

## **Conflict Management Mechanisms and Internally Displaced Women in Nigeria: The Case of Pastoralist-Farmer Conflict in Benue and Nasarawa States**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The conflict between pastoralists and farmers in Benue and Nasarawa states has taken its toll on the internally displaced (ID) women. Despite the conflict management strategies adopted in managing the conflict, yet, it remains intractable and the plights of displaced women lingers. The study examined how conflict management mechanisms in pastoralist-farmer conflict impacted the plights of displaced women in Benue and Nasarawa states. Impoverishment risks and reconstruction framework was adopted to anchor the study. Descriptive research design was employed to obtain the data. A validated questionnaire and interview were used to obtain the primary data. It was found that negotiation, mediation, compensation and deployment of security agents were adopted in managing the conflict. However, management of the conflict was characterized by extortion and lack of skills by the stakeholders involved. Security agents perpetrated human rights violations against women. The conflict management measures adopted were exclusive of the internally displaced women, hence, humanitarian crisis continues. There is need for training of the stakeholders involved in conflict management skills. Security agents need to be trained and retrained in skill acquisition and capacity building. Internally displaced women are to be included in the local peace committees in order to have the humanitarian challenges affecting them presented and addressed.

**Keywords:** Pastoralists, Farmers, Pastoralist-Farmer Conflict, Conflict Management and Internally Displaced Women

### **Introduction**

Pastoralist-farmer conflict has been in existence since the beginning of agriculture and it cuts across cultures and societies. It is a common feature of political economy in sub-Saharan African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Mali, Chad, Niger, and Cote d'Ivoire. Before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, pastoralist-farmer conflicts were restricted to the savanna belts of West Africa. Cattle rearing was mainly prevalent in Guinea, Sudan and the Sahel Savanna where crop production was carried out due to short rainy season and in small scale. The Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s forced pastoralists from the Sahel to migrate into the coastal zones of West Africa in search of fresh water and green pastures for their animals. At the same time, improved human health increased overall population, therefore, causing pressure on arable land. However, the two agricultural groups were able to co-exist through the exchange of crop residues for manure (Blench & Dendo, 2003).



Apart from ethno-religious/sectarian conflicts that have been experienced in Nigeria since independence in 1960, pastoralist-farmer conflict has constituted a security issue. Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have become incessant and common in some parts of Nigeria, particularly in the North Central geopolitical zone. The conflicts have led to the destruction of lives and property leaving communities desolated. It is alarmingly becoming widespread in such states within and beyond the North Central states such as Benue, Taraba, Plateau, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Kwara, Ogun, Oyo, Kaduna, Sokoto and Delta (Olayoku, 2014). The conflict spreads to other parts of the country as the pastoralists move from the arid Northern part of the country to the water-logged South.

The climatic change which occasioned drought and desertification in the North necessitates the migration of the pastoralists which often leads to conflict between the pastoralists and their host communities. Also, struggle over fresh water and arable land between the two agricultural producers has encouraged hostilities and social friction in many parts of the country. The conflict has encouraged instability, large and destabilizing population movements, aggravated ethnic and religious tensions, and incapacitated political and social institutions. High level of insecurity has not only been occasioned by the conflict but high potential to exacerbate food crisis in Nigeria has been demonstrated due to loss of farmers' lives, cattle, crops and valuable properties (Dosu, 2011, Solagberu, 2010).

Pastoralist-farmer conflicts have been so rampant in some communities of North Central Nigeria. The eruption of the violent conflict has led to massive internal displacement of people as experienced in the North Central, particularly in Benue and Nasarawa states where the pastoralist-farmer conflict is very rampant. The conflict has not only manifested in a fierce competition over grazing or farming land but subsumed in a broader dichotomy of religion, making it to become more lethal with the introduction of sophisticated weapons which seems to have assumed terrorist dimensions. The strategy of 'sack and occupy' employed by the pastoralists has not only caused more destruction of lives and properties but widespread displacement of people with attendant protection issues.

