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# **Strengthening Democracy with Information: An Assessment of Rural Dwellers' Political Information Behavior**

By

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## **Abstract**

*This study explored political information behavior of citizens residing in a rural setting from the district of Toba Tek Singh, Punjab-Pakistan. Qualitative research design using an unstructured interview guide was employed to conduct this research. Face-to-face interviews of 51 participants, selected through purposive sampling process, were conducted for data collection by visiting their homes using local language. Each participant was informed of his responses at the end of the interview for data verification and authentication. Each interview was carefully recorded and transcribed. Using thematic analysis, the verbal data were analyzed and multiple responses were grouped together and reduced into 'information needs' and 'information channels.' After that, the frequencies and percentages of the responses against these themes were counted because it was possible due to the uniformity in the qualitative data. The results indicated that a large majority of these participants were politically ignorant and did not seem to be in need of political information. A good number of participants required political information on current affairs, rural development policies, government policies and decisions, and both local and national political news. They mainly depended on mass media particularly television for political information followed by newspapers, radio, and interpersonal relationships. Since the rural dwellers were not interested in political information due to political ignorance and backwardness, efforts should be made to improve their political awareness. There was a critical need to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing information infrastructure for the rural population in Pakistan. The results will assist the policy makers in the development of a need-based, unified, and integrated rural information delivery system. This research would make a worthy contribution in existing research on information needs and seeking behavior of rural communities as no such study found addressing directly rural citizens' political information behavior.*

**Keywords:** Information seeking, Information behaviour, Political information, Political participation, Rural development; Pakistan.

## **Introduction**

Democracy is, generally, supposed to be the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The primary premise of democracy is that every member of the society, whether literate or illiterate, who is subject to policy should have a voice in its formulation through elected representatives. For effective political participation and wise voting behaviour, people need credible political information (Bartels, 1996; Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Druckman, 2005; Lau and Redlawsk, 2001; Sniderman et al., 1991). If they are politically ignorant, it becomes difficult for them to cast their ballots wisely and, thus,

unable to hold political leaders accountable for their actions and performance (Craig et al., 1999; Druckman, 2005; Niemi, and Weisberg, 2001). Similarly, Eveland and William (2004) state that political knowledge is essential for citizens in making informed decisions about government. Although there are differences of opinion about whether or not political information matters, it does suggest that political ignorance ultimately weakens the case for decentralizing power of the government.

Pakistan is a developing country where 61% of its population lives in rural areas (World Bank, 2015). The rural people are either predominantly illiterate or have low educational levels and are ignorant of new ways of improving their lives. They usually struggle for their survival. The factors such as poverty, ignorance, disease, high rate of illiteracy and lack of basic infrastructure keep rural people stagnant (Naveed and Anwar, 2014). Consequently, they are unable to make a meaningful contribution in the socio-economic areas, particularly political development. Arnove (1973) defined political development as “the institutionalization of widespread opportunities for effective mass participation in decision-making” (p.198). In other words, it is “the capacity of the political system to satisfy the changing needs of the members of the society” (Park, 1984, 58). According to Eckstein (1982), it is “the growth that occurs in politics as such” (p.470). Unfortunately, the knowledge of rural people about politics is disturbingly low and the political participation of rural population, in general, is either minimal or negative. In addition, the rural people often do a poor job of evaluating political information they do have. A widespread and persistent political ignorance keeps them politically unaware and hinders them in making an active political participation which is a measure of political development.

For consistent and effective political participation, it is essential to equip rural citizens with need-based, timely, and credible political information. The dream of political advancement and deliberative democracy cannot be materialized until the rural citizens’ timely access to the credible political information is not assured. Momodu (2002) defined political information for rural dwellers as a “type of information necessary for the process of mental liberation” (p. 408). He further argued that “mental liberation itself helps to break down apathy and culture of silence” and “engender in them effective participation in the process of nation building” (p. 408). It helps in raising political awareness and consciousness and in conjuring the appropriate cognitive and affective behaviors necessary for cohesive growth and development. By giving them what they actually need rather than what they want, the political participation can be improved. Understanding of political information behavior of the rural population is essential to provide credible information to them. Banmeke and Olowu (2005) emphasized that specific information needs of a particular community should be identified in order to meet their needs and aspirations. Lack of knowledge about users’ information behavior is a major obstacle in designing need-based information services for them (Rosenberg, 1995; Zaverdinos-Kockott, 2004).

