SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED BY EXTENSION AGENTS IN THE FISH INDUSTRY IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in Oyo State. Attention was focused on sources of information used by the extension agents involved in dissemination of modern technology in fish industries. Purposive sampling method was used to select sixty eight (68) extension agents from the thirty three local government areas in Oyo State. This is based on the ADP structure, classified into Ibadan/Ibarapa, Ogbomoso, Oyo and Saki zones. Data were collected by the use of a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, and Duncan Multiple Range Test. The results showed that the extension agents (91.0%) are active labour force (32-49) years while greater percentage (98.5%) is married. Lectures and training received from the ADP constitutes the highest source of information (67.6%) and (79.4%) communicates through individual contact. Duncan Test revealed higher means (X = 3.0952 and X = 3.6471) for Saki and Ibadan/Ibarapa zones, with greater access to information compared to Oyo and Ogbomoso (X = 1.8889 and X = 2.5833).

Information received through lectures and training, revealed the most accessible source of information to the extension agents followed by Radio and Television respectively.

Key words: Information, Extension agents, Fish industry, Oyo state.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication devices can be used to improve the flow of information and technology to the farmers. Yahaya (2001) defined communication as an interactional process that involves exchange of ideas, information, point of view and experiences between persons and groups. He also posited that the reported success stories of agricultural transformation in many countries have vital link with farmers having ready access to agricultural information particularly the used of mass media. This implies that for effective agricultural extension delivery the potentials of group dynamics among farmers' organizations remain available option for effective information dissemination in agricultural development process.

Many information units already exist in developing countries extension programmes; and mass media, audiovisual aids, and printed materials are used extensively. However, Yahaya (2003) stated that the use of communication skills, media and methodologies is typically abhorred and fragmented.

The major task of agricultural development effort is information transfer to improve agriculture. Olowu and Yahaya (1997) recognized the challenges for extension organizations based on the

complex processes involved in changing human behavior through communication. According to Yahaya (2003), it was this realization that led to the development of the concept of Agricultural Knowledge Information System (AKIS). It is an institutional approach which looks at sets of interconnected actors who play different complimentary roles in agricultural development process (Nwosu and Megwa, 1993). This has been further described as practical approach which set goals as the management of information. In addition, it is designed to function in a way considered as desirable for policy makers, farmers and other participants in the information exchange process.

The advantage of an innovation may not be realized if the message is not appropriately delivered to the end user. According to Adedoyin (1996), successful communication is the process by which people exchange ideas, facts, feelings or impression so that each gains a common understanding of the meaning, intense use of message. Disseminating useful and practical information relating to agriculture can be achieved through establishment of effective communication channels among researchers, extension agents and farmers (Chikwendu and Omoenela, 1997). Olowu and Yahaya (1997) stated that communication is a process by which an idea is transferred from a source to one or more receivers with the intent of bringing about desirable changes in their behavior.

An efficient fishery extension system requires adequate communication knowledge since communication, according to Fenley (1984) is a conscious attempt to share information and ideas with others. To a large extent, therefore, the success of an extension worker is determined by his ability to communicate good ideas to others. Good communication does not consist merely of giving information but in increasing understanding and helping farmers and fish workers to improve their activities. Like in agriculture, progress in fisheries development will start from better technology and greater skill in communication.

Extension aspects in fisheries must have adequate knowledge of the elements of communication to be able to aid effective transfer of technology. These elements include the communication himself, the message, channels through which the message will pass and finally the audience that will receive the message. This study therefore examines the sources of information accessibilities used by extension agents in fish industry in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Objective: The main objective of this study is to examine the sources through which extension agents disseminate information technology to the fish industry.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in all the thirty three (33) Local Government Areas in Oyo state, Nigeria, taking into consideration the zonal structures of the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP). These zones comprises of Oyo, Shaki, Ogbomoso and Ibadan/Ibarapa zones. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents for this study because only 68 extension agents (18 from Ogbomoso; Oyo, 12; Saki, 21; and Ibadan/Ibarapa, 17) exist in the state. Thus sixty-eight extension agents were interviewed with the aid of structured questionnaires, across the ADP zones. The data were analyzed using statistical tools like frequency counts, percentages, and Duncan test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Socio–economic characteristic of extension agents in Oyo State, Nigeria is as shown in Table 1 below. The demographic characteristics examined include age, sex, marital status, and educational status of the extension agents. The results showed that the age of the extension agents ranged from thirty-two (32) to fifty-nine (59) years. Majority (91.0%) of the respondents are in their active year (32-49 years). This group constitutes the labour force because they are very active and agile, while the least percentage (9.0%) of the respondents falls on 50-59 years age range. This revealed that the older extension agents are fewer in service. The sex distributions showed that a majority (92.6%) of the respondents are male and just 7.4% are female. This implies that the field extension agents in Oyo state are predominantly males.