The vulnerabilities the displaced women are exposed to due to displacement have become matters of more increasing concern. For instance, in Benue state, over 50,000 people abandoned their homes as a result of the incessant and unresolved conflict between the farmers and pastoralists between 2009 and 2013 while in Nasarawa state 41,129 individuals live with host communities as at July, 2015 because of the displacement caused by the pastoralist-farmer conflicts (Displacement Tracking Matrix, 2015). The inability of various stakeholders such as governments, community leaders, pastoralists, farmers and their associations to provide acceptable conflict management strategies to resolve the pastoralist-farmer conflict, constitutes a concern to scholars and policy makers. The grave humanitarian issues arising from the conflict such as the risks and vulnerabilities the internally displaced (ID) women are exposed to in various camps, school buildings and host communities where they fled to for safety have been worrisome. It is against this background that this paper attempts an analysis of how conflict management mechanisms adopted in pastoralist-farmer conflict affected the protection of



IDwomen in Benue and Nasarawa States. The specific objective is to describe the plights of internally displaced (ID) women in the pastoralist-farmer conflict in Benue and Nasarawa States.

### Statement of the Problem

Studies have been conducted on the causes and socio-economic consequences of pastoralist-farmer conflict in West Africa adopting different theoretical and methodological prisms (Abdoulaye, Issa & Nouhoun, 2015; Audu, 2014; Babiker, 2011; Bond, 2014; Msuya, 2013; Mwafupe, 2013; Ogu, 2016; Opoku, 2014; Sigalla, 2013). Empirical evidence has also demonstrated that pastoralist-farmer conflict causes displacement of people and challenges of protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Cohen & Deng, 2009; Crisp, 2012; Dawoud & Hassen, 2015, Hundie, 2010; Iwabukuna, 2011; Milner & Loescher, 2012). However, conflict management mechanisms adopted in pastoralist-farmer conflict and their effects on displaced women's access to protection have not been given exhaustive attention.

In Benue and Nasarawa States, internally displaced (ID) women experience challenges of protection as a result of intractable pastoralist-farmer conflict. Despite intervention by stakeholders in managing the conflict, yet, it remained unabated and women continue to experience protection problems. The lack of attention for conflict management mechanisms in respect of the protection of IDwomen begs for scholarly attention. Therefore, the paper fills the intellectual vacuum on how the conflict management mechanisms adopted in pastoralist-farmer conflict addressed the plights of ID women in Benue and Nasarawa states. In doing this, it attempts to answer the following questions: What are the challenges confronting the IDwomen as a result of incessant pastoralist-farmer conflict? How did the conflict management mechanisms adopted in managing pastoralist-farmer conflict address the plights of ID women in Benue and Nasarawa states?

### Literature Review

Pastoralist-farmer conflict in West Africa has turned the sub-region into a theatre of war particularly in Niger, Benin Republic and Mali. Environmental degradation, resource scarcity, demographic change and political instability have been the predisposing factors causing internecine conflict which makes the sub-region to demonstrate elements of anarchy (Shettima & Tar, 2008). The pastoralists in the West African sub-region, the nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists move within and across borders principally in search of water and pasture for their herds and in the process come in contact with the settled crop farmers which often lead to conflict as a result of crop destruction and struggle over few available environmental resources (Audu, 2014; Ofem, 2014). Msuya (2013) posited that encroachment of livestock routes (*Burtalis*) by the crop farmers is the remote cause of the violent conflict. This view is in line with the argument of Nformi (2014) that pastoralist-farmer conflict is prevalent in many West African states mainly because of the encroachment of the cattle routes by farmers which leads to the reduction of the width of the cattle routes leading to trampling of crops. The aforementioned positions contradict the view of scholars such as Oyama (2014), Lawuo, Mbagha and Mnayawi (2014) that pastoralists are culpable for the perennial conflicts as they allow cattle to veer off the cattle routes during migration and cause destruction to farmers' crops in Tanzania.



Pastoralist-farmer conflict is often articulated in bigger conflicts with religious, ethnic and political dimensions. It is often considered as relatively smaller, low level in West African sub-region but may be increasingly articulated with other conflicts of interests which might lead to intra and inter-state wars with serious effects on food security, regional peace, security, cooperation and development. However, pastoralist-farmer conflict is no longer considered as a relatively small and low level conflict as opined by Mwamfupe (2015) given the intensity, intractability and the level of destruction and magnitude of displacement it has caused which portends danger to sub-regional stability and peace in Africa.