A perusal of published research on information needs and seeking behavior of rural populations resulted that no study appeared to have been conducted examining directly political information behavior of rural citizens. There were on a few studies that

addressed this phenomenon as part of general information needs of rural dwellers (Naveed and Anwar, 2014; Momodu, 2002; Saleh and Lasisi, 2011). This situation indicated the need for direct and in-depth inquiries investigating rural citizens' political information behavior. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the political information behavior of rural dwellers residing in a cluster of three villages from the district of Toba Tek Singh, Punjab, Pakistan. This study generated useful insights about political information behavior of rural dwellers which can be useful to inform policy and practice about rural development. Specifically, these results can be utilized as a guide by government officials, both local and national, and other agencies while planning need-based information infrastructure for the rural population. This research would also make a worthy contribution to existing research on information needs and seeking behavior of rural communities as no other study appeared to have been conducted so far addressing directly rural citizens' political information behavior.

### Research questions

This study was designed to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What type of political information do the rural dwellers seek?
2. From where do rural dwellers find political information?
3. How much are they satisfied with the information channels used for political information?
4. What constraints do they face while seeking for credible political information?

### Literature Review

Research interest in examining information behavior of rural population began to develop in the early 1980s. Although a majority of the world population is rural, the amount of research on rural citizens' information behavior is limited. Of the available limited research, most of these studies just identified main categories (e.g., agriculture, health, finance, politics, education, religion, and community development) in which information was needed by rural communities (e.g., Ahmad Bakri, 2011; Anwar and Supaat, 1998; Chandra, 2014; Jiyane and Ocholla, 2004; Mchombu, 1996; Meitei and Devi, 2009; Momodu, 2002; Mooko, 2005; Musib, 1989b; Nwagha, 1992; Patrick and Ferdinand, 2016; Vavrek, 1990, 1995; Zaverdinos-Kockott, 2004). Some studies focused on production related information needs of the rural population (e.g., Elizabeth, 2007; Musib, 1991; Naveed and Anwar, 2013; Okwu and Umoru, 2009; Stefano et al., 2005). Only a few studies investigate health related information needs of rural population (e.g., Wathen and Harris 2006; Ahmad Bakeri and Latef, 2009).

A perusal of published research on information behavior of world rural population, indicated that the rural citizens posited political information needs in either secondary or marginalized interest of their everyday life (e.g., Anwar and Suppat, 1998; Chakrabarti, 2001; Cheunwattana, 1998; Das and Khan, 2004; Islam, 2010; Momodu, 2002; Musib, 1989a; Sahu, 2004; Saleh and Lasisi, 2011; Seneviaratne et al., 2006; September, 1993). A recent qualitative study by Naveed and Anwar (2014) investigated the non-agricultural information needs of rural residents of a village in Pakistan using a semi-structured interview schedule. This research quite surprisingly reported that a

majority of the rural people did not seem to be in need of political information. However, this study also reported that a good number of rural inhabitants required it for daily news, current affairs and government policies. None of these studies (e.g. Anwar and Suppat, 1998; Momodu, 2002; Saleh and Lasisi, 2011) addressed, why were the rural residents least interested in political information? This situation forced the researcher to raise certain logical and legitimate questions. (1) Why rural people were not interested in political information? (2) Were the rural people actually aware about their political information needs? (3) Did they know about different political systems, what the government means, and how did these affect their lives? (4) Were they aware of the role of political information in real democracy? These questions need to be considered in understanding of political information behavior of rural population around the globe especially in developing countries from Africa and Asia.

A review of the methodological features of previous research indicated that nearly all the studies adopted structured interview questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument to explore the information behavior of rural citizens. This meant that a pre-determined list of information needs was presented to the participants. Therefore, the results of these studies were restricted by the researchers' own understanding of what was worthy of investigation. This situation indicated the need for separate in-depth inquiries investigating each category of rural citizens' information needs as identified in the previous research. Islam and Ahmed (2012), in a review article, also suggested the need for more research examining several areas of rural information needs in both developed and developing world.

