



Impact of herdsmen-farmers crisis on women and girls in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study evaluated the impact of herdsmen-farmers crisis on women and girls in Benue State, Nigeria. It was carried out in the major areas that experienced incessant attacks from herdsmen, namely; Guma, Agatu and Gwer west LGAs of Benue State. The study adopted the environmental/resource scarcity and eco-survivalism theories in explaining the nature of the conflict in the study area with references to explanatory insights presented by different scholars. Primary data were obtained from 120 women and girls through personal interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interview (KII). The result showed that the main livelihood activities of women and girls were farming (production of crops and rearing of livestock), processing and sale of farm produce, with a few engaging in petty trading as well. Beyond other causes identified, the result holds that the conflict in the area was politically orchestrated. Considering the average mean score, lack of access to health care, displacement, psychological trauma and loss of lives of family members and loved ones stood out as major impacts of herdsmen-farmer conflicts in Benue State. It ascertained the socio-economic status of women and girls, identified causes of herdsmen-farmer conflict, determined the effect of herdsmen-farmer conflict on women and girls, and their coping strategies during and after conflicts and identified interventions, resources and support services needed to ameliorate the effect of herdsmen-farmer conflict on women and girls in the State. Unanimously, the women and girls solicited for intervention in medical/health services and empowerment in the form of skill acquisition and low or no interest loans.

Keywords: *herdsmen, farmers, women and girls, herdsmen-farmers crisis, food security*

Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria has been plunged into series of clashes and attacks between herdsmen and farmers in many states of the federation. Unsuspecting villagers are attacked on their way to the farm, houses are besieged and burnt down leaving the people homeless. Besides the destroyed properties, socio-economic life in those states is usually grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities for fear of being killed (Ajibefun, 2018). The conflicts and instability have become a major concern to the government, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), etc. To a large extent, the incessant conflict and violence has hampered the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals one to four, which aim to eradicate poverty and hunger, improve health and wellbeing of the people and make quality education accessible to all by 2030. The clashes, instead of abating have been on the increase exponentially to the dismay of the helpless.

Violent clashes between herdsmen-farmers are largely viewed as attacks perpetrated by male aggressors while women, girls and children are categorized as vulnerable

groups who are caught up in a vicious web of violence. They bear the brunt of the violent conflicts. Women accounting for such a high percentage of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, about 70 percent, imply that they are directly or indirectly affected by the conflicts. The fractured relationship between farmers and herdsmen is not just having a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of those involved, economic costs and losses from the conflict are also significant (Bukola 2018). All these have negative implications on the livelihood, social status and role of women within the communities involved in conflict. The conflicts weaken the social capital such that the cohesive forces that bond members of a community are broken. Women play major roles in the cohesion of the community, performing reproductive and community management roles to ensure the relationship among the community members is sustained. However, the hardships women often experience during and after conflict negatively impact these social cohesion roles.

In Benue State, the frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the predominantly farming areas of the state have resulted in the destruction of lives and

farmlands. According to Apenda (2016), nine out of the 23 local government areas (LGA) in Benue state, namely Guma, Gwer-West, Agatu, Logo, Kwande, Ukum, Tarka and the Northern part of Makurdi are mostly affected. Adetula (2016) as cited in International Crisis Group (2017) said that Benue State seems to be the hardest hit. Barely 5 days before the end of Governor Gabriel Suswam's administration in May 2015, over 100 farmers and their family members were reportedly massacred in the villages and refugee camps located in the Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa areas of the State. Based on head counts, over 1,800 lives have been lost to the conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Benue between 2014 to 2016 (International Crises Group, 2017). A study showed that the federal government of Nigeria was losing \$13.7 billion in revenue annually because of herdsmen-farmers conflicts in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Plateau states. These clashes are becoming as potentially dangerous as the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast. At present, response to the crisis at both the federal and state levels have been poor (International Crises Group, 2017).

