

## **Influence of Socio-Cultural factors on Rural House Form in Taraba State of Nigeria.**

ADADU OCHAPA

Kogi State University Anyigba, Nigeria

EYIAROMI ADEMILEKE FOLORUNSHO,

National Open University of Nigeria, Jos Study Centre

**Abstract.** This study investigates the Influence of Socio-Cultural factors on Housing Form in Rural Environment Among various ethnic groups of Taraba State, Nigeria with the aim to understand the socio-cultural factors that influences housing form adopted by tribes. A population of 2,300,736 (NPC, 2006) and a sample size of 750 house-hold head were selected for this study comprised of 135(18%) Mumuye, 86(11.47%) Jukun, 120(16%) Tiv, 95(12.67%) Mambila, 175(23.33%) Fulani, 105(14%) Wurukum and 34(4.53%) belong to other minority tribes. A Multistage Sampling technique was employed in the process of data collection. The study is a descriptive survey design with the main instruments used in collecting the data was “Questionnaire and in-depth interview (IDI) with a reliability index of 0.818 and validity of 0.90. Results are presented using simple percentage and the hypothesis was analyzed using chi-square statistics. The findings revealed that Traditional Single Hut Form (TSHF) is synonymous to Mumuye ethnic group belongs to low income class, while Traditional Compound Form (TCF) is synonymous to Jukun and Fulanis ethnic group belongs to low and middle income classes. The Fulani ethnic group were the majority in the use Jointed Block of Traditional Form (JBTF) and Jointed Block of Modern Building Form

(JBMBF) of middle income classes. This study area socio-economic activity is agrarian in nature; Mumuye ethnic groups were the majority in food crop farming followed by Tiv and Mambila ethnic group. Tiv ethnic group are the majority in cash crop farmland followed by Jukun ethnic group, The Fulani ethnic dominated the animal husbandry (pastoral Farmland), while Fish farming was dominated by Wurukum ethnic group. The hypothesis revealed that Housing forms are not the same among the various ethnic groups in the study area. The researchers therefore recommend that when Wurukum tribe in any part of the country need to be resettled by government it should be near fishing water source, Fulanis near grassing field, Mumuye, Tivs and Mambila ethnic groups near farmable land.

**Key words:** Socio-cultural, Housing forms, culture, Beliefs, influence.

### **1. Introduction**

Culture has several definitions, which can be said to converge at the fact that, it is the symbolic and learned aspects or ways of life and their complete design for living in human society. This is still based on the first definition as was used by Tylor in 1871 in which he

defined it as a learned complex of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, and customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Rapoport, 1998; Scolt and Marshall, 2005; Otiite and Ogbonwo, 1979; Igbo, 2011; Jencks, 1993; Okau, 2012).

On the other hand the term rural means different things to different people and countries. However, within the context of this study it is seen in terms of low population, subsistence occupation predominantly of small scale farming and 'pastoralism', community of face to face interpersonal relationship of less ability to move easily and quickly from one setting to another, and of low technological innovation. Rural is identified with socio-economic backwardness, neglect and deprivation; and with houses designed by the user in his spare time and based on low investment, local materials, combined with the assistance of relations, friends and neighbours, reflecting cultural heritage of the peoples; also encapsulating traditional forms value. Despite the fact that this explanation of rural is becoming obsolete in the developed world as a result of several changes and development, it is still the situation of most developing world.

Most people naturally build houses to fulfil and meet their socio-cultural needs and relevance hence housing can be viewed as a predictor of a variety of behaviours (Galster and Hesser (1981), Amerigo and Aragonés (1990), Potter and Cantarero (2006) and Jiboye (2010) as societies establish an order on their living space and reflect their characters in these spaces. Spatial organization is a sign of the common attitudes and the hierarchy of their different levels (Hillier and Hanson, 1984). Altman and Chemers (1980) in their various researches of the home around the world confirmed that family dwellings simultaneously satisfy the needs of the occupants for personal identity and for bonds with the community and culture at large. The socio-cultural value of man varies from one society to another, having both direct and indirect influence on his habitation. Man's status, occupation and other resources also affect the houses he builds for himself (Mills-tetty, 1989).