### **The Research Setting**

Pakistan, a developing country, is situated in south of spanning 881,913 square kilometers which makes it 33rd largest country by area. In terms of population, it has fifth position in order of most populous countries around the globe exceeding 207,774,000 individuals with a population growth rate of 1.43%. It has 143 districts with 6 tribal agencies and 6 frontier regions. Majority (63.6%) of population lives in rural areas. The literacy rate of the total population is 57.9% with male (69.5%) and female (45.8) by defining the literacy as a person can read and write having age 15 and above (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The rural people require information for their basic survival and day to day concerns but they lack appropriate information delivery system. (Naveed and Anwar, 2013, 2014). According to Pakistan Economic Survey 2016-17, the economy of Pakistan is dependent mainly on agriculture (19.53%), industry (20.88%) and services sector (59.59%). Agriculture is considered as lifeline of Pakistan's economy where 42.3% of the total labor force employed directly or indirectly (Government of Pakistan, 2017).

This research was conducted at the district of Toba Tek Sing from central Punjab. The selection of this district was made purposively. The access to rural people was easy because the research himself was a resident of this district. According to Population Census 2017, the population of this district consists of 2,190,015 persons. A large majority (n= 1,748,085, 79.8 %) of the total population are living in rural areas. Toba Tek Sing has four tehsils, namely, Gojra, Toba Tek Sing, Kamalia, and Pirmahal. The

participants of this study were rural citizens residing in the three villages (i.e., 330 Kotly, 331 G. B. Saleempur, and 332 G. B. Jakhara) from tehsil Pir Mahal. These villages are located in the south of the district. The land of these villages is irrigated by the Gugaira Branch canal. The rural people from these villages are associated with agricultural activities through crop, livestock, and poultry production for earning their livings and have low level of education. Electricity, telephones, TV cable network, water supply system, FM-95 radio channel were the major facilities available to these villages. But, unfortunately, these villages have no proper information support system.

## **Methods and Procedures**

This research adopted a qualitative research design using an unstructured interview guide to explore political information behavior of rural dwellers. Direct interviewing was considered most suitable for data collection in the rural environment because the rural people might be illiterate or less educated to respond a questionnaire independently. It was considered more effective due to its suitability, adaptability and usability with all kind of participants (Gorman and Clayton, 1999; Kerlinger, 1964).

## **Population and sampling**

The participants of this study were rural citizens residing in the three villages (i.e., 330 Kotly, 331 G. B. Saleempur, and 332 G. B. Jakhara) from tehsil Pir Mahal, district of Toba Tek Singh, Punjab, Pakistan. These villages were purposively selected because they shared similar characteristics with other villages in the area. It was also convenient to collect data from these villages because the researcher himself was the resident of one of these villages. The participants were recruited through purposive sampling techniques.

## **Data collection and analysis**

Face to face interviews of 51 adult participants, recruited through purposive sampling technique, were conducted by visiting their homes using local language. The questions were asked and the responses were recorded. Follow up questions were also asked to probe certain situations. Each participant was informed of his responses at the end of the interview for data verification and authentication. The responses were then carefully transcribed. Using thematic analysis, the verbal data were analyzed and multiple responses were grouped together and reduced into 'information needs' and 'information channels.' After that, the frequencies and percentages of the responses against these themes were counted because it was possible due to the uniformity in the qualitative data. The verbatim translations of responses were added where felt necessary. It should be noted that there may be a sampling bias because participants' selection was made using purposive sampling. Also, this inquiry covers the experiences of 51 participants only which constitute a small sample of the total population. Thus, this study did not claim, by no means, to be a voice of the whole rural population in Pakistan.

## **Results**

The following sections present analysis of data collected from 51 adult participants of three villages of Pakistan.

### **Demographic characteristics**

Of the 51 participants, 31 were males and 20 females. Thirty-five (68.6%) had some formal education ranging from primary to middle level while six (11.8%) were illiterate. Three (5.9%) had passed matriculation and seven (13.7%) had achieved their educational level up to college and university. It was quite interesting to note that none of the females had studied beyond the primary level and only three attended colleges for secondary education. The age of these participants ranged from 25-45 years with most of them falling the 30-40 years bracket. The males were mainly farmers, followed by laborers such as home servants and farming assistants. Some of them were electricians, barbers, plumbers, and sanitary workers. Only a few were school teachers. The females were primarily engaged in a variety of domestic activities.

