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Information Needs and Seeking Behaviors of Farmers in Jere Local Government Area, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper assessed information needs and seeking behavior of farmers inJere Local Government area of Borno State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to find out the information needsof farmers in Jere Local Government area of Borno State; information seeking behavior of farmers in Jere Local Government area of Borno State;sources of information farmers use in Jere Local Government area of Borno State andlevel of awareness of information of rural farmers in Jere Local Government area of Borno State,Nigeria.*Survey research design was adopted for the study with 136 population drawn from farmers' association groups.Self-designed questionnaire titled "Assessment of Information Needs and Seeking Behavior of Farmers in* Jere Local Government area of Borno State*Nigeria (AINASBOFIJBSN) was used. Data allocated were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage scores.The findings revealed that majority of information needs of farmers was at high level sought from their colleagues, friends, family and relied on best experience. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should provide timely information to farmers, and also provide public library service to the farmers foradequately creating awareness among them.*

Keywords: Assessment, information need, information seeking behavior, source of information

Introduction

Information has a variety of connotations in different fields. For instance, from the standpoint of physics and biology, information is a basic property of the universe and in psychologicalstudies information is used as a variable dealing with sensory perception, comprehension or other psychological processes (Prajapali, 2015). Then, the researcher sees information as an idea that effect change when used judiciously and it is an asset that can generate income when used effectively.According to Demet, Nilay and Marco (2016), information is a practical tool facilitating the life flow of individuals. This tool is used by individuals in order to resolve the problems, uncertainties and chaotic situations in life. More so, they added that information seeking behavior and information needs are interwoven tools creating a circulation serving the target of various information user groups.

Joseph (2020) in his own view defined information need as the process in which one goes about seeking information that will meet his/her need, and then added that, information seeking behavior varies considerably from one individual to another according to age, gender, level of education, occupation, location and culture. This implies that farmers are different in terms of age, gender, level of education, occupation, location and culture. The behavior they put on while seeking for information also varies based on their information needs.

In the course of information seeking, Habtemariam, Tegegni and Azage (2015) reported that rural farmers, especially women source information from neighbors, friends and relatives through informal discussion, experience sharing and inviting other farmers to visit their own farms. Brhane, Mammo and Negusse (2017) further added that information seeking behavior is an essential component in the designing and developing of a need-based information sharing technique to meet the information needs of users. Lack of access to information needed by rural farmers reduces their information seeking behavior.Base on researchers' observation, farmers in the area studied lack appropriate information on how to boost their farming activities. It seems they relied mostly on their colleagues, neighbors, past experience and fore-fatherswho possessed evidence from low yielding of farm produce in the area studied. This study therefore assessed information need and seeking behavior of farmers inBorno State, Nigeria.

Adelodun and Choi (2018) carried out a study on the review of the evaluation of irrigation practice in Nigeria: past, present and future prospects. Irrigation practice across the world was Vital to successful green revolution all year round to achieving sustainable development goals in food security, socio-economic and rural development. This review. attempts to uncover the underline issues regarding the irrigation practice in Nigeria through the evaluation of past and present practices, and its future prospects, The review showed that the major persistent issues that have been hindering the performance of irrigation practice to achieving the set goals were inconsistent government policies, lack of political commitment, low awareness and lack of technical know-how among the farmers on irrigation farming system, and untimely financial intervention.

In a study conducted by Roja (2018) titled: Agricultural information needs of the women farmers in Garani Village Tumkur District. Kamataka." The population of the study is women farmers. Survey method was adopted in the study and data were collected by using questionnaire and interview method. The results revealed that (81.25%). of the rural women are using mobile phones for getting their agricultural information. The first preferred sources of the information of women farmers were newspapers followed by other farmers or colleagues and then television.

In the same vein Joseph (2020) investigated information needs and information seeking behavior of farmers in Benue State for sustainable agricultural development. The study adopted a descriptive research design.The population of the study comprised of 4200 registered farmers with Benue State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BNARDA). The sample size for the study was 365 farmers who were selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument employed for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire titled Questionnaire on Information Needs and Information Seeking Behavior of Farmers in Benue State.

By and large, Tumsifu and Silayo (2013) carried out a study on information needs and sources of the rural formers in Tanzania specifically from Iranga rural district. Survey technique was used as the principal data collection technique where 120 rural farmers were interviewed. In-depth interviews of ten key informants from two villages of Ifunda and Kalenga complemented the survey. Findings revealed that (70%) of farmers information needs was about crop and livestock husbandry, marketing, funding options and value addition. However, there was a significant difference between the two wards in information needs for "information on crop and livestock husbandry" as well as information on "value addition". The modern means of communication are used to access non-agricultural (other) information.

Atasie and Izuogu (2017) carried out a study "Use of Radio for Extension Service Delivery to Farmers in Rural Communities of Abia State, Nigeria". A multi stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting 126 respondents for the study in three agricultural zones of the State namely: Umuahia, Aba and Ohafia. Structured questionnaire and scheduled interview were employed to elicit information from the respondents. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages, mean and ordinary least regression analysis. The result showed that the area was fairly dominated by males (51.59%). The finding revealed that (87.50%) of the respondents had access / ownership to radio and frequency of use of radio was high (85.57%). The factors that significantly influenced the use of radio for extension service delivery was age and marital status at 1% level of probability and frequency of extension contact at 5% level of probability. The study recommended that rural farmer's access to radio should be sustained to ensure adequate awareness of innovations generated by research institutions and other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1- What ate the information needs of farmers inJere Local Government area of Borno State, Nigeria?
2- What are the information seeking behavior of rural farmersin Jere Local Government area of Borno State,Nigeria?
3- What are the sources of information farmers use in Jere Local Government area of Borno State,Nigeria?
4- What are the level of awareness of farmers on farming activities in Jere Local Government area of Borno State,Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to assess;

