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Information Needs and Information Seeking Behavior of Krobo Beads Producers in the Eastern Region of Ghana

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Abstract

This paper aimed to determine the information needs and information seeking behavior of beads producers in the Eastern Region of Ghana. It also looked at the sources of information available to the beads producers, as well as the problems they encountered when searching for information about their work. The study employed qualitative research methods. Data was triangulated

through interview, observation and focus group discussions. One hundred and sixty three (163) beads producers participated in the study, The findings of the study revealed that the main knowledge gaps of the bead producers were related to their work, and these were registration of their designs, branding of their beads, marketing of their beads, copyright and health issues. The beads producers mainly sought information through their immediate family members and neighbours/friends, radio, television, NGOs, and individual beads sellers/exporters. The study recommends among other things the need for community radio stations, especially state owned radio and the information centres in the local communities to consciously develop and broadcast programmes to disseminate information that are relevant to the bead producers in their local language.

Introduction

The 2012 population census of Ghana revealed that most (79%) of the people in the three Krobo Districts are rural dwellers (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Apart from agriculture activities, one of the major economic activities engaged in by these rural dwellers is indigenous glass bead making (Lower Many Krobo District Assembly, 2014; Upper Manya Krobo District Assembly, 2014). In some cases whole villages are involved in the glass beads production business (Affum, 2009). The indigenous beads industry is an important economic activity that has generated income for many families (Akoto, 2013; National Commission of Culture, 2011). The cultural tourism segment of the beads industry has also become an important source of employment for the local people (Akpabli, 2013; Akoto, 2013) in that other people especially; foreigners and tourists have developed increasing interest for the Krobo bead in its traditional state (Akpabli, 2013: 2; Avotri, 2009:10). The Krobo have produced, used and trade beads for so many years, and as a result beads have become an integral part of their socio-cultural life

(Affum, 2009:23; Ashe, 2012:4; Avotri, 2009; Wilson, 2003:7). Today, however, various forms of glass beads are found in most cultures in Ghana (Akoto, 2013).

Unfortunately, despite the economic and cultural importance of the Krobo indigenous beads making industry in Ghana, it appears that access to the relevant, accurate and timely information which will contribute immensely to the satisfactory operations of the beads producers is lacking. Moreover, the literature on information needs and information seeking behavior of rural dwellers in Africa and particularly in Ghana on indigenous beads makers is lacking. The importance of information to rural dwellers cannot be over emphasized. Rural people need information on markets, health, civics, political, credit, academic, farm inputs, leisure, agricultural husbandry practices and international news (Alemna, 1995; Momodu, 2002, 2012; Munyua, 2000). Information is an invaluable element and essential commodity in today's social, economic, industrial, political and technological development (Okpala, 2010). People need information to develop their potential through education and training, to succeed in business, to enrich their cultural experience, and to take control of their daily lives (Moore, 2007). Without essential information many rural communities will be left behind. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) cited in Uzuegbu (2016) reported that more than 60% of Africa's population is short-changed as a result of living in rural areas, where there is little or no access to and use of appropriate information needed to make day-to-day decisions, progress in vocations and general wellbeing.

This paper therefore, investigated the information needs and information seeking behavior of the Krobo beads makers in order to find ways of developing information programmes to satisfy their needs. This is because the understanding of information needs and information-seeking behavior of various professional groups is essential as it helps in the planning, implementation, and

operation of information system, and services in work settings (Devadason and Lingman, ,1997). Effective access to relevant information is necessary for improving productivity in the beads industry in order to improve social-cultural and economic activities in developing nations like Ghana. This study was therefore, undertaken to establish the information needs and information seeking behavior of the Krobo beads producers in Ghana. The specific objectives of the study are;

1. To identify the information needs of the Krobo beads producers;
2. To determine the sources of information used by the beads producers when searching for information about their work;
3. To examine the challenges faced by the beads producers in meeting their information needs;
4. To recommend measures to improve delivery of information services to the Krobo beads producers to enhance beads productivity in the area.

