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WIDOWS AND THEIR INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR IN SOUTH -WESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated information seeking-behaviour of 109 widows in south-western Nigeria, with a questionnaire, using mainly snowball and purposive sampling techniques. Findings reveal that respondents were economically and educationally weak and their information needs hinge mainly on finance, children's education and training, counselling, family and personal health. They use sources including radio, children, mobile phone, church members and television when seeking for information. Factors motivating the use of information sources include ease of finding information, convenience, familiarity, relevance, and nearness for purposes of educating and training their children, personal work, running family matters, health, and carrying on successfully with widowhood. The major challenges facing respondents in their information seeking-behaviour are finance, weak education, and unemployment. This study throws light on understanding and opportunities for information workers to design relevant information systems for widows in order to meet their unveiling information needs and enhance their information-seeking behaviour activities. Governments' organs, and widows' support groups should give economic empowerment of widows and education of girl child a priority.

Keywords: Information needs, Information seeking-behaviour, Information sources, Information use, Nigeria, Widows

Researches on information seeking-behaviour are dated in history. Wilson (2000) provided the history and overview of the field of human information-behaviour including recent advances and multidisciplinary perspectives. The Royal Society of Scientific Information Conference of 1948 was credited with the evolution of what can be regarded as the modern day study of human information-seeking behavior (Wilson, 2000). However, studies on information needs (INs) and information-seeking behaviour (ISB) have continued to grow over the years (Oyadeyi, 2014). Information is central and pivotal to the studies on information needs (INs), information sources (IS) and information seeking-behaviour (ISB).

Definition of terms

Information

Scholars greatly differ in assigning accepted meanings to terms like information (Buckland, 1991), INs and ISB (Ucak and Kurbanoglu, 1998). Within the context of information science, Tiwari (2011) defined information as data presented in readily comprehensible form while Tubachi (1998) referred to information as processed and structured data necessary for all human

beings irrespective of their life endeavours. Buckland (1991) stated that though information is ambiguous as a term, and its definitive meaning runs into immediate difficulties, the important use of information can be as a tripod stand such as a thing, knowledge impacted and a process. Osunrinade (2014) referred to information as the most significant element for advancement in any given society being the fifth factor of production. Abiolu (2013) stressed the centrality of information in economy, development and other spheres of nationhood including peace and security and a nation's human capital.

Information need (IN)

Information need is regarded by Reddy, Krishnamurthy and Asundi (1998) as an activity that releases entropy and may be expressed, unexpressed, fulfilled, clarified or generated during the process of information-seeking activities. Ucak and Kurbanoglu (1998) however referred to IN as the recognition of the "existence of an uncertainty" Attafuab, Akussah and Banji (2020) argued that an IN is context-dependent. Oyadeyi (2014) opined that IN "is a factual situation in which there exists an inseparable interconnection with information and need". Reddy et al (1998) citing Taylor (1968) looked at INs from psychological point of view at four levels namely: visceral needs, conscious needs, formal needs and comprised needs. Further, these authors classified users into seven categories according to their INs. These classes are as follows:

- (i) Workers in fundamental research;
- (ii) Workers in applied research or development including medical and agricultural research;
- (iii). Technologists, including engineers, architects, medical practitioners, and those in agriculture;
- (iv). Writers of reports, textbooks, teachers, students and so on;
- (v). Scientific and technical journalists;
- (vi). The interested public; and
- (vii). Historians of science.

Looking at the classification of users by Reddy et al (2018), widows fall under category six which is the interested public.

Information seeking-behaviour (ISB)

Information behaviour came into focus within the last three and a half decades however it is rooted to information need and use that came into play about six decades ago (Aforo and Lamperty, 2012). While these authors argued that ISB deals with the behaviour and action displayed for various types of information to fulfill users' INs, Charoenkul and Chanchalor, (2021) explained ISB as the explicit actions undertaken by an individual to locate, evaluate and thereby apply information positively.

