Community Radio and Nomadic Education in Northern Nigeria: The Jigawa State Experience

Christian C. Ngwu
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu
Nigeria

Okwudiri Ekwe
School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Nigeria
Nsukka

Okechukwu Chukwuma
School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Nigeria
Nsukka

Abstract
Nomads constitute about 6 percent of the African population and are found in at least 20 different countries across the continent (Muhammed and Abbo, 2010:3). In Nigeria, the nomads who constitute about 7.6 percent (9.8 million) of the country’s population were, before the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in 1989, excluded from all formal educational schemes. The establishment of this commission saw the introduction of a special education system to get the hard-to-reach educated. To decentralize the system, so many states, including Jigawa State established the state’s version of NCNE. In 2008, Jigawa State established the Jigawa State Agency for Nomadic Education. To keep to its mandate of getting all nomads in the state educated, the agency adopted two major strategies – Mobile School System and Open Distance Learning. The later strategy is driven by the various community radio stations scattered in all the zones in the state. Three years down the line, how far has the agency gone in educating the nomads? This paper examines the role the community radio stations have played in educating the nomads through Open Radio Distance Learning using the descriptive research method. Findings reveal that students’ enrolment into the system has increased from less than 15 percent in 2008 to over 65 percent in 2011. Literacy level has equally increased by over 60 percent. Currently, the agency boasts of over 518 instructors and over 26,642 students.

Key words: Nomadic Education, Open Radio Distance Learning, Community Radio, Jigawa State
Introduction
When the Whiteman came into Africa for the purposes of evangelism and colonialization, they felt that there was a need to introduce formal basic education which would assist them to serve their administrative and other logistic needs. However, that system of education was only meant for those that served the economic and administrative needs of the so-called colonial masters. So many people were excluded from that scheme, not just in Nigeria, but in other African countries. Among those who were excluded were the nomads. They were excluded from that scheme because the colonialists felt that it was very tasking and not cost effective to educate them, and most importantly, because those nomads never served any of their economic and administrative needs.

That situation remained in most parts of Africa until the early 80s and 90s. In fact, in 1989 the military government of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida in Nigeria felt that the nomadic population was too large to be left out of Nigeria’s educational system. He integrated them into the Nigerian socio-political system, given the many instances of crisis which usually erupted between the nomads and their various host communities in the Southern part of Nigeria. Through Decree 41 of 1989, the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) was established as one of the agencies of the Nigerian educational system, to operate with its headquarters in Kaduna, the home capital of northern Nigeria (Muhammed and Abbo, 2010:3), where we have the majority of the nomads. The nomadic education programme was aimed at providing and widening access to quality basic education for nomads in Nigeria, boosting literacy and equipping them with skills and competence to enhance their wellbeing and participate in the nation building process.

In order to deliver on its mandate, the Commission devised a series of innovative approaches and strategies. These strategies included the On-Site Schools, the Shift System, Schools with Alternation Intakes, Mobile Schools, Radio Distance Learning, and Islamiya (Islamic) Schools. The Mobile School and Radio Distance Learning approaches are active in most of the northern states of Kano, Nassarawa, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Benue and Taraba.

Jigawa State government in 2008, under Law No. 12 of the State House of Assembly established the Jigawa State Agency for Nomadic Education (JSANE) - the state’s version of NCNE. The
agency, which is run by an Executive Secretary with full autonomy from the State’s Ministry of Education, has as its mandate to:

Ensure equity in the delivery of basic educational programmes, improve the social-economic activities of the entire nomads in the state and to increase access for the nomads to contribute their quota in the state’s scheme of things (Ngwu, 2011:11).

To deliver on its mandate, the agency, like the case in most northern states, adopted two main strategies - the Mobile School System and the Radio Distance Learning approaches. While the Mobile School System connotes a system where collapsible classrooms are used, the Radio Distance Learning Approach is a system that makes use of the radio to educate the nomads wherever they are in a language and dialect that they understand using a radio programme known as ‘Don Makiyaye a Ruga’ (for the nomads in their homesteads). These two approaches shall be the areas of concern of this analysis with special attention given to the Radio Distance Learning Approach. This is because we are interested in finding out the effectiveness of the Radio Distance Learning made possible by community radio stations in the state thirty months (2008-2011) after the agency was established.