Agatu LGA of Benue State has gained notoriety with regards to herdsmen and farmers conflict with numerous casualties. Sequel to this, Duru (2016) reported a gruesome attack on Agatu LGA of Benue State in February 2016 in which about 7000 people were driven away from six villages by the Fulani herdsmen. Over 200 persons were killed and houses were razed. Another report has it that about 500 people were killed by rampaging herdsmen following a siege on Agatu LGA of Benue State. The communities affected include Aila, Akwu, Adagbo, Okokolo, Ugboju, Odugbeho, Obagaji and Egba (Premium Times, 2016). In April 2016, there was a renewed attack on Agatu by the armed herdsmen. Statistics from the Benue State Emergency Management Agency indicate that about 30 persons died in the renewed violence. It is estimated that about N65 billion worth of properties (\$204 million) were lost since the conflict commenced in Benue. This figure was provided by the president general of Nzor-Tiv Global Associates, Edward Ujege, at a public hearing convened by the House of Representatives in Abuja, 25 May 2016 (International Crisis Group, 2017).

Despite the fact that some studies have been conducted on farmers/herdsmen lingering conflict in Nigeria, from the literature reviewed, none has precisely focused on evaluating the impact of farmers/herdsmen conflict on the most vulnerable groups - women and girls. The studies conducted by Gamgum (2018) focused on herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria: another dimension of insecurity". The objective of the study was to understand the rationale and how specific perennial conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria are being resolved before 2019 election in Nigeria to enable the people to resume normal life while Oli et al, (2018) focused on the prevalence of herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria. The study is anchored on the frustration-aggression and conflict theories using basically secondary data. Ofuoku and Osife (2010) and

Adelakun et al, (2015) in their studies on farmers/herdsmen conflict focused on its effect on livelihood in Delta and Oyo state. On the other hand, Adelakun et al, (2015) investigated the impacts of herdsmen-farmers conflict on agricultural extension service delivery in Oyo State. The study by Musa et al, (2014) tends to be related to this very study as it was carried out in Guma LGA of Benue State. However, the study was not extended to Agatu and Gwer west LGAs of the State. This study covered the major areas that experienced incessant attacks from herdsmen, namely; Guma, Agatu and Gwer west LGAs of Benue State. The study evaluated the effects of herdsmen-farmers crisis on livelihoods in Benue, especially as it impacts women and girls. The objectives were to ascertain the socio-economic status of women and girls in the study area, identify causes of herdsmen-farmers conflict in the area, determine the impact of the conflict on women and girls, and their coping strategies during and after conflicts and determine interventions, resources and support services that can ameliorate the effect of herdsmen-farmers conflict on women and girls in Benue State.

2.0. Theoretical framework

There are several theoretical explanations on what causes a violent conflict between two groups. The scope, resources and time available for this study places limitations on any attempt to test all these theoretical perspectives in the work. Given the environment and the groups involved; farmers and herdsmen, the study adopted the environmental/resource scarcity and eco-survivalism theories. The explanatory insights presented by different scholars formed the theoretical foundation for this research in explaining the nature of the conflict in the study area.

2.1. Environmental scarcity theory of conflict

In the study of environment, scarcity and violence, Homer-Dixon (1999) asserts that large populations in many developing countries are highly dependent on four key environmental resources that are fundamental to their livelihood, namely; fresh water, cropland, forests and fish. Scarcity or shrinking of these resources as a result of misuse, over-use or degradation, population growth, climate change and resource access leads to competition over the ecological resources among groups and may under certain circumstances trigger conflicts. In this perspective, resource scarcity is the product of an insufficient supply, too much demand or an unequal distribution of a resource due to political, economic, social and environmental factors. Thereby, subjecting some groups or people of a society into conditions of deprivation, competition and violence over the limited resources (Homer-Dixon, 1999). In effect, resource scarcity raises the competitive stakes and premium that the various societal groups places on available resources, which may engender violent conflicts.

The application of this theory in Benue State implies that the conflict has been driven by the scarcity of land, and competition between the farmers and the herdsmen

to ensure their viability in the area. The scarcity of land is due to the degradation and shrinking of the ecological space due to human and cattle population explosion and resource depletion. Therefore, the farmers need the land for cultivation, while the herdsmen need the land for grazing and rearing of cattle. Tonah (2000) opined that the ultimate causes of the conflict and the deterioration of relations between the Fulbe pastoralists and Kassena farmers conflict in Ghana lie in the general degradation of resources and the increased competition for access and resources capture. Resource-related conflicts in Africa are driven by the scarcity of natural resources. For instance, people in semi-arid sub-Saharan Africa with dwindling resources and increasing population live on the edge. Deficits in rainfall, land use or pasture generate major conflicts that could result in loss of lives and properties (Bennett, 1991; Blench, 1996; Turner, 2004). The debates by the various scholars indicate clearly that, resource scarcity underpins herdsmen-farmers conflicts in Africa, of which Benue State in Nigeria is not an exception.

