



Assessment of welfare services provisions and challenges for the implementation of migrant fisher-folk education Programme in the Niger delta region of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed the welfare services provisions and challenges for the implementation of Migrant Fisher-Folk education programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Two (2) research questions and two (2) hypotheses were answered and tested in the study, respectively. The study adopted descriptive research survey design, using a population as the 217 Migrant Fisher-folk primary schools in six states of the Niger Delta. These schools have a teaching staff population of 1152, from which 212 head teachers and heads of Early Childhood Units were selected as sample, using the stratified random sampling technique and multi-stage sampling strategy. The instrument of the study was a validated 17 item Programme Implementation Survey Instrument (PISI) with a reliability index of 0.89 obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. Mean were used in answering the research questions while the one-way Analysis of Variance was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study show that Welfare services such as free transport services, free medical services, overtime allowances, and loans are not provided for teachers of migrant fisherfolk schools. This is clearly shown by the aggregate mean ranging from 1.03 to 1.25. (not at all) for the states among other findings. It is recommended among that migrant fisher folk schools should be regularly exposed to training programmes and sufficiently motivated through special welfare packages and incentive allowances.

Keywords: Welfare Services, Challenges, implementation, Migrant Fisher-folk

Introduction

The promulgation of decree No. 41 of 1989, which established the National Commission for Nomadic Education, is one of the several measures adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria to assuage the peoples' feelings and to ensure that equal access to basic education is enjoyed by nomadic populations in Nigeria. The commission had initially focused its attention on the provision of formal education to the children of pastoral nomads. The decree also established three university-based nomadic education centres at Jos, Sokoto and Maiduguri to oversee the management of the nomadic education programme.

However, the National Council on Education at its 37th meeting held in Kano in March 1990 directed the commission to incorporate the children of the migrant fishermen into its nomadic education programme. Consequent upon this, the University of Port Harcourt Nomadic Education Centre was established by 1999 to provide the necessary support for the implementation of the migrant fisher folk education programme. The envisaged programme is a special education programme which aims at integrating the migrant fishermen and their children into the mainstream of national life and provides them with the relevant knowledge and skills which will uplift their living standards (Ibanga, 2016) ^[8].

Specifically, the migrant fisher-folk children education programme has been adopted to reflect the peculiar environment of the fishing communities. Although the curriculum of the fisher-folk schools is the same with the conventional schools, the idea was to ensure that those who may not proceed to the secondary level after primary education would be opportune to understand their environment in order to improve on it, while those who could proceed to higher education would be encouraged to engage in advanced studies that would be relevant for improving the environment and the general living conditions of migrant fishing communities (Akhueomonkhan, Raimi & Dada, 2014) [3].

It was equally envisaged that the adult members of the fishing communities also require functional literacy and non-formal education which would inculcate in them relevant knowledge and skills that will help them improve their general living conditions and occupational practice (Akhueomonkhan, et al.). With the introduction of basic education in Nigeria, schooling was made compulsory for all children aged 6–11 years plus (Abdulrahman, 2016) [2]. Unfortunately, the children of migrant fishermen are among the most educationally disadvantaged children in Nigeria. The conditions associated with their migratory lifestyle, such as discontinuity in education, social and cultural isolation, strenuous work outside school, extreme poverty, and poor health, impose multiple obstacles to their education and life chances. Due to the extreme economic conditions of migrants, migrant fishermen's children most often take on work and family responsibilities at an early age, sometimes to the detriment of school attendance. At the same time, migrating children are often exposed to a variety of health risks, such as accidental injury and exposure to sea piracy.

Whereas migrant parents may appreciate the importance of education, they may consider conventional schooling as a last option since decisions about where and when to relocate are ultimately based on economic necessity, which is determined by such factors as seasonal variations and tide (Nwile, 2020; McGahey, 2011) [11, 9]. They move from the freshwater fishing areas to the deep sea and back again according to the dictates of nature. It is for these reasons that the government established the National Commission for Nomadic Education with the lofty objective of providing migrant fisher folks with equal educational opportunity that must include special learning experiences that do not unnecessarily disrupt their lifestyle, but integrate them into the mainstream culture as their sedentary counterparts (Buba, 2020) [5].

