



EFFECTS OF HERDERS-FARMERS CONFLICTS ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL'S ENROLMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GWER WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study is on the effects of herders-farmers conflicts on primary school pupil's enrolment and infrastructural development in Gwer West Local Government area of Benue State. the study adopted a survey research design. Three objectives were raised by the study and were answered with three research questions. The population of the study consisted of 425 primary school teachers and a sample size of 206 was obtained using Taro Yamane formula. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Farmers Herders' Conflicts: Its Effect on Primary School Enrolment and Infrastructural Development (FHCIPSEID). The questionnaire was face and content validated by three experts, one from Justices' Peace and Development Commission makurdi and two from Gwer West local Government Education Authority, the instrument was trial tested on 20 primary school teachers in Guma, retrieved copies were tested using Cronbach-alpha reliability method and a reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained. The data collected was analysed using, frequency, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. Based on the Findings of the study, conflicts between farmers and herdsman have significant effect on the functionality and operations of primary schools in Gwer-West Local Government Areas of Benue State and all infrastructural facilities ranging from classrooms, staff offices and quarter, laboratories among others are destroyed as a result of farmers and herders' conflicts, the findings also indicated that there was a continuous decline in pupil's enrolment from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024. It was therefore recommended that Government should beef up security around the communities and around schools to ensure that schools are not shut down, laws restriction open grazing should be enacted and ranching be encouraged so as to protect primary school infrastructure while Parents should be encouraged enrol pupils in schools where there's security.

Keywords: Conflicts, Herders-Farmers, infrastructure, School Enrolment

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.12779595

Manuscript ID # 160

INTRODUCTION

Primary school Education is a vital stage for the growth and development of the educational sector in Nigeria. Its continuous growth, development and quality depends on the provision of good infrastructural facilities, high quality of teachers, prompt payment of salaries, provision and constant revision of the curriculum (Ogbonnaya, 2013). These factors when hindered have a negative effect in achieving the desired goals of the primary school sector. Recently, environmental dynamics like climate change, shrinking natural resources, desertification, rapid urbanization, industrialization and political manipulations have given rise to herders-Farmers conflicts situations that also affects primary school education

Generally, herders are by their nature migrants who leave their traditional abode in search of pasture for their flocks in most cases; their movement is caused as a result of absence of good and veritable land for their flock to feed on. Due to climatic change which has led to environmental degradation and population growth, there has been shortage in land use for both animal (herders) and crop farmers. In recent times, crop farmers have been having conflicts with herders over land use which leads to violent communal clashes arising from the activities of the herders who move about on a daily basis with their cattle in search of water and greener pastures within communities, most herders do not own land but graze their livestock in host communities (Awogbade, 2017). This conflict affects social economic activities of the society including primary school education through enrolment and infrastructural development among others.

Conflict is inherent in every society and it occurs as a result of differences in interest, opinions, and competition over scarce resources. Generally, conflict is the act of coming into collision, clash or being in opposition with one another. Okoro (2018) viewed conflict as disagreement that exist in a social situation over issues of substance or whatever emotional antagonism that create friction between individuals or groups. Persistent and on-going conflict between herdsmen and crop farmers in Benue rural communities has resulted in severe violence which has also poised a great challenge to primary school infrastructural development and primary school enrolment in the affected rural communities.

The farmers and herders' conflict in Gwer-West has left quite a number of devastating impacts which requires urgent attention. One of the effects of the farmers-herders' conflict is its negative consequence on primary school infrastructure and primary school enrolment and this is inimical to the attainment of sustainable development goal four which is quality education. Herdsmen-farmers' conflict has ravaged most rural communities in Gwer-West local Government area by depriving them of their farmlands and ancestral homes leading to loss of their sources of livelihood and access to primary school education. In submission of Okereke (2012), this violence has become so alarming that there is no gainsaying that Nigeria is at a crossroad and gradually drifting in a conflict society.

Most worrisome in the present development is the burning down of school building and destruction of other school facilities, raping, killing and kidnapping of innocent people where women and children are the most vulnerable and worst hit (Mbah, Jiriko and Amah, 2020). Conflicts in Gwer-West has drastically affected the infrastructural development of primary schools and its pupil's enrolment. Aro (2011) points out that security issues have drastically reduced government developmental projects towards the educational sector in the affected places. These has reduced the quality and number of graduating pupils in primary school thus lowering primary education in Gwer-West Local Government