2.2. Eco-survivalism theories of conflict

Another theoretical explanation to the herdsmen-farmers conflict is the theory of eco-survivalism. The crux of this theory is that the desperate quest of groups to protect and advance their livelihood in a competitive and resource-scarce ecological sphere is likely to result in violent conflict (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). The theory draws the relationship between resource scarcity and survival. Further, the theory holds that, the militant posture of the herdsmen and the farmers must be understood in relation to survival (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). To the farmer in Benue state, his/her survival depends on the cultivation of crops. Therefore, any damage caused to the crops threatens the livelihood of the farmer. In the same way, to the average herdsman, pastoralism is a way of living. In this regard, any threat to his herd amounts to a threat to his survival as well (Abbas, 2012). By applying this theory to the situation in Benue, it can be inferred that the aggression among the farmers and the herdsmen is motivated by a do-or-die struggle for a living in a territory that is competitive and hostile to each other's collective means of sustenance.

The environmental scarcity and eco-survivalism theories have been criticized over its reliance on resource scarcity as a cause of herdsmen-farmers conflict in Africa (Peluso and Watts, 2001). However, Homer-Dixon (1999) posited that, environmental scarcity is never a sole or sufficient cause of conflict or violence between two groups. It enmeshes with political, economic, and other factors to generate harsh social effects that in turn initiates violence (Homer-Dixon, 1999). On this score, Tonah (2006) noted that the conflicts do not only generate from resource scarcity or quest for survival, but also from hostilities and intolerance due to ethnic disparities. Since pastoralists and native groups possess distinct values, customs, physical and cultural characteristics, ethnicity plays key roles in these conflicts. For instance, Olaniyan (2015) in

his study on Fulani-Komkomba conflict in Ghana, revealed that in as much as resource scarcity is evident as a cause of the conflict. The underlining factor remains that the issue of ethnicity plays a major role, as the Fulani pastoralists are regarded as strangers in the land.

3.0. Methodology

3.1. Study area and sampling techniques

This work was conducted in three LGAs - Guma, Gwer-West and Makurdi in Benue State. Primary data were obtained through personal interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interview (KII). Multi-stage sampling method was used to select one hundred and twenty (120) respondents for the study. First was purposive selection of two communities from each of the selected LGAs. The communities were selected based on the high frequency of herdsmen-farmers conflict and its effects on women. These communities have been under perpetual attacks by the herdsmen. Then twenty (20) and eighteen (18) respondents were randomly selected for personal interviews and focused group discussion respectively while two (2) elderly and experienced persons were selected for key informant interview. All the discussants were directly affected by the conflicts. The FGDs and KII were conducted by the researchers and the natives for ease of communication and interpretations. They provided data on general community information, livelihood activities of women and girls, major crops grown by the female farmers, causes of herdsmen-farmers conflicts in the communities, impact of the conflicts on women and girls and their coping strategies. Including interventions, resources and support services needed by the communities with focus on women and girls.

4.0. Results and Discussion

4.1. Socioeconomic distribution of respondents

As shown in Table 1, majority of the respondents (92%) were within the age range of 30-69 years. Forty five percent (45%) were married, 35% were widows and only 13% were single. About 36% of the respondents had no form of formal education and majority (87%) of the respondents were farmers by profession. With about 63% functioning as household head which implies that they were the bread winners of their respective homes. This was because the herdsmen targeted and killed mostly the men and boys in a bid to have their way unhindered. The result revealed that majority of them (64%) had farm sizes ranging from 3 – 6 hectares and 8% admitted they had about 10 – 12 hectares of land. This indicates larger expanse of land in the study area which could be the major reason why they are under constant attack by the herdsmen. It is pertinent to note that there are a lot of similarities in the attributes and experiences of women and girls in these communities with only minimal differences. The main livelihood activities of the women were farming (production of crops and rearing of livestock), processing and sale of farm produce, with a few engaging in petty trading as well. The three major crops produced in order of priority are cassava, vegetables (pepper, okro, etc) and yam. It

was observed that the income level of the farmers dropped to zero except for those who have means of livelihood outside the communities and those who have relatives and friends who could send financial aid to them once in a while. Therefore, the income level of the farmers during this phase of conflicts which has lasted for about 7 years could not be captured. This has severe implications for both the farmers and the society.