Problem Statement
Some years after the Radio Distance Learning approach was introduced by the Jigawa State Agency for Nomadic Education, how far has it gone in educating these nomads through community radio in line with its set objectives, i.e., to what extent has the system been successful and effective so far, considering the fact that nomads constituted about 7.6 percent of the Nigerian population, and given the billions of naira which have been pumped into this scheme by the Jigawa State government?

Objectives of this Paper
(1) This paper investigates the role community radio stations in Jigawa State have played in the education of nomadic Fulanis through the Radio Distance Learning (RDL) Approach.
The paper also examines the prospects and challenges of community radio as it relates to the education of the nomads. Having made the above clarifications and study objectives established, we will now proceed to look at some key words in this paper by obeying the advice of Cicero (106 BC). According to him, the first step in handling a subject is to define it, so that everybody will understand what the subject matter is all about (Udeze, 2008:2).

In line with the above, we ask ourselves the following questions:
- what is development?
- what is community broadcasting (community radio)?
- what is nomadic education?
- what role can community radio play in nomadic education, and what are the strengths and possible hindrances to playing this role?

The Concept of Community Development
Before we look at the term community development, let’s first of all see what development is in a broad sense.

Development according to Inayatullah (1967), as cited by Asadu (2009:6), is “the ability of man to have greater control over his environment and increased realization of its human values, its political destiny and self-discipline.” Here, he emphasizes human development indices as better management and control of the environment, including the need for good political system of government which is acceptable to all. Uche (1999:14) sees development as:

a continuous process of harnessing all the available human and material resources of a society in a way that is compatible with the cultural expressions of the people, with the final goal of achieving a quality of living standard that is based on satisfaction, Justice, equality, liberty, happiness, freedom and progress.

Let us now put this definition to an end by defining community development. According to Ngwu (2011:12), community development:
is something fairly elastic which accommodates not just advancement in the rural areas in terms of technology, physical progress and economic achievement, but a change in the rural community towards the attainment of new ideas and the people’s control over their own affairs.
The Concept of Community Broadcasting

Traditionally, broadcasting has to do with the transmission of messages to a large audience through the air waves. According to Owuamalam (2007:1) broadcasting deals with the transmission of messages from a station to a heterogeneous audience scattered across a reasonable sphere of coverage.

Having seen what broadcasting is what then is community broadcasting? The term community broadcasting is defined variously, depending on one’s location, scope and context. Communities are complex entities, and so, what constitutes a community in community broadcasting is often contentious, hotly debated and will vary from country to country. In sociology, a community is seen as a group of interacting people living in a common location. Therefore, community broadcasting (CB) is often built around variables of access and participation and so the term community may be thought of as often referring to geographical settlements based around the possible reach of the community radio or television’s signals (Ekwe and Umeh, 2009:14). Therefore, community broadcasting is a system of broadcast media ownership and operation that is owned and operated by members of a given community where such a station(s) is sited. Production and dissemination here is done by the people and received by the same people on their own terms (Asadu, 2009:93). Ngwu (2011:6) sees it as synonymous with Abraham Lincoln’s definition of democracy, which implies “broadcasting of the people, by the people and for the people.”

According to the Nigerian National Broadcasting code, community broadcasting is recognized by the African Broadcast Charter as the third tier of broadcasting, which is a key agent of democratization for social, cultural and economic development. It is a non-profit, grassroots, public broadcast service medium through which community members are able to contribute and foster civil responsibility and integration (NBC, 2006:72).

However, ownership and operation of community broadcasting varies from one country to another or from one state to another. In the United States of America, community broadcast stations are established and managed by the community through communal efforts. That does not however mean that the government does not support them from time to time. 85 percent of community broadcast stations’ staff in US
are volunteers. The same is the case with Thailand which has about 3,000 community stations (Ngwu, 2011:12).

However, our main focus in this study is the use of community radio in educating the nomads in Nigeria. According to Asadu (2009:93) the African Charter on Broadcasting (2001), defines community radio as a type of broadcasting which pursues a social development agenda, and which is non-profit oriented.