The marital status distribution revealed that greater percentage (98.5%) of the extension agents are married while just one respondent is single. This indicates that the respondents are matured and responsible in their jobs. This also agrees with the predominant age interval of 38-43 years when most individuals are already married.

The religion distribution of the respondents indicates that appreciable percentage (67.6%) of the extension agents are Christians while about (30.0%) are Muslims. The educational status revealed that a greater percentage (75.0%) of the extension agents have diploma in education, while first degree (B.Sc./B.Ed) and higher degree (MSc.) accounts for 17.65 and 7.35% respectively.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of extension agents in Oyo State, Nigeria (n=68)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age (Years)	32-37	10	14.7
	38-43	34	50.0
	44-49	17	25.0
	50-59	7	10.29
Sex/Gender	Male	63	92.64
	Female	5	7.35
Marital status	Single	1	1.47
	Married	67	98.53
Religion	Christian	46	67.64
	Islam	21	30.88
	No response	1	1.47
Educational status	OND	18	26.47
	HND	33	48.53
	B.Sc./B.Ed	12	17.65
	M.Sc	5	7.35

Source: Field survey, (2006).

Frequency distribution of respondents according to sources of information is as shown in Table 2 below. The table showed the sources of information about fisheries technology available to the extension agents. The results also revealed the sources of information about fisheries technology available to the extension agents. Lecture/training (67.6%) in ADP is the most readily accessible channel of information to the extension agents, while appreciable respondents received information from radio

(60.3%) and television (52.9%). Other sources of information include newspaper (36.8%), friends (16.2%) and internet (4.4%) being the least source. These revealed that the extension agents received fisheries information from varied sources.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents according to sources of information (n = 68)

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	41	60.3
Television	36	52.9
Extension agents	30	44.1
Friends	11	16.2
Newspaper	25	36.8
Lecture/Training	46	67.6
Internet etc	3	4.4

Source: Field survey, (2006).

The mode of communication of extension agents with the fish industry (n = 68) is as shown in table 3 below. All the extension agents indicated that they communicated with the fish industry at one time or the other disseminating fishery information. However, table 2(b) revealed that majority (79.4%) of the extension agents communicate with the fish industry through individual contact. Group method of communication is rated second (55.9%) in communication with fish industry. Demonstration method of communication followed, while radio is next with (16.2%) and both exhibition and campaign are the least mode of communication to the fish industry.

Table 3: Mode of communication of extension agents with the fish industry (n = 68)

Mode of communication	YES		NO	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Demonstrating method	22	32.4	46	67.6
Group discussion	38	55.9	30	44.1
Individual contact	54	79.4	15	20.6
Poster and contact	14	20.6	54	79.4
Radio	11	16.2	57	83.8
Television	7	10.3	61	89.7
Exhibition	1	1.5	67	98.5
Campaign	1	1.5	67	98.5
Agriculture show	2	2.9	66	97.1
Publications	4	5.9	64	94.1

Source: Field survey, (2006).

The Means of information sources for extension agents across the ADP zones is as shown in Table 4 below. The results showed that Oyo and Ogbomosho had lower means while Saki and Ibadan/Ibarapa zones had higher means. The differences in mean could be that the headquarters of ADP is located in Saki and has access to information as Ibadan, which is the capital with many media organizations (both print

and electronics) when compared with Oyo and Ogbomoso zones. .

Table 4: Means of information sources for extension agents across the ADP zones.

Zones	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Ogbomoso	12	1.8889	1.3333
Oyo	18	2 .5833	2.5833
Saki	21	3.0952	3.0952
Ibadan/Ibarapa	17	2.7647	3.6471

Source: Field survey, (2006).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- From the study, it was found that lecturers/training (67.6%) received information from ADP is the most readily accessible channel of information to the respondents. Other source of information includes; radio, television, newspaper, Friends and internet as regard the accessibility to conventional channels of information.
- It is recommended that the use of both interpersonal and mass media like radio, television, newspaper, lectures/ training, internet should be intensified as sources of information that is disseminated to the fish industry which aims at increasing their innovation and technology.

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