4.2. Causes of herdsman-farmers conflict

The causes of the conflicts across the study areas were as shown in Table 2. The average mean score and benchmark was 3. Scores from 3 and above are accepted while any score below the benchmark is rejected. From the result, the major cause of herdsman-farmers conflict included destruction of farms and crops by herdsman (4.93), land grabbing and encroachment (4.43), shooting and killing of farmers (4.57), harassment of farmers by the nomads (4.43), rape and sexual harassment by nomads (4.14). The respondents also admitted that indiscriminate bush burning (4.21), threat and intimidation (3.79), water pollution by nomads (3.14) were part of the causes of conflict between the nomads and the farmers in Benue State. Amazingly, the people believed that the conflict in the area was politically orchestrated (4.71). On the other hand, the result revealed that armed robbery by nomads and cattle pilfering/rustling were not among the causes of conflict in the area.

This result agrees with the findings of Okereke (2012) and Bello (2013) who listed the causes of the conflict to include theft of cattle, destruction of crops, rape of women, and indiscriminate bush burning. The act of damaging the crops and farm produce by the cattle and the herdsman is one of the main reasons for the tension between the farmers and herdsman. According to the women farmers, the herdsman move their cattle to graze at night, destroying all their farms and crops. Some also move their cattle to feed on harvested agricultural produce stored in the farms, as the women temporary store or keep some harvested crops such as maize, yam, watermelon, cassava and groundnut in the farms for immediate processing before transporting them to the market. However, the herdsman intentionally move their cattle to feed on those harvested crops. An elderly woman and a farmer at Daudu village explained that “last year, the herdsman and their cattle destroyed all my 8 hectares of rice farm. This time around, it was 10 hectares. They intentionally grazed my rice farm even when they were aware that it has not been harvested”. The discussants across the sampled communities, pointed out that herdsman used to come around mostly during the dry season to feed their cattle from left-over cords after harvest. The study established that particularly in Guma LGA, some farmers sometimes contracted the herdsman to bring their cattle to their farms to eat grass after harvest as a way of preparing the land for next season's cultivation. This implies that there was a mutual and cordial relationship with the herdsman at first, which was later abused by the herdsman, as they grazed in the farms even during rainy and growing

seasons. Any attempt by the farmers to prevent the herdsman usually leads to conflicts and in most cases the death of the farmers. When the herdsman kill the farmers, they do not run away for hiding as in previous occasions. Rather, they inhabit the houses of the farmers and use their farms as grazing field for their cattle. The herdsman further kill any farmer that goes close to the seized houses or who attempts to repossess their habitation. The study established that, across Guma, Makurdi and Gwer-West LGAs, destruction of crops by cattle ranked as the major cause of the conflicts.

However, the discussants accused the ruling class and politicians as the major instigators of the conflict, alleging that the politicians seize the opportunity to acquire land and make more money through camps built for Internally Displaced Person's (IDP). They observed that the politicians were always soliciting for fund from national and international organizations to help control the factors causing the conflicts, but never deployed those funds to anything relating to the conflicts. They gave instances of the government's refusal of the IDPs to return to their homes even when normalcy had returned in the area. They were also restricted from talking to anyone who came to visit for research purposes, unless under strict monitoring. Those are suspicious acts and agree with the assertions of the respondents, stating that the conflict is now a tool for further enrichment by the corrupt political class.

4.3. Effect of herdsman-farmers conflict

Table 3 presents the effects of the conflicts across the study areas. Considering the average mean score of 3, lack of access to health care, displacement, psychological trauma and loss of lives of family members and loved ones stood out as major impacts of the conflicts. The result also revealed that farmers live in perpetual fear of attacks and reprisal attacks (Table 3).

