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NIGERIA'S EXPERIMENT WITH A NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR NOMADIC EDUCATION

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Introduction

This paper examines the problem of educating nomadic pastoralists in Nigeria, which has become central and controversial during the last two years. As in much of Africa, Nigerian pastoralists have been suffering from drought, desertification, reduction of pastureland, disruption of cattle routes, disease, and conflict with settled agriculturists. But unlike in many countries where development programmes employing the expertise of social and natural scientists have emerged to confront those problems, nearly all affairs of the nomadic peoples in Nigeria have become the concern of 'educationists'. This paper is, therefore, about the role that school and state have assumed in tackling the problems of Nigeria's pastoral nomads. It attempts to provide an explanation for why the national nomadic programme at present lies in the hands of educationalists. Using Gongola State's (see map) Nomadic Education Programme as a case in point, I shall argue that the politicisation of the project has played a decisive role in the shape the movement has assumed, and has so far been one of many factors precluding its implementation. The movement initiated by a few on humanitarian grounds now uses the same rationale to legitimise what many see as simply an effort to capitalise on the development funds that have become available.

Nomadic Pastoralism in Africa: Problems of Development

Pastoralists and nomadic pastoralists, who constitute a substantial portion of the population of many African countries which have arid ecological zones, have been accorded much scholarly and professional attention (Oxby 1975). In recent years, as political and environmental conditions have

become critical in many African states, the movement to initiate or intensify development programmes for the nomads has been joined by scholars in the social and natural sciences, as well as by government officials and civil servants.

Anthropologists, (eg Horowitz 1986; Bennett 1988) have argued that many of the development programmes for nomads have failed because they have been based on generalised, unsubstantiated assumptions. These include the assumption that pastoralists are destructive of their natural environment; that a uniform model of pastoralists' economy is applicable to most African ecosystems; that all requirements, including land, capital, and pastoralists' cooperation, could be readily obtained; that restricted freedom of select peoples would not have negative social, cultural and economic repercussions; and that there would be no abberations in environmental conditions (ie drought) during the development programmes. Furthermore, advocates of pastoralists' development have not been able to agree on an appropriate course of action: whether to destock or re-stock, to settle them with or without agriculture, to have open or fenced range land, to have large or small scale sedentarisation, and whether education should be provided in conjunction with or subsequent to these programmes. The failure to deal with the cultural and ecological variation, to make concessions to nomads' goals, and to involve them directly in the planning efforts, have contributed to the pastoralists' unwillingness to cooperate (Aronson 1980). In many cases, therefore, the costs of the development schemes far outweigh their benefits.

Many recent studies have further emphasised that development programmes, including those encompassing pastoralists, are best viewed as political phenomena (cf Galaty, Attwood and Bruneau 1988). Policy formation and implementation entails a complex dialogue among administrators and planners, with the stakes including development funds and control over the target

population. The struggle for control over these areas and the involvement in rhetoric to justify the existence of such programmes become ends within themselves (Horowitz 1986). Two results of the politicisation of development programmes include: first, elite minorities may benefit at the expense of the intended beneficiaries, and, second, the programmes cannot take off because they cannot escape the entanglement of bureaucracy. As we will see, such has been the case with recent strategies to assist the Nigerian nomads: the policy makers have not foreseen the unintended negative consequences of the programme, especially those resulting from the movement's politicisation, nor have they projected its costs as opposed to its benefits.

The Nomadic Pastoral Peoples of Nigeria

Pastoralism figures heavily in the lives of the peoples of northern Nigeria, even among those who do not own cattle, by virtue of their frequent contact with those who do so. The early and as yet unmatched anthropological studies of the predominant pastoral peoples in Nigeria, the Fulbe, by Stenning (1959) and Hopen (1958) can provide invaluable ethnographic information and show the importance of the physical and social environment in shaping Fulbe social organisation which has clearly been in flux. Stenning (1959:51) noted that agnatic descent group is not a monolithic unit but is acutely sensitive to demographic changes and ecological fluctuations. Descent groups adjust themselves by periodic fragmentation to the conditions in which their subsistence is grounded. Stenning and Hopen also demonstrate how Fulbe culture has persisted for centuries inspite of many hardships and conflicts with non-Fulbe.