In Nigeria, the well-known community radio stations are in Jigawa State. They, however, operate as FM booster stations. Though these stations might not be seen as true community radios because of their license type, we can still agree that they met all the qualities of a community radio. However, that cannot be said to be a true community broadcasting outfit since Nigeria has no official community broadcasting policy. This is apart from the mere fact that President Goodluck Jonathan recently gave NBC the right to grant community broadcasting licenses directly without the old and rigorous system of going through the presidency.

In spite of this argument, these stations are treated in this study as community radios because they met all the criteria of a community radio, except the issue of license. These criteria include:

- It is a non-profit making venture
- Programming is participatory and based on the community needs and interest.
- Community broadcast stations use low power transmitters and other small broadcast equipment. This is because of the small size of the coverage area.
- Indigenous languages and dialects of the host communities are usually used. This is to say that the people’s languages are used.
- Programme content is usually dominated by materials that are aimed at addressing the cultural, economic and social needs of the host community. This is because they are responsible for the origination and production of almost 91 per cent of all the broadcast programmes.
- Staffing in the community broadcast station is usually very small and dominated by ad hoc staff and volunteers or corps members.
Advertisements in community radio are usually about a local shop or product, child naming ceremonies, marriage announcements, religious announcements, messages from traditional rulers, among others (Ekwe and Umeh, 2011:14).

We must note that the stations in Jigawa State, which are scattered in eight villages of Birnin Kudu, Maigatari, Hadeja, Dutse, Kaugama, Marawa, Gwaram, and Kazaure, have all the above mentioned characteristics. However, only five out of these stations are functional at the time of this write-up.

The Concept of Nomads and Nomadic Education
According to Akinpelu (1993), the contemporary definition of nomadism refers to any type of existence characterized by the absence of a fixed domicile. He went further to identify three categories of nomadic groups as:

1. Migrant Farmers/ Hunters/Food Gatherers
2. Itinerant Fishermen and
3. Pastoralists (herdsmen)

In Nigeria, the following are the known nomadic groups:

- a. The Fulanis (with a population of 6.3 million)
- b. The Shuwas (with a population of 1.2 million)
- c. The Budamas (with a population of 35,001)
- d. The kwayams (with a population of 21,00)
- e. The Fishermen (with a population of 2.8 million)
- f. The Badawis (with a population yet to be established)
- g. Migrant Farmers (with a population of about 3 million)

The fishermen are concentrated in Rivers, Ondo, Edo, Delta, Cross River, and Akwa-Ibom states. In Jigawa State, the nomads constitute about 14.7 percent of the state’s population of 4.3 million. They also constitute more than 6.3 per cent of Africa’s population and are spread across 20 countries (Ekwe and Umeh 2011:14).

Nigeria’s National Policy on Education (NPE) defines nomadic education as the provision of basic education to the children of the disadvantaged and marginalized nomadic population in the country. However, recent development in Nigeria shows that it is no longer education for the children of the nomads, but for the entire nomads.

The goals of nomadic education programme (NPE) are to:
Provide nomads with relevant and fundamental basic education and improve their survival skills by providing them with knowledge and skills that will enable them raise their productivity and income as well as empower them to participate effectively in the socio-economic and political affairs in the country (Ezeomah, 1998:16).

The National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) has the mandate to:

- Formulate policies and guidelines in all matters relating to nomadic education in Nigeria.
- Provide funds for research and personnel development for the improvement of nomadic education.
- Develop programmes on nomadic education and provide equipment and instructional materials (Muhammed and Abbo, 2010:3).

The Jigawa State’s version of NCNE established in 2008 has almost the same mandate which is to educate the nomads and impact better skills on their livestock business.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on *The Five Way Rural Communication Model of Development*. The Five Way Rural Communication Model advanced by Ekwe et al. (2011:13) holds that development can get to the rural areas if stakeholders pass through the rural structures of the community in question. The stakeholders herein comprise the government, rural media and non-governmental organizations while the rural structures consist of the traditional institutions, opinion leaders, community associations and religious leaders. However, the rural structures understand the interfering variables (language, belief system, customs, religions, etc.) which ordinarily will serve as barriers in the flow of development programmes from the stakeholders to the rural community. The presence of the rural structure will eliminate these barriers, thereby serving as open doors for the inflow of developmental programmes.