Education is an instrument for development and can be used by any nation in development of individuals and the country at large. Education is aimed towards skills acquisition and relevant knowledge in order to survive in this complex technological world. Education is the major force in economic, intellectual, social and cultural empowerment (Burtch, 2006). Primary school education has been regarded as the first and foundation point of education and is vital to one's educational development. It is on this note that on the 30th September, 1999 President Olusegun Obasanjo formally launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) intended to provide free and compulsory primary to junior secondary education. Aluede (2006). Opined that Universal Basic Education ordinarily would have suggested that every Nigerian child, without exception would have access to basic education without hindrance. Though persistence crisis between farmers and herders in Gwer-West has poised a great challenge towards achieving these goals

The impact of these conflict on education is a great concern to the author due to its potential to disrupt and destroy primary school educational and enrolment which is a pathway to secondary school education and subsequent knowledge acquisition and skills development that produces the needed manpower to propel the socio-economic growth of the Nation. Suleiman (2016) pointed out that farmer herder's conflicts destroy infrastructural facilities in the schools such as classroom buildings, offices, books and other relevant documents are greatly destroyed or damaged. Most attacks by herders leads to burning down of structures which school buildings are inclusive living pupils with no option of leaving their ancestral homes to IDPs camp. The emotional and psychological trauma experience by the pupils and the loss of their parents means of livelihood further decreased enrolment.

Inline with the views of Awortu (2015) who established that conflicts between crop farmers and herdsmen have discouraged Foreign Direct Investment to education in Nigeria especially in Benue State for the fear of

Donation being destroyed during conflict. These has drastically reduced funding and support which has been enjoyed over decades by Benue State Government through donor agencies. This aligns with the views of Tyokyaa & Pinga (2017) who reported that farmers herders' conflicts significantly influence the provision of infrastructural facilities and students' enrolment in Benue State. Apart from the aforementioned factors, there are some factors that can also have impact on pupils' enrolment and infrastructural development of primary schools in Gwer-west local government area, these factors include disease outbreak (COVID19, Measles, Polio), natural disasters like storm, flood and insurgencies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

in spite of the Sustainable Development Goals 4 which aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Benue State Government commitment to ensure free and basic education for all children of school age, both parents and non -governmental organisation in Gwer West are out to achieve this goal, but the frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the state have resulted in the destruction of lives, properties and farmlands. Bello (2013) Submitted that the conflicts in most parts of Nigeria especially farmers and cattle herdsmen clash has affected many rural communities, farmers are driven out of their villages, ultimately becoming refugees in neighbouring towns or states. This is in consonance with Apenda (2016), who pointed out that nine out of the 23 local governments in Benue state, namely Guma, Gwer-West, Agatu, Logo, Kwande, Ukum, Tarka and the Northern part of Makurdi are mostly affected by the rampaging herdsmen have tale of woes to tell. These makes farmers to flee with their children into IDPs camps and other safe areas leading to pupils dropping out from school. it is this note that the researcher seeks to the ascertain the impact of farmers herders' conflicts on primary school enrolment and infrastructural development in Gwer-West.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specifically, the study sought to

1. Identify Primary schools affected by farmers herder's crisis in Gwer-West Local Government
2. Outline the Effects of farmers herder's crisis on primary school infrastructural development in Gwer-West Local Government
3. Determine the variation of primary school pupil's enrolment in the last two decades (2004-2024) in Gwer-West Local Government

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the Primary schools affected by farmers herder's crisis in Gwer-West Local Government
2. What are the Effects (impact) of farmers herder's crisis on primary school infrastructural development in in Gwer-West Local Government
3. What is the variation of pupil's enrolment into primary schools in the last one decade (2014-2024) in Gwer-West Local Government

METHODOLOGY

Area of the Study

The study is on the impact of farmers herders' conflicts on primary school enrolment and infrastructural development in Gwer-West. Government Area of Benue State, Gwer west is a local government area in Benue State with its headquarters in a town called Naka. Gwer-west Local Government Area lies within the transition belt between the equatorial main belt of the Southern Nigeria and semi-arid areas of Northern Nigeria. It is located between longitudes 7.3° and 10°E and latitudes 6° and 8°N with land area of 1,094km². The average annual temperature is 30°C with annual rainfall of 2000mm. The population of the people is estimated at 122,145 [national population commission 2006]. The local government has 15 council wards The Inhabitants are predominantly Tiv with their primary occupation as farming and major crops grown are yam, rice, millet, maize.

Research Design

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design, the design is suitable for the study because it is aimed at collecting data from primary school teachers who served as the respondents within Gwer- West Local Government Education Authority on the impact of farmers herders' conflicts on primary school enrolment and infrastructural development. Data collected from the representative sample was analysed and the result from the sample was generalised on the entire population of the respondents in the study area.