Loss of human lives is one of the major consequences of the continuous conflict, attacks and counter-attacks between farmers and herdsman in Benue state. It has caused massive death toll of many innocent lives. By implication, loss of family members and relations represent one of the most traumatic experience of women during and after the conflicts subsides. The trauma of losing husbands and children is the greatest psycho-social impact on the women (Hassan, 2018), resulting in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which manifests in poor mental and physical health, reduced quality of life and difficulties in managing work and family life.

The loss of a husband creates a vacuum in the family and often pushes the bereaved women into unprepared breadwinner roles and decision making for their families. This sudden single parenthood increases women's burden of care often not just for their immediate family but also to provide care for extended family members who were wounded, sick, despairing and displaced because of the conflict. The additional role and associated demand often push families into

poverty and dependence, especially when the women lack the skills, experience, or support to effectively take up such huge roles. Lack of resources to meet the demand increases the vulnerability of women to exploitation and forces the children especially girls out of school and sometimes into early marriages. Besides the loss of lives, valuable properties and vast expanse of arable agricultural farmlands are lost during the conflicts, thereby posing serious threat to food security since farmers for fear of attack could no longer go to farm and harvest their farm produce.

Besides the destruction of lives and properties, socio-economic life in the area is grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities. This implies reduced level of productive activities, e.g., female farmers due to high level of insecurity are unable to go to cultivate their farms during the farming season. On the other hand, during the attacks the women often flee leaving behind cultivated farmlands, which they are often unable to access to harvest the produce. In many cases women who were able to access their farms after the violence found out that the crops were either spoilt, harvested by other people, or destroyed by cattle. Such losses of farm produce and subsequent rise in food prices in the area have increased poverty and food insecurity. (Crisis Group, 2016).

These women are forced to abandon their homes and farmlands for safety and now reside in the IDP camps with little or no care in terms of health care, finances, and general wellbeing. Bukola et al. (2018) reported that herdsmen-farmers conflict displaced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes forcing displaced person to seek refuge in houses of family members and temporary IDP camps in Plateau and Adamawa states. Such displacements create immense human suffering due to sudden change of normal patterns of living, economic hardship, separation of families and uncertainties about location and safety of loved ones. Displaced women and girls suffer the most because they mostly move with the children while men largely move as individuals. Many girls affected by the conflict have not been able to continue schooling. Either that their parents and sponsors couldn't afford the fees, or they are advised to get married or in most cases, the schools were closed-down due to the conflict.

The result is supported by AAUW (2007) who opined that women are gravely affected by conflicts and in line with the assertions of UNIFEM (2005) that 43 out of every 100 women have been victims of different forms of violence. In today's world, with some form of conflict in almost every region, more than 70 per cent of the casualties are women and children (UNIFEM 2005). This is also supported by Tafft, Blyth and Murphy (2016), who observed that rape and sexual assault accounted for most of the reported incidents of violence against women and girls in Plateau state, Nigeria between January 2015 and September 2016. Women are exposed to violence and abuse and are preyed upon.

They lose protection and freedom – raped, forced into marriages, forced to have abortions or become pregnant. Moreover, after incidences of sexual abuses, the women are often rejected by family or community. Worst of all, these violence against women does not stop with the conflicts, it continues thereafter with men in the community taking advantage of the bereaved and vulnerable women and girls. For instance, women who have lost their limbs and unable to farm are often abandoned by their husbands. Due to hunger, lack of cloths to wear, menstrual-pad and toiletries, some women steal money, food, water and firewood. This is a clear indication that women and girls face more risks and dangers in armed conflicts compared to those faced by men and boys.

Though not peculiar to women and girls alone, psychological trauma of victims was one of the effects of the conflict as observed during the FGD discussion. Victims who survived the herdsmen attacks were still finding it very difficult to conform to their current situations. Unfortunately, most of these IDP camps do not have the wherewithal to effectively handle such traumas currently being experienced. There exists only one certified trauma treatment center in Nigeria, and it is domiciled in Abuja. The long-term impact will be that the people will grow up with a loss of their personal, emotional, psychological and socio-cultural identities.