Information need

An information need arises when an individual senses a problematic situation or information gap in which his or her internal knowledge and beliefs, and model of the environment fail to suggest a path towards the satisfaction of his or her goals (Case, 2002 cited in Mooko & Aina, 2006). According to Ozioko (cited in Okpala, 2010), information need means an imbalance existing between what a person knows and what the person is supposed to know. Aina (2004) is of the view that information seeking behaviour of people varies according to their age, gender, occupation, location, education, exposure and enlightenment, religion and even culture. Further, it is argued that information needs of people within the same country, organisation or the type of group a person belongs to will vary because the level of need for similar information may differ over time and between persons or groups of persons depending on a variety of factors, such as

the demographics of education, age, social and economic backgrounds, or by those factors that are resource based, namely, availability of information, awareness of availability, acquaintance with, and ease of use of information resources (Wilson, 2000).

Information needs can be recognised by the information seeker or by the information expert on behalf of the information seeker. However, the information seeker and an expert may need to work together towards “disentangling” and establishing the actual information needs (Kaniki, 2001). As part of the search for the satisfaction of these needs, an individual may engage in information seeking behaviour (Wilson, 1981).

Information seeking behavior

According to Wilson (1999, 2000), information-seeking behavior includes "those activities a person may engage in when identifying their own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information. Okonoko, Ojukwu, and Deborah (2015) defined information seeking behaviour “as the ways and means an individual use to collect and locate information for knowledge, his/her own use, updating and improvement. Information seeking behaviour is purposive in nature and is an outcome of a need to satisfy some objectives. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with people, face to face or electronically (Wilson 2000). Thus, information seeking behaviour are the tendencies and approaches exhibited by people while seeking out information which also is a function of the recognition of one’s information needs as perceived by him/her and that which propels him/her to make use of information services and resources to satisfy such perceived needs (Ekoja, 2010).

The three Krobo districts

The study was conducted specifically at the two Krobo traditional areas which are politically divided into three districts. These districts are the Lower and Upper Manya Krobo, and Yilo Krobo districts. **The Lower Manya Krobo District (LMKD)** lies between latitudes -6.2-6.50N and Longitudes -0.3 - 0.00 W of the Greenwich Meridian. The District covers an area of 591 square kilometers constituting about 3.28 percent of the total land area of the Eastern Region (18,310km), with a population of 89, 246 people (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012; Lower Many Krobo District Assembly, 2012; Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2013)

The **Upper Manya Krobo District (UMKD)** was carved out from the former Manya Krobo District in 2008. The District is located at the North-Eastern corner of the Eastern Region of Ghana and lies between latitudes -6.2-6.50N and Longitudes -0.3 - 0.00 W of the Greenwich Meridian and Altitude of 457.5m. The District covers an area of 885 square kilometers constituting about 4.8% of the total land area of the Eastern Region of Ghana (18,310km). The population size of the district is 72,092. The district is largely rural with more than 87 % of the population living in rural areas with about 13% living in urban centers (Ghana Statistical Services, 2012; Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2013).

The **Yilo Krobo district** is approximately between latitude 60 .00'N and 00 .30'N and between longitude 00 .30' and 10 .00'W. It covers an estimated area of 805sq.km, constituting 4.2 percent of the total area of the Eastern Region with Somanya as its capital (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2013). The total population of the district is 87,847. The district is predominantly rural with more than 67% of its population living in rural areas (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2013; Yilo Krobo District Assembly, 2012:8).