ISB as an area in the broad discipline of information science is defined as the field that is concerned with determination of information needs of users, their searching behaviour and the use to which they put the information so searched (Julien 1995 in Ikoja-Idongo and Mosert 2006). From their view point, Kopyiwattage, Warner and Robert (2018) opined that ISB is gap-

bridging where individuals make move that is influenced by information time and space to reach desired outcomes. On the other hand, Wilson (2000) in his argument expressed that ISB is the purposive seeking for information in the bid to satisfy or fulfill some aim or goal that arises due to a particular IN, which will definitely warrant that the information seeker interacts with information systems. In the simplest terms, ISB refers to the way people look for information, and make good use of the information so got to attain a particular goal or aim. Therefore an awareness of this is paramount to the field of Library and Information Science for the purpose of designing relevant information systems for the various contexts of the public. John Samuel as cited by Mensah (2010) posited that in its context,

“...the issue of information does not have a constituency. What is required is to connect the issue with people’s daily pressing concerns, and ensure that people see their right to information in the broadest context of their right to development.”

This work reviewed some literature on studies of women’s INs and ISB but those relating to widows seemed very scarce to be found. Abiolu and Okere (2010) in their study observed that the demand for, and use of information has been considered to be the “defining features of the last 20 to 30 years being the factors of separation of the present from the past”. Citing Briggs 1998, these authors highlighted the need for information as follows:

- Guiding human decisions and actions;
- Monitoring and assessing the effects that such decisions and actions can have;
- Exchanging and sharing experiences among people; and
- Being a means of facilitating participation in societal affairs and issues.

The impact of information on development and empowerment cannot be overlooked. Arthur, Dukper and Bawa (2019) underscored this in their discourse pinpointing the fact that “women’s development and empowerment is centred on availability and accessibility of quality information. They also noted that information penetrates every aspect of human daily lives through television, radio, mobile phone in every community, to computers in almost all organisations. According to them when access to information is unhindered, women are consequently given the ability to contribute and play active roles in national and economic development.

Kaur, Kaur and Sharma (2019) undertook a study of ISB of women regarding food-related health and hygiene practices engaging a sample size of 200 women from rural and urban districts of India, using interview. The study ascertained the relationship of ISB of women with their personal and socio-economic characteristics. Results from the study showed that most respondents expressed information needs for selected food-related health and hygiene. With regards to ISB, respondents displayed positive correlation with the educational status, caste, family’s financial status. The study also reported that greater percentage of respondents used informal sources including family friends, neighbours, and relatives to obtain information most of the time. Sources such as mass media were used by fewer respondents. In another study, Kassim (2020) examined the maternal health and ISB of women of reproductive age in Mpwapwea district of Tanzania. It was revealed that these women needed health information in order to enable informed health decision-making. The respondents sought information from

professional health staff but got most information from non-professionals and informal sources including community health workers, birth attendants who employ traditional means, and family members. Factors that impact negatively on their ISB include inadequate health facilities, hindered access to professional care and services. Kassim (2020) also stressed the importance of relevant or useful health information but cautioned that using informal unreliable sources to meet health information needs could be hazardous to sound health.

The study by Manyere (2015) investigated ISB of 217 rural women using interview and FGD to elicit information from them. The study reported that information was mostly needed for family care and business. Sources used for accessing information to meet their needs include phones, face-to-face meeting, visitation to friends and neighbours. In this vein, respondents used more of informal sources of information. The challenges facing the women in the study area include but not limited to, insufficient time, non-awareness of information materials in the designated places, airtime issues, and network and electricity supply bottlenecks. Further, Saleh and Lasisi (2011) reported their findings from the study of ISB of women in Borno State, Nigeria. They found that their respondents needed information on areas including agriculture, education, economy (finance) and health while politics is among the least.

Yap, Tiew, Ngadan and Ho (2020) while conducting their research on ISB of rural women in Malaysia using 390 respondents based on quota sampling, identified their greatest areas of information needs as religion, health, medical, entertainment, leisure and sports; the lowest being social welfare, politics and general or state election. The sources of information these women employed are internet, social media, and mobile applications and media sources including TV, radio and newspaper. Yap et al (2020) also found a positive and high correlation between quality and accessibility of information source, and the frequency of use of the source for the purpose of information-seeking. The constraints observed by the respondents include poor information infrastructure and inadequate financial capacity.