On the conflict management mechanisms adopted to address conflict in sub-Saharan African states, Emmanuel and Ndimbwa (2013) opined that traditional mechanisms for resolving land-related conflicts in Tanzania have been useful in bringing harmony and peace among the members of the society. They are created within the socio-political structure of every community and have been shaped by the realities happening in every community, particularly among Gorowa of Babati in Tanzania. Also, in Kenya, due to lack of faith in the use of court because of the expensive procedures, traditional justice mechanisms are adopted in managing pastoralist-farmer conflict. The use of council of elders, inter-ethnic marriages, resource management agreements and ethnic group alliances formed parts of traditional justice mechanisms used in Kenya. In Turkana, Borana and Somali communities, council of elders is in use but is unable to enforce punishment to the offenders. In a study conducted by Ruto, Adan and Masinde (2014), it was found that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were used among the pastoralists in Pokot, Turkana, Marakwet and Samburu. Council of elders is seen as being trustworthy and knowledgeable in the affairs of their communities which allow them to make informal and reasonable decisions.

As argued by Chikaire, Ajaero, Ibe, Orush & Onogu, (2018), pastoralists and farmers prefer the use of traditional institutions to courts because they want preservation of mutual relationships between them. Chikaire, et al (2018), further noted that mediators are sought from the communities of the warring parties and as such, elders used are respected for their roles in the community. Also, adjudication is used in many traditional African societies by bringing the two disputants together for peaceful resolution of the conflict. In a study conducted in Zamfara by Umar (2010), it was found that the conflicting parties made use of traditional arbitrators, using the security agents is not a common practice among the people. However, council of elders might not be effective in resolving pastoralist-farmer conflict because of the reduction in their integrity due to extortionary tendencies, erosion of powers and inability to enforce decisions which may cause the conflict to become intractable( Kratli& Swift, 2014).Ruto, et. al. (2014) further argued that inability to resolve pastoralist-farmer conflict has worsened the plight of the internally displaced persons exposing them to hardship in the camps and host communities.

Sheekh, Atta-Asamoah and Sharamo (2012) described how internal displacement has forced hundreds of thousands of pastoralists and farmers to flee their homes in Northern Kenya. They argued that displacement has occasioned severe humanitarian consequences which have been persisting for decades without adequate attention by both national and international



stakeholders. Complex factors that have occasioned the displacement of pastoralists and farmers in Northern Kenya are colonially established boundaries, violence and conflict, human rights abuses, historical injustices and environmental conditions. Challenges facing internally displaced persons include lack of protection and assistance, risks to health, lack of access to education, political, economic and social marginalization, denial and violations of rights to development and sustainable livelihoods (Rhoades, 2010). Brown (2014) argued that the inability of the traditional/community leaders to manage pastoralist-farmer conflict often leads to escalation making governments to deploy security agents in order to ensure law and order. However, deployment of security agents to manage a conflict gives room to human rights violations such as indiscriminate arrest, extra judicial killings and sexual molestation of women and girls.

### **Theoretical framework**

The paper adopts Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) as a framework of analysis. The Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction framework was formulated and developed by Cernea in the 1990s in a series of studies (Cernea, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1998 and 1999). As a theory, it was developed to analyze the risks associated with development-induced displacement. According to him, there are risks and vulnerabilities associated with displacement which include landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property and resources, impoverishment and social disarticulation. In order to address the challenges caused by displacement, Cernea advanced that there must be focused developmental strategies adequately financed by governments in order to alleviate the risks and vulnerabilities the displaced populations are confronted with. However, in order to avoid over romanticization, other displacement scholars such as Mathur, Mahapatra, Agnihotri and Parasurama have leveled series of criticisms against the IRR theory.