Methodology

This study mainly employed qualitative research approach and phenomenology research designs. This is because the qualitative approach is recommended by various authors as an effective method for collecting data in IK studies rather than quantitative (Grenier, 1998; Langill, 1999). The major aim of qualitative research methods is not quantification, but to explore experiences, develop meaning and get a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon under investigation in their natural setting (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007). The qualitative approach had allowed the researcher to study and understand the activities of the beads producers in their natural environments. Phenomenology design also advocates the scientific study of immediate experiences and focuses on events, occurrences and happenings as one experiences them (Fellows & Liu, 2008). The researcher chose phenomenology because she was concerned with lived experiences of the bead producers who were involved, in the beads making industry in the Krobo communities in Ghana (Capenter, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; Kruger, 1988; Maypole & Davies, 2001; Robinson & Reed, 1998). Non-probability sampling techniques were used to select the sample for this study. It is suggested that non-probability sampling methods particularly purposeful or theoretical sampling techniques are used in qualitative studies (Maxwell, 2013:97; Rose, Spinks & Canhoro, 2014:196).

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the three Krobo Districts and the six villages/towns for the study due to the concentration of bead production industries in these areas; while snowball sampling technique was used to sample the bead producers. The data collection instruments used were semi participant observation, interview, and focus group discussions through problems trees and information mapping. The different data collection methods were triangulated in order to compare their results so as to avoid errors or bias and to ensure the

credibility of the findings.. Data was collected until saturation was reached, that is, at the point where the researcher had heard the range of ideas and was not getting new information (Krueger & Casey, 2000:26; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1995).

Discussion of findings

The discussion was done based on the information needs, information seeking behavior and sources of information available to the beads makers as well as problems they encountered in the course of searching for information.

Background of participants

A total of 163 beads producers participated in the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. One hundred and twelve (112) participated in the focus group discussions while fifty one (51) of them were interviewed. Two focus group discussions were held in each village within each district, and each focus group comprised of 8--10 participants. This was made of Yilo Krobo forty (40), Lower Manya thirty seven (37), and Uper Manya thirty five (35). The participants who took part in the interviews were fifty one (51). This includes Yilo Krobo (20), Lower Manya (14), and Upper Manya (17).

The participants were made up (59, 36.0%) women and (104, 63.8%) men. The age distribution of the participants were, 18-23 (40, 24.5%), 24-32 (47, 28.8%), 33-40 (37, 22.7%), 41-45 (23,14.1%), and (16, 9.8%) were 46 years and above. Most of the beads producers (132, 81%) had some form of formal education, while (31, 19%) did not have formal education. Those who had formal education include (54, 33.1%) primary education, (63, 47.7%) middle or junior high secondary education, (13, 7.9%) senior high secondary education, while (2, 1.2%) were polytechnic students and (1, 0.6%) had university education.

Information needs of the beads producers

The participants were asked if they have ever been confronted with the need for particular information concerning their job which they did not readily have knowledge about. Most (42) of the participants interviewed answered in the affirmative. The beads producers were then asked to indicate areas where they needed information about but they lacked knowledge in those areas. According to the participants their main knowledge gaps include registration of their designs, branding of their beads, copyright issues, production of transparent beads, credit and loan facilities, health issues, marketing of their beads, and formation of beads making associations.

Awareness of IPRs and registration of designs

When the beads producers were asked if they had registered their designs, most (49) of the participants who were interviewed said they did not register their designs while a few (2) of them said they tried to register their beads. The participants were then asked why they did not register their designs; according to most (27) of the participants they did not know where to go or whom to contact to help them register their designs. Others (15) indicated that they did not have money to register their designs because they learnt the registration was expensive, some (8) noted that they were comfortable protecting their knowledge in their memory, while one of the participants said *“I attempted registering my design however, the cost of applying for and maintaining IPR was very high, and the process involved was also cumbersome. For example, I was not able to meet the condition of novelty which indicated that the invention must be new because most of us developed our designs from ancient designs”*

The participants were asked if they were aware of some of the importance of registering their designs, most (31) of the participants said they were not aware of the importance of registering

their designs, some (18) indicated that some of their colleagues had been saying so many things about registration of their designs but, they did not know what they would gain from it that was why they did not boarder to register their designs, while one elderly woman indicated *“one of our colleagues said something about the importance of registering our designs some time ago but I forgot”*