Stenning (1959) was among the first to point out the necessity for government aid to pastoralists. They could be assisted to increase stock production and to control disease, they might be encouraged to sell surplus stock, thereby contributing to

Nigeria's economy (then a British colonial one), and they might be assisted in settling on ranches. But this could only be possible if the policies worked with and not against the social organisation and culture of the pastoral Fulbe.

Since Stenning's pioneering suggestions, not much ethnographic attention has been given to Nigeria's nomads,[1] and indeed most of Stenning's and Hopen's findings, as well as more recent work in Niger and Mali (eg, Swift 1979; Horowitz 1986) are often overlooked in some academic circles in Nigeria, for reasons which should become evident below. Indeed, in contrast to some other African countries, a non-interventionist attitude towards pastoralists prevailed in Nigeria until recently. Interestingly too, whereas in the 1970s millions of dollars were received in external aid by such countries as Niger, Mali and Chad to study and alleviate the effects of the Sahelian drought on pastoral populations, hardly any attention was given to Nigeria. Despite the existence of several large veterinary institutes in Nigeria, it is only in the past few years (as we will see below) that the major problems facing the nomads (eg lack of pastureland and water, conflicts with farmers, inaccess to cattle routes, disease, inability to secure veterinary services, and so on) have become recognised. Little intensive research has been conducted or made available publically to confirm the severity of these problems. Only a few development programmes have been implemented for nomadic groups, and with little success; many others have been designed and not implemented. For instance, as early as the 1960s, grazing reserves were

[1] Most research has been conducted at livestock institutes in the Kaduna and Jos Areas, with attention given to cattle and milk production, often under controlled conditions (cf Raay 1974; ILCA 1986; Waters-Bayers 1988) and much less coverage of the diverse ecology and social organisation of pastoralists throughout Nigeria. Frantz (1980) and Blench (1984, 1985) have conducted general surveys in the Mambilla area, which may be indicative of that ecological zone but not of the more arid zones of Northern Nigeria, nor of the social life and ecosystems of specific pastoral peoples in that area. However, since late 1987, one survey has been in progress in Katsina State led by a multi-disciplinary team of university consultants; it is as yet uncertain if any development programmes will result.

demarcated throughout the northern territories of Nigeria, but up to the present day, few attempts have been made to develop them. Those that were designed failed to involve the pastoralists directly in their operation, and most have fallen into disrepair (Ezeomah 1987).[2] Even the initially successful settlement programme of Fulbe in Mambilla - an environment which allows for year-round grazing - did not anticipate the extreme ethnic strife which now is problematic among the Mambila peoples (Frantz 1980; Blench 1984).

In view of the apparent failure of the Ministry of Agriculture to take adequate steps to assist Nigeria's nomads, several professors of education have become dedicated to a nomadic education programme, to which we now turn.

Development of the Programme

Prior to 1986, the problem of educating minority populations in Nigeria was practically unheard of, except in some university circles. A few attempts were made by state or local governments to register nomadic children for attendance at school, and some Fulbe ardo'en (chiefs) were urged to encourage their people's school registration and attendance (Gongola State 1986). A few local governments attempted to erect schools for nomads, which were not supported by the intended participants. Efforts to force school attendance were met with emigration (Ezeomah 1983). It was therefore concluded that mobile schools, which cater to the nomads' lifestyle and aim at providing functional literacy to them, should be instituted at the state level (Ezeomah 1982). It was also argued that 'the nomads must have a role in planning their own lives and those of their children. Imposed programmes are doomed to failure' (Ezeomah 1982:21). A proposal for a large-scale nomadic education programme was

