

## Perceived Impact of Crop Farmers-Herders' Conflict on School Enrolment and Infrastructural Facilities of Primary Schools in Doma South, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The study was carried out to identify the perceived impact of Crop farmers and herders' conflict on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in the rural communities of Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. It was guided by two objectives, and two research questions. The study adopted survey design with a population of 400 respondents drawn from four electoral wards of Doma South, Doma L.G.A. Nasarawa State. Sample size for this study was 270 respondents comprising of 130 crop farmers, 120 herders and 20 primary school head teachers. Multistage random sampling was adopted to determine the sample size. The instrument for data collection was Farmer-Herders Conflict Questionnaire (CFHQ). CFHQ was validated by three experts. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Results revealed that crop farmers-herders were involved in conflict in Doma South. It further revealed that the crop farmers-herders conflict has impacted negatively on the school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in the rural communities in Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. The study recommended among others that immediate reconstruction, building of primary schools, homes and other infrastructures damaged during conflict in the study area by the relevant authorities. This will motivate the parents to send their words back to primary schools in the conflict affected areas.*

**Keywords:** Crop farmer, Herders, Conflict, Infrastructural Facilities, School enrolment

### Background

The UBE programme has been domesticated in all the states to ensure effective delivery and the local governments are also assigned visible roles. Yet this level of education which is the bedrock of any educational system in the world is in trouble especially in the conflict areas (Illo and Bolaji, 2017). The threat of localized violence spreads fear in the affected communities, leaving school children at home and thousands of schools closed, or children traumatized and too anxious to learn (UNICEF, 2019). When students become displaced, refugee camps often cannot provide them with adequate education. This poses question on the long-term implication of conflict on educational development in conflict prone communities. This ugly scenario seems to defeat the main objectives of the UBE programme which include;

- Ensure unfettered access to nine (9) years of formal basic education.
- The provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian of school going age.
- Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.

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- Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

Obanya (2020) opined that UBE programme provides the type and form of learning needed to build firm roots of literacy and numeracy, to inculcate basic life skills and more importantly, to consolidate the skills of learning and how to learn. According to Eze (2016) education is a means of liberating the mind and making one a very useful member of the society. It is in the realization of this and its importance that the Nigerian government made education free and compulsory at the basic level. The Nigerian education system is structured with a compulsory nine straight years of basic schooling. In the survey of UNESCO (2024), it was revealed that children from rural and poor households are more likely to remain out of school than children from urban and rich households. The threat of localized violence spreads fear in the affected communities, leaving school children at home and thousands of schools closed, or children traumatized and too anxious to learn (UNICEF, 2024). In recent time in some parts of Doma South, Nasarawa State, conflict erupted among crop farmers and herders with wanton destruction of lives and properties including educational infrastructures and this conflict has escalated and assumed a deadly. This menace according to Omake (2022) have existed for many years. However, the conflicts seem to surpass measures for mitigating them. Hence, the conflicts seem to cause fighting or to suggest the possibility of fighting among the crop farmers and the herders.

Crop farmers according to Amonjenu and Wombo (2016), are group of people who grow crop plants for the benefit of mankind. But, Saidu (2018) opined that farmers are individuals who own or manage crops. Crop farmers has been in serious conflict over some reasons suspected to be ownership and utilization of natural resources herders. Herders are people who rear cattle, sheep, and goats that migrate from one place to the other in search of pastures and fresh water for their animals (Adebajo and Adenuga, 2016). These group of herdsmen are among those herders who leave their original homes searching for greener pasture for their cattle. It has been observed by many authors that, their migration is caused by the scarcity of good grazing land for their livestock to feed on. Nzeh (2015) opined that in their culture, tradition, and occupation, herders remained a migrant race who does not own lands nor have any permanent abode. This group of herdsmen are always in loggared heads with crop farmers in Doma South, Doma L.G.A Nasarawa State.

The importance of basic level of education in the society cannot be over emphasized especially at the rural communities. With the enormous benefits attached to the UBE programme, rural many communities in Doma South of Nasarawa State continue to abandon their homes as the result of frequent rifts between crop farmers and herders. The persistent violent conflict has forced both parties involved to abandon their homes for IDPs camps in Doma. It is on this note that the researcher intent to find out the perceived causes of the violent conflict between crop farmers and herders and the impact of the conflict on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in the study area. Inquiring on any form of conflict is complex, as it involves numerous perspectives and orientations such as different styles of communication, ambitions, social, political, or religious views, and different cultural backgrounds thus it becomes difficult undertaking such a study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived impact of crop farmers- herders on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in rural communities of Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- identify causes of farmers-herders' conflict school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in the rural communities in Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State;
- ascertain the perceived impact of crop farmers-herders' conflict on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State

### Research Questions

Two research questions were raised and answered. These are;

- What are the causes of farmers-herders' conflict on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in the rural communities in Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State?
- What are the effects of farmers-herders conflict on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State?

### Methodology

The study adopted survey design with a population of 120 respondents comprising of 60 crop farmers, 40 herders and 20 primary school head teachers from four electoral wards in Doma South, Doma L.G.A. Nasarawa State. The sample for this study is 120 which was the population of the respondents. There was no sampling because of the manageable size of the population. Therefore, the entire population of the respondents was used in the study. The instrument for data collection was Farmer-Herders Conflict Questionnaire (CFHQ). CFHQ was validated by three experts. The instrument was subjected to face validation. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics precisely mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The tool used for data analysis was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. The benchmark of 2.5 is simply the mean average of the value assigned to the four response options which are  $4+3+2+1=10 \div 4 = 2.50$ .

