

THE

RESEARCHER

ISSN 1119-4855

3(1) September 1998

**JOURNAL of NIGERIAN Education
RESEARCH REPORTERS' ASSOCIATION**



ENHANCING INFORMATION DISSEMINATION FOR INCOME GENERATION AMONG RURAL WOMEN

ETIM, FELICIA E. AND EDUKERE, UDUAK I.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY & LIBRARY SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF UYO, UYO

Abstract

The identification of women as "vehicles of development" and their inclusion in infrastructural development gave impetus for a research into information dissemination and income generation. Information dissemination strategies available to Akwa Ibom women have been identified, factors enhancing information dissemination and the relationship between information dissemination and income generation determined. Implication are that there is need to create awareness through effective information dissemination using traditional meetings, clubs, and women associations.

Introduction

Women constitute a large percentage of the food producers and a vital source of labour for the traditional agricultural sector of which they form a pillar. Most of these women dwell in the rural areas, and carry out their responsibilities (food production activities, housekeeping, child care, and community development) under constraints such as poverty, illiteracy, repeated pregnancy, excessive workload, absence of social amenities including those of health, education, good water supply, poor access to farm inputs and improved tools, low status, and no recognition (Anyakoha, 1990.).

The progress of change can come from a number of actors including appropriate information dissemination strategies and technology, which is not value free or value neutral, but to be embedded in and carry socio-economic values, institutional forms and culture. Technology and information has different impact on people. As techniques, it affects the way people do things, and as a system of knowledge, it affects the way people think about what they do. It is assumed in developing countries, that rural population requires information to enhance development at the grass-root level, (Ochai, 1995). This school of thought sees the existence of two worlds, the developed and developing countries characterised by the abundant information on the one hand, and its absence or lack of it on the other. Information is seen by librarians and information scientists as the pivot which development revolves, and the library, its vehicle. The development model, employed is that if information is provided to the rural women they necessarily respond positively and the supposition is that development would have taken place in these rural areas. There is certainly a serious gap in the information exchange process and in the information transfer chain, linking rural communities with other of information centres.

The provision of information to rural communities is a responsibility fragmented among several government ministries, NGOS, agencies, and governmental parastatals. With the exception of the library services, most of the other agencies supply information to rural communities as a small package within a larger package or services and input,

(Mchombu, 1992). This is certainly the case with the extension agencies in agriculture, community, and adult literacy programmes. Rural women are exposed to a lot of information, but the real problem seems to be whether the information reaching them is reliable and organised in such a way to achieve defined objectives. (Aboyade, 1984).

Despite increased urbanization and massive government, and non-government efforts to reduce the low economic status of rural women, not much has been achieved. One reason for the slower rate is the inability of these programmes to change the complex fabric of rural society. Most of the rural areas in Nigeria cannot meet the needs for her rural women whose lot can be improved with the help of effective information dissemination strategies, (Akpan – Attat, 1998). Information dissemination is the greatest force which sustains every development activity. Most of the rural women have little or no access to any formal loan or credit information and facilities. This is partly the result of lack of access to vital information and partly due to the societal norms which relegate women to the background by presenting a poor image of their contribution to the household and state economy (Simbeye, 1990).

The purpose of this study is therefore to identify information dissemination strategies available to rural women, identify factors that enhance information dissemination to rural women and to determine if there is a significant relationship between information dissemination strategies and income generation among rural women in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Methodology

A survey research design was adopted on a population of women from the 31 local government areas of Akwa Ibom State. A simple random sampling techniques was used to select two villages from each of the three local government areas earlier randomly selected from the three senatorial districts of Ikot Ekpene, Uyo, and Eket. 500 women were therefore selected from the six villages during their monthly women co-operative meetings. A structured interview schedule was used to collect data because of the low level of education of the subjects under study. Each item of the interview schedule was explained clearly and assurance of the women's understanding obtained before responses were recorded.

Result And Discussion

Information Dissemination Strategies Available to Rural Women

Table 1 shows the frequency of information dissemination strategies (IDS) available to rural women. 41% of the women rated town crier/village council meeting as most available IDS. This was followed by the Family support Programme meetings. Ironically, library services rated the lowest with 0.8%. This result tallies with Mchombu's (1992) report from Malawi that most rural dwellers still have high confidence in traditional leadership. There is therefore need to involve traditional leaders and women mobilisation through these strategies are communicated through their local language.