Challenges of Fisher Folk Education in Nigeria

Nomadic education in Nigeria is affected by defective policies, inadequate finance, faulty school placement incessant migration of students, unreliable and obsolete data, and cultural and religious taboos (Sa'adu & Aminu, 2019; Abbo, 2011) [13]. While some of these problems are solved by policy and infrastructure interventions, most of them are complex and difficult to solve. The persistence of these problems is regular migration of the Ijaw and other fishing communities along the coastal line. Other challenges are;

1. The nomadic education curricula are unsuitable, if not an impediment to learning. For example, the use of English for instruction at the elementary school level is inappropriate. Learning in the English language is difficult for children who are yet to master their own language. The problem is that due to cost the government

cannot develop orthographic materials to replace English as a medium of instruction in schools (Ibanga, 2016) [8].

2. Instead of teaching fishing crafts, formal schools spend too much time on teaching history and cultures of societies the fishermen least know or want to know about.
3. Conventional education ignores the desirability of the apprenticeship model, thereby closing a vital channel of skill transfer (Aleyidiewo as cited in Bashar, Sambo & Ibrahim, 2017) [4].

Interestingly, with the newly developed monitoring indicators for the inter-ministerial agency carries out monitoring activities mainly to check the extent to which planned contents, inputs, process and products in the Commission's programme are being implemented. Specifically, the Commission carries out periodic exercise which involves checking, watching and observing for the purpose of determining achievements, constraints, challenges as well as future direction and interventions that need to be introduced for assuring welfare system (FGN, 2013). To see to the welfare of nomadic education generally, the government through various interventions made:

1. Teacher Training on pedagogical skills, Record keeping, school management for Head teachers and teachers of Nomadic Primary Schools (pastoralists, migrant fisher folks; migrant farmers (Ibanga, 2016; Ekundayo, 2010) [8, 6].
2. Design, Development and production of Instructional materials (Easel blackboard, chalkboards, Wooden blackboard, lap desks) etc.
3. Transport and Transportation: procurement of project vehicles, motor cycles for teachers and dugout canoes.
4. Construction of 6 Nos. Community-based nomadic schools.
5. Procurement of mobile collapsible school structures.
6. Face-to-face sensitization, advocacy and mobilization of nomadic communities.
7. Procurement of office furniture and equipment.
8. Professional capacity development of nomadic teachers.
9. Development and production of maternal and child health materials for nomadic groups.
10. Procurement of education expert on skills acquisition of extension agents and migrant youths.
11. Construction and equipping of 5 nomadic education model centres in grazing reserves, fishing ports and farm centres.

Nwile (2022) [12] specifically outlined the functions of the Inter-Ministerial committees, which include;

1. To facilitate the provision of welfare services such as bore holes, wells, dams and clinics for the nomads and their livestock.
2. To facilitate the establishment of grazing reserves, settlement centres, grazing areas;
3. To ensure that welfare facilities are adequately provided in the grazing reserves, grazing areas and settlement centres.
4. To assist the commission in the implementation of the nomadic education programme.
5. To ensure the dissemination of useful information on matters affecting the nomads and their environment.
6. To ensure peaceful co-existence between nomads and sedentary groups;

Statement of the Problem

The Federal Government 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 to all Nigerians, and in order to ensure that fisher-folks 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 to strengthen its welfare services for the educationally disadvantaged group (Nwile, 2022; 2020) ^[11, 12].

However, these are faced with major constraints; constant migration/movements in search of deep water fish in the case of migrant fishermen; the control system of child labour in their production system, thus making it extremely difficult to allow their children to participate in formal schooling; the irrelevance of the school curriculum, which is tailored to meet the needs of sedentary groups and thus ignores the educational needs of fisher folks; and physical isolation as they operate in largely inaccessible physical environments. This is specifically with regard to the provision of adequate and appropriate welfare services by inter-ministerial agencies involved in the implementation of the programme. These issues may have truncated or not the implementation of migrant fisher folks. Therefore, these issues constitute the problems of the study.