The participants were then asked if they were aware of some laws that can help them protect their designs, most (47) of the participants said they were not aware, while few (4) of them indicated that they were aware of the IP on folklore, they however, indicated that they were not sure if the folklore law protects IK. The participants were then asked if it would be necessary to have IPRs that would protect IK in Ghana. According to most (42) of the beads producers it was necessary to have laws that would protect IK in Ghana, while few (10) of them said they were not sure, as one old man said *“I don't know unless you tell me”* Those who said there was the need to have IPRs that would protect IK were asked why they think it was important to have laws that would protect IK. Most (27) of the participants said it would prevent some of their colleagues from copying people designs which will eventually protect their designs and knowledge, some (15) said it would help to eradicate conflict among them as a result of design copying. Others (6) indicated that IPRs would help them to be more creative which would improve the quality of their designs, and that the quality of their designs would attract more customers, while some (8) of them noted that IPRs would help to preserve their traditional knowledge for their children.

From the focus group discussions almost all (107) the participants said they did not register their designs, while a few (4) of them indicated that they attempted registering their designs. This was because according to most (57) of the participants they lack the requisite knowledge about which

institution or whom to contact to help them acquire the necessary information on how to register their designs, others (33) said they were not really aware of the importance of registration of their designs. Some (11) posited that most of their designs were developed from old designs and that no single individual can claim ownership of such designs; hence it would be very difficult for one person to register some designs. Again, most (67) of them indicated that the fear of colleagues copying each other design prevented them from sharing their knowledge, and that they were comfortable protecting their knowledge through secrecy (in their memory) which had helped them to safeguard their knowledge throughout generations. Hence, the conventional ways of disclosing and protecting that knowledge were not in conformity with their practices, and thus, they viewed it as a challenge.

According to most (93) of the participants who took part in the information maps they were not aware of any IP that protects IK, while some (18) of them said they were aware of the folklore law but they were not sure if it protected IK completely in Ghana.

Branding of beads

The beads producers were asked if they had brands for their beads; majority (47) of the participants indicated that they did not have brands for their beads, while few (4) of them indicated that they had brands for their beads. When the beads producers were asked to indicate how they prepare their beads for sale, most (46) of them said they send their beads to the market and displayed them on tables for sale, while a few (5) of them said they packaged their beads in designed plastics and displayed them in their stores for sale or send them to the markets for sale.

During the focus group discussions most (103) of the bead producers disclosed that they did not have brands for their products, while few (9) of them noted that they had brands for their beads.

Most (99) of the participants said they send their threaded beads to the markets and displayed them on tables for sale. There were only six (6) participants who said they had brands for their beads and that they packaged their products very well.

Production of transparent beads

When the beads producers were asked to indicate the types of beads that they produced; most (43) of the participants said they make glazed beads only, while some (8) of them indicated that they produced glazed and transparent glass beads. Those who said they did not have the requisite knowledge of making transparent glass beads were asked if there were some people in their communities who produce transparent beads, one of the participants gave negative response as follows, *“No, there used to be a particular man who produces transparent beads in our community but he died about four (4) years ago. So currently there is nobody in our community who produces transparent beads. Most of us learnt how to produce only glazed beads”*. Another participant also said *“No, almost all of us in this community learnt how to produce glazed beads only, so we cannot make transparent beads”*

From the focus group discussions and observations the participants disclosed that most of them (93) produced only glazed beads while a few (19) of them indicated that they had the requisite knowledge about transparent glass bead production.

Marketing of beads

The participants were asked to indicate where they usually sell their beads. Most (26) of them said they sell their beads at Koforidua the regional market, while others (13) mentioned Koforidua and Agomanya markets, few (7) of them stated that they sell their beads at Koforidua and Agomanya markets, and that some of their customers come to buy the beads at their

workshop, while one (1) participant indicated that he sells his beads locally and export them as well.