The researchers sought the consent of the respondents through a letter addressed to them and participation in the study was voluntary. The respondents were given assurances that any information provided for the study would be treated with the high level of confidentiality. Their level of participation was gained when they discovered no part of Farmer-Herders Conflict Questionnaire (CFHQ) required revealing personal information that was traceable to them but to find lasting solution to their own protracted problem. The data collected were confidentially treated, honestly analysed and discussed mainly for academic purpose. Most importantly, the paper was not plagiarized.

### Results

**Table 1: Causes of conflict between crop farmers-herders in the rural communities of Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.**

S/No. Item statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1. Competition over the use of land resources	3.91	.330	Agreed
2. Cattle rustling	2.78	.878	Agreed
3. Blockage of grazing routes	2.53	.610	Agreed
4. Denial of access to crop residues	2.58	.611	Agreed
5. Overgrazing/hardening of soil	2.98	.338	Agreed
6. Increase in farming activities	3.05	.406	Agreed
7. Burning of range land and fadama	2.58	.711	Agreed
8. Destruction of farm crops	3.12	.279	Agreed
9. Increase in the population of people	3.00	.930	Agreed
10. Increase in the population of cattle	2.63	.340	Agreed
11. Desertification/desert encroachment	2.71	.815	Agreed
12. Freshwater scarcity	2.52	.985	Agreed
13. Poisoning of stream water by the host community	2.56	.701	Agreed
14. Contamination of stream by cattle	3.57	.898	Agreed
15. Sexual harassment/rape	3.35	.633	Agreed
16. Harassment of herders by youth in the community	2.55	.489	Agreed
17. Disregard to traditional authority by herders	2.22	.210	Disagreed

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

The data in Table 1 revealed that 16 out of 17 items had their mean values ranged from 2.53 to 3.57 which were greater than the bench mark of 2.5 on a 4 point scale. This showed that the respondents agreed with

the causes of conflict in the rural communities of Doma South. One respondent disagreed with item 17 (2.22) as one of the causes of conflict in rural communities in of Doma South.

**Table 2: Perceived impact crop farmers-herders conflict on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in the rural communities of Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.**

S/N	Item statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to the extension of school calendar	3.71	.455	Agreed
2.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to the low enrollment of pupils/students	3.09	.875	Agreed
3.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to burning down of classrooms in primary schools in the area	3.63	.488	Agreed
4.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to burning down of classroom desks	3.37	.484	Agreed
5.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to burning down of classrooms	3.64	.481	Agreed
6.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to the destruction of staff offices	3.29	.456	Agreed
7.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to the destruction of instructional materials	3.01	.887	Agreed
8.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to the vandalization of school properties	3.96	.193	Agreed
9.	Crop farmers-herders conflict have led to the high number of school dropout	2.55	.993	Agreed

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation.

The data in Table 2 showed that all the 9 items had their mean values ranged from 2.55 to 3.96. The grand mean for this cluster was 3.39 above the bench mark of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed with the perceived impact of crop farmers-herders conflict on school enrolment and infrastructural facilities of primary schools in Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. The standard deviations of the 9 items ranged from .193 to .993. This indicated that the respondents were not far from the mean and from one another in their responses. This added value to the reliability of the mean.

### Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings is done based on the research questions answered. The finding on research question 1 agrees with Omaku (2022) found that crops damaged by cattle, land encroachment, inadequate grazing reserves, lack of access to the water point and pollution of water points are among causes of conflict between nomadic herdsmen and farmers in rural communities. The finding on research question 2 is in consonance with the findings of The findings of Suleiman (2016), who found out that whenever farmers-herders disaster strikes, infrastructural facilities in the schools such as classroom buildings, offices, books and other relevant documents are greatly damaged or destroyed also, this finding revealed that farmers-herders conflicts have significant effects on school enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state to a high extent This finding agrees with that of Ahmed (2015) and Saidu (2018) who noted that when crop farmers-herders conflict in an area, it affects school enrolment because many people run from their homes to safer places and this affects the population of the area generally, school enrolment and the quality of educational.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, this study concludes that crop farmers-herders conflict are caused by factors such utilization of land resources, destruction of farm crops, cattle rustling, blockage of grazing routes, denial of access to crop residues, overgrazing/hardening of soil, increase in farming activities, burning of range land and fadama, inadequate land, increase in the population of people among other causes. These conflicts between crop farmers-herders usually forces school children to relocate with their families

to places that are safe from the conflict and this may affect their education as these new places may not have educational facilities to accommodate them while many families abandoned their homes to take shelter in IDPs camps

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Since utilization of land resources is one of the principal causes of conflict between crop farmers and herders in rural communities of Doma South, Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State there should be immediate enactment of new and definite law on the use of land resources to mitigate land related conflicts among the land users.
- There should be reconstruction, building of primary schools, homes and other infrastructures damaged during conflict in the study area. This will motivate the parents to send their words back to school.

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