Purpose of the study

The study aimed to assessing the welfare services provisions and challenges for the implementation of migrant fisher-folk education programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the challenges to the implementation of migrant fisher-folk education in the Niger Delta?
2. What are the welfare services provided for migrant fisher-folk education in the Niger Delta?

Research Hypotheses

1. There are no significant differences among Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers States in the challenges to the implementation of migrant fisher-folk education.
2. There are no significant differences among Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers States in the welfare services provided for migrant fisher-folk education.

Methodology

The research adopted the descriptive survey design in its approach. The descriptive survey is considered most appropriate because the study investigated a phenomenon that is already in existence. The target population of this study comprised of all migrant fisher folk primary schools in the six states that make up the study area. The States include Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Akwa-Ibom, Delta and Edo States. Presently, there are 217 (nomadic) migrant schools with teaching staff strength of 1,152 teachers spread across the six states. The head teachers and the head of the early childhood unit of these schools constituted the respondents for the study. In addition, the researcher interviewed the Director of the University of Port Harcourt Nomadic Education Centre. The stratified simple random sampling technique was adopted to select states and schools from the target population based on proportionate sampling. First of all, 50% of the states in the region were randomly sampled, giving a total of 3 states. In the second stage, 50% of nomadic schools in the 3 sampled states were randomly selected for the study. This gave a total of 106 schools. All the head teachers and the head of early childhood education unit of these sampled schools were used for the study. This gave a total of 212 respondents (Akwa Ibom 86, Bayelsa 84 and Rivers 42). The researcher developed a programme implementation survey instrument.(P.J.S.I) made up of three sections for the study. Section A, made up of six items (1-6) was used to elicit demographic and general information about the schools surveyed. Section B consisting of five items each. The instrument was subjected to appropriate validation before it was used. It was subjected to the scrutiny of the experts in educational management. The different responses to the questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. This yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.89. In addition, the mean was used to answer the research questions with the stated decision boundaries as guide.

Great Extent	3.5-4.0
Moderate Extent	2.5-3.4
Minimal Extent	1.5-2.4
Not at all	0.0-1.4

The one way Analysis of Variance was used to analyses the data to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 significant level.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the welfare services provided for migrant fisherfolk education in the Niger Delta region?

The first parameter used in assessing the level of implementation of migrant fisher folk education programme in this study is the provision of welfare services for teachers of migrant schools. The result of data analysis presented in Table 1 shows these information using 9 items which included free transport services, loans, overdraft, free medical services, overtime allowances, hazard compensation fees and provision of free lunch.

Table 1: Weighted mean on the provisions of welfare service

S/no	Agencies	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Rivers	Avrg. Mean	Remarks
		Mean	Mean	Mean		
1.	Free transport services	1.11	1.49	1.36	1.3	Not at all
2	Loan for purchase of car/boat	1.01	1.18	1.24	1.095	Not at all

3	Loan for renting of house	1	1.18	1.12	1.09	Not at all
4	Overdraft facilities	1.01	1	1.36	1.01	Not at all
5	Free medical services for pupil and staff	1	1	1.36	1	Not at all
6	Over time allowance	1.14	1.22	1.36	1.18	Not at all
7	Hazard compensation fee	1.06	1	1.36	1.03	Not at all
8	Provision of free lunch for pupils/staff	1.06	1	1	1.03	Not at all
	Aggregate	1.05	1.18	1.3	1.12	Not at all

As clearly shown in Table 1 welfare services are not provided for migrant schools in Akwa Ibom State, Bayelsa State and Rivers State. The aggregate mean of 1.05 for Akwa Ibom State, 1.18 for Bayelsa State and 1.12 for Rivers State is evident that welfare services are not provided for teachers of migrant schools in the Niger Delta region.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges to the implementation of migrant fisher folk education in the Niger Delta region?

The two parameter used in assessing the level of implementation of migrant fisher folk education programme in this study is the assessment of what constitute challenges to the programme implementation.

Nine items were assessed and the results presented in Table 1. From the result of the data analysis in Table 1, it is clear that all 9 outlined items constitute challenges to programme implementation in Akwa Ibom State. Eight out of the nine items analyzed pose as challenges to programme implementation to a moderate extent.