For instance, Mathur (1999) critiqued the theory for not including other risks such as loss of access to public services and civil rights. As Agnihotri (1996) critiqued, the IRR theory lacks gender-oriented analysis, as internal displacement affects men and women differently. Women are prone to more vulnerabilities and risks than men; they tend to suffer severe impacts of displacement. Women also suffer discrimination in the area of compensation criteria as witnessed in Orissa in India where an entitlement to land compensation is set at 18 years for men and 30 years for women. In addition, gender-based violence which results due to displacement is not included as part of the risks internally displaced persons face particularly women and girls. The IRR theory developed by Cernea is adopted as an analytical framework for its elucidating manner in explaining risks, vulnerabilities and protection issues associated with forceful displacement whether through conflict, development and natural disasters. As a matter of fact, internal displacement engenders prognoses which pose as threats to protection of lives of the internally displaced persons.

### **Study Areas**

The first area of the study is Benue state. Benue State has twenty-three (23) local government areas. The local government areas include Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer-East, Gwer- West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi,





Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya. It is bordered by Nasarawa state to the North, Taraba state to the East, Ebonyi and Cross River states to the South and Kogi state to the West. Predominantly, Benue state is inhabited by the Tiv and Idoma people, who speak Tiv and Idoma languages respectively. Other ethnic groups in the state include Igede, Etulo, Abakwa, Jukun, Aweya and Nyifon (Alimba, 2014). Availability of water and pastures in the state caused the influx of the pastoralists which often pitched them against the farmers. Persistent conflicts between the farmers and pastoralists caused the destruction of lives, property and displacement of people with attendant issues of protection of the displaced persons in the affected local government areas of Agatu, Kwande, Gwer-West, Vandeikya, Logo, Guma, Makurdi and Gwer East ( BENSEMA, 2015; NCSAN, 2015).

The second area of the study is Nasarawa state. It was carved out of Plateau State on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996 by General Sanni Abacha's Administration. It is bounded in the North by Kaduna State, in the West by Abuja Federal Capital Territory, in the South by Kogi and Benue States and in the East by Taraba and Plateau States. It comprises of thirteen local government areas. Nassarawa State consists of different ethnic groups such as Eggon, Hausa-Fulani, Tiv, Jukun, Gbanyi, Egbira, Doma, Alago, Kambari/Kanuri, to mention but a few. The state is not densely populated which makes it favorable to grazing and agricultural production. The influx of the pastoralists into the area, struggle over increasingly scarce land and vegetal resources, conflicts have become incessant. Two local government areas affected by the pastoralist-farmer conflict and displacement with challenges of protection are Keana and Nasarawa Eggon.

## Research Methods

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study in order to make generalization of the findings based on the drawn samples. Mixed method, qualitative and quantitative means, was used in data gathering process in order to have in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and also give accurate description which could be validated by empirical investigation that has scientific explanation and predictive outcome (Ray, 2012). The population of study is Benue and Nasarawa states. The Local Government Areas affected by the pastoralist-farmer conflict in Benue and Nasarawa States constituted the target population of the study. In Benue state, Makurdi, Guma, Logo, Gwer- East, Kwande, Gwer -West, Vandeikya and Agatu were the affected local government areas while Nasarawa Eggon and Keana were also affected in Nasarawa state (BENSEMA, 2015 and NCSAN, 2015). The estimated population of the local government areas affected in Benue State are: Makurdi (500,797), Guma (191,599), Logo (169,570), Gwer East (195,955), Kwande (288,881), Gwer West (142,107), Vandeikya (272,528) and Agatu (115,597) (National Population Commission, 2015, BENSEMA, 2015). Also, in Nasarawa State, the estimated population of the local government areas affected are: Keana (79,253) and Nasarawa Eggon (172,422) (National Population Commission, 2015, NASEMA (2015). The total population of the study is 2,128,709.



## Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling techniques adopted for the study were purposive, snowball and simple random. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the interviews (in-depth interview and focus group discussion). The reason for adopting purposive sampling technique was because there was no reliable sampling frame that could be used. Also, the technique was utilized to select individuals and organizations who were either eyewitnesses or stakeholders that needed to provide information on the phenomenon. For the questionnaire administration, respondents were selected from the six internally displaced persons' camps established for the pastoralist-farmer displaced people in both Benue and Nasarawa States. A total number of three hundred and sixty copies of questionnaire were administered to the ID women in the two states.