[2] Several attempts were made by US-AID to develop grazing reserves, but few nomads participated in them and the reserves fell into disrepair after the funding was terminated.

then drafted. In 1984 a very large contribution was made by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) for nomadic education programmes in Bauchi, Gongola, and Jos States, to be completed in 1986. The UNDP contribution was to be matched by Nigerian government funds.[3]

It was during 1986 that a more open concern for nomads' education emerged. A conference held in Gongola State on the feasibility of mobile schools and an appropriate school curriculum for nomads drew national attention. Educationists from the University of Jos also received the support of the Minister of Education (who is Fulbe from Gongola). They began to draft a national plan for nomadic education on the grounds that state and local governments were incapable of implementing large-scale programmes, of soliciting international development funds, and of dealing with nomads who move across state boundaries (Fed. Ministry of Education 1987). The team from UNIJOS was then commissioned to expand its research into ten northern states, focusing plan implementations. Shortly thereafter they informed UNDP that the programme, to which it had contributed, had not begun on schedule and was only about to commence. The completion date was postponed until 1988.

Conferences continued to be held on nomadic education. The debate in academic circles concerned three issues:

1) Should the nomads be settled first before they are educated?;

2) Should schools be designed explicitly for nomads, even if it is at the expense of other people's education?;

[3] With the gradual devaluation of the Nigerian naira beginning in 1986, the total contributed to the programme (prior to its National launching) should have amounted to over 2 million naira.

3) Are mobile schools the best and most feasible way of preserving and enhancing the nomadic livelihood while providing nomads with functional literacy?

A national policy on nomadic education was drawn up under the contention that nomadic education can be an indirect solution to many, if not all, of the nomads' problems. According to one educationist (Ezeomah 1987), it is only through education the nomads' lifestyle can be improved. In his view, the benefits of nomadic education include that:

1) they will learn to stand up for their grazing rights and to improve the land they do own;

2) they will learn 'scientific' knowledge about disease and how to avoid it;

3) they will learn how to better feed and manage their herds;

4) they will learn how and when to sell their livestock and how to increase milk production, that is, to maximise their profits;

5) they will know more about health care for their families and animals;

6) they can also be taught leadership abilities so that they can participate actively in development programmes;

7) they will become aware of avenues of settlement should they decide to settle.[4]

[4] This contrasts with policies in other African countries (eg Kenya, Tanzania) where programmes have emphasised gradual, guided settlement, with education being targeted towards settled families or those who voluntarily send their children to boarding schools (Nkinyangi 1981).

Finally, research which showed nomads had a 'favourable' attitude to education led to the adoption in late 1987 of a national policy by the Federal Ministry of Education.[5] The formal launching of the nomadic education programme signalled the beginning of a nationwide campaign. This made available substantial Federal funds to the states' education ministries so that they could develop and implement their own programmes. The programme objectives deriving from the National Policy for Education included:

1) the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;

2) the inculcation of the right type of knowledge and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;

3) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around him (ie training in scientific and critical thinking);

4) the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities, and competences, both mental, social and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in his society and to contribute to its development (Ezeomah 1988:16)

The next three years would thus be an experimental period, seeking not only to foster a sense of awareness among the nomads of the necessity for education, but also to establish hundreds of mobile nomadic schools throughout the country and to ensure regular attendance of children in the schools.

The Ministry also requested that individuals from several ministries and disciplines be invited to participate in a

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[5] Based on asking questions about whether or not they would send their children to school and if they thought education would assist in their procuring a living; and, more generally, on the researchers' conclusion that learning and socialisation are an integral fact of Fulani culture (Ezeomah 1987).

National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), to be housed in the Ministry of Education and eventually constituting a separate department. States were further commissioned to form interdisciplinary advisory panels, and Centres for Nomadic Education were approved for the University of Jos and Ahmadu Bello University, and later the University of Maiduguri. Following a meeting where the Minister of Education defended the programme, the propositions were accepted by President Babangida in June 1988 and forwarded to the Ministry of Justice (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988).

