

INFORMATION SOURCES AND ACCESSIBILITY AMONG FISHER FOLKS IN ESE - ODO AND ILAJE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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Information sources and accessibility among fisher folks in Ese - Odo and Ilaje Local Government Areas of Ondo State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire and scheduled interview was administered on randomly selected 140 respondents from two selected study areas to collect data. Data were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistic and Chi-squares. The results showed that 88.2% of the respondents indicated information need, 57.6% had access to information. Extension agents 13.2% and friends 11.8% were the major sources of information among the fisher folks. The Chi-square analysis indicated that no significant association existed between accessibility and information source among fisher folks on extension agents, research institute, non-governmental organization, radio, television and friends. It is recommended that government should maximally utilize all available information sources to reach the fisher folks to boost protein supply through artisanal fisheries and also to save money on fish importation.

Keyword: *Information, accessibility, fishing communities, fisher folk, extension services*

INTRODUCTION

Food sufficiency through transformed agricultural programmes as advocated by the government can only be achieved when the producers in various segments of agriculture receive the right information at the right time on input supply, modern production methods, storage and marketing. Olojede *et al.* (2017) opined that sustainable agricultural development cannot be successfully achieved without having correct and current information and technologies to meet up with globalization and its concomitant rapid changes. The dissemination of information can only be realistic through the use of information sources. Sani *et al.* (2014) observed that any system producing or containing information intended for transmission is an information source. Information sources are distinguished by the form of representation; textual (books, journals, manuscripts), graphic (graphs, diagrams, plans, charts), and audio visual (sound recordings, motion pictures, slides). Therefore, in this increasingly information dependent age, the lack of information could certainly have serious, or even, perilous consequences. Information is needed in all stages of human development. For information to be of optimum use, it must be relevant, accurate, timely, recent, clear and effective (Vidanapathrina, 2012). Access to information is the right of humans and the use is dependent on the capacity to access and use Olojede *et al.* (2017). Okwu *et al.* 2011 noted that information accessibility can be affected by lack of an effective mechanism for information gathering, cost of access, educational level and health of the information user and also language barriers. Accessibility to information is enhanced if the required information is packaged in the form that is obtainable to the user in terms of cost, language, and source of the information.

Oladele (2006) held the view that agricultural information is generated in Universities and research institutions. This result emanates from a research on multilingualism of farm broadcast and agricultural information access in Nigeria. Oladele, (2006) also pointed out that such information includes scientific and commercial information. It is indicative that research and development has the ability to create a pool of scientific and technical information with a great wealth in modern societies. Research and development departments existing in the various Universities in Nigeria are platforms in which agricultural technologies information can emanate for farmers usage which can enhance Nigeria's wealth through exportation of agricultural produce. Ondo State, fisher folks are mostly artisanal that still depend on traditional methods of fishing but in recent times, some of them have started using motorized canoes fitted with out-board engine for their fishing exercise (Adeleke, 2013). Ese – Odo and Ilaje Local government Areas of Ondo State have fisher folks dispersed in communities along coastlines and brackish water they depend on mainly for fishing. Therefore, the main objective of the study to determine the major sources of information and their accessibility among fisher folks in Ese – Odo and Ilaje Local government Areas of Ondo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: identify level of information needs among the fisher folks, examine the accessibility of the fisher folks to information needs and investigate the information sources of the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out in the coastal areas of Ondo State of Nigeria. About 80% of the study area is covered with water, swamp and flood plains with a coastline of 80 km long. This makes Ondo State qualify as a maritime State and makes it rank among the highest artisanal fish Nigeria. Ondo is one of the six states that make up the South West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It has interstate boundaries with Ekiti and Kogi States to the north, Edo State to the east, Delta State to the Southeast, Osun State to the Northwest and Ogun State to the Southwest. The Gulf of Guinea lies to its south and its capital is Akure. Ondo State covers an area of 15 195.2 km² and lies at latitude 7° 10' north and longitude 5° 05' east. It has a population of 3,460,877 and a population density of 218 people km² (Ogunremi, 2015 and Ogunremi, 2016). The study areas are Ese – Odo and Ilaje Local Governments Area.