The socio-cultural values that can influence the housing form and patterns of a cultural group include: religion, occupation, leisure, neighbourliness, family size and marital patterns, security and safety, occupation, wealth and poverty and so on. Social status and culture of an individual are set of beliefs, customs, practices, behaviours, norms, values, myth, sanctions, taboos, restrictions, and so on that exist and direct human's action within any community.

The effect of socio-cultural values and lifestyles of the people are very much inherent in the determination of preferences as reflected by Dawan (1984) and Muller (1994) on the study of the resettlement scheme for Gwari people in Abuja, Nigeria and that carried out among the kitale dwellers in North West Kenya respectively. The studies revealed that the pattern and forms of the new dwellings provided for those being resettled were at variance and in conflict with the social and cultural value of the dwellers, therefore consequently abandoned for alternative locations. According to Awotona, Mills-Tetty and Ogunshaki (1994) opined that any housing design will invariably lack originality and relevance so long as it antagonistically contradicts cultural values and user's life styles.

Jiboye (2004) opined that socio-cultural factors and house form in Nigeria reiterated that there are some generalized patterns for houses in rural or urban location and in spite of numerous differences in building materials, customs, habits and beliefs, certain elements are common among the various Nigerian traditional house form.

Therefore, there is a need for a practical approach on carrying out research concerning housing forms which had been of cultural relevance to the people particularly the different ethnic groups of Taraba State of Nigeria. In this study, the intention is to understand how social status and culture of the various tribes influences rural housing form in rural area of Taraba State.

## 2. Statement of the Research Problem

In human development man is continuously trying to reshape his immediate environment to

suit his socio-cultural needs directed at his housing apparently producing variation in housing characteristic across different cultural areas and of course not without some resultant problems. Charalambons (1992) suggests that the cultural investment in space, both locally and globally, varied to a considerable degree between as well as within each ethnic groups. Adeyemi (1998) reported that the rural landscape was perceived visually as unwelcome and the buildings within the rural settings as substandard. The study area is a conglomerate of tribes and people that moved or lives in the land as a result of trade, nomadic life, tribal conflicts / wars, political movement and farming, all bringing different types of cultures and values, social system, their language and traditional houses to suit. The different tribes recognized themselves to be relatively distinctive and different from their neighbours, although their borders, between them are now becoming narrow, due to various social developments, like intermarriage, political influence and interaction, education, urban employment, tribal wars, draught, migration and looking for animals' green pastures. Setting out this principle, tribes reflects evolution of the people numerous origins of different cultures. It will be worthwhile, therefore, to undertake a study on the socio-cultural factors that influence rural house forms in such area.

### 3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the socio-cultural factors that influence housing forms in relation to ethnic groups in Taraba State, while specific objectives are as follows:

- (i) to identify the various ethnic groups in the study area
- (ii) to identify socio-cultural activities the people living in the study area
- (iii) to find out the socio-cultural activities that influences their choice of housing forms
- (iv) to examine the specific value on housing forms in the study area.

### 4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the research purpose, a set of broad and more specific research questions have been raised in this section to guide the study.

- (a) What are the house forms synonymous with various ethnic groups?
- (b) Does marital status influence house forms in the study area?
- (c) Does Religious believe influence house forms in the study area?
- (d) What are specific values about house form in the study area of the tribes?
- (e) What are the common norms guiding housing construction in the study area?

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1 Research Design

This study adopted two research designs namely survey research design and historical research designs. Survey research allows data to be collected and analyzed only from a few people considered to be representative of the entire group. Historical research on its part is a procedure in which researcher conducts a systematic search for his documents in order to answer some questions about some past events which could lead to a better understanding of the present and the prediction of the future (Jegade, 1999 and Nworgu, 1991).

### 5.2 Population and Sample

#### Population

A total population of 2,300,736 according to National Population Census (2006) from sixteen local government area of Taraba Satate. A total of 750 household head were sampled.

#### Sample

The sample size was made up of 750 household head which comprised of 135(18%) Mumuye, 86(11.47%) Jukun, 120(16%) Tiv, 95(12.67%) Mambila, 175(23.33%) Fulani, 105(14%) Wurukum and 34(4.53%) belong to other minority tribes.

