

## AN ANALYSIS ON THE SOURCES OF DEVELOPMENTAL INFORMATION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF MAMBILLA, SARDAUNA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE

**Jibril G. Isa & Mary Ntala Oliver**

Taraba State University, Nigeria

sajeeboo14@gmail.com

### Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Jun 10, 2024	Jun 23, 2024	Jun 26, 2024	Jun 29, 2024

### Abstract

People of the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba State's Sarduna Local Government Area are believed to be cut off from the rest of the state due to a poor road network, a lack of internet connection in some regions, and a lack of active traditional media presence. On light of the above, this study adopted the survey method to explore the sources of development messages on the Mambilla Plateau. Findings of this study revealed the major sources of developmental information among the populace of the Mambilla Plateau in Sarduna Local Governemnt Area of Taraba State include religions institutions such as Mosques and Churches and traditional leaders. Results of this study also revealed that some of the factors militating against access to developmental information among the populace of the Mambilla Plateau in Sarduna Local Government include lack or absence of the conventional media such radio, television and newspaper; poor road network, illiteracy and language barrier. Therefore the study recommended among other things that there is the need for the government and stakeholders to ensure the active presence of the conventional media outfits on the Mambilla Plateau.

**Keywords:** Development, Information, Mambilla Plateau, Taraba State

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Nigerian society is faced with avalanche of developmental issues such as lack of clean water, electricity, good roads, hunger and diseases among others. The above challenges have made life uneasy for the common especially those residing in rural areas where poverty and hunger are prevalent. However, effective communication has over the years proven to be a catalyst for development which without it no nation can attain a reasonable extent of development.

The Mambilla Plateau in Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State is one of the typical Nigerian communities that are faced with atypical development issues. The area is a long range of broken mountainous (Hamman, 2008), hence, this automatically makes transportation problematic to its populace.

The Mambilla Plateau is also faced with the problem of partially or no presence of active conventional media such as radio television, newspaper or magazine. The only active radio station on the Mambilla as at the time of writing this research paper is a booster station that operates barely two hours daily. Similarly the area has poor mobile network as some mobile networks are obvious weak. The above situation among other things inspires the researchers to investigate the sources of developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau in Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Every human society craves for development as it is a requisite for better life. Therefore, accessing development information is paramount especially in an undeveloped community where the populace have no or little knowledge of development as a concept development. In Africa, especially Nigeria, Harande (2009) revealed that information is not prevalent in rural areas due to poor infrastructure and communication channels such as radio and television stations among other.

The people of the Mambilla Plateau in Sarduana Local Government Area of Taraba State are said to be disconnected from the other part of Taraba State due to poor road network, lack of internet access in some areas, and inactive conventional media presence in the area. From the foregoing, one began to wonder how the occupant of this area access developmental messages. It is therefore in light of the above, that this study examined the sources of developmental messages among the people of the Mambilla Plateau in Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out communication channels accessible to the people of the Mambilla Plateau
2. To identify the sources of development messages among residents of the Mambilla Plateau
3. To ascertain the constraints to acquisitions of developmental information among people of the Mambilla Plateau

### **Research Question**

1. What are the communication channels accessible to the people of the Mambilla Plateau?
2. What are the sources of development messages among residents of the Mambilla Plateau?
3. What are the constraints to acquisitions of developmental information among people of the Mambilla Plateau?

### **Literature Review**

Development information refers to attempts to package and disseminate information aimed primarily towards rural populations, with the goal of improving their living conditions when used. Uhegbu (2004) and Imhabekhai and Olumukoro (2007) believe that well-informed and information-conscious citizens are a road map to long-term economic, social, environmental, educational, and technological growth.

Several studies, like Alex & Pox (2003) cited in Unagha and Ibenne, (2011) have documented an increase in revenue because well-informed farmer's cooperatives are able to adapt correctly to market shifts. Through collective viewing of agricultural programs on television and telephone conversations with distant friends and relatives, they have been forced to compete with commercial farmers. It also enhanced their social networks, and such people are now continuing to grow themselves with the knowledge they have gained.