The model is quite relevant to this discourse because it recognizes maximum interaction between the stakeholders and the rural structures. This interaction process allows every element or group to
communicate effectively at all times. This is schematically represented in the diagram below:

![Diagram of the Five Way Rural Communication Model](image)

*Fig 1.1: The Five Way Rural Communication Model*
*Source (Ekwe, Onyebuchi, Umukoro, Chukwuma, Odoemelam, Elijah, & Njoku, 2011).*

From this model, it can be understood that any of the stakeholders (government, community media and non-governmental organizations) can design a development programme for the rural people, but can only reach them through the rural structures that can help break the barriers of language, religion and belief system.

In view of the above scenario, the Jigawa State government designed the nomadic education programme through an agency but the agency uses community radio stations in the state to get to the rural
people. The agency equally employs the services of the rural structures to get to the hard-to-reach nomads who are very conservative. The nomads equally have a way of reaching the stakeholders through the rural structures. Therefore, an effective mechanism for feedback is the hallmark of this model.

Research Methodology
The researchers used the descriptive research method to analyse the manifest data in this study. Descriptive research is the type of inquiry that deals with the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions and ongoing process, current practices and attitudes. The main aim of descriptive research is not merely to describe existing state of affairs, but, more importantly, to discover reliance and meaning. It outlines the variables involved in a particular problem and suggests ways of dealing with them in order to achieve desired objectives. Descriptive research report things the way they are. It gives the picture of a situation or a population and specifies the nature of a given phenomenon (Nwodu, 2006:173). We, therefore, considered this research method the most appropriate for this study.

As stated earlier, the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) proposed several approaches to deliver education to the door steps of the hard-to-reach nomads. However, we analysed only two of these approaches which are the Mobile School System and Radio Distance Learning programme.

The Mobile School System
The mobile schools system uses foldable classrooms that can be assembled or dissembled within 30 minutes and carried conveniently by park animals (motor caravans are now replacing pack animals to move the classrooms). Mobile school system is a learning system where temporal schools are built and can be moved to any location as the need arises. This type of formation enables the nomadic education facilitators to take education to the nomads irrespective of where they are and where they intend to go. The nomads are always on the move to find greener pastures for their cattle, so they do not have permanent homes and as such they are alienated from the conventional school system. The mobile school was designed to follow the nomads and teach them wherever they are instead of the conventional way of
students going to learn wherever schools are. So, as the nomads move, the schools move with them (VerEecke, 1989:13).

A typical mobile unit classroom consists of three classrooms, each with spaces to serve 20 to 30 students. Some of the classrooms are equipped with audio-visual teaching aids.

The current mobile school system in the strictest sense remains sparingly used, primarily due to the enormity of problems associated with this model. Some mobile schools, however, are in operation in Jigawa, Benue, Taraba, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Borno, Yobe and other northern Nigerian states. By the beginning of the 1995/1996 school session, there were 890 nomadic schools in 296 local government areas of 25 states of Nigeria, catering for the educational needs of the children of pastoral nomads alone. Of these, 606 schools are owned and controlled by the states, 130 by the local governments, and 152 by local communities. Together, they serve 88,871 pupils of the estimated population of the 3.1 million nomadic school age children. (Ajidagba, et al. 2009).

Borrowing a leaf from the federal government’s approach, the Jigawa State government established the Jigawa State Agency for Nomadic Education. This agency, with the sole mandate of bringing education to the nomads wherever they are or might want to be, adopted two approaches which were tailored along the federal government approaches, ie: the Mobile school system and radio distance learning programme.