### 5.3 Sampling Technique

Multistage sampling technique was adopted in this study classifies the study population into North, Central and South zones. In applying multistage sampling, the zones are taken as the Primary Samplings Units (PSU) from a purposively sampled was selected from each ethnic group. Then, further division of each of the selected secondary unit of Local

Government areas (two Local Government Areas from each of the senatorial zone). According to Kitchin and Tate (2000) contend that sample size depends on the variability of the population to be sampled. They further argued that if one already knows something about the variability, one can estimate the size of sample needed in order to estimate population value with a certain degree of confidence. Multistage Sampling technique as mentioned was employed in the process of data collection. Multistage sampling plan is where the sampling is carried out using smaller and smaller unit. It can be said to be a complex form of cluster sample which involve dividing the population into clusters or groups with the clusters chosen at random and everyone within the chosen cluster is sampled. The three stages of samples were as follows: Selection of ethnic groups, Selection of localities and Selection of respondents. The six ethnic groups selected do not have even geographic spread all over the sixteen local government areas and one development centre. Instruments of Primary Data collection

Questionnaire and in-depth interview (IDI) were the direct methods used in this study for the collection of the primary data and they formed the major instruments. The questionnaire was divided into two sections and based on the research objectives, consisted of open and closed-ended questions.

**5.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The collected data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 application software, simple percentage was used to answer the research questions based on socio-cultural factors influencing Housing form of the different ethnic origin were presented and discussed.

The simple percentage formula used is presented below:

$$P = \frac{OF}{TR} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Where:

P = Percentage score

OF = observed frequencies

TR = Total respondents

**6. Results**

**Research Question One**

What are the house forms synonymous with various ethnic groups?

Table 1: House forms across Ethnic Groups in Taraba State

Ethnic Groups	House Form						Row Total
	Traditional Single Huts	Traditional Compound	Jointed Block of Traditional Form	Jointed Block of Modern Building Form	Jointed block of mixed traditional and Modern Housing Form	Modern Housing Form-(flats, bungalow and others)	
Mumuye	52 (38.52)	37 (27.41)	33 (24.44)	5 (3.70)	6 (4.44)	2 (1.48)	135 (100)
Jukun	23 (26.74)	30 (34.88)	22 (25.58)	3 (3.49)	5 (5.81)	3 (3.49)	86 (100)
Tiv	45 (37.50)	44 (36.67)	20 (16.67)	5 (4.17)	3 (2.50)	3 (2.50)	120 (100)
Mambila	21 (22.11)	40 (42.11)	20 (21.05)	3 (3.16)	6 (6.32)	5 (5.26)	95 (100)
Fulani	20 (11.43)	82 (46.86)	52 (29.71)	15 (8.57)	3 (1.71)	3 (1.71)	175 (100)
Wurukum	41 (39.05)	28 (26.67)	25 (23.81)	4 (3.81)	3 (2.86)	4 (3.81)	105 (100)
Others	12 (35.29)	12 (35.29)	6 (17.65)	1 (2.94)	1 (2.94)	2 (5.88)	34 (100)
<b>Colum Total</b>	214 (28.53)	273 (36.40)	178(23.73)	36 (4.80)	27 (3.60)	22 (2.93)	750 (100)

Source: field survey 2015. Note that Percentages are in parentheses (%)

Table 1 revealed House forms of various Ethnic Groups in Taraba State, majority of the Mumuye ethnic group had 52(38.52%) of Traditional

Single Hut Form (TSHF), while the Jukun and Fulanis ethnic group had 30 (34.88%) and 82 (46.86%) of Traditional Compound Form (TCF)

respectively. The Fulani ethnic group were the majority in Jointed Block of Traditional Form (JBTF) and Jointed Block of Modern Building Form (JBMBF) with 52 (29.71) and 15 (8.57) respectively. In summary, 214 responses representing 28.53% of the respondents had Traditional Single Huts (TSH), 273 responses representing 36.40% of the respondents had Traditional Compound (TC), 36 responses

representing 4.80% of the respondents had Jointed Block of Modern Building Form (JBMF), 27 responses representing 3.60% of the respondents had Jointed Block of Mixed Traditional and Modern Housing Form (JBMHF) and 22 responses representing 2.93% of the respondents had Modern Housing Form-flats, bungalow and others (MHF).