However, it is quite unfortunate that some rural areas in Nigeria lack access to developmental information. Jacobs and Herselman (2006) observed that when compared to city dwellers, rural inhabitants have difficulty acquiring information. It's possible that this is due to a lack of infrastructure in rural regions, which contributes to the digital divide.

According to Jacobs and Herselman (2006), information is a driver of knowledge growth, but it only becomes meaningful and relevant if it can be accessible. People in rural regions want access to information technology and conventional media that will allow them to acquire information.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is built on the development media theory. According to development theory, the media should be utilized to promote society's general growth (country). It should be focused on the society's collective interest rather than the selfish interests of a few people. It was advocated that the government intervene and promote development via the employment of communication and action programs (policies). For the welfare of society, communication can be utilized for information, education, mobilization, and persuasion.

"Developmental media theory encourages media support for a current political system and its endeavor to bring about national economic growth," (Baran & Davis, 2012, p.149). The notion highlighted the importance of the media supporting government policies and programs rather than criticizing governments, their programs, and persons. This notion is used by a number of developing countries in South America (Baran & Davis, 2012)

Based on the core tenets of this theory, it is apposite to infer that the people of the Mambilla Plateau of Taraba State need functional media outfits as a requisite for the development of the people and the ambience at large. Hence, the need for both the state and federal government to ensure that the area has a functional and vibrant media outfits.

### **METHODS**

The research study adopts survey method and the questionnaire was used as the core instrument for data collection. The population of the study comprised of the entire populace of the Mambilla Plateau i.e. Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State. Sardauna Local Government Area has a population of 299,800. However, with the help of Krejcie and Morga Sampling Table, the researchers arrived at a sample size of 383.

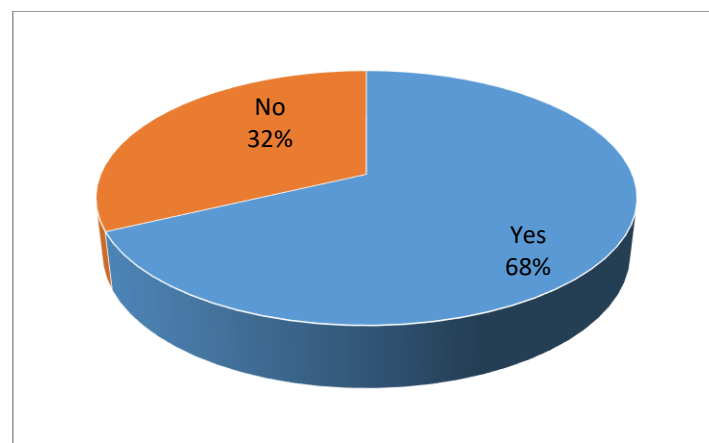
### **RESULTS**

The aim of this study is to assess the sources of developmental information among ruralite on Mambilla Plateau of Taraba State. Therefore, the results of the study are based on the

objectives investigated which are; to find out communication channels accessible to ruralite on the Mambilla Plateau, to identify sources of developmental messages among the ruralite and to discover the challenges of accessing developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau.

### **Respondents' profile**

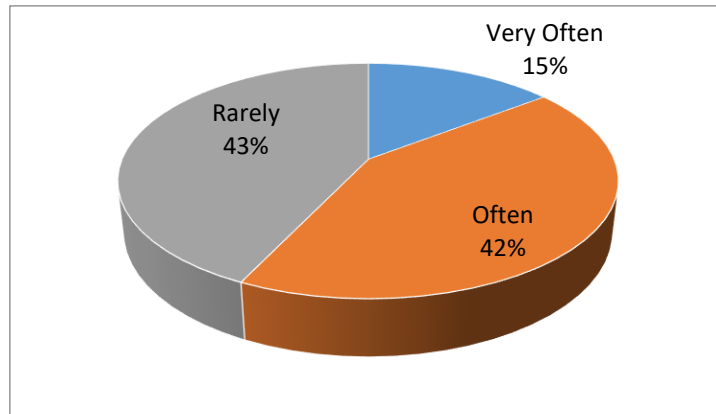
Based on the data retrieved from the field, it was found that 58% of the respondents are male; while 42% are female. This implies that there are more male than female in the sampled population. The study revealed that 23% of the sampled population are students/applicants, 35% are farmers, and 21% are business men/women while 20% are civil servant. These are all people that need developmental messages in the daily endeavour. Finally, it was also found that 29% of the sampled population have either FSLC or SSCE as their highest qualification, 59% revealed that they had Diplomas or NCE while 13% revealed that they have Degree and above as their highest qualification.