What ISB involves has been explained in some earlier paragraphs above however, Prasad (1992) in Gyesi (2020) has run amok with this instance in their argument showing seven processes of ISB namely,

“identifying objectives, defining need, accessing information systems, establishing sources of information, information acquisition, use of information, and satisfaction/dissatisfaction ... ISB refers to the strategies and actions undertaken to locate discrete knowledge elements. It can be said that the behaviour which yields the highest satisfaction is the best” (p.9).

In a study of Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), Rafiq, Igbal, Rehman, Waqas, Naveed and Khan (2021) established that a deep awareness of INs and ISB of users is paramount to designing a relevant information service for them. Before this can be, efforts in conducting research tailored to this must be exerted appropriately to the context of the various potential users (and widows in the present study). Widows are women who have lost their spouses to death. However, a woman in such a condition but remarries can no longer be regarded as a widow.

Statement of the Problem

Dated back for well above four decades, Jackson (1977) observed that the precursor to understanding ISB involves a deep grasp of the foundation of information need. According to Jackson, the draw back in constructing sufficient and new/or innovative information delivery systems for the general public hinges on the dearth of appreciation of the variance existing in the nature of the INs of the general public consisting of the poor, the elderly, children, workers, racial minorities (and the widows the focus of this research). Rafiq et al (2021) observed an important fact that a strong awareness of people's information behaviour is sacrosanct to the construction of an information system built with their needs in mind. Bates (2010)'s argument that efforts tilting to research on INs, information use and ISB should be situation-and-context-specific lends credence and a pivot to investigation of widows' ISB. Up and until now, scientific research in the human lived experiences of widows has attracted a great attention in recent times, but for whatever reasons, scientific research focusing on the INs, information use and ISB of widows has not attracted the front burner of information research investigations. A sizeable research has beamed the lack of adequate legislation in widows' support and has brought to limelight the dehumanizing treatment meted out to widows. There is a daunting dearth of literature on widows and their relationship with relevant information in meeting their needs as "go-it-alone" parents and emergent heads of households in a seemingly unfavourable, social male-dominated environment. This dearth of literature on this significant group should be a cause for great agitation not only in scholarship but also in contemporary information environment. The information environment should not be a contributor to the neglect of widows in reported statistics and research as in the case in some situations. This study therefore investigated widows of different ages and occupations, their information needs, sources they employ in obtaining information, purposes for which they use information and their ISB generally with a view of providing awareness and understanding for relevant information design, provision and service delivery.

Objectives of the study

The objectives set for this study are to:

1. identify the demographic characteristics of widows in Ondo State, Nigeria;
2. ascertain their information needs and sources used to meet those needs;
3. find the information sources used and factors motivating the widows to use those sources;
4. ascertain what widows use the information they get from those sources for and how satisfied or otherwise with such; and
5. highlight the constraints (if any) that widows face while seeking for information.

Methodology

This study employed a survey design using a quantitative approach. It was conducted in Akure, the capital of Ondo State, Nigeria. Widows of varying ages and different occupations formed the respondents, and for sampling purposes, a combination of snowball and purposive sampling was employed. O'Leary (2014) noted that snowball sampling technique can be useful in building a sample size through referrals. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013), it is a sophisticated sampling technique found to be very useful in pinpointing respondents that are not

