

Taraba zone where only one town is connected to national grid



■ Dorofi is one of the towns in Sardauna local govt area Taraba central without electricity



■ Senator Yusuf A. Yusuf representing Taraba Senatorial District

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“The central zone is blessed with both natural and human resources, but these resources could not be harnessed due mainly to lack of electricity,” she lamented.

Our findings also reveal that Mutum Biyu, headquarters of Gassol Local Government Area in the Central Senatorial Zone, located about 74 kilometres from Jalingo, the Taraba State capital, is also not connected to the national grid.

A generating plant installed some years back by the state at the power house located at Kan Kwana in Mutum Biyu to supply electricity to the town between 6pm and 12 pm on daily basis has not been functioning for many months due to lack of diesel.

Initially, it was the local government council that was supplying diesel to the plant, but that had stop due to lack of funds.

“The local government



■ Vandalised cables which were to link Mutum Biyu with the National Grid from Jalingo, the state capital

council used to supply diesel and also maintain the generating plant, but now there is no money and therefore residents are not getting electricity,” a resident, Malam Garba, said.

Though contract for the electrification of the town was awarded by the Federal Government some years back, the contractor abandoned the project and electric cables so far supplied for the line have been stolen.

Daily Trust learnt that Mutum Biyu, a fast growing town, has no single industry despite potentials of agricultural resources capable of sustaining the agro-allied industry, like rice milling industry.

Kurmi and Gashaka local government areas in the zone are also experiencing slow socio/

economic development as a result of absence of electricity.

Gashaka Local Government Area, for example, is home to the largest national park in the whole of West Africa. However, the Gashaka Gumti National Park, located about 40 kilometres from Serti, headquarters of Gashaka Local Area, depend on a generating plant to light the park, a situation that is said to be responsible for its low patronage.

A resident of the area, Malam Garba Mayo Selbe, said with stable power to the park, more tourists would come because of the good scenery and wildlife found in the park.

“Serti gets electricity from a generating plant installed by the Taraba State Government many years ago and it was the

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local government council that supplied diesel for the running of the station. However, the local government has no money to supply diesel now,” he lamented.

The story is the same for Baissa, headquarters of Kurmi Local Government Area, where the town, as well as other towns and villages around it are not connected to the national grid.

Baissa is home to the Baissa Timber Company, as well as the Baissa Palm Oil Company and two other companies which have stopped operation for some years now. The problem was traced to operational costs.

A resident of the area, Mr. Yakubu Garkuwa, lamented that while other towns in neighbouring Donga and Takum local government areas in the Southern Senatorial District enjoyed electricity from the national grid, the whole of the central district was not connected.

“I blame our politicians; especially those representing

us at the National Assembly, for not taking the issue of connecting Kurmi and other local government areas in the Central Senatorial District to the national grid,” Mr. Garkuwa said.

The Manager, Jalingo office of the Yola Electricity Distribution Company (DisCO) Mr. Hanawa, said both state and federal governments had a role in providing electricity to rural areas.

He said nine out of 16 local government headquarters in Taraba State were connected to the national grid.

The manager explained that they advised the state government to connect Mutum Biyu and Gassol towns from Jalingo, but that the state was yet to do so.

He said connecting the towns would not cost much to the government because of their proximity with Jalingo.

“The Proposed Mambilla Hydro Power Project and the ongoing Kashimbilla 400MW Hydro Power Project in Takum Local Government Area, when completed, would address the need of electricity to areas that are not enjoying power from the national grid,” Mr. Hanawa said.

Daily Trust findings, however, reveal that the tower for the supply of electricity from Kashimbilla, which is about 95 per cent completed, is being erected to supply electricity to most parts of the southern and central districts.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Press Secretary to Governor Darius, Mr. Illiya Kwey, said the present administration in the state had done very well in the area of electricity supply to rural areas more than any other administration in the state.

He said Kakulu, Yakoko and Monkin villages in Zing Local Government Areas of the state had been connected to the national grid by the administration of Governor Darius.

Mr. Illiya Kwey further stated that other electricity projects executed by the state government included electrification and connecting of Kununi town in Lau Local Government Area to the national grid.

However, worthy of note is that both Zing and Lau local government areas are in the Northern Senatorial District and not in the Central Senatorial District which suffers gross lack of electricity.

Though contract for the electrification of the town was awarded by the Federal Government some years back, the contractor abandoned the project and electric cables so far supplied for the line have been stolen