Simple random technique was employed in selecting 360 respondents to give them equal chance of being selected. The three established camps in Benue state for the pastoralist-farmer conflict IDPs are North Bank (Makurdi), Anyii (Logo) and Daudu (Guma) (BENSEMA, 2016). Also, the three IDP camps in Nasarawa state are Guruku, Awe and Kugbaru (Nasarawa Eggon) (NASEMA, 2016). A total number of 180 copies of questionnaire were administered to ID women in Benue and Nasarawa states respectively so as to elicit information on their protection issues. Purposively, in Daudu (Guma), 60 respondents were selected out of 1800, in Anyii (Logo), 60 respondents were selected out of 1000 while in North Bank (Makurdi), 60 participants were selected out of 980. In Nasarawa state, 60 respondents were selected out of 900 in Guruku while 60 participants were selected out of 720 in Awe.

In Kugbaru, 60 individuals were selected out of 600. Through snowball, the participants were interviewed to provide first-hand information on the subject matter based on experience and position. The pastoralists, community leaders, Sariks (pastoralists' leaders), farmers, security agents, NGO officials and ID women were reached and interviewed. Twenty participants were interviewed by making use of in-depth interviews. In Benue state, fifteen participants were interviewed while five were interviewed in Nasarawa state. Four focus group discussions were conducted in the two states. Twelve participants were interviewed in focus group discussion in Benue state and Nasarawa states respectively. The focus groups include the pastoralists, farmers, non-governmental organization (NGOs) officials, security agents and representatives of ID women. Each focus group consisted of seven members. In all, twenty-eight participants were engaged in focus group discussions. Validated questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion guides were used to collect data. Three hundred and fifteen (315) copies of questionnaire were retrieved out of three hundred and sixty (360), representing the response rate of 88%.

## Results and discussion

This section presents an analysis of the data on the plights of internally displaced (ID) women caused by incessant conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in Benue and Nasarawa states.

**Table 1.1 The plights of internally displaced(ID) women in Benue and Nasarawa states due to pastoralist-farmer conflict**

	Research items	SA	A	SD	D
1	Physical protection of the internally displaced women is guaranteed in the camps	49(15.6%)	25(7.9%)	213(67.6%)	28(8.8%)
2	Means of livelihood are available for the ID women	11(3.5%)	9(2.8%)	256(81%)	39(2.9%)
3	Feeding is provided in the camp for the ID women	6(1.9%)	3(1%)	290(92%)	16(5.1%)
4	Sanitary provision is available for the ID women	10(3.2%)	7(2.2%)	200(63%)	98(31.1%)
5	There is water supply in the camp for use	18(5.7%)	19(6%)	199(63.2%)	79(25.1%)
6	There is availability of health care facility for ID women in the camp	19(6.%)	21(6.6%)	230(73%)	45(14.2%)
7	Female ID women are protected from sexual violence	10(3.2%)	9(2.8%)	266(84%)	30(9.5%)
8	There is provision for post-trauma management services for ID women	5(1.5%)	5(1.5%)	289(91.7%)	16(5%)
9	Gender-based violence is experienced by ID women	10(3.2%)	15(4.8%)	212(67%)	78(24.8%)

**Source: Field survey, 2019**

From table 1.1, 96% believed that there is no physical protection in the camp. It can be depicted that physical safety is not guaranteed, hence, series of human rights violations. 83.9% felt that means of livelihood were not available as there are no jobs to do, hence, economic hardship prevails. 97% thought that there is inadequate feeding in the camp. Women are not adequately fed in the camps in the two states. 94% felt that there is no sanitary provision in the camp. The implication of this is that women experience health issues as there is no health facility provided. 88% thought that there is no supply of water in the camp. Non-availability of social amenities like water can predispose to health issues. 87% believed that there are no health care facilities available to address any ill-health experienced by the displaced. Close to 94% felt that women face sexual violence as a result of displacement caused by the pastoralist- farmer conflict. While close to 97% felt that there are no post-trauma management services provided to





address the psychological problem confronting them. 91.8% believed gender-based violence is experienced in the camp as a protection issue.