1- Information needsof farmers in Jere Local Government area of Borno State, Nigeria.
2- Information seeking behavior of farmers in Jere Local Government area of Borno State,Nigeria.
3- Sources of information farmers use inJere Local Government area of Borno State,Nigeria.
4- Level of awareness of information of rural farmer's in Jere Local Government area of BornoState,Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was conducted inJere Local Government area ofBorno State, which is bounded by Republic of Niger to the North, Republic of Chad to the North-east and Republic of Cameroon to the South and as well as Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe States to the West. Survey design method was used to assess"Information Needs and Seeking Behavior of FarmersinJere Local Government area ofBorno State Nigeria". The population of the study was the entire 136 farmers selected from a ward in the selected local government area. The instrument used' for gathering data was a self-designed questionnaire. The instrument was personally administered by the four researchers and data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage scores.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Response Rateof Information Needs and Seeking Behavior of Farmers inJere Local Government area ofBorno State Nigeria

QUESTIONNAIRE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
Questionnaire Distributed	136	100
Questionnaire Returned	122	90

Table 1 above shows the response rate of the respondents.The result shows that 90% of the questionnaire were filled and retuned and found useful for the study.

Table 2: Distribution based on the level of Information Needs of Farmers.

Information	**M**		**M**		**BA**	
	Fre.	**Per.**	**Fre.**	**Per.**	**Freq.**	**Percen. (%)**
On planting method	76	62%	41	33.6	5	4
Storage method	65	53.3	50	41	7	5.5
Agriculture	51	41.59	41	33.6	30	24
How to use manure / Fertilizer	73	59.89	45	34.4	7	5.7
Availability of application of particles	63	51.6	44	36	15	12.3
Total	**122**	**100**	**122**	**100**	**122**	**100**

Table 2: on information needs of farmers revealed that 76 (62.3%) indicated they need maximum information, 41 (33."%) shows that they need maximum information, on over age level, while 5 (4%) indicated that they need information below average. This table implies that majority of the respondent indicated they need maximum information for their farming activities.

Table 3: Distribution based on Information Seeking Behavior of Farmers. Key: Very often (V O), Often (O), and not often (N O).

S/N		MP		P		LP	
		Fre.	Per.%	Fre.	Per.%	Fre.	Per.%
1	Family and relative	**63**	51.6	**40**	32.89	**19**	15.6
2	Neighbors and Friends	**65**	53.3	**48**	39.39	**9**	74
3	Colleagues	**70**	57.4	**40**	37.79	**6**	4.9
4	Past experience	**80**	65.6	**30**	24.69	**12**	9.8
5	Radio and Television	**37**	30.30	**40**	32.89	**45**	36.7

Table 3 on sources of information farmers use indicated that past experience revealed 80 (65.6%) of respondents showed more preferable, followed by source of information from colleagues, revealed that 70(5 7.4%)of respondents indicated that colleagues are more preferred.

Table 4: Distribution based on awareness of information by farmers on farming activities. Key; Well Aware (WA), Aware (A) and Not Aware (NA)

	WA		A		NA	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Agriculture extent service	51	41.9	45	36.9	26	21.3
Use of manure fertilizer	60	49.2	52	42.6	10	8.2
Agriculture credit/ loans	33	27	57	46.7	32	26.2
Pesticide and weed control	l43	35.2	61	50	18	14.8
Disease control	51	41.8	48	39.3	23	18.9
Method of storage	43	35.2	61	50	18	14.8
Radio and Television	51	41.8	56	45.9	15	12.3
Library and information Center	24	19.7	37	30.3	16	50

New seed and farming implement	40	32.8	49	40.2	33	27
	122	**100**	**122**	**100**	**122**	**100**

Table 5 on awareness of information by farmers on farming activities revealed that farmers were well aware on how to use manure and fertilizer, with response rate of 60(49.2%) and the table also revealed that 61(50%) of the respondents indicated that they are not aware of library and information centers.

Findings of the Study

Based on the data presented and analyzed above, the following findings are arrived at:

1. Majority of the respondents need maximum information on planting methods with 76(62.3%), use manure/fertilizers 73(59.8%) use new seeds/storage methods for their farming activities.
2. Majority of the respondents sought information from their family, relatives, friends with 66(54°/o') and neighbors and colleagues with 54(44.3%) for their farming activities.
3. Majority of the respondents indicated that their main source of information was their past experiences with 80(65.6%), colleagues with 70(57.4%) and neighbors/friends with 65(53.3%) respectively.
4. Majority of the respondents indicated that they are well aware on how to use manure and fertilizer.

Conclusion

The findings under information needs of rural farmers were on maximum level, which indicated rural farmers have more interest in information to help them farm, through this, sufficient food may be produced. The findings also revealed that information seeking behavior of rural farmers were through their friends, neighbors, relatives and family instead on the reliable, current and modern sources of information like social media etc.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, thefollowing recommendations are established:

1. Information providers such as agricultural extension officers, libraries and information centers, researchers, and educators should encourage rural farmers to involve in producing crops/livestock that can benefit the society in the area under study.
2. Information providers such as agricultural extension officers and educators should open the eyes of the rural farmers through advice and education to see the need of both raining / dry season farming in order to produce plenty of crops in the study area.
3. Government and NGOs should make available different sources of information on both print and electronic information such as newsletters, posters, pictures, books, internet, e-mails and telephone to give them timely information, and
4. Government should extend public libraries to rural areas under study so that they should have access to information materials, especially on farming activities.

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