**Figure 1: Respondents' Access to Developmental Information**

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

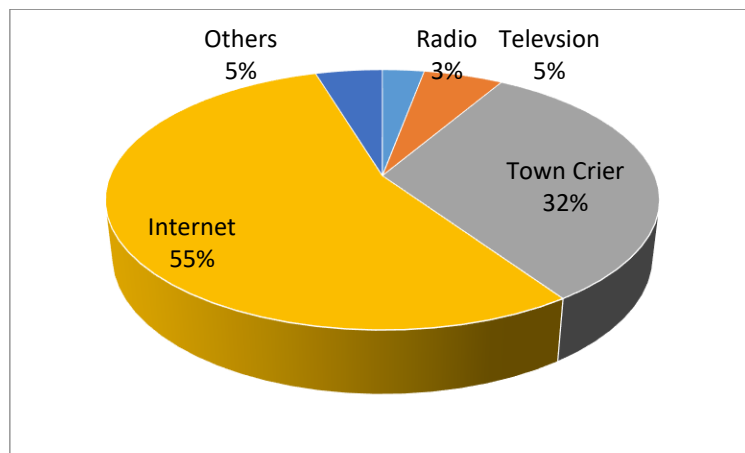
The above pie chart shows whether the respondents access developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau. Based on the results, 68% of the respondents indicated that they access developmental messages while 32% said they do not access developmental messages. This implies that the respondents access developmental messages.



**Figure 2: Frequency of Access to Developmental Messages in the Mambilla Plateau**

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

The above data shows the percentage of the extent respondents have access to developmental information. Based on the data, 15% of the respondents said they access the information very often, 44% indicated that they access the information often times while 43% access the information rarely. It means that majority of respondents rarely access developmental information.

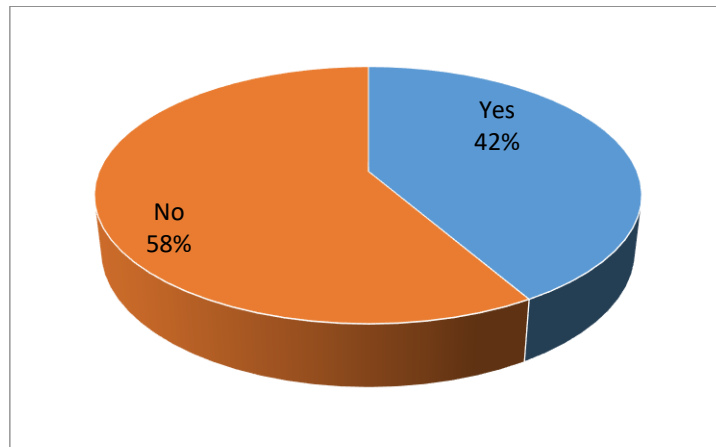


**Figure 3: Accessible Channels of Communicating Developmental Messages**

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

The data in the pie chart above show the channels used by the respondents to access developmental information. Accordingly, 55% access developmental messages through the internet, 32% said they access developmental messages through town crier, 3% said through radio, 5% said they access developmental messages through town crier and other means such as religious gathering in churches and mosques. Based on the above results, it