listed or not easy to locate; it proves good in identifying respondents and can be trusted on to guide the researcher from the initial first respondent, to the next one, and to the next one and so on and so forth. O’Leary (2014) argued that snowball sampling method is used when working with populations that are not easily identifiable or accessible like those of homeless people. In the light of this research, snowball sampling was used because widows constitute a population that cannot be easily identified or accessed. This method is relevant in that it can help increase the sample size and also help generate a network of a profession or people of common concern or interest. During the snowball sampling technique employed here, the researcher stumbled on an aged widow who gave access to a group of widows she leads under the aegis known as the “Global Women’s Help” comprising 80 members on census attendance. The researcher was able to administer 70 copies of the research instrument to respondents due to some constraining factors like fuel shortage that impeded their attendance at weekly meetings held on Thursdays between 10.00am and 12.00pm. In the light of the time of meeting, the researcher was permitted to administer copies of questionnaire only before the commencement of the meeting. So this process could not move faster due to time constraints and irregularity in attendance by widows. In view of this, the researcher and her assistants had to continue purposive sampling with widows in Global Women’s Help on one hand and snowball sampling with other widows in Akure metropolis on the other hand. In all, 109 respondents took part in the research. Purposive sampling method was applied because the researcher chose the unit that was considered to be typical and most common in the population under investigation as all the members of the Group were widows (Bless et al (2013). The instrument used by the researcher was a self- developed questionnaire with Likert format, open- and close-ended questions. Since the researcher could not cope with eliciting information from all the respondents alone, it became necessary for her to employ the services of other hands. Therefore, research assistants were trained and employed for the administration of the questionnaire consisting of sections A to H. Section A focused on widows’ demographic characteristics, B on information needs, C, information sources, D, factors that motivate them in using information sources and E, how widows search for information. Sections F and G centred on information they use and their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it, and constraints facing widows while seeking for information respectively. Data elicited from the respondents were analysed with the aid of Statistical Package in Social Science IBM version 22, using descriptive analysis like frequency distribution, mean, mode and tables.

Findings and Discussion

Of the 109 copies of questionnaire administered, only 100 were found usable and analysable, nine did not meet the criteria for inclusion and so a response rate of 91.7% was produced from widows’ responses. Here in this research widows, participants and respondents were used interchangeably and multiple responses were allowed.

Demographic Characteristics of Widows

Widows were asked questions on their demographic characteristics. The distribution of their responses is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Widows

| Characteristics | Range/Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Cumulative (%) |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Age (in years) | 30 – 49 | 10 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| | 49 ⁺ – 69 | 62 | 62.0 | 72.0 |
| | Above 69 | 28 | 28.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 | |
| Education | No School | 8 | 8.0 | 8.0 |
| | Primary school (completed/ uncompleted) | 44 | 44.0 | 52.0 |
| | Secondary school (completed/ uncompleted) | 24 | 24.0 | 76.0 |
| | Post-Secondary | 7 | 7.0 | 83.0 |
| | HND/Bachelor | 14 | 14.0 | 97.0 |
| | Postgraduate (Master & PhD) | 3 | 3.0 | 100 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |
| Religion | Christianity | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |
| Ethnicity | Yoruba | 98 | 98 | 98.0 |
| | Ibo | 2 | 2 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |
| Occupation | Trading/ Private Employment | 63 | 63.0 | 63.0 |
| | Civil/ Government Service | 8 | 8.0 | 71.0 |
| | Farming | 6 | 6.0 | 77.0 |
| | Retiree | 14 | 14.0 | 91.0 |
| | No work | 9 | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |
| Income (in Naira) | 1– 40,000 ⁺ | 54 | 54.0 | 54.0 |
| | 40,000 ⁺ – 80,000 | 18 | 18.0 | 72.0 |
| | 80,000 ⁺ –120,000 | 14 | 14.0 | 86.0 |
| | Above 120,000 | 14 | 14.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |

The ages of the widows range between 30 and above 80 years with majority (62%) falling between 50 and 69 years. The mean age of the widows is 63.71 years showing many had passed economically active years. Regarding the education of the widows, 44% completed or attempted primary school while 24% either completed or left before the end of the secondary school, 7% had post-secondary education like technical school, 14% had Higher National Diploma or Bachelor’s degree, 3% had tertiary certification inclusive of PhD degree while 8% did not go to school at all. The respondents were mainly uneducated. Also, their religious status indicates that overwhelmingly, all (100%) the widows study belonged to the Christian Faith while responses on ethnicity reveals that almost (98%) all the respondents were Yoruba by tribe one of three major ethnic tribes in Nigeria; they occupy the southwestern geopolitical zone (one of the six) of Nigeria. Their occupational data indicate that 63% were either traders or engaged in private employment, 8% were government workers, 6% were farmers 14% had retired from active service and 9% percent did not engage in type of occupation. Looking at their income, a greater proportion (54%) earn not more than N40,000 per annum, 18% earn above N40,000 but not more

than N80,000 per annum while 14% earn above N80,000 but not more than N120,000 annually and 14% earn above N120,000 per annum.

The revelation regarding the widows’ ages show that majority of them had passed the economically active years. The findings in respect of their educational status suggest that they are liable to face an uphill task because of lack of adequate education as heads of their families. This condition poses a restriction on their capability to find good work (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1999), interact intelligently among elites in the society and participate in development programmes and matters that affect their wellbeing. Looking at their incomes, the widows earn so poorly. Income is a known key factor in family development, and as displayed in Table 1, more than 70% of the widows earn less than US \$160 a year. This is reflective of their poverty and financial incapacitation as heads of their families.

Information Needs of Widows

Widows were presented with a number of INs. They were to select the ones they needed to meet certain information demands in their lives as widows. According to Adekanye (2019), every individual needs information for their survival. This is why investigating the INs of widows is paramount. Table 2 presents the INs of widows.

Table 2: Distribution of Information Needs of Widows

| Information Needs | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| Finance/Income maintenance | 62.0 | 1 |
| Children’s education and training | 55.0 | 2 |
| Health | 48.5 | 3 |
| Counselling | 44.3 | 4 |
| Widows’ support | 34.9 | 5 |
| Religion | 28.0 | 6 |
| Legal issues bordering on widows’ rights | 27.6 | 7 |
| General information (safety, crime, news and current affairs) | 23.3 | 8 |

Their responses showed that most of them needed information on areas including finance and maintaining their income (62.0%), followed by information on children’s education (55.0%), health (48.5%), counselling (44.5%) widows’ support (34.9%), religion (28.0%), legal issues bordering on widows’ rights (27.6%) and general information regarding safety, crime, news and current affairs (23.3%). Even though the distribution of these widows’ information needs is diverse, their information needs are peculiar.

This study’s finding confirms previous studies including Owen, (2000) that have demonstrated a strong association between widows and financial incapacitation. Owen (2000) noted that widows carry a significant weight in the percentage of poorest peoples globally. Li (2009) corroborated this by pointing out that at the death of their husbands, many widows’ living standard falls so much past the threshold of low-income earning. This by implication may send them to a depth of

poverty beyond their imagination. The Yoruba proverb that says *ikú ọkọ l'òṣì obìnrin* meaning “spousal death is the poverty of a woman” not only sums this up but also attests to the fact that a widow can be doomed to poverty by the demise of her husband. This singular need can have ripple but multiplying effects on other areas including children’s education, family and personal health, accommodation, financial decisions, among others. The findings on information needs bordering on the rights of widows (like where, when and from whom to seek redress if maltreated) tilts to charter by Widows for Peace through Democracy (2015) whose mandate focuses on the rights of widows regarding matters of law, social, customary and economic conditions. This charter further requires all arms of governments, and their parastatals to exploit every possible avenue to address and remove the poor treatment of widows, and work with widows’ groups themselves to determine their populations and conditions. This is with a view to helping these arms of governments and organisations formulate and implement policies and laws that can improve widows’ conditions, empower them economically and socially and recognise them as a weighty part of a country’s social capital.

