



IMPLICATIONS OF THE BAWKU CHIEFTAINCY CONFLICT ON BASIC EDUCATION IN THE BAWKU TRADITIONAL AREA OF THE UPPER EAST REGION OF GHANA

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Abstract

Ghana is locally and internationally described as an oasis of peace and stability in a continent circumvented by conflicts. This is because the country has not experienced any civil war or large-scale violence since independence in March 1957. Nevertheless, it is faced with pouches of relative violence, including ethnic conflicts, land/resource based conflicts, religious violence and chieftaincy disputes, having devastating implications on socio-economic development. This paper contributes to the debate on the implications of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict on basic education in the Bawku Traditional Area of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The Protracted Social Conflict Theory underpinning the Bawku chieftaincy conflict was examined. Data for the study were drawn from both primary and secondary sources, comprising books, articles, journals, newspapers, theses, interviews and focus group discussions. The study revealed that the conflict has had devastating effects on basic education in the area in terms of completion rates, gender equality, educational attainment rates and educational infrastructure. To minimise the adverse effects of the conflict on basic education in the area, the paper recommends campaign on the implications of the conflict on the socio-economic development of the area, particularly on basic education by the government, non-governmental organisations and opinion leaders.

Keywords: *Conflict, chieftaincy, education, development, Bawku, Ghana*

Introduction

Give me the money that has been spent in conflicts and I will cloth every man, woman, and child in an attire of which kings and queens will be proud. I will build schools in every valley over the whole earth. I will crown every hillside with a place of worship consecrated to peace (Anderson & Sumner, 2006).

Anderson & Sumner's (2006) assertion explain why there is the need to study conflict and the benefits that can be derived when conflict is prevented in our society, especially protracted violent conflicts. This paper is structured around the introduction, historical reflection of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict, the theoretical framework underlying the study, the methodology employed, findings and discussions, conclusion and recommendations.

It has been noted by Kendie (2010) that in the last decades of the twenty-first century, nearly half of the

West Africa countries have experienced one form of conflict or the other. Conflict is defined as a perceived difference that may cause a violent clash, armed confrontation and struggle between groups and the states whereby those involved may be injured or killed with many people displaced and properties destroyed. Awedoba (2009) also conceptualises conflict as a relationship between two or more parties that centre on difference, disagreements, incompatibilities and clash of interest between a wider aggregate of society that seeks to cause a positive or a negative change. In his view, conflict becomes aggressive or negative when it

manifests in some form of physical destruction of property and high value symbols, or when the parties go beyond seeking to attain their goals peacefully and try to dominate or destroy the opposing parties' ability to pursue their own interests. Conflict also occurs due to a clash of interests in the relationship between parties, groups or states, either because the parties are pursuing opposing or incompatible goals or when individuals fail to live according to their values or when others values are threatened in the society (Awedoba, 2009; Oyeniyi, 2011).

Recent studies, including Harber (2002) argue that conflict has effects on the educational system of every country. In his view, education, as one of the key institutions in the state, is often targeted by the belligerent parties in countries affected by violent conflict. The overall state failure and the failure of the educational system demoralises children's self-confidence, expose them to criminality, illegal drugs, prostitution, and unsafe sex leading to HIV/AIDS. Similarly, there is also a phenomenon of youth recruitment into armed militias (child soldiers). Some of these child soldiers consequently commit horrific acts of cruelty and abuses against others during conflict situations. The displacements which are caused by conflict also disrupt schooling and children's enrolment in schools. For example, in 2009, there were 27 million people worldwide displaced from schools, including 11.6 million people in 21 African countries (Easterly, 2009). Although, the effect of violent conflict on education is a global problem, Africa countries face the greatest challenge through violent conflicts. For example, some countries in the Africa region, including Chad and Sierra Leone have experienced low level of school enrolment, retention, and academic performance in all the levels of the educational system caused by violent conflicts (Easterly, 2009).