4.4. Coping strategies

In order to survive the effects of the conflict, the women and girls adopt some coping strategies and they include; borrowing to purchase items (mostly food) on credit to pay later, but sometimes when they cannot pay back in cash, they repay in kind by rendering other services. 'Other services' could imply different things to different people per time. It ranges from doing manual jobs to sexual abuse. They also engage in intensive labour such as breaking of firewood, breaking of stones and fetching water for restaurants in order to have food to eat. Some depend on financial support from their husbands, relatives and friends and sometimes family members who reside outside the troubled communities. Petty trading, where they gather fall-out grains, firewood, vegetables etc, after harvest on farms from neighboring communities that were not attacked, for sale. For those that had personal savings before the conflict, they rely on their savings to either start up a business or lease farmland in other communities to cultivate and build back gradually. Also, some of the women have received support from neighboring villages in form of land donations to enable them to farm.

4.5. Suggested interventions

In one voice, the women and girls solicited for intervention in the provision of relief materials like food, clothes and toiletries. Making medical/health services accessible to reduce especially mother-child mortality rate in the area and to help treat growing infections, such as sexually transmitted diseases. They emphasized on the need to form, train and empower the community security group, that will be the watchdog

and protect them from the incessant malicious attacks from the herdsmen. The need for empowerment in the form of skill acquisition and low or no interest loans has become paramount. This includes training on financial management, because some of the petty traders complained that they experience difficulties in managing the capital for their businesses, hence could not stay viable in the market for long. Most of all, the displaced persons earnestly desire to see the causes of the conflicts resolved so that they could relocate to their communities and live normal lives, as living in the IDP camps seems to put their lives on hold.

Conclusion

Women, girls and children are adversely affected by the conflict and consequently, the farming, economic and social activities are fast deteriorating. Though the attackers do not usually select their victims when they shoot to kill, women and young girls feel and bear the greater brunt of the conflict. Apart from being killed or maimed, there have been several reported cases of rape during the attacks and abduction of the women as sex slaves (Cone, 2019). The conflict has evidently created many widows and widowers and helpless young orphans who add to the existing large number of beggars in both rural and urban centers and or become liabilities to other families. These conflicts reinforce circles of extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and moral decadence in the society. We recommend that the federal and state government should set up a mechanism of ensuring peace, security of lives and properties in these areas and assist the victims of the conflicts (both displaced and non-displaced persons) through skills acquisition, provision of functional and equipped primary health care centers, resuscitate the fallen educational system and get the children back to school as quickly as possible. There is need for proper re-orientation on the sanctity of human lives and the essence of social interaction irrespective of religious and ethnic background and the strengthening of the mechanism for conflict resolution in the state to regulate and prosecute offenders violating the law set up in the state to regulate herdsmen-farmers interaction. Fortunately, the federal government approved the rehabilitation of 368 grazing reserves, across 25 states in the country, including Benue (Guardian, 2021). As such, there is a need to identify options for forage and potentially dual-purpose (food and forage) crops that are highly productive, rich in nutrients and resilient to climatic and other stresses to allow cattle in the grazing reserves, as well as ensure incomes and food security for both farmers and livestock keepers.