Interest on how information is disseminated and meanings conveyed has occupied man since the time of pre-Socratic philosophers. Thus the general conceptualisation and operationalisation of information dissemination is mass-oriented. Public enlightenment and propaganda and using much time tested communication channels of newspapers,

television, radio and town criers are more effective. The delimma of dissemination is therefore not solved by only providing access to the information and knowledge but to increase contact with data. The answer therefore lies is creating condition and strategies that enable what is "information or knowledge for one person to be converted into information or knowledge for another. Every decision taking requires hard information derived from feasibility's and technical reports, in-house memoranda, government position, papers, learned journals in which subject specialists communicate the latest knowledge in a field of specialization. The information needed for achieving an environmentally sound development is highly inter disciplinary and cross-sectoral.

The three facts of information follows that, first of all it is a new fact for the recipient, something previously unknown to the recipient. Secondly, the information is novel or new fact which has been sent, received by the person to whom it is directed and recognised, also accepted by that person. Thirdly, this information must be so stated that further processing is not necessary in order to use the information for decision making. The value of information has meaning only in the context of its usefulness to users, "It is only through sliental satisfaction that success or effectiveness can be truly measured. Use is only a preliminary or rough indication of value of information where goals are clearly defined and the information being used is directly related to the goals.

Table 1: Information Dissemination Strategies (IDS), Available to Rural women.

S/N	IDS Available to Rural Women	Actual Frequency
1.	Town Crier/Village Council Meetings	205 (41.00)
2.	Family Support Programme Meetings	100 (20.00)
3.	Extension Agents (Agric)	84 (16.80)
4.	Community Development Workers	49 (12.00)
5.	Co-operative Societies	33 (4.40)
6.	Selective Dissemination of Information	18 (3.60)
7.	Current Awareness Services	2 (1.40)
8.	Traditional Library Services	4 (0.8)
	Total =	500 (100)

Factors that Enhance Information Dissemination among rural Women

There is a widespread realisation that the process of rural change are more complex than plethorax description, and that changes cannot be regarded as an exogenous factor which impinge on the otherwise stage of the rural community. Table 2 shows on analysis of factors that enhance information dissemination among rural women in Akwa Ibom State. The findings are in support of general observation

Table 2: Factors that enhance Information Dissemination among rural women.

	Factors Enhancing Information Dissemination	Actual Frequency
1.	Introduction of folk media/drama	120 (24)
2.	Local Festival songs	102 (20.00)
3.	Use of local language in electronic media such as radio etc.	100 (20)
4.	Local Agricultural shows	83 (16.6)
5.	Vernacularization and use of low prized	
6.	Newspapers	50 (10)
7.	Posters	25 (5)
8.	Use of rediffusions boxes	20 (4)
	Total =	500 (100)

that rural African's have an oral culture of communication and dissemination of information. The reason may also be that a very high percentage of the population is illiterate, so that various innovative programmes like folk media/drama, local festivals and songs can enhance their ability to decode effectively the information being conveyed. Membership of a target audience may not receive the information at all or when received interpret it in light of their predisposition in a manner not in accordance with the intention of the disseminator. Often dissemination may even be destroyed through selected attention, selected perception or even selected retention.

Attention should thus be paid to the characteristics of the clientele, or end users being addressed, bearing in mind the attention of the audience and arousing /sustaining their interest.

Relationship Between Information Dissemination Strategies and Income generation

The study sought to determine if there is a significant relationship between information dissemination strategies and the women's income. Findings reveal that information dissemination strategies determine income generated by rural women in Akwa Ibom State. The chi-square (X^2) value of 128.52 was greater than the table value of 44.773 with 28 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. By all indications the women living in the rural areas have access to the traditional repertoire of images, narratives and enoscapes offered by the traditional, information disseminating apparatus.

Table 3: Chi-squared Analysis of the Relationship between Information Dissemination Strategy and Income Generated.