Table 2: Challenges to the Implementation of Migrant Fisher folk Education Programme

S/no	Agencies	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Rivers	Avrg. Mean	Remarks
		Mean	Mean	Mean		
9	Inadequate funds to support schooling activities	3.17	3.6	4	3.38	Great extent
10	Inadequate instructional resources to facilitate teaching and learning	3.02	3.12	4	3.07	Great extent
11	Lack of interest in schooling by children	2.49	3.36	4	2.95	Great extent
12	Lack of parental support for children education	2.62	2.79	3.67	2.71	Great extent
13	Poor monitoring and evaluation of programme	2.55	3.01	2.55	2.78	Great extent
14	Harsh and difficult terrain	2.77	3.7	3.14	3.24	Great extent
15	Inadequate basic amenities	3.04	3.57	4	3.31	Great extent
16	Lack of political will on the part of government	2.93	3.46	4	3.20	Great extent
17	Poor motivation of staff	3.17	3.75	4	3.46	Great extent
	Aggregate	2.77	3.26	3.56	3.02	Great extent

Only item three (lack of interest in schooling by children) pose as a challenge to a minimal extent in Akwa Ibom State. In Bayelsa State, five out of the nine items pose as challenges to a great extent while four items pose as challenges to a moderate extent. In Rivers State, seven out of the nine items pose as challenges to a great extent while only two pose as challenges to a moderate extent (see aggregate mean of 2.77 for Akwa Ibom, 3.26 for Bayelsa and 3.56 for Rivers State). In summary all nine items pose as challenges to the implementation of migrant fisher folk education programme in all the states.

Research Hypotheses

A total of two research hypotheses were formulated and

tested in this study and the result of the test is presented in under this subsection. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level.

Hypotheses 1: There are no significant differences among Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State in the welfare services provided for migrant fisher folk education.

This hypothesis compared Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers states on the level of welfare services provided for staff of the migrant fisher folk education. The result of the test using one way ANOVA are summarized in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Summary of One Way ANOVA among Akwalbom, Bayelsa and Rivers State in the welfare services provided for migrant fisher folk education, ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between Group	5.169	2	2.584	18.739	.000
Within Group	28.604	208	.138		
Total	33.773	210			

As shown in table 3, the test result has yielded an fvalue of 18.793 which is significant at 0.000 (which is by far lower than 0.05 significant value which was used in testing this hypothesis). Hence the differences among the three states are

considered significant and the null hypothesis is rejected. Since significant differences have been found, a post hoc test using Tukey' B statistics was carried out and the results are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Tukey' B post hoc comparison among AkwaIbom, Bayelsa and Rivers State on the status of welfare services provided for migrant fisher folk education Turkey B^{a,b}

State	N	Subset of Alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Bayelsa	85	1.0275	1.3069
Rivers	84		1.4021
Akwa Ibom	42		

Harmonic mean sample size 63.186

The evidence of Tukey's B shown in table 4 with the mean subsets reveals that welfare services are significantly more provided in Bayelsa and Rivers than Akwa Ibom. No significant differences exist between Bayelsa and Rivers states in the provision of welfare services.

Hypotheses 2: There are no significant differences among Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State in the challenges to the implementation of migrant fisherfolk education.

This last hypothesis compared the three states on the challenges confronting the implementation of the migrant folk education. The result of the test using one way ANOVA are summarized in tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Summary of One Way ANOVA among AkwaIbom, Bayelsa and Rivers State in the challenges confronting the implementation of migrant fisher folk education ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between Group	23.076	2	11.538	34.358	.000
Within Group	69.848	208	.336		
Total	92.924	210			

The result of ANOVA in table 5 has yielded an f-value of 34.358. This f-value is significant at 0.000 (2-tailed). Based on this obtained significant value, which is by far lower than 0.05 significant value which was used in testing this hypothesis, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that differences among the three states exists. The Turkey' B statistics which determined where the significant differences exists is presented in tables 6.