Population and sample

The population of the study is 425 which was limited to only primary school teachers who are under Gwer-West Local Education Authority. The researcher adopted Taro Yamane's formula to determine sample size for the study. A sample size of 206 was obtained and were administered with the research instrument

Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled Farmers Herders' Conflicts: Its Effect on Primary School Enrolment and Infrastructural Development (FHCIPSEID). The instrument was self structured by the researcher and was divided into three parts based on the objectives of the study with response options of Affected or Not Affected for research question one and Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) for research Question two and Yes or No if there's variation for research three. The first part was on the number of primary schools in Gwer-West Local Government where 107 schools were listed out while the second part was on the effects of farmers herder's conflicts on primary school infrastructural development with 10 item statements, and the third part was on the variation of primary school pupil's enrolment from the period of 2013 to 2024 covering 10 academic sessions. The questionnaire was face and content validated by three experts, one from Justices' Peace and Development Commission makurdi and two from Gwer West local Government Education Authority, the instrument was trial tested on 20 primary school teachers in Guma, retrieved copies were tested using Cronbach-alpha reliability method and a reliability coefficient Of 0.92 was obtained, thus indicating that the instrument was reliable and can be used for the study. The instrument was administered to 206 primary school teachers across Gwer-West local Government Area of Benue State with the help of a research assistant.

Data Analysis Technique

Data collected was analysed using, frequency and simple percentage for research question one and 3, while mean and standard deviation to answer research question. two Any item with a mean value of 2.50 was regarded as Agreed and any item with a mean value of less than 2.50 was regarded as not Agreed.

RESULTS OF FINDINGS

Question 1 Identify Primary schools affected by farmers herder's crisis in Gwer-West Local Government

Table 1: Percentage Response of teachers on Primary schools affected by farmers herder's crisis in Gwer-West Local Government

| S/NO | NAME OF SCHOOL | AFFECTED | NOT-AFFECTED |
|------|------------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| 1. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL NAKA | | √ |
| 2. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL NAKA | | √ |
| 3. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL NAKA | | √ |
| 4. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AGAGBE | | √ |
| 5. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AONDONA | | √ |
| 6. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL AGBAJA | | √ |
| 7. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL APENDA | | √ |
| 8. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL TOMBU | | √ |
| 9. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAANYISA | | √ |
| 10. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL ACHU | | √ |
| 11. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL KWEGI | | √ |
| 12. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ORMIN | | √ |
| 13. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL TAMEN | | √ |
| 14. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL APIA | | √ |
| 15. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL UCHOUGH | | √ |
| 16. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MNGBEA | | √ |
| 17. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ATSWERGA | | √ |
| 18. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTSEKE | | √ |
| 19. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL ACHAGH | √ | |
| 20. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBASHIJA | √ | |
| 21. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ATUME | √ | |
| 22. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL TONGOV | √ | |
| 23. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MKOVUL | √ | |
| 24. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL KULA | √ | |
| 25. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL NAGI | √ | |
| 26. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAIER | √ | |
| 27. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL UBIR | √ | |
| 28. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL ATUKPU | √ | |
| 29. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL AKUME-GYALUWA | √ | |
| 30. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL GOH | √ | |
| 31. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AGBO-VENGAV | √ | |
| 32. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL IMANDE | √ | |
| 33. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AKUME-MBAKYURAN | √ | |
| 34. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL MANDAKI | √ | |
| 35. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL YOGBO | √ | |