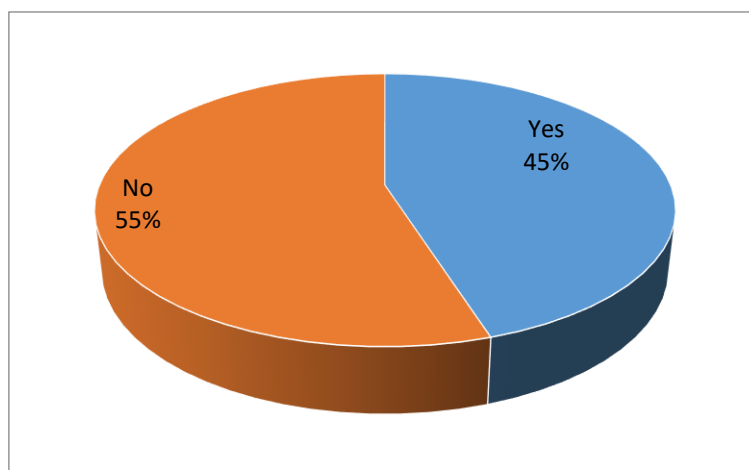
be inferred that majority of the respondents receive developmental messages through the social media platforms.



**Figure 4: Do Agricultural Extension Officers Provide People in the Mambilla Plateau with information on farming Activities**

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

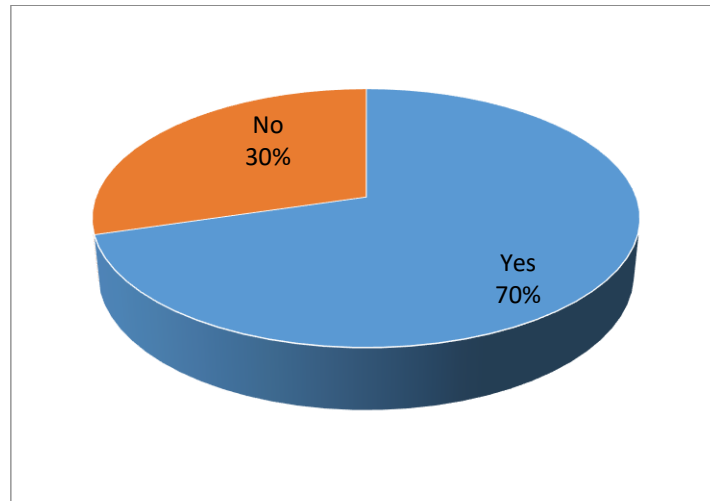
The data in the pie chart above show that 42% of the respondents agreed that agricultural officers provided them with useful information about farming activities. 58% said they do not receive developmental from agricultural extension officers. This implies that the impact of Agricultural Extension Officers is less felt in the area of providing the ruralite in the area with developmental information about their farming activities.



**Figure 5: Do government health officials provide information and education towards improving health care in the Mambilla?**

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

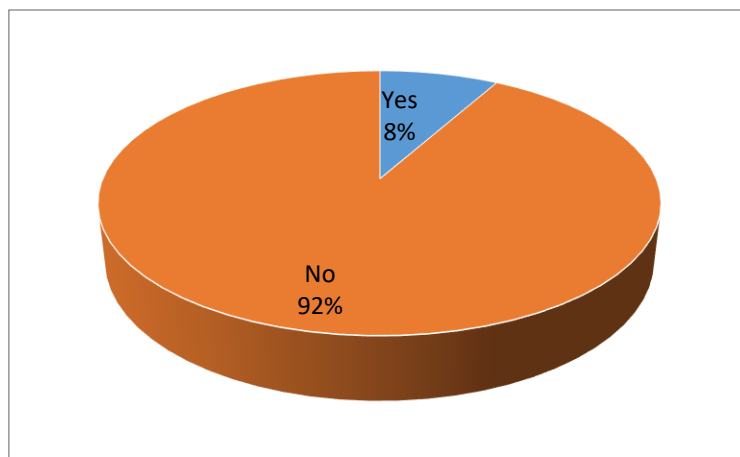
The data in the pie chart above show that 45% of the respondents agreed that government health officials provided them with useful information and education towards improving their health care. 54% said they do not. It means majority of the respondents are not reached by health officials in terms of providing health messages.



**Figure 6: Do religious Groups in your Area engage in the provision of developmental information in the Mambilla Plateau?**

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

The above data reveal that 70% of the respondents agreed that religious leaders provide them with useful developmental information while 30% do not agree. This implies that religious institutions are important sources of developmental information.