Generally, Africa is perceived as a dark continent besieged with series of conflicts and civil wars in the global scene. Nonetheless, Ghana is among the few countries that have not experienced any form of large-scale conflict since independence in March 1957 (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013; Issifu, 2015a). In Africa, Ghana has again established a precedent when she became the first Sub-Saharan country to elect a democratic government for the fourth time since January 1993. With the establishment of Ghana's Fourth Republic, the country has often been described at both local and the

international cycles as an oasis of peace and stability with a steady democratic culture on a continent plagued with conflicts (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013). The peaceful atmosphere enjoyed in Ghana makes her play a pivotal role in peacekeeping and conflict resolutions in many conflicts and war torn areas on the African continent and beyond such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire, Rwanda, Sudan, Somalia, Lebanon and Cambodia (Issifu, 2015a). Apparently, Ghana's role in peacekeeping and conflict resolutions in the Africa sub-region was part of the reason that the American Fund for Peace in 2009 conferred on Ghana as the most peaceful and stable democratic country in Africa (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013).

More importantly, while there is a growing consensus from the local and international cycles that, Ghana is a peaceful country in respect of her strong desire to deepening and consolidating democracy, the country is still grappling with pockets of relative violence emanating from ethnicity, chieftaincy, natural resources, religion and politics. As stated by Aapengnuo (2008:1) "there are more than 200 internal conflicts around tradition, chieftaincy authority, land and politics". These conflicts, though localised have had dire consequences on the lives of people, properties, and above all affected the development processes of many communities in northern Ghana, including the Bawku Traditional area (Issifu, 2015a). These pockets of conflicts have largely claimed numerous lives and destroyed several properties in Ghana. For example, in 2002 alone, several people were murdered in the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, including the overlord "Ya Na" (Tonah, 2012). In effect, the government of Ghana spent over seven billion cedis (US \$9 million) to maintain the fragile peace in Dagbon (IRIN, 2013). In addition, the Konkomba-Nanumba, and the Dagomba-Nanumba conflicts in 1994/95 for instance, resulted in the loss of 2000 lives and 18,900 animals, including over 500,000 tubers of yams destroyed and 60,000 acres of crops set on fire (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Besides, 144 farming villages and schools were burnt as well as 78,000 people displaced and millions of properties belonging to the state and indigenes destroyed because of the conflict (Mahama, 2003). This is part of the reasons why Kendie, Osei-Kufour, Boakye & Tuffour (2014) have also confirmed that although Ghana is described as a peaceful country, violence occurs from time-to-time, which involves the

protagonists from various ethnic, religious, economic and political backgrounds.

Historical reflection of Bawku chieftaincy conflict

Bawku Traditional Area consists of three administrative areas. These are Bawku Municipality with its capital in Bawku, Garu-Tempene District with its capital in Garu, and Bawku West District with its capital in Zebila. The Bawku Traditional Area is represented by the Bawku Traditional Council under the presidency of the Bawku Naba, the Paramount Chief of the Bawku Traditional Area. The membership is made up of 23 divisional Chiefs of important settlements such as Pusiga Naba, Gumbu Naba, Binduri Naba, Kaadi Naba, Kulungungu Naba and Kugri Naba. They serve as advisors to the Bawku Naba (Office of the Upper East Regional House of Chiefs, 2015).

The conflict between the Kusasis and the Mamprusis in the Bawku Traditional Area dates back to 1930 with the Kusasis' claiming title over the Bawku chieftaincy/skin (Awedoba, 2009). Recent studies conducted by scholars, including Bukari and Guuroh (2013) argue that the ethnic conflict is a deep-seated and longstanding identity-based conflict, which revolves around the test for traditional political power between the Kusasis and Mamprusis. As noted by Bukari & Guuroh (2013), the principal actors and stakeholders in the conflict, particularly the Kusasis and the Mamprusis have both taken entrenched positions making the conflict protracted in the Bawku Traditional Area.

Focusing on the Bawku conflict, a growing body of recent scholarship, including Brukum (2001), Bombande (2005) and Longi (2015) posit that the dynamics surrounding the entrenched position of the Kusasis ethnic group is that they were the first to settle in the East Agolle, now the Bawku Township, comprising all areas under the Bawku skin such as Bawku to Zawse, Pusiga, Yaragungu, Tampilungu, Sapelliga, Nyokko, Binduri, Garu, Zebilla, Tempene and other smaller villages surrounding the Bawku township. Aside being the first settlers as well as the majority ethnic group in the Bawku Traditional Area, the Kusasis feels denied of their traditional political power (Awedoba, 2009). Conversely, the Mamprusi ethnic group also holds the view that, the Kusasis were not natives of the land of Bawku Traditional Area because they migrated to Bawku from Bugri, Yauga and Ayua, all in Burkina

Faso to the present location in the Bawku Traditional Area (Awedoba, 2009). Consequently, Bawku and its surrounding villages have been under their chieftom of the Mamprusi since pre-colonial days (Awedoba, 2009). This misunderstanding has degenerated into violent confrontations between the two ethnic groups on several occasions, particularly between 1983 and 2009 that killed several people and destroyed many properties (Awedoba, 2009).