By September 1988, all northern states, and even a few southern states had launched nomadic education programmes, each receiving approximately half a million naira to support their activities according to their needs.[6] The Ministry of Education then announced that when necessary additional funds would be made available and reiterated its intention to see the programme through at whatever cost. However, the National Commission for Nomadic Education, which might have diversified opinions on the nomadic programme, has yet to meet because of further delays at the Federal level.

The Case of Gongola State

Although it is difficult to predict programme results in all involved Nigerian states, my own findings in Gongola State (one of three states to be funded by the UNDP grant) might be indicative of the course of events in other states. First, we turn to nomads' attitudes. In interviews conducted with

[6] The nomadic programme was initially geared toward Fulbe who constitute the largest nomadic people in Nigeria. After some debate and accusations of Fulbe ethnic favouritism, it was agreed that all nomadic peoples, ie Shuwa, Koyam, Bodawai, and Tuareg (Azbenawa and Buzu) pastoralists, as well as migratory fisherman, such as the Budduma, should benefit from the programme. Some southern states have therefore launched programmes for their 'nomadic' peoples.

'nomads' in mid-1986 (prior to the national launching of the programme), many reported that they subscribed to a high degree of seasonal mobility which they were as yet unwilling to change. Many contended that, 'Herdsmanship (ngainaka) and nomadism (tokkugo ladde) are among our traditions (finugo tawa), a part of our identity (pulaaku), and we are not willing to sacrifice them or our cows for anything ...' They were, however, keenly interested in obtaining government support to enhance their pastoral livelihood, and their spiritual leader (maudo laawol pulaaku) was willing to summon his assistants from all over Nigeria to join in the efforts.

By late 1987, some nomads had heard of the education programme but by and large were opposed to it. They saw little benefit in sending their children to school while their herds were left unattended. Their reluctance to become sedentary persisted. Some even argued that they were certain the government simply intended to exploit or to trick them into forfeiting their livelihood. For instance, when asked about the programme, one ardo (chief) exclaimed:

> Huwatta! (It won't work!) Many other things must be done before we can think about educating our children. First, the government must provide us with necessary facilities, such as vaccines, grazing reserves, and cattle routes. But even if they do all of this, they will not find teachers with the necessary culture and endurance to follow us through the bush.

By mid-1988, information about the utility of education had rapidly spread among the pastoralists, emanating from the state's nomadic education unit through the ardo'en (chiefs) and also through the Mi Yetti Allah (Cattle Rearer's Association). At this time, the nomads were enjoying the national attention accorded them. This is what a large group of semi-settled Fulbe from a large, dispersed settlement outside Yola had to say about the programme:

> Some people came here and asked us questions. They wanted to know if we would send our children to school. We told

> them yes, that if they build a school for our children, at least some of our children will attend, even if they have to trek for 20 kms. But they will have to be sure that our cattle are not affected, because our life depends on them. The people who came here only asked about education and not about our problems. We want to settle, but there is no land for us. We have difficulty in taking our cows from here to dry season pasture, and farmers make us pay just to graze the stubble from their corn stalks. We have difficulty in obtaining necessary vaccinations for our cattle. The people who came here weren't interested in our problems, they only asked us if we want education and we never saw them again.

The national debate on nomadic education and its associated costly propaganda (eg media coverage, calendars, buttons, t-shirts, and school bags), has made the nomads more willing to enrol their children in school, assuming that their social and physical environment will be held at a constant. They are also more willing to settle, assuming they will receive the same kind of attention from the government as has been accorded the issue of their education. But they also argue that the problem of their education should not be given such priority, nor will it solve the numerous other problems associated with their livelihood and with population pressure.