Information sources used by widows

Information cannot be got from the plain air but through a number of sources. Respondents were requested to identify the sources they use to obtain information in order to fill the vacuum of their information needs. Multiple responses were welcomed during the course of the research. The distribution of the responses by widows are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Information sources used by widows

| Mass Media | Interpersonal Sources | Computer-related Sources | Information Resources, Libraries/ Information Centres |
|---|---|---|---|
| Radio (88%) Mobile phone (77%) Television (65%) | Children (78%) Church/Religious Group members (63%) Family/Relatives (53%) Other widows (49%) Counsellors (39%) Health workers (39%) NGOs (35%) Widows local support group (30%) Friends & Neighbours (32%) Experts (22%) Widows international support group (15%) Information workers (13%) | Social media (19%) Internet & computer (11%) | Newspaper (16%) Books (13%) Magazines (9%) Government documents (6%) |

The information sources used by widows comprise a combination of many sources as one source may seem inadequate in meeting the needs. These sources were categorised into four namely mass media, interpersonal sources, computer-related sources, and information resources, libraries/information centers (Table 3). With respect to mass media, respondents identified radio (88%) as the most prominent source followed by mobile phone (77%), and television (65%). Under interpersonal sources, the respondents pinpointed their children (78%) as lead sources, followed by church and religious group members (68%), and family/relatives (53%) to obtain information. The formal sources were much less used by the widows.

The finding on radio sustains Pew Research Centre (2011) that the radio is the head information source when it comes to time-sensitive news and information from the immediate and remote environments. Findings in respect of use of television, internet and computer, magazine, information resources reflect that of Kaur, Kaur and Sharma (2019) which revealed that women watch food shows on the television to a very large extent but use formal sources to a very limited extent. Many studies (Kaur, Kaur and Sharma, 2019; Kim, Krebs and Shin, 2015) have reported more use of informal sources than other sources. The study’s findings on social support, children, family, friends, neighbours, and building community as interpersonal sources of information and strong strategies for coping with conditions of agony and grief when certain information needs arise also corroborate those of Manala (2015), Kim, Krebs and Shin (2015), and Holm Berland and Soverinsson (2018) that these support systems are of much value to widows. However, the informal sources as used by widows in this study’s findings though in consonance, with those of Edwards (n.d.), differ in the use of formal sources where almost all her respondents used libraries, newsletters, hotlines among others. Yadav (2017) also reported in his research that informal sources were more highly used followed by the media and lastly by formal sources which were least used during ISB processes.

Factors that motivate widows to use sources of information

This study probed the factors that motivate widows to use information sources. Their responses are displayed in Table 4. Findings revealed that ease of finding information (80%) is the number

Table 4: Factors motivating use of information sources

| Factors motivating use of information sources | Responses (%)* | Rank |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|
| Ease of finding information | 80 | 1 |
| Convenience | 55 | 2 |
| Relevance | 53 | 3 |
| Familiarity | 53 | 3 |
| Nearness | 52 | 5 |
| Inexpensiveness / cheapness | 46 | 6 |
| Availability | 41 | 7 |
| Right format for me | 37 | 8 |
| Reliability | 33 | 9 |

| | | |
|--|----|----|
| Detailed | 26 | 10 |
| Friendliness | 23 | 11 |
| Brevity | 17 | 12 |
| Least time spent in finding needed information | 17 | 12 |

* Multiple responses were allowed

one factor motivating widows in using information sources, with more than half identifying other factors like convenience (55%), relevance (53%) familiarity (53%), nearness (52%). Close to about half (46%) identified inexpensiveness of a source as a motivator. Approximately, about two fifths identified availability (41%), right format for me (37%) and reliability (37%). Also 26% used an information source consequent to being detailed as a motivator, 23% chose a source due to its friendliness while a little less than a fifth each identified brevity and least time spent in finding needed information (17% each). These factors motivated widows in descending order of magnitude