As a follow-up to the preceding contributors, a study conducted by Bukari & Guuroh (2013) documents that in 2009, there were 78 murder cases, 32 robbery cases and 40 cases of arson resulting from the Bawku chieftaincy conflict in the Bawku Traditional Area. As noted by the scholars, although, the Government of Ghana employed the peacekeeping operations, the mediation process, and the use of the law courts, as well as the imposition of curfews on the Bawku Traditional Area, these political and institutional strategies employed to resolve the conflict did not yield any meaningful result in the Bawku Traditional Area (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013).

Theoretical framework

The paper is anchored on the Protracted Social Conflict theory (PSC) having its underpinnings in Edward Azar's model of Protracted Social Conflict. The theory assesses the root causes, effects and the implications of conflicts in a society or country which are protracted or intractable. The theory looks at conflicts which keep recurring and seem almost irresolvable. According to Coleman (2000), an intractable conflict is one that is often intense, deadlocked and difficult to find a lasting solution to. The common characteristics of intractable conflicts include occasional outbursts of conflicts which are often intense, persistent and vicious; their effects are often pervasive, affecting all aspects of a person's socio-political and economic life, and the social institutions of the larger society (Bukari, 2011). The main causes of protracted conflict usually include questions of values, claim to identity, cultural norms, power, resources, human needs, past history of ethnocentrism, discrimination, colonialism and abuse (Coleman, 2000). As noted by Bar-Tal (2000), protracted conflict is often a vicious violence, which results in the construction of a conflictive ethos, which provides the dominant

orientation to the society. He believes that in such conflicts, conflict resolution leads only to the formal termination of the conflict but not the real conflict (Bar-Tal, 2000). The protracted social conflict theory identifies a plethora of factors as being responsible for intractable conflicts.

This theory pays attention to ethnic and other forms of communal conflicts and emphasises that the sources of these protracted conflicts are more internal (within a state) rather than external (Azar, 1990). These sources, according to Azar (1990), include cultural, political, economic, colonial and institutional factors. Protracted conflicts usually tend to affect all sectors of a society's development because of the intensity and recurrence of the violence. In sum, the protracted social conflict theory is an all-encompassing theory that looks at conflict from the structural, cultural, ethnic, political, economic, religious, human needs as well as social factors. Mall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse (1999) suggest that, in resolving protracted social conflict, there is the need to properly manage ethnic dominance, provision of institutional structures to protect minority needs and rights, as well as the provision of an enabling environment to create economic opportunities for citizens in the state (Coleman, 2000). Also, Bar-Tal (2000) argues that resolving such conflicts require the need for a successful reconciliation process, which in turn requires a change of the conflictive ethos and formation of the alternative peace ethos.

The Bawku chieftaincy conflict fits well into a protracted social conflict because its sources involve claims to values, identity, power as well as cultural contestation in the Bawku Traditional Area. The continuous and vicious cycle of the violence in Bawku makes the conflict defy any workable solution despite all the social, political, and economic interventions that the Ghanaian government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have made and are still making in the Bawku Traditional Area (Bukari, 2011). In his view, the nature of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict has an adverse effect on all aspects of the society, particularly peoples' livelihood in the rural and urban communities, and socio-economic developments; education, commercial activities, agriculture and all aspects of social activities in the area (Bukari, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative case study methodology. The method appeared best suited and most appropriate for collecting information about the current situation from the people of the Bawku Traditional Area. Comparisons were made with other Northern conflicts like the Dagbon/Yendi conflict and the Konkomba/Nanumba crisis. The method was used to explain the existing conditions among the people in the Bawku Traditional Area in order to provide plausible answers to the objectives outlined in the study. The target population of the study included all pupils in the Junior High Schools, teachers, parents and Education Officers in the Bawku Traditional Area.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the twelve (12) Junior High School girls, the twelve (12) Junior High School boys, ten (10) parents, and the eight (8) teachers for the study. In addition, the purposive sampling method was again used to select the six (6) Education Officers, and two (2) chiefs and the criteria was that they had adequate knowledge regarding conflict in the Bawku Traditional Area. Both the primary and secondary data were collected in three months (from September, 12 to November, 13, 2015). The primary information was collected using the interview guide and FGD guide. Secondary data were gathered from books, articles, journals, newspapers, published and unpublished theses. The data gathered from the field were summarised and interpreted using a discourse analysis tool.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part of the paper discusses the views of respondents on the implications of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict on basic education in the Bawku Traditional Area. The issues assessed included the effects of conflict on basic education completion rate, conflict and educational gender disparity, conflict on educational attainment rates, and the financial cost of conflict on educational infrastructure.