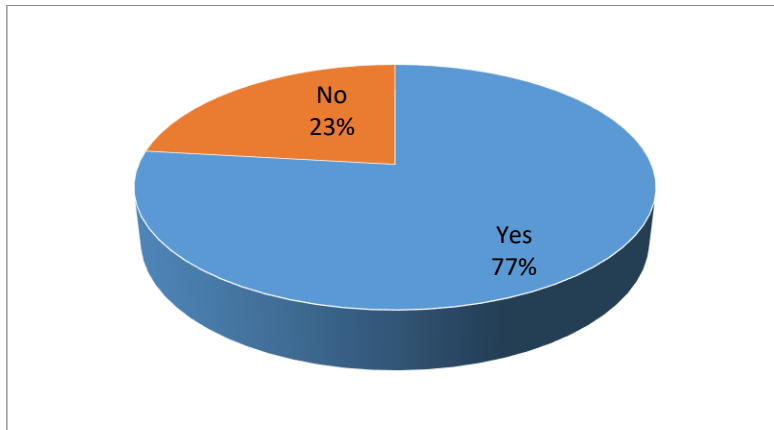


**Figure 7: Are there Non-governmental Organization engaging in provision of information and knowledge on development in Mambilla Plateau**

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

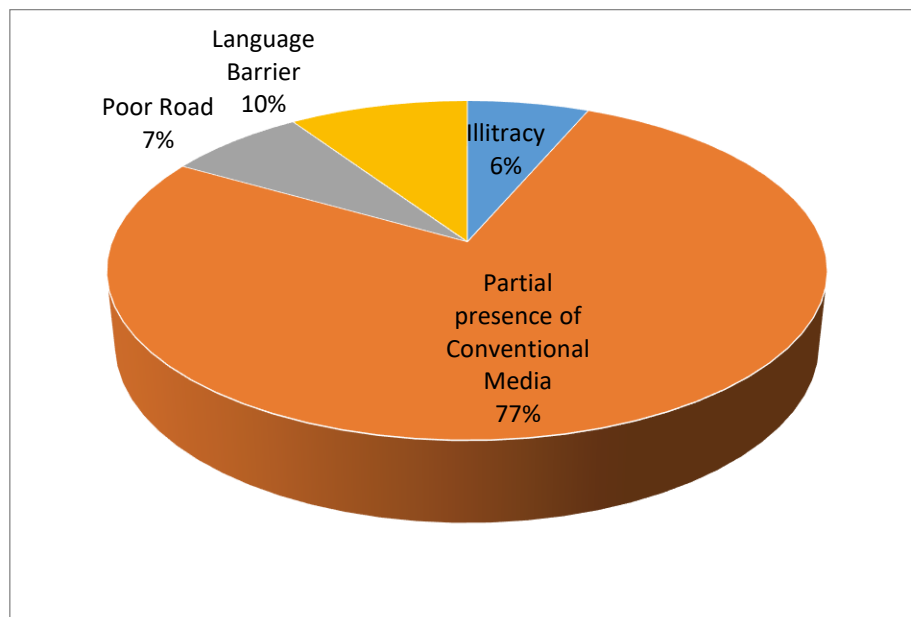


The data in the pie chart above show that only 8% of the respondents said they access developmental messages from non-governmental organizations while 92% said otherwise. This implies that majority of the respondents are not reached by non-governmental organizations in the area of disseminating developmental messages.



**Figure 8: Do Traditional Leaders on the Mambilla Plateau engaged in the provision of information and knowledge on development?**

According to the data in the pie chart above, 77% of the respondents agreed that agreed that traditional leaders provide them with developmental information while 23% debunk the claim. This implies that traditional leaders on Mambilla Plateau are agents of development.