Angchum (2011) perceived accessibility to be multidimensional comprising convenience, ease of use, availability and familiarity. Some literature also noted that accessibility encompasses nearness, language, time saved, availability and ease of use (Bronstein 2010 in Angechum 2011). With this understanding, the factors in Table 4 culminate into accessibility of information sources to the widows. The findings regarding factors motivating widows to use any information source(s) focus on the accessibility of such sources. This study's finding on ease of finding and convenience is in harmony with that of Angchum (2011) who found that convenience and ease of finding information in any source(s) are able to increase respondents' perceived source accessibility and therefore can give rise to increased use. In addition to the poor economic condition of widows, using cheap information sources cannot be ruled out as they may likely go for these, and with the background of weak educational status, a source that is the right format and reliable may also be considered by them. Relating Tables 3 and 4 together, an apparently displayed behaviour by widows hangs on Zipf's theory popularly known as Principle of Least Effort in which the respondents majorly chose mass media and interpersonal sources over and above formal ones for those sources seem less complicated and less rigorous to them. This may be why they use radio, television, and informal sources more than others; they might like prefer trying or depending more on sources they have used before.

Information Use

The widows who formed the respondents of this research were asked to identify what they use the information they seek for, and also state how satisfied or otherwise they were with such use. The widows use information for variety of purposes (Table 5).

Table 5: Information use by respondents' widow and their degree of satisfaction with such use

| Purpose of using information | HS | S | HD | NSA | Mean (M) (\bar{X}) | SD | Remark |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|--|-----------|---------------|
| Advance children's education and training | 38 | 16 | 1 | 1 | 3.63 | 0.62 | HS |
| Advance my work | 37 | 20 | 0 | 1 | 3.60 | 0.53 | HS |
| Running family matters | 30 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 3.57 | 0.50 | HS |
| Make my personal health better | 35 | 25 | 0 | 1 | 3.54 | 0.59 | HS |
| Improve family health | 25 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 3.52 | 0.62 | HS |
| Carry on successfully with widowhood life | 32 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 3.52 | 0.50 | HS |
| Good home-keeping attitude | 24 | 16 | 1 | 1 | 3.50 | 0.67 | HS |
| Provide for children | 38 | 35 | 0 | 1 | 3.49 | 0.58 | HS |
| Assist other widows | 24 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 3.46 | 0.50 | HS |
| Increase family income | 19 | 21 | 2 | 0 | 3.40 | 0.67 | HS |
| Familiarise myself with governmental policies and regulations and legislations relating to widowhood, safety, crime and so on | 19 | 18 | 4 | 0 | 3.37 | 0.59 | S |

Degree of satisfaction (M): Highly satisfied (HS) = 3.5 – 4.0; Satisfied (S) = 2.5 – 3.4; Highly dissatisfied (HD) = 1.5 – 2.49; and Not satisfied at all (NSA) = 1.0 – 1.49

The mean scores (M) in Table 5 show widows' degree of satisfaction after using the specific information. Advancing children's education and training (M=3.63, SD=0.62) emerges as the topmost reason for which widows use information and were highly satisfied in this regard. Others include advancing their work (M=3.60, SD=0.53), running family matters (M=3.57, SD=0.50), improving personal health (M=3.54, SD=0.59) and family health (M=3.52, SD=0.62), carrying on successfully with widowhood (M=3.52, SD=0.50), good home-keeping (M=3.50, SD=0.67). They also use information for the purpose of provision for children in other areas (M=3.49, SD=0.58), and assist other widows (M=3.46, SD=0.50) increase family income (M=3.40, SD=0.67), and familiarisation with policies and legislations relation to widowhood (M=3.37, SD=0.59). For all of these, the widows were highly satisfied or satisfied as shown in Table 5. Widows showed their satisfaction with the information used that related to all of those with means less than 3.50. These findings echo those of Yadav (2017) in relation to seeking information for occupation, children's betterment and smooth maintenance of the family.