Effects of conflict on basic education completion rate

Conflict represents a major impediment to the realisation of the EFA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), such as the universal completion of primary education and gender equality in primary and secondary education (Buckland, 2005). For example, according to UNESCO (2010), there are over half of the world's primary-aged children who are out of school due to violent conflicts in their states. In Ghana, for instance, the Bawku chieftaincy conflict has affected basic education in many ways. Most tragically, it resulted in the displacement of teachers and educationists who were responsible for ensuring that pupils had a successful completion rate. For example, more than two-thirds of teachers in the primary and secondary schools were displaced as a result of the conflicts, leaving the educational systems in the districts with virtually no trained or experienced teaching professionals. The municipal director of education further said:

“During the conflict, all teachers who were not natives of the municipality left and those who were natives also sought transfers to teach in areas outside the Bawku town. This puts a lot of pressure on the officers’ in charge of postings and transfers of teachers. Worse of it all, pupils’ enrolment figures went down drastically from 876, 110 to 478,021 and many parents transferred their children to Bolgatanga, the capital town, to continue their basic education” (Fieldwork, 2015).

Besides, many of the school children who changed their school due to the Bawku chieftaincy conflict had to be repeated in their new schools. This situation affected their completion rate, and increasing the economic challenges of their parents. A pupil had this to say:

“Before the conflict, I was in primary six and was approaching junior high school, but when my parent changed my school to Bolgatanga I was repeated, I am currently in primary four. I am very sure this will affect my completion level” (Fieldwork, 2015).

Corresponding to the findings, it is interpreted that the dynamics of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict has had a negative effect on the basic education completion rate of the pupils in the Bawku Traditional Area, even though education is key and a catalyst to the socio-economic and political developments of every nation. This

confirms the UNHCR (2014) reports that worldwide, violent conflicts often lead to forced migration, and therefore interrupt the education of millions of children of school going age.

Conflict and educational gender disparity

According to Cornwall & Musembi (2004), education is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings irrespective of one's gender, ethnic, and religious affiliations. However, millions of people around the world, especially women are being denied access to education due to the gender discrimination. A number of global reports, including UNICEF (2010) have estimated that there are 65 million girls out of the 121 million children are out of school. According to UNICEF (2010), eighty per cent (80%) of these girls are found in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the attention given to gender equality in education in terms of enrolment and completion as highlighted in the Dakar World Education Forum, there is still a wide gender gap in formal education where many girls in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are being denied their fundamental human right (Driscoll, 2008). This phenomenon in part exacerbated by violent conflicts which are a common occurrence in Africa and parts of South Asia regions within the globe (Buckland, 2005). In Ghana, the Ghanaian government has over the years signed a number of international treaties, agreements, programmes and policies under the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) to promote education for all, nonetheless, the rate of girls' enrolment is reduced drastically, especially in northern Ghana, including Bawku Traditional Area due to the rampant ethnic, land and chieftaincy conflicts in the area.

Data from the field revealed that the Bawku chieftaincy conflict has had terrific challenges in the Bawku Traditional Area. For example, empirical reports revealed that households' income reduced drastically through damage to farmlands and buildings, injury and death of working adults, or economic recession. Due to that, many parents were forced to remove their children, particularly the girl-child from school to assist them in generating income to take care of the family. Confirming the findings, the issue was explored during the interview, and one of the female pupils said:

“I cannot attend school again because our house was burnt down during the chieftaincy conflict. My father asked me to sell ice-water so that we can get some money to feed ourselves since we do not have money again” (Fieldwork, 2015).