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 36. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AKURA | √ | |
| 37. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL DUGERI | √ | |
| 38. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ATSEKE | √ | |
| 39. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL SHAAPERA | √ | |
| 40. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBATSUGH | √ | |
| 41. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAAKEM | √ | |
| 42. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL JIMBA | √ | |
| 43. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL YUGH | √ | |
| 44. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL IJAHA I | √ | |
| 45. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ANGBAN | √ | |
| 46. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILE | √ | |
| 47. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL AJIGBA | √ | |
| 48. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL IKYOR | √ | |
| 49. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRGI | √ | |
| 50. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ORAWE | √ | |
| 51. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AGBO-GYALUWA | √ | |
| 52. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAHUNGWA | √ | |
| 53. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAAKPE | √ | |
| 54. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AJEBE | √ | |
| 55. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL TSE-ALE | √ | |
| 56. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL TEMA-MBAKU | √ | |
| 57. | RCM PRIMARY SCHOOL AMEE | √ | |
| 58. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL JEJELE | √ | |
| 59. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBACHWA | √ | |
| 60. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL IGBAFU | √ | |
| 61. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL IJAHA II | √ | |
| 62. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ADAWA | √ | |
| 63. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAKOMBUR | √ | |
| 64. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAGBISHA | √ | |
| 65. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL GBABI | √ | |
| 66. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAWURA | √ | |
| 67. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ORKERGA | √ | |
| 68. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL KPERAM | √ | |
| 69. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL KYERKYAA | √ | |
| 70. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL ANKYE | √ | |
| 71. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBASHASE | √ | |
| 72. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL UKUMA | √ | |
| 73. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL IORSHASHE | √ | |
| 74. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL SHIA | √ | |
| 75. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAMONDU | √ | |
| 76. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL AKUTSA | √ | |
| 77. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL GABELA | √ | |
| 78. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAIKYU | √ | |
| 79. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL AZEM | √ | |
| 80. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL TSE-ABE | √ | |
| 81. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAGA | √ | |
| 82. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL TSWAREV | √ | |
| 83. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL IGBOJI | √ | |
| 84. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL INJOOV | √ | |
| 85. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL KUKU | √ | |
| 86. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGER | √ | |
| 87. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL KOKO | √ | |
| 88. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAGBERA | √ | |
| 89. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL OCHOLI | √ | |
| 90. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTSUAASOM | √ | |
| 91. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL UTEE | √ | |
| 92. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL ANYAKPA | √ | |
| 93. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL TEMA-DURA | √ | |
| 94. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAYEMEKEM | √ | |
| 95. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL UGONDU | √ | |
| 96. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL JOBAN | √ | |
| 97. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL UGBADU | √ | |
| 98. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL KWAGHTAGHER | √ | |
| 99. | NKST PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTA AV | √ | |

| | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 100. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAAGAV | √ | |
| 101. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL MBAZAM | √ | |
| 102. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL GAASE | √ | |
| 103. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL AHULA | √ | |
| 104. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL GBAAGBUM | √ | |
| 105. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL GBINDE | √ | |
| 106. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL NYONOWA | √ | |
| 107. | LGEA PRIMARY SCHOOL OLEGEJAMU | √ | |

Table 1 shows that Gwer-West Local Government have a total number of 107 primary schools. The table further revealed that only 18 primary schools are functioning which indicates that only 17% of the total population of primary school in Gwer-West are functional while the remaining 89 primary schools are shut down due to farmers herder's crisis amounting to 83% of total schools shut down.

Question 2 Outline the Effects of farmers herder's conflicts on primary school infrastructural development in Gwer-West Local Government

Table 2: Mean ratings of responses of teachers on the effects of farmers herder's crisis on primary school infrastructural development in Gwer-West Local Government

| S/NO. | Item Statement | Mean | SD | Remark |
|----------------------|---|------|-------|--------|
| 1 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to the destruction staff office | 3.42 | 0.695 | Agreed |
| 2 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to the burning down of classrooms | 3.45 | 0.631 | Agreed |
| 3 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to burning down of staff quarters | 3.54 | 0.632 | Agreed |
| 4 | Farmers-herders' conflicts lead to destruction of school desk | 3.41 | 0.671 | Agreed |
| 5 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to the destruction of teaching instructional materials | 3.49 | 0.586 | Agreed |
| 6 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to destruction of school records | 3.16 | 0.723 | Agreed |
| 7 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to the destruction of school library | 3.33 | 0.637 | Agreed |
| 8 | Farmers-herders conflicts destroys play equipment at play grounds | 3.17 | 0.804 | Agreed |
| 9 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to the destruction of school laboratories | 3.37 | 0.573 | Agreed |
| 10 | Farmers-herders conflicts lead to the destruction of toilet buildings | 3.30 | 0.717 | Agreed |
| Grand mean/SD | | 3.36 | 0.666 | |

Table 2 indicates responses of teachers on the effects of farmers herder's crisis on primary school infrastructural development in Gwer-West Local Government. items from 1-10 all had a mean score of 3.19 to 3.49 respectively which is above the bench mark of 2.50 with standard deviations ranging from 0.573 to 0.804. Based on the cut-off point of 2.50, the teachers rated all the items above the cut off marks of 2.50 indicating that farmers-herders conflicts lead to the destruction of staff offices and burning down of classrooms. the responses also indicated that staff quarters, children desk and instructional material are also destroyed as a result of this conflicts. school records, library facilities and children play ground are also affected by this conflict while school laboratories and toilet buildings are not left out

The cluster mean of 3.36 and standard deviation of 0.666 were rated above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that farmers-herders conflicts affect infrastructural development of primary schools in Gwer-west Government.