Though instituted as early as 1983, Gongola State's nomadic education programme gained momentum in 1987. Assuming that funds will be readily available, there are now plans to establish at least 16 mobile nomadic schools in the near future in the state's four nomadic education zones. Eight will be 'high cost', with tents, collapsible furniture, teachers, and motorcycles and bicycles for teachers' transport. The remainder will be 'low cost', open-air schools, with school materials, teachers, and bicycles for their transport. In early 1988, appeals were made to students and future teachers with a commitment to the nomads and a willingness to withstand extreme hardships. As in incentive, they would be allowed to continue their education at the University of Maiduguri, and would receive special training for the nomadic programme. Also in early 1988, appeals were again made for dedicated headmasters and teachers to join the

programme. All would serve as mobile teachers beginning this summer, meaning that they would live in or near the nomads' bush encampments and would follow the communities (or clan segments) on their seasonal treks. In August of 1988, Gongola's first nomadic school was launched at Yolde Kpasham in Numan Local Government in a gala event, attended by Federal and State officials, culminating in the donation of 0.7 million naira to the State programme. The school, which is manned by a very enthusiastic headmaster and an Arabic teacher, is of the high cost type, with two large tents and collapsible tables and chalkboards.

However, after the initial excitement brought on by government and media presence in the remote camp, the participants' interest quickly began to wane. After only a few weeks, the initial registration of 76 students had dropped to below 40, and parents were already complaining about the hardships thrust upon them, their children, and their cattle. (Note that the Yolde Kpasham community was practically settled, moving during the year to several locales within only a 10 km radius). In addition, the teachers complained of disagreements with students' parents, and of a lack of teaching aids, transportation, and even salary. Furthermore, they were already being forced to intervene in the nomads' problems of conflict with settled agriculturists and of obtaining health services. The State's nomadic education unit, comprised of several civil servants, also reported that hardly any other work had progressed on the other proposed schools because of a lack of funds and transportation to the sites. In fact, students had yet to be registered for the schools that should have been opened, and the newly-trained teachers had yet to report for work. They further reported that they had neither input into nor feedback from the research survey conducted briefly in the area (by the University of Jos team in 1987), and they lacked sufficient funds to conduct their own research. Yet higher-level officials from the State's education ministry contended that

substantial research was underway and that the programme was operating smoothly and would continue to expand and solve the nomads' problems. However, individuals from Gongola's Ministry of Agriculture complained that their plans for systematically aiding the nomads to settle were being undermined by the educationists. They said that the proposed advisory panels or commissions, where they might have been able to voice their opposition, had yet to convene.

The Politics and Ethics of the Programme

The above discussion reveals a good deal about the progress, problems, and prospects of development programmes for Nigeria's nomads. Certainly, the education movement has fostered solidarity and a general sense of awareness among the nomads, along with a sense of caution that in reality they may be targets for exploitation. Many more nomads now appear willing to educate their children than was the case two years ago, and they also realise that the Nigerian government has the capacity and resources to alleviate their many hardships.

But beyond causing a good deal of excitement in academic and bureaucratic circles as well as among the nomads themselves, the objectives of the programme, which has been operating on a small scale since 1982 and funded externally since 1984, have yet to be realised. Although substantial funds have been consumed by the project, they have so far only marginally reached the target population. It appears that the ecology and social organisation of the subjects (ie seasonal fragmentation of groups) have already begun to militate against regular attendance at school, or even the establishment of schools beyond the planning stage. The programme simply does not address itself to these small-scale variations, nor to the more extensive migrations which these people have shown historically. Notably, too, the first

schools built were not among nomads, but for peoples who were virtually settled![7]

When the state intervened in the nomadic problem, it was inevitable that a good deal of politics would come into play. With the institution of the programme, many individuals quickly realised that the stakes could be high and immediately joined the nomadic education programme or the debate against it. The politicisation of the movement has thus had many negative repercussions, including:

