedagogies as depicted by Salawu (2016) Maria (2017):

Synchronous learning is when all the students learn together at the same time (and often even place) but the instructor is at another location. It often features video or teleconferencing that connects teachers and learners digitally.

Asynchronous learning is a less connected but also less constrained format. Instead of live online lessons, students are given learning tasks with deadlines. They then self-study to complete the assignments

Video Instruction Technique

Kinash et al., (2015) described Pedagogical Uses of Video as a strategy to enhance learners' interest in their study. With the emergence of the flipped classroom, the use of video can make fundamental changes to teaching and learning. The process of re-thinking and re-designing academic course content in response to technological changes for a market of students who have very different experiences and expectations can in itself have a significant impact in improving material. Video is being used in a variety of ways to support various pedagogical strategies successfully. By no means a comprehensive list, within just the context of problem-based learning, video clips can be used to present a problem to students to trigger problem-solving; to provide information around the topics (Rasi and Poikela, 2016).

Videos can include content that might be academic in nature or material that is supplementary to academic content, such as a news or film clips. They can be used in support of both practical and conceptual teaching (Kay, 2012) through formats which include the video lecture, video tutorial, short knowledge clips, and "how-to" example-based video-modelling. Although much video-based education is still top-down and teacher-centered (Yousef et al., 2014, Kay, 2012) there is an increasing trend towards combining both teaching-focused and learning-focused methods (Kirkwood and Price, 2013). Students are showing an increasing desire to be more independently in control of their learning journey and to create "personalized learning environments" in and outside of the classroom (Rasi and Poikela, 2016).

Video provides that opportunity for students to take fuller control over their learning, both the flexibility over when it's watched but also as a tool to create video material as part of their act of learning.

Benefits of Video instruction

There are a number of ways in which video can make a tangible difference to teaching and learning of a disadvantage child. One study (Taslibeyaz, 2017) in the context of medical education from 2000 to 2014, predominantly case studies, showed that watching videos was beneficial for gaining clinical skills, changing attitudes, encouraging cognitive learning and retaining knowledge. Furthermore, the visual benefits of video provide a vehicle for increasing access to practical demonstrations.

Students can learn from field experts having the opportunity to view close-up expert illustrations, and with the option to view them repeatedly if necessary (Ramlogan et al., 2014, Cooper and

Higgins, 2015). Additionally, these examples can illustrate real-life practices and highlight information visually that would be impossible to adequately describe verbally or through written text (Rasi and Poikela, 2016, Schneps et al., 2010). This can reduce the cognitive load of attempting to call concepts to life, or performing a process of “mental animation” to make sense of things, especially in STEM subjects (Castro-Alonso et al., 2018).

Access and Attendance

Higher Education In its broadest sense, video as part of an online multimedia offering seems to be having a positive impact on engagement through a broadening participation perspective. Online courses are expanding the pool, rather than taking from a limited market of potential students (Goodman et al., 2016) and notably, racial and ethnic minority as well as part-time students are more likely to take online courses (Chen et al., 2010). Internet technology is opening access to people who might otherwise have been excluded from higher education, and educational video therefore becomes more accessible to these groups. On the other hand, there is concern about whether the availability of video lectures online will increase levels of absenteeism. This is a source of tense debate and raises important questions regarding definitions of engagement. Does attendance matter if achievement is unaffected (Kinash et al., 2015, Kay, 2012)? If students are engaging with material online are they less engaged than if they attend a live lecture? There are mixed findings here with different studies showing different results, from less physical attendance but higher student performance (Traphagan et al., 2010), to no decrease in on-campus attendance but an increase in achievement (Kinash et al., 2015). It is not clear that attendance is affected by the availability of online video but what does seem to be consistent is that the availability of online video likely adds to achievement and does not harm it.

Emotional Engagement

Fredricks et al (2004), considered video instructions to be behavioral (measuring attendance and participation); cognitive (looking at the focused effort students give to what is being taught); and emotional too (exploring feelings about the learning experience and gauging levels of interest). How students feel about their experience of learning will have an impact on how they engage with the course and potentially whether they will complete it Martinez, (2001). Across the literature, higher levels of student satisfaction are reported in groups with access to video Yousef et al., (2014). Also, an overview of the literature specific to problem- based learning found a general

preference for video over text Rasi and Poikela, (2016). Finally, reported benefits of video podcasts include that they are enjoyable to watch, they are satisfying, motivating, intellectually stimulating, useful and helpful for learning Kay and Kletskin, (2012). Ultimately, students appear to enjoy video and view it positively. They enjoy the independence it provides, with control over when and where to learn, the pace of learning and what to learn Kay and Kletskin, (2012).

Barriers to Engagement

The research on the benefits of video and engagement are well-described but the research also outlines some areas of risk. The freedom that video provides through flexibility of access, without the availability of an instructor, requires greater self-discipline on behalf of the students (Martinez, 2001, Sun and Rueda, 2012, Kay, 2012). Also, as students increasingly access materials partly or exclusively online, the potential for isolation, disengagement and drop-out grows (Kizilcec et al., 2014). perhaps most importantly, self-regulation, harder to manage remotely, has been found to be a significant predictor of emotional, behavioral and cognitive engagement across a range of research results (Sun and Rueda, 2012). Technology also plays a significant role in this dynamic. On the one hand, it can provide options to counteract the risk of isolation and lack of self-motivation, for example via video-based communication methods which can be used as a tool through which to interact and assess student performance and comprehension (Borup et al., 2011). On the other hand, computer anxiety is found to be a key factor affecting learner satisfaction in e-learning, as are the attitudes of the instructor (Sun et al., 2008).

Conclusion

The female children of the nomad communities in Nigeria have long been deprived of access to quality education. The current education system in Nigeria made it difficult to give viable education to pastoral nomads at this present level of social and economic development. The education system is characterized by general low enrollment of female child, male-biased and urban orientation has always been under-financed. The nomads' way of life is not conducive to accommodate the structure of the present day education system which are anchored on traditional teaching methods. Hence the need to embrace ODL as a strategy to enhance access of girl child enrolment to education, enhance their retention and completion.

Recommendations

ODL has the potential to deliver flexible, individualized, inclusive education to learners in respect of their gender, place of residence, occupation and time. It offers accessible and flexible instructional modes that can accommodate the aspirations of the female child of nomads as against conventional delivery approaches. Hence ODL delivery strategies such as video instructions should be adopted in educating the girl child of the nomads. These should be sponsored free by the government. The community leaders should be included in sensitizing and mobilizing the girl child of the nomads

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