This reflects the UNESCO (2010) report, which states that more than 50% of children, especially the girl-child dropped out of school in Africa and Asia region to assist their parents to work in farms and other economic ventures in order to generate income to maintain their existing level of consumption due to the economic difficulties caused by the conflicts.

The issue was further explored during the interview with the parents. One of the parents had this to say:

“I removed my three girls from school leaving the four boys because, in case of any shootings the boys can run faster to the house so I will not risk my girls who may be shot because they cannot run” (Fieldwork 2015).

From the findings, it was found that girls suffered more than boys during the Bawku chieftaincy conflict. In view of this, during the conflict, boy child education became the preferred option as against the girl-child due to the dangers that the girl child faced during the conflict. Subscribing to the findings, UNESCO (2010) report indicates that regional, ethnic or religious group inequalities in educational attainment can be further widened as a result of the conflict. Supporting the above view, Alaga (2010) argues that women and children are the ‘violated during the violation, the victims of the victimisation and the captured of the captives’ during periods of violent conflict. This is the exact description of the situation in African countries, and for that matter northern Ghana. This supports the work of Buckland (2005) and Shemyakina (2011) that during conflict situation girls are increasingly being vulnerable to the assailants because they are attacked by the insurgency groups so that they could gain attention from the government.

Data from the field also revealed that a significant amount of money and a large farm size were lost due to the Bawku chieftaincy conflict, consequently, people could not afford to provide equal education to all their children. In view of this, parents preferred to finance the education of only the boy child with the limited money available to them. This corroborates the study by Pape (1998) who observed that an increased incidence of poverty and child care responsibilities during conflict periods tend to affect existing gender disparities in education.

In addition, it was found in the study that the violent nature of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict made many of the parents to withdraw their children, especially girls from school for fear of violence against them.

Conflict and educational attainment

For children who attend school, conflict can have a negative effect on their educational attainment level, increasing dropout rate and reducing educational survival rate due to the economic hardship, the displacement of the family, closure of education systems, inaccessibility to educational materials from book shops (Swee, 2009). Data from the field revealed that during the Bawku chieftaincy conflict, many book shops that supply educational materials to school pupils in the Bawku Traditional Area were closed down for fear of being attacked by the assailants. Many people, including the teachers and the educational administrators migrated and sought refuge in Bolagatanga, Navrongo, Tamale and some parts of southern Ghana. Data from the field indicated that, this situation affected the educational attainment rate in the area because pupils abandoned schooling and relocated with their parents. Those who stayed in school during the period could not access educational materials to use in schools. An Education Officer in Bawku Municipality who was interviewed remarked:

“Children’s educational attainment is particularly compromised by the exposure to the Bawku violence. Educational attainment in the Bawku Traditional Area suffered due to shortages in basic necessities, such as school materials. As is often the case, the academic year was interrupted or shortened due to the destruction and damages of educational facilities and materials during the conflict” (Fieldwork 2015).

Generally, conflict-affected countries experience high number of children of school going age out of school than conflict-free countries (UNESCO, 2010). Recent scholarship has highlighted that the high rate of school drop out of children caused by conflict tend to affect the number of children who get access to education attainment in those countries (UNESCO, 2013). This tendency affects the future life prospects of the affected children, including access to the labour market, earnings and health outcomes in adulthood (Justino, 2011), which may aggravate the risks associated with the outbreak or

“I am not comfortable in Bawku because of the conflict and as such I sometimes go to teach the pupils once a week or sometimes I go to the school to give the students homework and return home. I am often absent because the school environment is not secured” (Fieldwork 2015).

Corresponding to the findings, it was found that access to school by teachers was also a critical challenge for some of the teachers who stayed to carry out their responsibilities during the conflict. This situation had a great repercussion on the academic performance of the children because teachers who were willing to stay and work found it challenging to attend school regularly due to the poor access to transport systems and a series of curfews and bans. For instance, male teachers had to absent themselves from school because of the ban placed on the ride of motorbike by the males. Meanwhile, motorbike is the common means of transportation in the region. This confirms a cross country quantitative analyses that children from conflict areas experience poor academic attainment due to conflict challenges, including a series of curfews and restrictions in such a society (Shemyakina, 2011).

