

CONFLICTS BETWEEN CROP-FARMERS AND HERDSMEN ON FUNDING OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GUMA AND LOGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the effect of conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State. One research question guided the study while one hypothesis was formulated. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 1,723 teachers from 220 schools (1,390 teachers from 203 primary schools and 333 teachers from 17 secondary schools) in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State respectively. A total of 172 teachers (139 primary school teachers and 33 secondary schools teachers) from 22 schools (20 primary schools and 2 secondary schools) constituted the sample of the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample size from the two Local Government Areas of Benue State. A four point structured 5-item rating scale questionnaire titled Conflicts between Crop-Farmers and Herdsmen and Funding of Schools Questionnaire (CCFHFSQ) was constructed by the researchers and used in collecting data for the study. The data collected were analysed using mean and by standard deviation to answer the research questions while chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen significantly affect funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State to a high extent as investors often stay off the area. Thus, thwart the development of education. It was recommended among other things that government should beef up security in the country to reduce the level of insecurity and ensure safety of lives and properties to encourage internal and international investors who will contribute their quarter in funding education in Nigeria.

Key Words: Conflicts, Crop-Farmers, Herdsmen, and Funding

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Introduction

Nigeria, just like other countries of the globe, consider safety of lives and properties of her citizenry most important than any other human need. This is simply because security is one of the necessary conditions for the growth and development of any nation. This is also very important for the survival of the Nigerian people and nation at large. As a result, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as in section 14(1) (b) states that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. This therefore, means that the government at all levels owe her citizens the duty to protect lives and properties. This is to say that, a secured environment provides a condition of feeling safe from harm, danger or peril and the defence, protection and preservation of core values as well as the absence of threat of any kind (Tor-Anyiin, 2013).

In recent times however, this very important aspect of protection of lives and properties of the government, as enshrined in the constitution of most countries seem to be under a serious threat not only in Africa countries, but other countries of the globe due to incessant conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen. Generally, conflict is the act of coming into collision, clash or being in opposition with one another. It is also the tension that is experienced when a group of people feel that their needs or desires are likely to be denied or where their language and ethnic values set in (Oluwole&Pinga, 2017). Onsarigo (2007) defines conflict as a condition when one party feels that the other party has frustrated or is about to frustrate certain concerns of that one party. It therefore, implies that conflicts exist whenever an action by one person or a group of persons prevents, obstructs and interferes with the desires of a particular individual or a group of people.

In Nigeria today, there are lots of conflicts that seem to have the potentials of affecting the intended effective achievement of the Nigeria basic needs such as protection of human lives and properties as well as provision of education for all. Some of the conflicts or security challenging issues that may weigh down the attainment of these basic human needs in a nation may be crop-farmers and herdsmen conflicts, religious crises, youth militancy, communal violence, political assassinations, kidnapping and human trafficking among others (Okosun, 2013). This study focuses on crop-farmers and herdsmen conflicts, which are mainly attributable to resource control and divergent value systems in the country.

In Nigeria and Benue State in particular, conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen arise from disagreements over the use of land around farmland and/or grazing areas, an stock routes and access to water points for both animals and households. The movement of herdsmen from the far northern states of the country such as Kano, Katsina, Borno, Jigawa, Maiduguri, Bauchi and many others to the Benue valley is usually caused by the increasing demand for fresh grazing grounds especially during dry season periods; When the herdsmen move with their herds southwards because of the availability of pasture. In most cases, the herdsmen encountered problems with the local people, because farmers’ crops are usually destroyed by their cattle (Tyokyaa&Pinga, 2018). The authors note that trouble sparked off when the Fulani herdsmen in search of grazing land destroyed people’s crops like cassava, maize, yams and groundnut. These crops were the means of sustenance for the indigenes of the area. The indigene would be not happy with this development, they at times retaliate by killing the herdsmen cattle in their numbers. The herdsmen felt that their source of livelihood too is tampered with and unleashed mayhem on the indigene who were/are the original owners of the land. The conflicts that

erupted in Guma and Logo Local Governments Areas of Benue State on the 1st of January, 2018 later spread to other parts of the state (Tyokyaa&Pinga, 2018).

A lot of damages were done to human lives and properties including educational facilities. As a result, people fled from their homes, economic and school activities came to a halt in the rural areas (Ibrahim, 2015). The researchers also observe that there was mass killing, raping of women, burning of houses, displacement of people, business premises, closure of schools, burning of vehicles and other assets and outright looting and cheating. Aside from killing and destruction of properties, their activities could also affect funding and management of schools as they often settle in these schools and destroy their facilities.