**Research Question Two**

Does marital status influence house forms in the study area?

**Table 2: Marital Status influence on House forms**

Marital Status	Traditional single hut	Traditional compound	Jointed Block of traditional form	Jointed block of modern building form	Jointed block of mixed traditional and modern housing form	Modern Housing form-Flat, bungalow and others	Total (%)
Single	176 (23.47)	14 (1.86)	0	0	0	0	190 (25.33)
Married	20 (2.67)	259 (34.53)	171 (22.80)	35 (4.67)	22 (2.93)	13 (1.73)	520 (69.33)
Separated	7 (0.93)	0	0	1 (0.13)	0	0	8 (1.07)
Widowed	10 (1.33)	0	2 (0.27)	0	0	0	12 (1.60)
Divorced	1 (0.13)	0	5 (0.67)	0	5 (0.67)	9 (1.20)	20 (2.67)
Total	214 (28.53)	273 (36.40)	178 (23.73)	36 (4.80)	27 (3.60)	22 (2.93)	750 (100)

Table 2 revealed marital status and house form, 190 (25.33%) are singles, 520 (69.33%) are married, 8 (1.07%) are separated, 12 (1.60%) are widowed and 20 (2.67%) are divorced. Marriage is a strong influencing factor that determines house form in the study area, out of the 520 (69.33%) married household head relationship with 20 (2.67%) had Traditional single hut, 259(34.53%) had Traditional compound, 171 (22.80%) had Jointed Block of traditional House form, 35 (4.67%) had Jointed block of modern

building form, 22(2.93%) had Jointed block of mixed traditional and modern housing form, and 13(1.73%) had Modern Housing form-Flat, bungalow and others. This study finding is in line with Charalambons (2007) opined that culture being systems of human behaviour and thought focuses on attributes that people acquire not through biological inheritance but by growing up in a specific tradition (society), remains useful determining factor to house form.

**Research Question Three**

Does Religious believe influence house forms in the study area?

Table 3: Married Respondents religious influence on House forms

Religion	House Form						Total
	Traditional single hut	Traditional compound	Jointed Block of traditional form	Jointed block of modern building form	Jointed block of mixed traditional and modern housing form	Modern Housing form- Flat, bungalow and others	
Christianity	20 (3.85)	159 (30.58)	95 (18.27)	18 (3.46)	15 (2.88)	10 (1.92)	317 (60.96)
Islam	0	91 (17.5)	66 (12.69)	16 (3.08)	6 (1.15)	2 (0.38)	181 (34.81)
Traditional	0	9 (1.73)	10 (1.92)	1 (0.19)	1 (0.19)	1 (0.19)	22 (4.23)
Total	20 (3.85)	259 (49.81)	171 (32.88)	35 (6.73)	22 (4.23)	13 (25.19)	520 (100)

Table 3 revealed religious status and house form of the 520 (69.33%) married household head from table 2 above. Religions is another strong influencing factor that determines house form in the study area, based on the cluster of dispersal marriage is a core of culture in any society and it cut across all religion in the study area. 20 (3.85%) of the household head that had Traditional single hut enough to cater for their family, but majority of the of 259(49.81%) household head had Traditional compound. This study is in agreement with Kottak (2004) restated anthropologist Anthony F.C. Wallace’s definition of religion as “belief and ritual concerned with supernatural beings, powers, and forces” influences house form.

**Research Question Four**  
**What are specific values about house form in the study area of the tribes?**

Based on the researchers’ interactive interviews with the respondents and observation of various ethnic groups in the study area it was observed that everybody in the area of study respects each other belief and the society values that bind them together.

The Mumuye ethnic group have value for children, children huts are always at the approach into the compound because they belief that the children will soon leave the compound after attaining appropriate maturity age to start their own. Secondly, the Mumuye people restrict other persons apart from the spiritual head from

the shrine area (which is fenced in enclosed place with so many trees and woods inside). Thirdly, the Mumuye people have a burial place with the housing units because of their norms and believe.