FINANCIAL COST OF CONFLICT ON EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Conflict often destroys and damages schools and educational infrastructure. Studies by the UNESCO (2013) documented that conflict in Bosnia and

“During the Bawku chieftaincy conflict in the municipality we had to close down schools in areas where the conflict was intense and this disrupted the academic calendar of the municipality. Aside that, a lot of the school buildings, including classrooms, libraries and other educational facilities were pulled down” (Fieldwork, 2015).

Generally, northern Ghana experiences more conflicts than the rest of the region in the country. (Human Security Report, 2005). These conflicts lead to internal

renewal of violent conflicts (Justino, Leone & Salardi, 2013).

Furthermore, it was also revealed that, the conflict affected the teachers’ and educational administrators’ access to school and the education offices in the Bawku Traditional Area. Consequently, there was a high level of teacher absenteeism in the Bawku Traditional Area. Besides, the education administrators were also afraid to move freely to carry out their activities in the area. During an interview, one of the teachers had this to say:

Herzegovina destroyed about fifty percent of the school infrastructural systems. Similarly, empirical studies by Brück (1997) also estimated that about fifty-eight percent of primary schools in Mozambique were closed down or destroyed due to the long civil war. In Iraq, the level of the destruction of the conflict on education facilities was estimated to be eighty-five percent. This figure was considered as one of the highest challenges caused by conflicts in conflict- torn areas in the world (Buckland, 2005). Schools and places of learning are often explicit targets during periods of armed conflict. For example, following the 1998-1999 war in Timor-Leste, ninety-five percent of school infrastructural systems were destroyed by the assailants. This is a similar situation of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict. Data from the field revealed that the rampant conflicts in northern Ghana, especially the Bawku chieftaincy conflict had led to the destruction of school infrastructure. The destruction of social infrastructure, including schools and other educational facilities, had severely affected the developments of education in the area. The current study has exposed many dimensions of the educational systems that are negatively affected by the Bawku chieftaincy conflict. In a FGD a teacher lamented:

displacement of people and migration of the youth, which therefore affected all the levels of educational systems and the infrastructure facilities. For example, in

1994 alone, the Ghanaian government claimed to have spent six billion Cedis (C6,000,000,000) in maintaining peace, and the provision of educational infrastructure facilities in northern Ghana, including Bawku (Brukum, 2007).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The foregoing analysis has shown that the conflict has adversely affected basic education completion rate in the Bawku Traditional Area. Besides, the Bawku chieftaincy conflict also affected school management and instruction periods because many of the educational administrators and teachers responsible for managing and supervising teaching and learning in schools were displaced as a result of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict, leaving the educational systems in the area with virtually no trained or experienced teaching professionals.

Despite the fact that the Ghanaian government has over the years signed a number of international treaties, agreements, programmes and policies under the FCUBE to promote education for all, the rate of girls' enrolment in conflict prone areas in northern Ghana, including Bawku Traditional Area is negligible. This is in part due to the fact that many girls are discriminated from having access to education due to conflict induced challenges such as insecurity, pressure on limited available resources and the fear of victimisations. For example, it was found in the study that the majority of girls in Bawku were kept from school by their parents for fear of violence against them, as others are kept home to contribute to the household's income lost in the conflict.

Moreover, during the peak of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict, higher school attainment was affected severely as many shops that sell educational materials were forced to close down. This affected the educational attainment rate in the area because students could not access educational materials relevant for their academic work. In addition, it was established that the conflicts in northern Ghana, especially the Bawku chieftaincy conflict also destroyed school infrastructural facilities.

In view of the above, the paper proposes the following recommendations to resolve the challenges. First, the people in the Bawku Traditional Area should be

educated to know the effects of conflicts on their socio-economic developments. This campaign should be spearheaded by the Government of Ghana (via the National Commission for Civic Education, Information Services Department), NGOs and the opinion leaders, including chiefs and assembly members. This will help minimise the rampant level of conflicts in the Bawku Traditional Area.

Second, stiffer punishment should be meted out to people who instigate the youth to foment trouble in the area. This is likely to help force the youth to desist from this kind of practices in the Bawku Traditional Area.

Finally, the Government of Ghana should provide structures which will help maintain maximum security, particularly in the school environs. This will enable teachers and students to attend school without fear in the Bawku Traditional Area.

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