Findings from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed that the plights of internally displaced women include physical insecurity, joblessness, hunger, malnutrition, health issues, sexual violence, trauma and even death. The officials said that all the ten council wards in Agatu local government area of Benue state had people massively displaced making them to be exposed to risks and vulnerabilities. One of them further revealed that there were no shelters for the displaced women in the communities, most of them spent time under the trees, in uncompleted buildings and abandoned schools while others moved in with their relatives in other communities.

A group of community leaders in a focus group discussion stated that the responses of government at all levels varied. The local governments only responded to the needs of the women at the initial stage of displacement by bringing relief materials but no further action was taken as to how they would be accommodated. Many lived with friends and relatives while some went back to their communities without adequate security in place. The few ones who stayed in camps are not adequately provided with security, food, health facilities and means of livelihood as many of them engaged in menial jobs for survival. Also, they noted that non-governmental organizations have been helpful in providing relief materials to the displaced women in camps through the help of private individuals who saw it as their responsibility to help.

A group of displaced women engaged in a focus group discussion in Keana, Nasarawa state, said their houses were burnt down by the attackers, property and farm produce were looted, pregnant women were ripped of their unborn babies, women were raped before they were killed and their worship centers were destroyed. Some of the challenges they confronted include lack of job, food, water, insecurity, poor sanitation, ill health, psychological trauma as a result of the death of their loved ones, sexual assault/exploitation, marital break-ups and neglect by their representatives in governments when they needed them most. In a discussion with a group of non-governmental organization officials, they stated that internally displaced persons faced harrowing experience and protection issues.

Another identified problem facing the displaced women was ill-health. A lot of the displaced persons in the camps have one health issue or the other. No health facilities were provided to attend to these issues. Many of the women did not have money to transport themselves to health centers in safe communities less to buy drugs even if prescribed. According to the NGOs officials, the challenge of ill-health cuts across all the camps in the two states which has resulted into deaths as no health facilities were readily available. The common health issues the displaced people suffered were malaria and cholera as a result of the unhygienic environment they lived. Also, during childbirth, no medical personnel is available to help in the delivery which often time leads to maternal mortality.

Also, gender-based violence was identified as one of the vulnerabilities ID women face in camps and host communities. Cases of rape, prostitution/survival sex and exploitation are



common among young women. One of the non-governmental organization officials said “internally displaced women face a lot of abuses and they are too vulnerable as a result of the death of their husbands”. Many of those who managed to escape being killed by the Fulani attackers have no house, food and jobs to do. Those who squatted in other communities considered safe face sexual abuses. Revealing further, she said girls uprooted from communities’ barter sex for food, money and shelter since they have lost their parents due to the attacks. Many of the women staying with people in the host communities who are not in camp are exploited on a daily basis. Women were prone to different degrees of sexual violence such as rape by the Fulani pastoralists during attacks and if they managed to escape they are sexually violated by men in the host communities and camps leading to psychological trauma.

From the findings of the study, the persistent conflicts between pastoralists and farmers subjected the internally displaced persons to multiple displacements in many communities. The participants identified the protection issues to include but not limited to sleeping under the trees, uncompleted buildings and abandoned schools, hunger, starvation, lack of money due to loss of means of livelihood, family disorganization, psychological trauma due to the death of relatives, depression, mental ill-health and gender based sexual violence. The protection issues faced by the displaced women confirms the position of Cernea (1999) that landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, insecurity, increased morbidity, impoverishment and loss of access to common property are protection issues associated with displacement of people. The finding of the study corroborates Mathur(1999) on the experience of internally displaced women who were raped during the conflict and are still further subjected to sexual exploitation by the ‘good Samaritans’ who housed them since their husbands were killed and their houses burnt down by the assailants. The internally displaced women find it difficult to seek justice for the fear of marginalization and stigmatization. This section presents an analysis of the data on the conflict management mechanisms and plights of internally displaced (ID) women in Benue and Nasarawa states