1) Interested scholars and administrators have polarised into camps, those supporting nomads' education, and those supporting their settlement (which should be complementary programmes). Moreover, neither large-scale education nor massive or forced settlement appear feasible under the present social and ecological and economic conditions in Nigeria;

2) Bureaucracy and politics, especially among the educationists, have prevented other disciplines or qualified individuals from contributing to the programme; the inherent compartmentalisation of Nigerian Federal Ministries has further facilitated the Education Ministry's monopoly of the programme. Although the programme purports to be interdisciplinary in scope, with a few exceptions, individuals from outside the field of education have so far been excluded;

3) There also has not been much linkage or coordination between State and Federal officials on research efforts (with the exception being Plateau State, from which the programme and national survey emanated);

4) The programme has legitimised administrators' and settled peoples' exploitation of the nomads, under the expectation that the nomads will learn, through education, to avoid

[7] Bennett (1988) notes that many programmes purporting to assist nomadic peoples are often implemented among only semi-settled pastoralists.

exploitation. This, it seems, skirts the issue that there are some fundamental problems in Nigeria which need to be dealt with, such as its legal and land tenure systems as they apply to nomads. The nomads are in fact quite aware that the system time and again exploits them and favours settled people or commercial ranchers;

5) The exhortations by educationists (eg in Ezeomah 1987; Federal Republic of Nigeria 1987) that Nigeria's nomads are peoples who wander from place to place, who lack legal or scientific knowledge, who are impoverished and maladapted, and who do not know how to manage their herds or make a profit (among many other derogatory statements), all serve to perpetuate the negative stereotypes held by the public and thereby encourage exploitation.

It was inevitable for a project so sensitive and now controversial that ethics and human rights should become an issue. Since its inception, the nomadic education programme has been concerned with the betterment of the nomads' lifestyle through the provision of literacy. Recently it has begun to appeal to human rights, arguing that nomads have as much right to education as other people, no matter how much of a minority they are and regardless of the cost of educating them. And, if other Federal ministries are failing to confront the nomads' problems, the Education Ministry can bear that burden. Here is one such invocation of human rights:

> The Nigerian nomads as human beings must be entitled to such a right to education <u>now</u>. To delay their education until their settlement is completed is to deny them the fundamental right and freedom unconditionally guaranteed by the Nigerian Constitution and the UN Declaration of Human Rights (Nigeria 1987:5).

While these objectives may be valid, this kind of statement (absent from earlier works on nomadic education) which advocates universal literacy (based on western societies where literacy rates are relatively high), is now being used as a

primary means of justifying the monetary favouritism shown towards Nigeria's nomadic minorities. It also supports the educationists' monopoly of the many resources associated with the programme. In becoming politicised, therefore, the programme's humanistic goals have lost their substance. What is appropriate for the nomads and their development is now being determined by the advocates of the education programme. Little cognisance has been given to what Nigeria's nomads see as appropriate for themselves. Here we may recall that the success of the programme's initial design hinged upon nomad's direct participation in its planning or implementation. And yet, so far, no 'nomads' have done so (beyond answering questionnaires), nor have any Fulbe or their settled Fulbe kindred served on the committees which make the plans and control the development funds. How then can we be certain that the nomads' rights, as they perceive them, will be adequately represented?

In short, although it may be ethical to make general provision for nomads' education, it appears that nomads' other fundamental rights, especially their ability to pursue their livelihood, may be simultaneously violated by an over-emphasis on nomadic education at the expense of other programmes. As nomads begin to participate more actively as citizens in mainstream Nigerian society, immediate provisions must be made for the preservation of their pastoral livelihood.