Conflicts between crop-farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State have negatively influenced the funding of schools as the frequent destruction of infrastructural facilities in schools result to recurrent expenditure for the schools on the valuable infrastructures destroyed. Awortu (2015) observes that these unending conflicts between crop farmers and herdsmen have drastically reduced government performance in the area of infrastructural development, employment generation and improved workers welfare. This is true as the concentration and current budgetary allocation to security and increased security votes of governments at all levels have affected the allocation to sectors of the economy. The huge capital that should have been channelled to other issues in the education, health, agriculture and other sectors to enhance development are being used to control the conflicts that erupt between crop farmers and herdsmen. Aro (2011) points out that security issues have drastically reduced government developmental projects to educational sector, investment and growth in a number of schools in the affected places.

The cumulative effects of crop farmers and herdsmen conflicts and other security challenges have led to a situation in which expenditure on education has increasingly dwindled over the years. This is occasioned by the pressing need to allocate more funds to security to the detriment of other sectors of the economy, education inclusive. Federal Government's allocation of funds to education in recent years attests to this fact. In 1999, allocation to education sector was 11.2%, in 2000 was 8.3%, in 2001 was 7.0%, in 2002 was 5.1%, in 2003 was 11.8%, in 2004 was 7.8%, in 2005 was 8.3%, in 2006 was 8.7, in 2007 was 6.1%, in 2008 was 13.0%, in 2009 was 7.2% and in 2010 was 6.4% ((Vanguard, 24th July, 2013).

Aside dwindling government allocation to the educational sector, activities of herdsmen in this area may have discourage many investors from investing in the development of schools for fear of their money being wasted if attacks are repeated. In the same vein, Observation by Beatrice (2015) reveals that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have discouraged Foreign Direct Investment to Education in Nigeria. Investors all over the world are afraid of coming to put their money in Nigeria schools especially in Benue State for fear of being destroyed by the persisted conflicts between crop-farmers and the herdsmen. Even the facilities being donated by Donor Agencies were not safe as many of them were destroyed during the crises The activities of kidnapping by Boko-Haram and militancy in the far north and southern parts of the country have also contributed to scaring investors from investing in the country especially in the area of education. Omankhanlen and Babajide (2012) observe that because of the security situation in Nigeria caused by Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herdsmen and Niger Delta militants different countries on a daily basis warn their citizens to stay off Nigeria. This is a very bad signal to the growth and development of the

Nigerian economy, education inclusive. Nigeria with its vision 20:20:20 is projected to be world economic power by 2020 with having a mass of her citizens educated, but with the kind of conflicts in the area, the educational future of Nigeria is bleak.

In most quarters, these conflicts have also threaten the security and safety of people who have come from within such as Parents Teachers Associations, Old Students' Associations, local investors to assist in the funding and development of education in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas. Thereby forcing them to flee for their dear lives and abandon the project of providing quality and accessible education for people in these communities. From the forgoing, one would understand that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have not only affected funding of schools, but the entire educational system in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas as well as other parts of Benue State and Nigeria at large. It is in view of this that the researchers deemed it necessary to examine the extent to which conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen affect funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

There has been public outcry and expression of worry over the menace of conflicts that have risen between crop-farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State. These conflicts seem to undermine the security of the state and Nigeria at large as well as effective funding and management of primary and secondary schools. The activities of these groups (crop-farmers and herdsmen) have not only led to the dislodging of the affected communities but seem to have diverted government attention from allocating reasonable funds for the provision and management of primary and secondary schools in the area of study.

Worst of all, this seems to have discourage foreign investors and Donna Agencies from funding educational activities in the area of study. As countries warn their citizens from carrying out business activities in Nigeria for the fear of been kidnapped and killed. The problem of the study put in question form is: What is the impact of conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impacts of conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Assess the extent to which conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen affect funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Question

The study was guided by the following research question:

1. To what extent do conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen affect funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:
H₀₁ Conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have no significant effect on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 1,723 teachers from 220 public primary and secondary schools (1,390 teachers from 203 primary schools and 333 teachers from 17 secondary schools) in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State (Benue State Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, 2017). A sample of 172 (10%) teachers (139 primary school teachers and 33 secondary schools teachers) from 22 (10%) schools (20 primary schools and 2 secondary schools) was selected using multi-stage sampling technique (purposive sampling technique to pick schools within the most affected areas of the two Local Government Areas and simple random sampling techniques to select teachers in the sampled schools). This sample is considered adequate since it is in line with Achor and Ejigbo's (2006) assertion that for a larger population, a sample of 10% of the population is adequate.