The Wurukum ethnic group believes the ancestors dwell in some particular forest hence regarded as sacred and anyone viewing it contrary is a taboo. Secondly, whenever a twin is given birth, traditional pots always put at the entrance of the mothers hut to be used for worship festivals.

The Hausa/Fulani ethnic group kitchen always situated opposite living rooms as a custom and as a Muslim always have private, semi-private and public space of worship.

The Mambilla ethnic group dug graves outside and tunneled to the inside of the house, being a sign of respect and honour for the dead.

The Tiv ethnic group always has a central place resting hut in their compound for relaxation and their strong interaction (‘ate). Secondly, the Tiv’s bury dead youth at the entrance to the settlement and others within the settlement.

The Jukun ethnic groups live in booths during the Iya-puje festival (the festival in harvest thanksgiving) young adult normally settle away from the main family. The Jukuns buried their dead within the compound mostly unmarked.

### Research Question Five

#### What are the common norms guiding housing construction in the study area?

Based on the researchers interactive interviews with the respondents and observation of various ethnic groups in the study area it was observed that everybody in the area of study respect the various ethnic group norms and avoid encroaching into another person's Land (Landed properties) was a common norm guiding housing construction in the study area.

### 7. Discussion

House forms synonymous with various Ethnic Groups in Taraba State, majority of the Mumuye ethnic group had 52(38.52%) of Traditional Single Hut Form (TSHF), while the Jukun and Fulanis ethnic group had 30 (34.88%) and 82 (46.86%) of Traditional Compound Form (TCF) respectively. The Fulani ethnic group were the majority in Jointed Block of Traditional Form (JBTF) and Jointed Block of Modern Building Form (JBMBF) with 52 (29.71) and 15 (8.57) respectively.

Marriage is a strong influencing factor that determines house form in the study area, out of the 520 (69.33%) married household head relationship with 20 (2.67%) had Traditional single hut, 259(34.53%) had Traditional compound, 171 (22.80%) had Jointed Block of traditional House form, 35 (4.67%) had Jointed block of modern building form, 22(2.93%) had Jointed block of mixed traditional and modern housing form, and 13(1.73%) had Modern Housing form-Flat, bungalow and others. This study finding is inline with Charalambons (2007) opined that culture being systems of human behaviour and thought focuses on attributes that people acquire not through biological inheritance but by growing up in a specific tradition (society), remains useful determining factor to house form.

Religions is another strong influencing factor that determines house form in the study area, based on the cluster of dispersal marriage is a core of culture in any society and it cut across all religion in the study area. 20 (3.85%) of the household head that had Traditional single hut

enough to cater for their family, but majority of the 259(49.81%) household head had Traditional compound. This study is in agreement with Kottak (2004) restated anthropologist Anthony F.C. Wallace's definition of religion as "belief and ritual concerned with supernatural beings, powers, and forces" influences house form.

**The specific values about house form in the study area of each tribe** in the study area it was observed that everybody in the area of study respects each other belief and the society values that bind them together. The Mumuye ethnic group have value for children, children huts are always at the approach into the compound because they belief that the children will soon leave the compound after attaining appropriate maturity age to start their own. Secondly, the Mumuye people restrict other persons apart from the spiritual head from the shrine area (which is fenced in enclosed place with so many trees and woods inside). Thirdly, the Mumuye people have a burial place with the housing units because of their norms and believe.

The Wurukum ethnic group believes the ancestors dwell in some particular forest hence regarded as sacred and anyone viewing it contrary is a taboo. Secondly, whenever a twin is given birth, traditional pots always put at the entrance of the mothers hut to be used for worship festivals.

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The Tiv ethnic group always has a central place resting hut in their compound for relaxation and their strong interaction ('ate). Secondly, the Tiv's bury dead youth at the entrance to the settlement and others within the settlement.

The Jukun ethnic groups live in booths during the Iya-puje festival (the festival in harvest thanksgiving) young adult normally settle away from the main family. The Jukuns buried their dead within the compound mostly unmarked.

Based on the researchers interactive interviews with the respondents and observation of various

ethnic groups in the study area it was observed that everybody in the area of study respect the various ethnic group norms and avoid encroaching into another person's Land (Landed properties) was a common norm guiding housing construction in the study area is in line with Charalambons (2007) view.

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