By the end of 2009, the agency had built 170 mobile schools with an enrollment figure of 21,642 pupils (15,456 males and 11, 186 females). The schools had a total of 518 teachers (502 male and 16 females). These classrooms are equipped with 178 easel and boards, 350 copies of class registers, 567 double sitter mats, 35 tarpaulin shades (for students’ over flow), 1600 copies of textbooks and unknown number of exercise books (Jigawa State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, May 2007-May 2009:24). These figures doubled in February 2011. These schools are spread across the five emirate councils that make up the state. They are: Dutse, Gumel, Hadejia, Kazaure, and Ringim. The classrooms are designed in such a way that they can be collapsed and erected within 30 minutes. Instead of wood chairs, the classrooms have mats which can be folded easily.

To make this project effective, the governor of the state, Alhaji Sule Lamido employed instructors (teachers) and provided them with
50 monitoring motorcycles to aid their movements through the remotest terrains of the nomads. These instructors who are mostly Fulanis use their local dialects to convince the nomads to enroll in the schools and equally use their local dialects in teaching them.

Convincing these conservative nomads took the state a lot of time and resources. In the awareness creation campaign in 2008, the State government through the Ministry of Education used the community radio stations to reach the nomads. Programmes like *yara manyan gobi*, (Children are leaders of tomorrow), *fillin manter da yara* (women and Children), *yara a ji makaranta* (children go to school), *fillin makiyaya da manuma* (for pastoralists and famers), etc. broadcast in FM Andasa, Dutse, Maigatari, Birinin Kudu, and others were used to convince the nomads to enrol their wards. The enrolment rate moved from less than 1.3 percent in 2008 to more than 60 percent in 2010 (New World FM Dutse, 2011).

**Radio Distance Learning Approach: The Place of Community Radio**

Mobile Learning refers to the use of any mobile or wireless device for learning on the move. Aderioye (2007:24) noted that it is any service or facility that supplies a learner with general electronic information and educational content that aids his/her acquisition of knowledge, regardless of location and time. Kinshuk (2003:45) opined that learning is mobile in terms of space, in different areas of life and with respect to time. This means that mobile learning systems should be capable of delivering educational content to learners anytime and anywhere it is required. This is ‘learning on the move’.

The distance learning scheme or interactive radio instruction (IRI) which aims at making basic education more accessible to nomadic children and adults was the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa, and its pilot phase was considered very successful. In 1996, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Kaduna allocated a 30-minute slot of air time to the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) through which it transmitted a magazine programme entitled *Don Makiyaya a Ruga* (for the nomads in their homestead). The post-broadcast survey conducted by the commission revealed that the project was 75 percent successful, not minding the initial hitches. It further showed that 60 percent of the learners were
inspired to embark on social action activities. Meanwhile, the commission has completed the recording of 26 episodes of the distance learning programme for the Shuwa Arabs, Fulanis and Kanuri pastoralists found mainly in Borno State and around the Lake Chad Basin in the northern part of Nigeria. A series of capacity building workshops on the IRI methodology are conducted on a regular basis for all categories of personnel, including the teachers.

The commission also produced and transmitted radio programmes on integrated health issues in four languages, namely, *Fulfulde – Ko Larani Njamu Meden*, Shuwa-Arabic *Al-Hiyal Anta*, Hausa-Ingantacciyar Rayuwa and *Pidgin English* called *Beta Living*’ from 2006-2009. Transmission of the programme in each of the four languages is made up of twenty six (26) episodes. The Fulfulde and Hausa language episodes were broadcast on FRCN Kaduna; Shuwa-Arab language by Yobe Broadcasting Corporation, Damaturu and Pidgin English by FRCN Enugu. Yobe Broadcasting Corporation signals were received by some Fulanis in some part of Jigawa State. As at June, 2010 there were 215 adult literacy centres nation-wide out of which 71 were male (66.9 %) while 144 were females centres (33.1%). These centres had a cumulative enrolment of 8,270 learners comprising 3,380 males (40.8 %) and 4,890 females (59.2%). Out of those enrolled, 4,785 graduated at basic literacy level representing 57.9 % and comprising 2,107 males (44.0 %) and 2,678 females (56.0%) respectively.