**Table 2.1. Conflict management mechanisms and plights of internally displaced (ID) women in Benue and Nasarawa states**

S/ N	Research items	SA	A	SD	D
1	Negotiation is effective in addressing the plights of ID women in Benue and Nasarawa states	28 (8.8%)	15 (4.8%)	178 (56.5%)	94 (29.8%)
2	Mediation ID women’s access to protection	20 (6.3%)	25 (7.9%)	201(64%)	69 (22%)
3	Arbitration help the ID women’s access to protection	12 (3.8%)	5 (1.5%)	210 (66.6%)	88 (27.9%)
4	Use of courts is effective in protecting the ID women	32(10%)	18(5.7%)	188(59.7%)	77 (24%)
5	Deployment of security agents guarantees protection of ID women	33(10%)	12(3.8%)	250(79%)	20(6%)

in the two states				
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**Source: Field survey, 2019**

From table 2.1 presented, 87.3% believed that negotiation did not guarantee protection of internally displaced women. It can be depicted that negotiation was adopted in managing pastoralist-farmer conflict, but was ineffective in guaranteeing the protection of the displaced women. 86% felt that mediation did not provide access to protection to the internally displaced women. Third party intervention has not been able to resolve the incessant conflict between the two warring parties. 96% believed that arbitration did not guarantee the protection of the displaced women. Use of court was not effective in protecting the displaced women. This suggests that the courts that are supposed to be the last hope of the oppressed have failed the plight of the masses in flight. 85% thought that deployment of the security agents could not provide protection to the displaced women. Security agents are most frequently deployed by the government when conflict escalates in order to instill law and order. Varying degrees of human rights abuses are perpetrated with impunity without being held accountable in a conflict situation.

Findings revealed that the conflict management mechanisms adopted in pastoralist-farmer conflict have not been effective in guaranteeing the protection of internally displaced women. Most of the participants said that the conflict management mechanisms used in mitigating pastoralist-farmer conflict have not been effective and protection of internally displaced women was not provided for. Different factors were mentioned affecting the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms adopted in the protection of the displaced women. Such include lack of mediatory skills by the community leaders, non-inclusion/poor representation of the IDPs in the management process (which could have given them opportunity to present issues affecting them), and corruption of the community leaders, policemen and civilian joint task force which made people to lose faith in the institutions. According to the participants, on many occasions when the community leaders engaged the pastoralists and farmers in a series of negotiation in order to ensure peaceful co-existence, challenges of the IDPs will not be discussed at all. It was only the interests of the conflicting or warring parties that were always considered without paying attention to the displacement crisis engendered by the conflict.

A pastoralist interviewed in Nasarawa state said that negotiation as a tool for managing pastoralist-farmer conflict is not effective because of corrupt practices of some community leaders who would collect money from the pastoralists before grazing takes place in their communities. Most often, the owners of the farms would not be involved and when conflict occurs rather than the community leaders to mediate, they would not be available. Most of the pastoralists believed that negotiation cannot make peaceful resolution possible because of extortion by the community leaders and also farmers use chemicals intentionally to poison crops for their cattle even after collecting money from them, which results into death of cattle.

In a focus group discussion with the non-governmental organization's officials in Benue state, it was revealed that mediation as a conflict management mechanism in resolving



pastoralist-farmer conflict in the communities has not been effective. It was noted that the community leaders, *ArDOS* (herders' leaders), non-government organizations and government officials have played mediatory role in order to resolve the conflict in Benue and Nasarawa States. They revealed that most decisions such as restriction of movement of foreign pastoralists in communities prone to conflicts, withdrawal of weapons in circulation, creation of grazing lands for the pastoralists in their lands, among others, were not upheld. It was also revealed that when mediations took place between the warring parties and stakeholders, internally displaced persons challenges were not presented.