**Figure 9: Factors limiting access to developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau**

In the pie chart above, 77% of the respondents said partial presence of the conventional media is one of the factors that limit access to developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau. On the hand, 6%, 10% and 7% of the respondents said illiteracy, language barrier and road are some of the factors that limit access to developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau. This implies that that the core factor limiting access to developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau is the lack of conventional media presence such as radio, television and newspaper outfits.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study examined the sources of developmental messages on the Mambilla Plateau especially among the ruralite. The study found that major sources of developmental information among the populace of the Mambilla Plateau in Sardauna Local Governemnt Area of Taraba State include religions institutions such as Mosques and Churches and traditional leaders. The above finding concede with the argument of Chester and Neelameghan (2006) who expound that rural communities in Africa constitutes the larger percentage of the population whose information needs are not adequately met by conventional media.

Results of this study also revealed that the major channels of developmental information on the Mambila Plateau especially among the ruralites include the internet and town crier. However, an insignificant proportion of the respondents revealed that they access development message via radio and television. The above findings in somewhat in tandem with the findings of Ifukor (2013) who found that the town-crier is one of the channels of information dissemination that are used to acquire and disseminate information in rural areas. However, the above findings negate that of Mtega (2012) who revealed that most of the information needed related to day-to-day problems of rural communities was accessed mainly through radio, television, magazine, and also through cell phones and face-to-face communication.

Results of this study also revealed that some of the factors militating against access to developmental information among the populace of the Mambilla Plateau in Sardauna Local Government include lack or absence of the conventional media such radio, television and newspaper; poor road network, illiteracy and language barrier. The above findings conceded with the findings of Harande (2009) who revealed information is prevalent in

rural areas due to poor infrastructure and communication channels such as radio and television stations. This implies that the presence of conventional media is imperative in rural areas to make dissemination of information accessible to ruralite.

### **Recommendations**

1. There is the need for the government and stakeholders to ensure the active presence of the conventional media outfits on the Mambilla Plateau.
2. The government need to construct good road and also provide for development agents with equipment to enable them discharge their duties.
3. It is imperative for development agents in the field of agriculture, health and other related areas to adopt a multi-media approach in disseminating development information since traditional and religious institutions seems to be veritable sources of developmental information on the Mambilla Plateau
4. Development agents should study the uniqueness of the Mambilla Plateau and discover the best acceptable method to disseminate developmental information.

### **CONCLUSION**

The populace of the Mambilla Plateau of Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State are faced with the challenge of accessing developmental messages due to the nature of the terrain especially lack of active presence of media, poor road network, illiteracy among others. Therefore, this calls for a swift action by stakeholder holders and government to facilitate the dissemination of developmental information on Mambilla Plateau which at the end run has to potency to foster development in the area.

### **REFERENCES**

- Baran,S. J.,& Davis, D.K.(2012). *Mass communication theory, foundations, ferment, future,6th edition. United States : Wadsworth Cengage*
- Hamman, M. (2008) *Peoples of the Mambilla Plateau and their relations with the Bamnyo C- 1840-1901*. Zaria:Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited
- Harande, Y. I. (2009). Information services for rural community development in Nigeria. *Library philosophy and practice*, 271.
- Ifukor, O.M. (2013). Channels of information acquisition and dissemination among rural dwellers. *International Journal of Library and Information Science*, 5(10), 306-312.

- Imhabekhai, C. I. and Olomukoro, C. O. (2007). Integrating the Nomads into the National Development Programmes through Adult Education Programmes In I. A. Nwazuoke, E. A. Okediran and O. A. Moronkola (eds). Education for Social Transformation. Ibadan: Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan
- Jacobs, S. J., & Herselman, M. E. (2006). Information access for development: A case study at a rural community centre in South Africa. *Issues in Informing Science & Information Technology*, 3.
- Mtega, W. P. (2012). Access to and usage of information among rural communities: A case study of Kilosa District Morogoro Region in Tanzania. *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 7(1).
- Neelameghan, A., & Chester, G. (2006). Environmental knowledge and marginalized communities: The last mile connectivity. *Webology*, 3(1), 24.
- Uhegbu, A. N. (2004). Gender empowerment: information and participatory democracy of rural women in Nigeria. *Abia Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 1(1) , 77.
- Unagha, A. O., & Ibenne, S. K. (2011). Obstacles to provision and use of development information in rural communities in Nigeria. *Library philosophy and practice*.