Question 3. Determine the variation of primary school pupil's enrolment from the period of 2013/2014 academic session to 2023/2024 academic session in Gwer-West Local Government

Table 3 shows variations of pupils' enrolment from the period of 2013/2014 academic session to 2023/2024 academic session

| S/NO | SESSION | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL ENROLMENT | PERCENTAGE ENROLMENT PER SESSION |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 2013/2014 | 11,067 | 9,053 | 20,120 | 12% |
| 2 | 2014/2015 | 10,212 | 8,413 | 18,625 | 11% |
| 3 | 2015/2016 | 10,015 | 7,040 | 17,055 | 10% |
| 4 | 2016/2017 | 9,905 | 7,015 | 16,920 | 10% |
| 5 | 2017/2018 | 9,217 | 7,008 | 16,225 | 10% |
| 6 | 2018/2019 | 9,018 | 6,300 | 15,318 | 9% |
| 7 | 2019/2020 | 9,006 | 6,126 | 15,132 | 9% |
| 8 | 2020/2021 | 8,328 | 5,362 | 13,690 | 8% |
| 9 | 2021/2022 | 8,134 | 5,120 | 13,254 | 8% |
| 10 | 2022/2023 | 7,520 | 5,016 | 12,536 | 7% |
| 11 | 2023/2024 | 7,215 | 4,560 | 11,775 | 7% |
| GRAND TOTAL | | 99,367 | 71,013 | 170,650 | 100% |

Data in table 3 shows variations of primary school pupil's enrolment in Gwer-West Local Government for 10 academic sessions spanning from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024. The data indicate that there is continuous decrease in pupil's enrolment. In 2013/2014 academic session, a total number of 20,120 pupil's were enrolled which made up 12% of the total enrolment of 170,650 for 10 academic sessions, in 2014/2015 academic session the total enrolment dropped by 1% with a total pupil's enrolment of 18,625. The decline continued with 1% drop in 2015/2016 and remained constant in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic session. In 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, there was 1% decline from 10% to 9% with further decline to 8% in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. In 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, pupil's enrolment further declined by 1% from 8% to 7%. Within the period of 2013/2014 to 2023/2023 academic session, there was a total enrolment variation of 8,345 pupil's which constitute 59% decline in the total enrolment.

Discussion of finding

The finding of this study revealed that conflicts between farmers and herdsmen have significant effect on the functionality and operations of primary schools in Gwer-West Local Government Areas of Benue State as table 1 indicate that 83% of primary schools are shut down.

Findings in table 2 revealed that all infrastructural facilities ranging from classrooms, staff offices and quarter, laboratories among others are destroyed as a result of farmers and herdsmen's conflicts

This is in line with Ahmed (2015) who observed that in the 21st century most school facilities and documents have been destroyed as a result of farmers herdsmen's conflicts thereby keeping students and teachers out of school. This is in consonance with Okereke (2012) Kasarachi (2016) who pointed out that serious conflict between herdsmen and farmers leads to destruction of valuable properties. Suleiman (2016), also reported that whenever farmers-herdsmen disaster strikes, infrastructural facilities in the schools such as classroom buildings, offices, books and other relevant documents are greatly damaged or destroyed. This is in consonance with Ahmed (2015) who notes that when there is natural disaster or herdsmen-farmers clash in an area, it affects school enrolment because many people run from their places of abode to safer places.

Table 3 revealed that there was a continuous decline in pupil's enrolment from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024. This aligns with the views of Eme, Ugwu and Onuigbo (2017) who amongst other reasons pointed out population displacement and death people within the communities as a result of farmers herdsmen's conflicts also affects activities within the community. When people are displaced from their communities, abandon all activities that are carried out within the immediate environment which schools are also inclusive. Musa and Shabu (2014) also agreed that displacement of both farmers and herdsmen decrease output in every sector of the economy. this affects school enrolment as both parents and pupils relocate to safe areas where there are no conflicts.

Conclusion

It is clear that farmers and herdsmen's conflicts has great effects on the existence, functionality and operations of primary schools in Gwer-West local Government with ravaging effects on its infrastructural development and a decline in pupil's enrolment as long as the conflicts continues

The study revealed that Gwer-West local Government has a total number of 107 primary schools with only 18 of the schools in operation. A larger number of 89 primary school has been shut down due to farmer herdsmen's conflicts. Moreso, the conflicts have effects on the infrastructural development of the schools as all school facilities are destroyed. This has in turn affected pupil's enrolment as most parents and pupils are displaced from their homes leading to decline in pupil's enrolment.

Recommendation

Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. Government should beef up security around the communities and around schools to ensure that schools are not shut down
2. Government should enact laws restriction open grazing and encourage ranching so as to protect primary school infrastructure
3. Parents should be encouraged enrol pupils in schools where there's security

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