Table 4: Summary of Tukey' B post hoc comparison among AkwaIbom, Bayelsa and Rivers State on the challenges confronting the implementation of migrant fisher folk education Turkey B^{a,b}

State	N	Subset of Alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Bayelsa	85	2.8598		
Rivers	84		3.3805	
Akwa Ibom	42			3.7063

a. Harmonic mean sample size 63.186

b. The group sizes are unequal the harmonic mean of the group sizes is used

As clearly shown in table 6 with the mean subsets the implementation of migrant fisher folk education is significantly more inhibited in Bayelsa and Rivers States than in Akwa Ibom. No significant differences exist between Bayelsa and Rivers in the challenges to the implementation of migrant fisher-folk education.

Summary of Major Findings

1. Welfare services such as free transport services, free medical services, overtime allowances, and loans are not provided for teachers of migrant fisherfolk schools. This is clearly shown by the aggregate mean ranging from

1.03 to 1.25. (not at all) for the states.

- The study has found that inadequate funds, inadequate infrastructures, lack of political willpower on the part of government, lack of parental support, lack of interest in schooling by children, poor motivation of staff and lack of such basic amenities as water, electricity and accommodation, harsh and difficult terrain and poor monitoring and evaluation of programmes pose serious challenges to the implementation of migrant fisherfolk education in the Niger Delta region.
- Welfare services are significantly more provided in Bayelsa and Rivers than Akwa Ibom.
- The implementation of migrant fisherfolk education is significantly more inhibited in Bayelsa and Rivers States than in Akwa Ibom.

Discussion of Findings

The evidences from this research survey is that welfare services such as free transport services, free medical services, overtime allowances, loans etc are not provided for teachers of migrant fisherfolk schools. This is clearly shown by the aggregate mean ranging from 1.03 to 1.25 (not at all) for the states. In relative terms, the study found out that welfare services are significantly, more provided in Bayelsa and Rivers than Akwa Ibom. This result is supported by Sa'adu and Aminu (2019) ^[13], McGahey (2019) and Ibanga (2016) ^[8], when they lamented the complete lack of motivational packages for teachers at all levels. This has always explained the reason why it is difficult to retrain teachers and why many get into teaching as a last resort and would quit at the least opportunity. This result is not surprising, considering the fact that the inter-ministerial agencies responsible for providing or funding the provision of these services have not been effective as seen in this study.

There are several issues that pose serious challenges to the implementation of migrant fisher folk education in the Niger Delta region. These are inadequate funds, inadequate infrastructures, lack of political will power on the part of government, lack of parental support and lack of interest in schooling by children. Others include poor motivation of staff and lack of such basic amenities as water, electricity and accommodation, harsh and difficult terrain and poor monitoring and evaluation of the programmes. It was further revealed that the implementation of migrant fisher folk education is significantly more inhibited in Bayelsa and Rivers States than in Akwa Ibom.

This finding is supported by the result of studies by several authors. These include Buba (2020) ^[5] who while assessing the challenges to the development of nomadic education identified such challenges as availability of teachers, the place of nomadic Education in UBE, statistical problem, the training of teachers, supervision and the settlement of migrants as major challenges. Similarly, Abdulrahman (2016) ^[2] had observed that the very location of migrant fisher-folk's settlements constitutes great impediment to

program implementation Also, Nwile (2022) ^[12] and Akhuemonkhan, Raimi and Dada (2014) ^[3] had also identified these as challenges in the implementation of nomadic education which also include migrant education. In his own analysis, Nwile (2020) ^[11], in his comprehensive report on nomadic education programme noted that inadequate funding and limited institutional capacity were serious challenges and impediment to effective delivery of education to the migrant fisherfolks and the nomads. These evidences as supported here are not surprising, considering the fact that earlier finding in this study has shown generally poor performance. Even the observed lack of interest in schooling by school children could be due to the poor learning condition in these schools as earlier observed.

Conclusion

Migrant fisher folk education has not gotten sufficient support from all stakeholders to ensure its full and effective implementation in Nigeria's South South Zone. As a result, the current state of implementation cannot ensure that the program's fundamental objectives are fully realized in the migrant fisher folk schools. Therefore, migrant fisher folk schools should be regularly exposed to training programmes and sufficiently motivated through special welfare packages and incentive allowances. This is the only way adequate teachers can be retained in migrant fisher-folk schools.

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