In Jigawa State, the story is not different as the state’s Nomadic Agency uses the various community radio stations scattered in the state to ensure distance learning. Here the stations in Andasa, Dutse, Maigatari, Birin Kudu, Hadeja, etc are used to deliver programmes aimed at educating the nomads. There are four programmes *Yara manyan gobi* (children are the leaders of tomorrow) *fillingmanter da yara* (learning field for women and children), *yara aji makaranta* (children go to school), and *fillin makiyaya da manuma* (for pastoralists and farmers), currently running in Radio Jigawa, Andaza Birin Kudu and Dutse. Some of the themes of the programme include:

- The importance of adult education
- School enrolment into the mobile schools
- Date of mobile school resumption
- Locations of mobile schools
- Girl child education
Christian Ngwu, Okwudiri Ekwe, & Okechukwu Chukwuma

- Community development
- Environmental education (their grazing rights and to improve the land they own)
- New economic and agricultural practices
- Conflict and conflict resolution
- Health related issues (hygiene)
- Civic education

The agency in 2008 after its establishment realized the importance of radio programmes as a complement to the mobile school system for the effective education of the nomads. This is because, the agency realized that nomads are captives of mobile radio as they are seen with radio sets hung over their shoulders as they attend to their flocks. Since the mobile school system cannot reach everyone because of their nomadic nature, radio distance learning becomes an alternative. The agency equally discovered that it could use community radios to convince the nomads to send their wards to schools. It is also used to announce resumption dates and locations of the mobile schools.

In a bid to achieve the set goals, the agency adopted the following objectives in line with that of NCNE which include advocacy, mobilization and sensitization of stakeholders. Others are the establishment of adult literacy centres in nomadic communities, sustainability, adaptation and development of integrated literacy programmes and radio- adult component. The community radios are used currently to achieve these objectives, and the survey conducted by the agency in 2010 indicated that the listening groups have increased by more than 60 percent (Ngwu, 2011:11).

One of the features of the adult component of the radio distance learning approach for the nomads is the discussion of contents by learners through a participatory approach. It is cross-curricula and multi-dimensional. The radio programme’s contents focus on functional literacy, numeracy, commerce and life skills. They are effectively delivered through the radio to the nomads through personal and radio listening groups. The facilitators or instructors guide the nomads to form a listening group to aid understanding of radio programme contents. The agency now has over 518 instructors and teachers attending to over 26,642 students (Jigawa State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, May 2007-May 2009:24).
The Five Way Rural Communication Model will help us to understand how information flows through the various elements. As seen above, the agency goes through the community radios to put its programmes across, the community radios pass this information to the nomads. But the programmes might not have any effect if the community leaders, religious leaders and opinion leaders (rural structures) do not help the nomads to understand clearly what the messages are all about. The obstruction put up against the programmes in the form of belief systems, religion, culture, etc. can only be overcome by these rural structures. This is what happens in the mobile school approach.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, one can say that the nomadic education policy is a right step in the right direction. The effectiveness of the programme in Jigawa State and other states in the northern part of Nigeria has shown that the nomads now have basic education like their non pastoral counterparts in Nigeria.

In Jigawa State, the level of achievements recorded in this exercise is impressive. From just 15 percent of students’ enrolment in 2008 to over 65 percent presently is something wonderful which should be praised. From less than 100 facilitators to over 500 in 2010 should be commended. Indeed, the war against illiteracy in the nomadic community is gaining success. (Jigawa State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, May 2007-May 2009:26).

However, these are not without some challenges. Despite the modest impact made so far in the two approaches, nomads’ literacy level is still low in the country. In the course of implementing the programmes, the agency was faced with daunting challenges and constraints such as under funding and the conservative nature of these nomads.

Fund is the major challenge of nomadic education implementation in the country and the state in particular. The agency lacks enough funds to execute all its programmes as contained in the 2011 budget. The funds released were not enough. As a result of this the agency is under-staffed and monitoring of the mobile schools and radio programmes has suffered. Members of staff of the agency still use their personal vehicles to run the agency’s duties.
Another challenge is the conservative nature of these nomads. Some of the nomads believe that the programme is a calculated attempt by the government to corrupt their minds towards their Allah-given religion (Islam). Some of them claimed that they cannot leave their cattle unattended to. Besides, according to them, it is against their belief (Jigawa State Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, May 2007-May 2009 Report: 31).

References
of Mass Communication Enugu State University of Science and Technology.