Constraints that widows experienced when using information

The widows were requested to state the constraints they face in their bid to meet their information needs. Many challenges were identified buttressing the fact that accessing information has posed difficulties to women globally especially those in the Sub-Saharan African

(Arthur, Dukper and Bawa, 2019). The challenges identified by widows and their distributions are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Constraints widows experience while seeking for information

| Constraints | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| Financial problems | 90 | 1 |
| Inadequate or no education illiteracy education | 49 | 2 |
| Lack of job/employment | 43 | 3 |
| Poor social networks among widows | 32 | 4 |
| Lack of time | 27 | 5 |
| Poor internet connectivity | 25 | 6 |
| Non-availability of information in native/indigenous languages | 25 | 6 |
| Lack/inadequate computer phone skills | 24 | 7 |
| Patriarchal culture | 22 | 8 |
| Lack of information centres like libraries | 16 | 9 |
| Inadequate library /information resources where libraries are available | 11 | 10 |

The respondents identified certain challenges and the most intense being financial problems (90%), with education (49%), lack of employment (43%) poor social networks among widows (32%) ranking them 2, 3 and 4 respectively, lack of time (27%) ranked fifth which may be due to fending alone for their families. Other constraints both ranked sixth and 25% each are poor internet connectivity and information not made available in native language Yoruba, since most of them were highly undereducated as shown in Table 1. Computer and computer related-issues, patriarchal problems, poor social connections, and information centres and insufficient information resources were less problematic to respondents' information seeking activities as highlighted in Table 6, possibly because they were weakly educated. These findings contrast those of Arthur Dukper and Bawa (2019) in that the most intense problem identified in this study for example are almost the least in theirs and ditto for others. While libraries and their resources being grossly inadequate were selected by a total of 27% of the participants in this study, these were the topmost constraints to the study participants of Arthur, Dukper and Bawa (2019). Owen (2000) noted that without adequate or relevant literacy and educational training, widows cannot support themselves in their everyday life needs as education is basic to acquisition of many life skills. Where this is lacking, it may be very difficult if not impossible to attain any reasonable height in such skills, and economically. Findings here on constraints due to weak education and problem of information not available in indigenous language concur with Patrick (2016) in his own study who found illiteracy and language problems to be factors that hinder information seeking. Saleh and Lasisi (2011) also reported some constraints to information seeking-behaviour including high illiteracy, inability to access certain formal channels consequent to poverty

Conclusion and Recommendation

When women move from a status of being married to that of widowhood, they face an uphill task of becoming “solo” parents and heads of their families. Their lives totally face an unprecedented and unknown orientation which necessitates provision of relevant information to alleviate some of their bitter widowhood experiences. Investigation into information needs, information sources, information use, and information seeking-behaviour of widows – has not attracted any scholarly attention to any prominent level as literature in this regard seems scant and oblivious in research. If this situation persists, it may have effect on this ‘social capital’ and the upcoming generation in their care. This research therefore investigated the information needs of widows, sources used to meet those needs, and their information seeking-behaviour. Information needs of widows in this study were various and diverse with stress on those relating to inalienable survival including finance, children’s education, counselling, and family and personal health. These widows use radio, children, television, mobile phone, and many informal sources to obtain information. They tilted to mass media and informal sources more for information because these widows found them easy to use, the sources are convenient and they are familiar with these sources, in consonance with G. Zipf’s description of the theory of Principle of Least Effort. The widows use information for a number of things including those of advancing their work, making provision for their children’s upkeep and education, health matters in the home and general wellbeing of the family. Some of the constraints facing the women in this study during their information seeking activities include financial handicap, inadequate or no education, lack of gainful employment and poor social networks among widows generally. In all, this study throws light on understanding, and opportunities for information workers to design relevant information systems for widows in order to meet their unveiling information needs and enhance their information-seeking behaviour activities.

Majority of the widows in this study had passed the economically active age and they had weak education, it is recommended here that education of girl child should be highly encouraged and older uneducated widows or women can be provided with adult education — non-formal educational trainings and programmes. Widows should be economically empowered to be able to cater well for their families and function in their new status. Finally, widows’ support groups within the country and their international counterparts should both make their presence more felt among south westerners in Nigeria in addition to promoting legislations protecting widows and their rights. Their presence may provide a solution to some of the information needs of widows. There is an obvious need for increased research in the area of information seeking behaviour of widows, as this study appears to be a maiden one in Nigeria, to delve into this area of research consequently, more research will help the information workers and government arms to use appropriate channels not only to source for information on widows’ needs but also to disseminate relevant information to them as at when appropriate.

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