These participants mainly spent their spare time in watching television and chit-chatting. They watched dramas, news, films, and sports on different channels. Although some participants mentioned reading as their leisure time activity which was mainly focused on the Holy Quran and Islamic books. They were also asked to specify the types of news media available to them. Television was the only source for news as a majority of these rural citizens had no access to print media such as newspapers and magazines. Some participants mentioned that they had access to internet using smart phones and personal computers.

### **RQ1: Participants' conceptions of political information needs**

These rural inhabitants were asked to specify the nature of their requirements for political information. While responding, a majority of them 31(60.8%), especially females, did not seem to be in need of such information because they felt that they did not have interest in politics. When they were asked why? They replied that they had to sustain their survival for basic physiological needs and struggle for managing their everyday concerns (e.g., income generation activities, food, health and family care). These engagements did not allow them to indulge in political activities. Some participants expressed that they were not interested in political activities and the related information. For instance, one male participant said that "It is wastage of time and energy to be engaged in political activities. That is why I have no need for political information" (P7). Another felt that "The discussion on political matters sometimes result in quarrels with friends and relatives. Therefore, it is better to avoid such discussions and information" (P11). One female summed up the responses of many other participants and raised a very interesting and surprising question, "Why do we need to be engaged with political information if we get nothing out of it?" (P8). These participants were not aware about current affairs and government policies for rural development. Some of them were even unaware about the existing political system, civil rights and civic responsibilities, manifestos of the political parties, how the governments were constituted, rural development programs, IMF loans and the way these loans would affect their lives. It was quite disappointing that they were politically ignorant and alienated because they were even unaware about various types of governments and how their decisions affected their lives.

Of the 51 total participants, there were only 20(39.2%) rural inhabitants who specified their political information needs. Table 1 presents the details their responses. These participants perceived that they had a need for information mainly on current affairs which was followed by rural development programs, government policies, and news. These participants were asked about the purposes for which they needed the political information? These respondents were not clear about the reasons for needing political information. Only a few participants acknowledged that the political information helped them in being aware of the surroundings where they lived. Such information was good for mental relief. It must be mentioned that the education level of most of these participants were more than middle.

Table 1  
Political information needs (n=51; multiple response)

Information needs	Frequency	Percentage
Currents affaires	19	37.2
Rural development programs	15	29.4
Policy information	14	27.4
Local news	11	21.5
National news	09	17.6

Some participants, who require political information, were also in a state of political distrust. For instance, one participant ironically expressed, “the government ignores public interests while formulating policies” (P19). Another, reflecting the responses of many others, noted that “the current politicians do not have any concern with public welfare and described that these political leaders serve their own interests after elected as public representatives” (P17). A female inhabitant (P32) raised a quite interesting question as “what can public do with these political leaders if they are not accountable anywhere?” A school teacher mentioned that, “Nobody can take risks of raising the question mark on the performance of current local political leaders because everyone is afraid from the enmity of these politicians” (P41).

### **RQ2: Information channels used for political information**

The participants were asked to identify the key information channels that they used in obtaining political information. The 20 (39.2%) participants, who had identified a need for political information, mentioned such information channels (Table 2). The figures indicate that a large majority of these participants relied mainly on television for political information. This was followed by newspapers, community leaders, internet, and radio. Some participants mentioned interpersonal relationships as sources of political information. The major usage of internet in seeking political information included: use of social media – Facebook, YouTube, and online newspapers. The use of social media as a channel of information on current and public affairs was an emerging theme among these

participants. One participant mentioned use of a college library located nearby as the source of information.

Table 2

Channels used for political information (n=20; multiple response)

Information channels	Frequency	Percentage
Television	18	90
Newspapers	13	65
Political leaders	12	60
Internet	11	55
Radio	11	55
Friends	8	40
Co-workers/relatives	7	35
Teachers	4	20
Library	1	5

### RQ3: Satisfaction with information sources used

How much satisfied were the respondents with the information channels they used for political information? The participants could provide multiple answers. A large majority of the participants were satisfied with whatever they had available to them. On the contrary, some participants believed that sometimes the government manipulated broadcasting of information with censorship laws. The news channels also controlled information on different issues and broadcast diluted and doctored information. For instance, one participant believed that the “news media didn’t broadcast accurate, reliable, and objective information” (P47). Another participant (P21) mentioned that “I’m dissatisfied with news channels because one can clearly see alignment of different news channels with particular political parties”. One more participant noted that “The local news channels broadcast biased information and even sometime misinformation” (P8). Similarly, two more citizens shared their views as:

I’m unhappy with local news channels due to their biased and compromised reporting. These channels serve their own interests, work for certain political parties, and broadcast controlled and subjective information. (P28)

I ‘m dissatisfied with media sources because they broadcast subjective information. However, I receive information from multiple news channels and read various newspapers at the college library. Therefore, I have varying perspectives about certain government decisions with regard to Metro Bus, Orange train services, CPEC, and many other projects. If one has multiple perspectives about a particular situation, one can easily understand the actual situation. (P25)

A few participants mentioned that news media reports (e.g., television, radio and newspapers) were quite embarrassing and a source of tension for them. One of them (P15) said that “media reports sometime cause tension and frustration because the reporting is such as the whole system is going to collapse overnight”. Another (P26) participant precisely shared her viewpoint as, “I avoid watching news as it is a big source of tension and causes depression”.

In addition, the rural internet users were dissatisfied with social media such as Facebook and YouTube for the provision of inaccurate, irrelevant and even outdated information. For example, two respondents mentioned that the Facebook news were mostly fake and unauthentic” (P22) and that “I wasn’t always satisfied with information received from social media because sometimes news were fake and sometimes reliable” (P29). One more participant expressed:

I’m quite unhappy with information received from Facebook because most of the posts were untrue. I didn’t usually believe social media because some political parties generate misinformation to serve their own interest.  
(P25)

#### **RQ4: Major constraints in seeking political information**

What constraints do these rural dwellers face while acquiring credible political information? Only 20 (39.2%) participants answered this question. The major constraints in seeking political information mentioned by most of these participants included: illiteracy, low education, language barriers, and electricity shortage. Some participants considered the mismatch between the timings of television talk shows and electricity load shedding also restrict them in obtaining information from the analysts. One of these participants expressed that “sometimes analysts talk in a difficult language which is unable to understand for us. The analysts and anchors should communicate their analysis in a simple and understandable language” (P51). Whereas a few participants expressed that the reporting of different television channels is totally different which creates some time confusion and keeps rural people at cross-roads about certain situations. These participants described that sometimes they are unable to evaluate the authenticity and credibility of political information received through multiple news channels about the same event. For example, one participant stated as:

When certain anchor persons in private media channels report varied facts about the same happening, it causes confusion and keeps us at the cross-roads. We don’t have enough capability to evaluate the received information objectively and decide which information is true to believe.”  
(P25)

#### **Discussion**

The results indicate that a large majority of the rural residents were less interested in politics and did not seem to be in need of political information. These results were partially consistent with the results of previous studies examining rural dwellers’ information Behaviour (e.g., Anwar and Suppat, 1998; Chakrabarti, 2001; Cheunwattana,

1998; Das and Khan, 2004; Islam, 2010; Momodu, 2002; Musib, 1989a; Sahu, 2004; Saleh and Lasisi, 2011; Seneviratne et al., 2006; September, 1993). These studies reported that the category of political information need was specified by a small number of rural residents. These results were fully in line with those of Naveed and Anwar (2014) who reported that the rural citizens did not appear to be in need of political information. However, none of these studies looked into why the rural residents were least interested in political information.

The analysis revealed that a large majority of the rural dwellers were politically ignorant and alienated as they were unaware about the existing political system, the way government operates, current affairs, and rural development programs. There was a widespread perception about politics as non-consequential endeavor among these citizens which needed to be changed. This was not quit surprising because political ignorance and backwardness was wide spread in rural areas of Pakistan. This finding echo those of Naveed and Rahat-ul-Ain (2017) who also reported that the rural dwellers in Pakistan are politically ignorant and were not interested in political activities. These findings were also in line with the results of Somin (2016) who also reported the problem of political ignorance is extensively prevalent even in American citizens where democracy has developed at reasonable levels, literacy rate is good, and they actively participate in politics as compared to Pakistan. The deep and widespread political ignorance and cynicism has serious implications on deliberative and participative democracy requiring an extensive knowledge and sophistication of the average voter (Somin 2006, 2010). Perhaps, the political ignorance and cynicism were the main reasons for least interest of rural populations in political information. Politics, whether one is concerned with it or not, affects everyone's life because the policies the government formulates affect the lives of masses, either positively or negatively. This widespread political ignorance keeps this segment of the population bogged down in dealing with basic survival and politically backward. Therefore, they cannot actively participate in the process of socio-economic and political development.