Sampling procedure and data collection

The population for the study comprises all men and women involved in artisanal fishing within the study area. Data for the study were collected from artisans using interview schedules that were conducted by the researchers, with the assistance of trained enumerators that were fluent in the local dialects of the respondents. Multistage random sampling technique was used to draw samples for the study. Two Local Governments Areas that have marine and coastal water bodies dominated by fishermen in their communities were selected out of the eighteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the State. Secondly, six fishing communities were randomly selected from each of the two LGAs earlier chosen to give a total of 12 fishing communities covered in the study. Subsequently, 12 fisher folks were randomly selected from each of the 12 communities, to constitute a total sample size of 144 (Ogunremi *et al.*, 2015). Data collected were on information needs, accessibility and sources. Data were analyzed through descriptive analysis such as frequency counts and percentages, while Chi-square (χ^2) was used to test relationships between the variables at $p < 0.05$ significance level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 indicates the information needs of fisher folk in the study area. Majority 88.2% agreed that they needed information on fishing, and approximately 86.1% rated their level of need as high while 11.8% disagreed on information need and 13.9% rated their level of need as low. High level of information need is an indication of the fisher folk's readiness to improve on their production as productivity is mostly determined by the information at ones disposal when all other factors are constant. The result agrees with Okwu *et al.* 2011 in similar findings in Benue State who reported high level of fisher folks need on information.

Table 1: Information needs of Fisher folks

Level of Information need	Frequency	Percentage
High	124	86.1
Low	20	13.9
Yes	127	88.2
No	17	11.8
Accessibility		
Yes	83	57.6
No	61	42.4

As shown in Table 1, 57.6%, of fisher folks had access to information while 42.4 had no access. From the response of fisher folks to information need in Table 1 it can be inferred that about half of the respondents had access to the needed information. Table 2 shows various sources of information disseminated to fisher folks. All the sources of information to the fisher folks were at very low level. Although the sources were low in information dissemination, extension agents 13.2% and friends 11.8% were higher than all others. The implication is that extension agents still remain the most reliable way of communicating technologies to fisher folks. Friends as a source could be as a result of intimate relationship among the fisher folks which stimulates information dissemination. Daudu *et al.* (2009) submitted that extension agents and friends are the major sources of information among farmers in Benue State. Ogunremi *et al.* (2012) reported that the policy of the government in creating the ADP (mostly extension agents) is for the country to rapidly achieve self-sufficiency in food production and to expand the production of agricultural raw materials through grass root extension delivery. Annune *et al.* (2014) opined that the lack of effective sources of information to artisanal fisher folks will result in the decrease in production rate and there will be gross shortage of fish supply.

Chi square analysis in Table 3 indicates the relationship between accessibility and sources of information of the fisher folks. There is no significant relationship between the extension agents, research Institutes, Non-Governmental Organizations, Federal Department of Fisheries, Radio and accessibility to sources of information dissemination to the respondents. The implication is that among all the information sources considered in the

study none has serious impact on the respondents. This could be attributed to level of information available to the fisher folks from each of the sources.

Table: 2. Sources of information dissemination to fisher folks

Variable	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Extension Agents	19	13.2	125	86.8
Research Institute	9	6.3	135	93.8
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	10	6.9	134	93.1
Federal Department of Fisheries	6	4.2	138	95.8
Radio	8	5.6	136	94.4
Television	8	5.6	136	94.4
Friends	17	11.8	127	88.2
Extension Publication Pamphlets	11	7.6	133	92.4

Table 3 Chi square relationships between accessibility and sources of information dissemination to fisher folks

Training variables	χ^2	Df	P	Remarks
Extension agents	0.573	1	0.37	NS
Research Institute	1.595	1	0.18	NS
Non - governmental Organization	2.20	1	0.12	NS
Federal Department of Fisheries	0.209	1	0.50	NS
Radio	1.045	1	0.26	NS
Television	3.093	1	0.08	NS
Friends	1.324	1	0.19	NS
Extension publication pamphlet	1.110	1	0.23	NS

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed the information needs of the fisher folks were very high but the accessibility rate to information was moderate or medium. Among all the information disseminated to the fisher folks, extension agents and friends appeared higher than all others sources in comparison although they are equally at a low level. It is recommended that government should maximally utilize all available information sources to reach the fisher folks to boost protein supply through artisanal fisheries and also to save lot of money on fish importation. More extension agents who are the major government agency saddled with the responsibility of technology transfer through communication to the fisher folks should be employed and provided them with modern equipment for efficiency.

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