Although it is becoming increasingly evident that the pastoral nomadic way of life in northern Nigeria is becoming endangered by environmental stresses, especially those induced by rising population and decreasing available pasture, it seems that there has also emerged an even more menacing and threatening force: Nigeria's advocates of development. Although problems faced by the nomads today, such as conflict with settled peoples and uncertainties of water and pasture, are centuries old, these problems are now being exaggerated to justify attempts to educate, develop and, ultimately, to settle the

nomads, with the tacit objective of modernising their traditional way of life and making them 'more like the settled peoples'.[8] However, as long as these motives and their associated rhetoric underlie development programmes, Nigeria's nomads will continue to be subjects of prejudice and misunderstanding. Moreover, given the current political underpinnings of the education movement, with the stakes being development funds and power, the recent scholarly work by educationists (who are untrained in scientific research methodology) has been haphazard, and without sufficient research.

The ethical issue facing people like the author, a few humanitarian Nigerians, and non-Nigerian scholars of development is: 'Should outsiders intervene in this project?' The flaws in its motivations design and implementation are blatantly obvious to the outsider. Then again, the movement has become so highly politicised - to the extent that some have vowed to stand by it at whatever cost - that any attempts from the outside to provide alternatives, or simply to conduct relevant intensive research, might be perceived as threats and dismissed as incorrect, chauvinistic, or irrelevant.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the Nigerian government's attempt to intervene with development programmes for its nomadic peoples. It required state intervention and a good deal of lobbying before a programme of sorts was able to take off at the national level. Although the objectives of the programme (now housed in the Ministry of Education) may be valid, it is questionable whether the programme as designed is indeed feasible at this point in time, not only because of

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[8] Rigby (1969) and Horowitz (1986) discuss how efforts to improve the standard of living of pastoral peoples often become laden with an ethnocentrism whereby pastoralists are viewed as less developed than settled agricultural peoples. This facilitates the spread of prejudice to the wider community and guarantees that the pastoralists never adequately represent themselves in development efforts.

pastoralists' variable migratory patterns and social composition, but also because the movement to educate them has been capitalised upon by individuals with only marginal interest in their welfare. So far, millions of naira have already been spent simply in the effort to justify the programme and to begin to educate a handful of children, whose parents are at a loss about where to pasture their cattle. If the nomads' problems associated with procuring a livelihood are not addressed in the near future, those now willing to enrol their children will be forced to forego their interest to seek a more favourable environment elsewhere. The programme also does not calculate the many years that must pass before the few nomadic youths who now attend school, mostly on an irregular basis, will be old enough to show the benefits of education. Moreover, it does not specify how the Nigerian government will continue to bear the programme's enormous costs.

Through the campaign for nomadic education, the Nigerian public has become increasingly aware of their land's nomadic peoples and of the problems that face them. It is also clear that education may not be the best solution to these problems. Many agree this may be just another programme of the Nigerian government that is abandoned after the funds and support for it have been depleted. Certainly, there are other alternatives which so far have been dismissed by the educationists, evidently as a means of retaining a monopoly on programme funds. The programme needs to be re-evaluated and restructured before its negative repercussions become more apparent. If the government were to rethink the programme, the nomadic education funds might be usefully channelled towards the nomads' more immediate problems or hardships. Or, if the programme must remain an educational one, a larger share of the funds could be used to develop adult education programmes for interested nomads or to enhance their cattle rearers' association. Such funds are sorely needed in the rural areas of northern Nigeria, where many villages lack

primary schools and where a majority of school age children, particularly women, fail to attend school altogether.[9]

Nigeria's pastoral nomads have, thus far, employed indigenous cultural mechanisms to mobilise their kindred in support of the nomadic education movement, in the expectation that their hardships will be reduced in the near future. If there is no significant change in the nomads' predicament soon, rather than campaigning for the education of nomadic children, the Nigerian government may have to contend with concerted resistance to its subsequent development programmes.

[9] Based on my own research (VerEecke 1989) in several locales in Gongola State where, in spite of opportunities to attend primary or secondary schools, less than 50% of school age children had enrolled in primary school. Even in urban areas like Yola, children enrolled in primary school were barely in the majority, and hardly any rural men and women were attending secondary school.

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