A self-structured questionnaire titled "Conflicts between Crop-Framers and Herdsmen and Funding Questionnaire (CCFHFQ)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into Sections A and B. Section A contained information on the personal data of the respondents, while Section B contained information that bordered on the impact of conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen on funding of primary and secondary schools. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, one each from Educational Management, conflict resolution unit and Measurement and Evaluation, all from Benue State University, Makurdi.

The responses of teachers were collated and analyzed for results. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question. The decision was based on the real limit of numbers. Hence a mean response score of 3.50-4.00 was considered Very High Extent (VHE), 2.50-3.49 High Extent (HE), 1.50-2.49 Low Extent (LE), while 0.50-1.49 was considered as Very Low Extent (VLE). The chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the hypotheses at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The results are analysed and interpreted in line with the research question and hypothesis as follows:

Research Question: To what extent do conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen affect funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Respondents on the Extent to which conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen affect funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State

Item No	Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Government allocation of funds to education has declined in my area because of the growing need for security votesto put the situation under control.	43	75	33	21	2.81	0.95	High Extent
2	Parent Teacher Associations have stopped funding schools in my area because the conflicts between farmers and pastoralists have made people to desert the area.	50	58	39	25	2.77	1.03	High Extent
3	Donna agencies are scared of funding schools in my area because of the fear that, the persistent nature of these conflicts have destroyed all that was provided in the schools.	48	71	21	32	2.78	1.05	High Extent
4	Old students Associations have stopped funding schools in my area because, the incessant nature of the conflicts have pushed them away.	37	60	52	23	2.65	0.97	High Extent
5	There are no people in my community to rent the school facilities to enable the school to generate funds to complement government efforts.	44	58	41	29	2.68	1.04	High Extent
Cluster mean/Standard Deviation						2.74	1.01	High Extent

Table 1 show that the mean ratings of items 1-5 are 2.81, 2.77, 2.78, 2.65 and 2.68 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.95, 1.03, 1.05, 0.97 and 1.04. The standard deviations are small showing that the respondents' responses are closely clustered around the mean and as such are homogeneous. The table also shows that the respondents had a cluster mean of 2.74 and standard deviation of 1.01. This is above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that non-payment of teachers' salaries is perceived to have high impact on examination malpractice in public secondary schools in Benue State.

Hypothesis: Conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have no significant effect on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State.

Table 2: Chi-square test of the effect of conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Log Local Government Areas of Benue State

Opinions	Observed frequency	Expected Frequency	If	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	P-value	Decision
VLE	26	43.0						
LE	38	43.0	3	.05	17.58	7.82	.001	Significant
HE	64	43.0						Reject
VHE	44	43.0						H ₀
Total	172							

Table 2 shows that χ^2 cal. = 17.580^a > 7.815; P<.05 with 3 degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have no significant effect on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State was rejected. This means that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have significant effect on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have significant effect on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State. This is in line with Awortu (2015) who reported that the unending conflicts between crop farmers and herdsmen have drastically reduced government performance in the area of infrastructural development, employment generation and improved workers welfare. This is true as the concentration and current budgetary allocation to security and increased security votes of governments at all levels have affected the allocation to sectors of the economy. This is also in consonance to Beatrice (2015) who discovered that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have discouraged Foreign Direct Investment to Education in Nigeria. The researchers discovered during the field work that even parents who had return to their homes have little or nothing to take care of themselves, talk more of paying their children school fees and supporting educational development in their areas. It was also noticed in most places that some members of the communities where not willing to return to their places of residence, not to talk of people from outside the community coming to invest in education in the area. It was also found that foreign investors in education were deserting the area as a result of the incessant attacks from the marauding Fulani herdsmen.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this study, it was established that conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen have significant effect on funding of primary and secondary schools in Guma and Logo Local Government Area of Benue State. The unending conflicts between crop-farmers and herdsmen in this part of the country have not only led to dislodging the affected communities, but have also discouraged International Agencies from contributing their quarter to the development of education as well as investing in other sectors of the economy. Thus, carnage, if not arrested on time, has the tenacity of tarnishing the image of Nigeria at the international community.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. Government should beef up security in the country to reduce the level of insecurity in the country and ensure safety of lives and properties to encourage internal and international investors in contributing their quarter in funding education in Nigeria.
2. Religious leaders should organize and carry out sensitization campaign to discourage the local farmers from perpetrating these barbaric acts of destroying their own farm products and be encouraged to see themselves as a family.
3. Parents should collaborate with the security operators to flush out the invaders and also protect the investors and their investments in the area.

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