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MAP OF BENUE STATE SHOWING THE AREAS COVERED

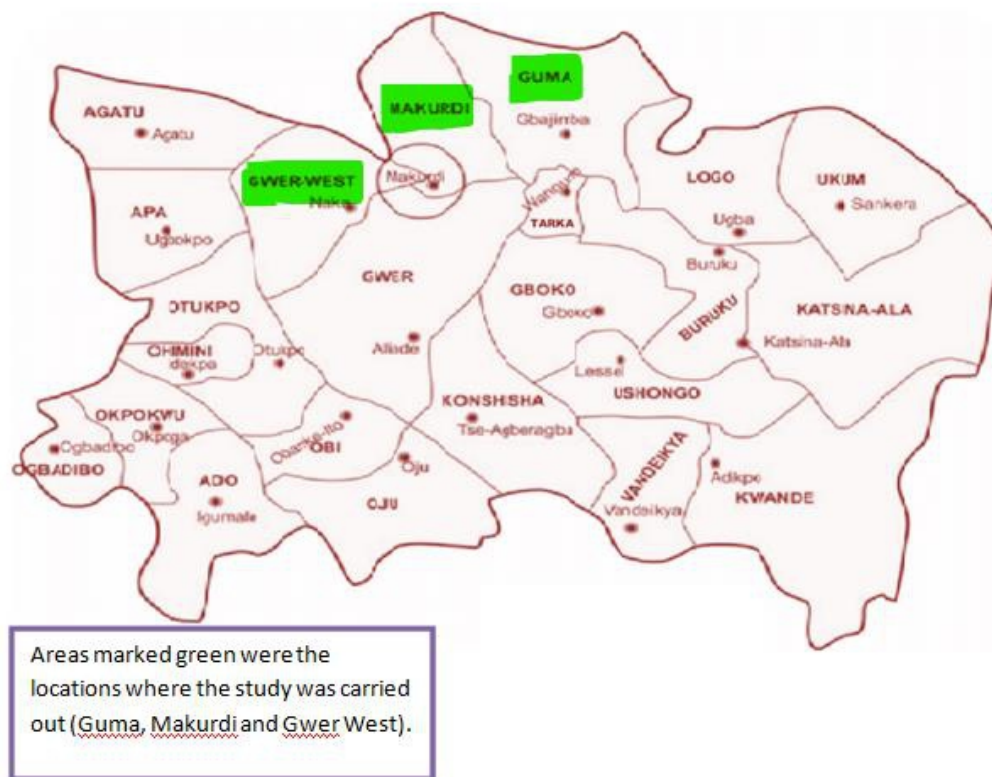


Table 1. Socioeconomic Background of female farmers in Benue State. N=120

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-29	9	8
	30-39	17	14
	40-49	35	29
	50-59	33	27
	60-69	26	22
Marital Status	Married	54	45
	Single	16	13
	Widowed	42	35
Level of Education	No formal education	43	36
	Primary education	43	36
	secondary school	34	28
Occupation	Farmer	104	87
	Others	16	13
Religion	Christian	87	93
	Others	13	7
Household Head	Yes	76	63
	No	44	37
Household Size	1-3	9	8
	4-6	94	78
	7-9	17	14
Farm Size	1-2ha	34	28
	3-4ha	42	35
	5-6ha	35	29
	Above 6ha	9	8

Source: Field data, 2022

Table 2. Causes of herdsmen-farmers conflict in Benue State. N=120

Causes	Mean	Remarks
Destruction of farms and crops	4.93	Accepted
Land grabbing and encroachment	4.43	Accepted
Shooting and killing of farmers	4.57	Accepted
Politicians orchestrated	4.71	Accepted
Armed robbery by nomads	2.71	Rejected
Harassment of Nomads	4.43	Accepted
Cattle pilfering/rustling	2.21	Rejected
Rape and sexual harassment by nomads	4.14	Accepted
Indiscriminate bush burning	4.21	Accepted
Threat and intimidation	3.79	Accepted
Water pollution by nomads	3.14	Accepted

Source: Field data, 2022

Table 3. Effect of the herder-farmer conflict in Benue State. N=120

Effect	Mean	Decision
Loss of lives of family members/loved ones	4.72	Accepted
Farms were burnt by the herdsmen during the conflict	3.28	Accepted
Crops were harvested/stolen during the conflict	3.73	Accepted
House and properties burnt down completely	4.65	Accepted
Sources of income were destroyed	4.64	Accepted
Livestock and stored food items were destroyed.	4.38	Accepted
Food supply and prizes became unstable	4.14	Accepted
Economic activities were disrupted	4.03	Accepted
Conflict crumbled social gatherings	3.85	Accepted
Displacement of locals	4.80	Accepted
High rate of school outs	3.74	Accepted
No access to health care	4.82	Accepted
Fear of reprisal attacks	4.63	Accepted
Marriage break-ups	2.68	Rejected
sexual harassment, rape and other gender-based violence	3.78	Accepted
Sex for money	4.48	Accepted
Unwanted pregnancies	4.12	Accepted
Early marriage	3.73	Accepted
Psychological Trauma	4.81	Accepted

Source: Filed Survey 2022