In an in-depth interview conducted with one of the traditional leaders in Kurape village in Nasarawa state, he thought that mediation should be an effective way of resolving pastoralist-farmer conflict but it has not been so because of corruption and poor leadership of the community leaders, police, pastoralists' association and civilian joint task force. He said the community leaders and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association in Nigeria have failed in playing effective role in resolving the conflict because of corrupt practices and leadership tussle. He noted further that land belongs to the people in both Benue and Nasarawa states. Any land that should be allocated to any stranger must be with the consent of the people. He pointed out that corrupt community leaders/village heads allocate land to the pastoralists after collecting money without the knowledge of the people. When conflicts occur, they would not be found to intervene because of the wrath of their people. According to him, the community leaders have lost the credibility of playing any mediatory role effectively. What the pastoralists do most of the time is to resort to fighting and killing of people.

A group of NGO officials revealed that the use of security agents in resolving the conflict has not been effective because they committed human rights abuse by arresting and torturing women who were not even perpetrators of the violence. They noted that what deployment of security agents did was to instill fear and impose negative peace rather than paying attention to the causes of the conflict. They said that security agents were deployed when the conflict had escalated resulting into destruction of lives and properties. One of them said deployment of security forces could not guarantee the protection of women. He mentioned when displacement occurred the security agents found it difficult to guarantee physical protection of the displaced women. Even in the camps and communities they ran to for safety, security agents were not found to ensure physical protection of the displaced women. Deployment of security agents in managing conflict, particularly the pastoralist-farmer conflict has not brought any relief to women in terms of their protection; instead violation of women's rights persists. As established in the literature, scholars such as Kratli and Swift (2014) argued that negotiation and mediation through customary institutions for managing conflict are breaking down as a result of undermining the position of elders by modern changes in tradition of a market economy and increasing polarization of the rich and poor. This scholarly position is in tandem with the opinions of the participants who agreed that negotiation, mediation and alternative dispute resolution would not guarantee the protection of ID women due to poor mediatory skills by the community leaders, non-inclusion/non-representation of the displaced women in the management processes, corruption of the community leaders, policemen and Civilian Joint Task Force.





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## Conclusion

The study concludes that the conflict management mechanisms adopted in pastoralist-farmer conflict have negative consequences on the physical, socio-economic and psychological well-being of the ID women in Benue and Nasarawa States. The protection of IDP women cannot be divorced from the conflict management process for peace to be achieved and sustained. Protection of IDP women has a lot to do with the pastoralist-farmer conflict management. In other words, the conflict management mechanisms adopted in managing pastoralist-farmer had implications on impacting internally displaced women's access to protection. The experience and challenges of protection of internally displaced women are critical and necessary to be mainstreamed into the conflict management processes for actions to be taken.

It is evident from the study that different institutions and management mechanisms were used in resolving pastoralist-farmer conflict. The institutions like traditional rulers, community leaders, village heads, *Sariks* (pastoralists' leaders), security agents, government officials, civil society groups such as Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, etc., have at one time or the other mediated in the conflict but protection of ID women became more of a precarious situation. The study found that community leaders, security agents particularly the police, civilian joint task force members and youths were alleged to have played irresponsible role of extorting money from the conflicting parties which undermined the process. The mechanisms were ineffective as found by the study due to the corruption that permeated the conflict resolution processes.

## Recommendations

There is need for government at the various levels to separate budgets allocated for the IDPs and disaster management because not all disasters cause displacement and the consequential challenges like violent conflicts.

The mediatory processes were peopled by unskilled individuals such as the community leaders and village heads. Training and re-training of the community leaders and village heads in mediation therefore become necessary since they are the first point of call when conflicts occur. This should be handled by the non-governmental organizations specializing in conflict management such as Justice Development and Peace Commission.

During conflict and post conflict, internally displaced women are traumatized due to lack of means of livelihood, death of loved ones, mental distress, etc., leading to psychological trauma. Centers can be established to train people on trauma management and provide services to ID women.

There is need to train and re-train the security personnel on how to relate with the civilians during conflict situations. Security agents found violating civilians particularly ID women should be prosecuted to serve as a deterrent to others. ID women should be empowered through skill acquisition provided by NGOs and supported by government in order to make them



less dependent on the hand-outs given by the individuals. It is necessary for women to be included in the conflict management processes in order to present the challenges confronting them so that the stakeholders can provide solution.

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