Information Dissemination Strategies	A	B	C	D	E	Total X
Selected Dissemination of Information (SDI)	0 (0.25)	2(3.67)	4(7.2)	9(4.64)	4(2.23)	18
Current Awareness Services (CAS)	0(0.10)	1(1.43)	1(2.8)	3(1.81)	2(0.87)	7
Traditional Library Lending Services (TLS)	0(0.06)	2(0.82)	2(1.6)	0(1.03)	0(0.50)	4
Community Development Workers (CDW)	0(0.31)	6(17.14)	22(33.6)	10(5.68)	2(2.73)	22
Agricultural Extension Agents (AES)						128.52*
Family Support Programme Meetings (FSP)	0(1.81)	2(17.14)	22(33.6)	40(21.67)	20(21.67)	84
Co-operative Societies (CS)	0(1.40)	10(20.40)	35(40)			100
Town Crier/Village Council Meetings (TCVC)	0(0.84)	14(12.24)	32(24)	35(25.80)	20(12.4)	60
				8(15.48)	4(7.44)	
	5(2.87)	65(41.82)	100(82)		10(25.4)	205
				25(25.89)		
Total	7	120	200	129	62	500

Significant at 0.05 level, df=28, Critical X^2 - value = 43.773

There is evidence that dissemination strategies and practices especially in the area of oral communication have been organically embedded in the fundamental mobilization and modernisation from the early days of Better Life Programme, (Akpan – Atata, 1998). There is obviously evidence that the integration between information dissemination and income generation that the integration between information dissemination and income generation are geared towards economic empowerment. The above assertion further lend hand to the observation by Kaplan (1986) that the activities of the various women groups have played an important role in poverty alleviation among rural women. As it is often not recognised, the emergence and development of economic information dissemination was actually integrated and not merely reflected in women development programme since 1985. The implication of this is that rural women mastery and utilisation of

traditional strategies and model of information dissemination to enhance their income generation has been the matrix of their own survival and success. Income generation is greatly enhanced by effective information dissemination strategies.

Summary and Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the information dissemination strategies available to rural women in Akwa Ibom State, the factors that enhance this dissemination and determine if there is a significant relationship between information dissemination and their income generation. Research findings have revealed eight Information Dissemination Strategies available to rural women with the town crier/village council meeting being rated as the most available. folk media/drama and local festival songs have been shown as the most enhancing factor information dissemination while a significant positive relationship has been found between information dissemination strategies and income generation among rural women in Akwa Ibom State.

There is the assertion that rural women can only generate enough income and be active economic participants through the provision of vital information and infrastructural facilities. It is hereby suggested that since rural women suffer many socio-cultural and economic deprivations, an awareness for socio-economic projects should be created through the use of predominantly local language of the target audience. Information Dissemination strategies should be decentralised. Local radio stations/local community newspapers and vernacularization of programmes are needed.

References

- Aboyade, B. O. (1984) "access to Information in rural Nigeria". Nigeria Journal of Library and Information Science. Vol. 2 No 2 p 84.
- Akpan Attat, E. A. (1998) Factors influencing information dissemination strategies on income generation among rural women of Akwa Ibom State. Theses submitted to the Dept. of Educational Technology and Library Science.
- Anyakoha, E. U. (1990) women in food production: Implication for Home Economic practice in Developing Countries. In People and Practices International issues in Home Economic, Canadas, Varines, E. Badir D. and Keirn D. (Eds.)
- Koplan, C. (1986) "Language and Gender "Paper on Patrarchy (W.P.C/POC)
- Mchombu, K. J. (1992) Information needs for rural Development: The case study of Malawi. African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science, Vol. 2 No 1 pp 17-32
- Nworgu, B. G. (1991) Educational Research: Basic Issues and Methodology. Ibadan Wisdom Publishers Ltd.
- Nwuneli, O. E. (1986) Mass Communication in Nigeria: A book of reading Enugu, Fourth Dimension Press.

- Ochai, A. (1995) Library Service to the Grassroots in Developing Countries "A Revisionist Approach". African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science, Vol. 5 No 2, pp. 163-171.
- Richi, R. (1980) The value of Information: In Morss, Eliot R, (ed). Government Information Management: A counter report. London: Wsetview Press pp 47-62.
- Simbeye, S. (1990) "Th role of Telecommunication in Economic Growth Proposal for and alternative Frame Work of analysis. Media, Culture and Society. Vol. 19 No 12 pp, 558-583