A good number of these rural inhabitants perceived that they had a need for information about current affairs, rural development programs, government policies, and both local and national news. These findings were fully consistent with Naveed and Anwar (2014) who also discovered such political information needs among Pakistani citizens residing in rural setting. In addition, these results also confirm the findings of Saleh and Lasisi (2011) and Momodu (2002) who reported that the rural inhabitants need to know about the government, the way government affected their lives, their civic rights and their powers as electorates and how to vote and danger of compromising their votes.

These participants relied mainly on television for political information. Their dependence only on mass-media for political information may lead to one-dimensional understanding. However, this finding is quite logical because rural citizens usually preferred verbal communication (Dutta, 2009; Islam and Ahmed, 2012; Naveed et al., 2012; Zhang and Yu, 2009). The reason for preference of oral communication might be due to their illiteracy or low level of education and non-availability of printed materials because the library facility to rural populations was non-existent in Pakistan. It was quite

interesting to mention here that the reasons for having a need for political information were unknown to the participants of this study.

The rural dwellers were either totally unconcerned about political information or seemed to be satisfied with whatever political information was available to them. This is an area where there is a room for NGOs, civil society, and mass media to work if the nation has to get out of the corrupt political culture. The role of mass-media is critical not only for making public opinion through delivering credible political information and political socialization of the rural communities of Pakistan. While on the contrary, some participants perceived that sometimes the government manipulated media broadcasting through censorship laws. In addition, the news channels also controlled information on different issues and broadcast diluted and doctored information. The role of internet especially social media sites was also limited in provision of political information as majority of the rural inhabitant was illiterate and they don't afford high cost of internet access.

The results also indicated that illiteracy, low education, electricity shortage, language barriers, and bad timings of television programs as the major constraints restricting the rural inhabitants' access to political information. These results are not surprising because the literacy rate of rural populations in Pakistan is quite low as compared to urban populations. These results were consistent with those of Naveed, Anwar and Bano (2012), Naveed (2013), Naveed and Anwar (2013, 2014, 2015) who also reported similar problems of Pakistan rural dwellers in acquiring information related to everyday life. Illiteracy and low level of education as a primary barrier to rural people in meeting information needs were also reported by Nwagha (1992), Ukachi (2007), and Jiyane and Ocholla (2004).

## **Conclusions**

Since the rural dwellers were not interested in political information due to political ignorance and backwardness, efforts should be made to improve their political awareness. There is a critical need to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing information infrastructure for the rural population in Pakistan. An active collaborative effort is needed by the government, information specialists, extension workers, and the end users if a better information delivery system is to be implemented in the rural setting. A good solution could be the provision of information through a mechanism closer to the Integrated Rural Information System (Anwar et al., 1976) by using the combination of older and emerging media technologies. Such information infrastructure can provide access to useful channels to break free from political ignorance and increase access to relevant political information. In addition, public libraries can initiate community information services (CIS) in collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) on the lines as proposed by Anwar (1996). The mass-media such as television and newspapers should avoid jargons and broadcast understandable information considering low education of the rural populations. The government needs to work on political information efficacy of the rural population if the goal of real and participative democracy is to be achieved.

The results of this study will be useful in a number of ways. First, these results can be utilized as a guide by government officials, both local and national, and other agencies while planning need-based information infrastructure for the rural population. Second, such knowledge will be helpful for NGOs, civil society, mainstream mass-media, community action groups, and training organizations in making public opinion, overcoming socio-political inequalities, altering existing socio-political arrangements, and strengthening socio-political participation. Once, fundamental socio-political changes occurred, then, it would be easy through education to alleviate political ignorance, empower political socialization, and promote participation of the broader masses of rural people in society. This would ultimately reduce rural people's current state of political alienation, increase their participation in political development, and play a decisive role in strengthening democracy. Lastly, this research may provide new directions for more detailed and in-depth inquiries in the proposed area as no other study appears to have been conducted so far on the rural citizens' political information behavior.

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