The beads producers were asked if they always get customers for their products when they send them to the markets. According to most (39) of the participants who were interviewed they did not always get customers, this had been expressed by one of the participants as follows *“No, we did not always get customers for our beads when we go to the market, sometimes when we did not get good prices at the market we return the beads to our villages, in some cases we find it very difficult to get money for transport back home”*. Some of them (12) indicated that they always get customers for their beads. The participants were then asked if they had tried any alternative means of selling their beads, most (41) of them said no, only few (10) of them indicated that they sometimes send their beads to Accra the capital of Ghana or Tema to sell. According to the participants the market days for the two markets were Thursdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. This means that the beads producers needed to wait for these days before selling their products even if one had beads and she or he wanted to sell.

From the information maps most (76) of the participants indicated that they mainly sell their beads at Koforidua market, some (15) of them mentioned Koforidua and Agormanya markets, others (6) indicated that they sell their beads at Accra, Tema and Kumase, while few (5) of them indicated that apart from the local markets they had stores where they sell their beads.

Beads making associations

The participants were asked if they belong to beads making or any association; some (26) of the participants said they belong to some associations which were not made up of only beads producers, some (13) indicated that they were into beads making associations but they had

stopped, while others (12) said they did not join any association at all. Those who said they did not belong to any association were asked why they were not in any association in their communities or join any association, some (4) of them said they did not know how to go about it, others (2) indicated that they were not clear about issues pertaining to bead making associations, while some (6) noted that they heard several stories about these associations but they did not know how to go about it.

From the focus group discussions some (61) of the participants revealed that they belong to some associations, others (33) said they were not in any association, while some (7) of them said they were in some beads making associations but they had stopped. Most (31) of the beads producers who did not belong to any association were mainly found at Somanya, Odumase and Ahabaso. It appears that because of lack of bead making associations at the above mentioned areas participants could not have access to credit facilities to help them raise capital for their work. According to some of the beads producers who were in beads making associations, the financial institutions were ready to give assistance to only artisans who were in groups or associations.

Health issues

The beads producers were asked if they were aware that inhaling the glass powder continuously could affect their health. According to most (33) of the participants they were not aware that continuous inhaling of the glass powder could have any effect on their health, others (11) indicated that they were not sure, while some (7) said it would not have any effect on their health as illustrated by the following response. *“inhaling the glass powder will not have any effect on our lives, our grandparents and parents had been in this business throughout their lives, but they lived long before they died”* From the information maps most (81) of the participants said

continuous inhaling of the glass powder would not have any effect on their health, while others (20) indicated that they were not sure

The participants were then asked if they were aware that the heat and smoke from the fire can affect their health, especially, their eyes, some (15) of them said, they were aware but there was nothing they could do about it, others (19) said they were not aware, while some (7) also said it would not have any effect on their eyes as illustrated by one participants *“our grandparents and parents had been in this business throughout their lives, but they grew old before they died so I don't think the heat from the fire can have any effect on my health”* Those who said the heat and smoke from the fire could have effect on their eyes were asked why they did not put on goggles when working, according to the participants when they put on the goggles it rather attracted more heat. From the focus group discussions (55) of the participants indicated that the heat could have effect on their health, others (47) indicated that they were not sure, while (10) of them said the fire could not have any effect on their health. Most (56) of the participants who took part in the focus group discussions confirmed that their major knowledge gap was registration of their designs, others (29) mentioned branding of their beads, most (47) of them also stated copyright issues, some (22) mentioned access to credit, health issues (45), and marketing (37) of their beads.

This finding agrees with Anunobi, Ogbonna and Osuchukwu (2014) who revealed that the greatest job-related information needs of rural dwellers were raw materials, locating government tenders, and improving their knowledge. Further, Mtega (2013), Mooko (2005) revealed similar findings of information need of rural dwellers in Tanzania and Botswana. Nwosu, Igwe, and Emezie (2014) also reported that women artisans have information needs related to their work, and that face-to-face mode of communications was the major source of their information.

Information seeking behavior and sources of information available to the beads producers

The beads producers were asked to indicate if they had tried to search for information whenever they had a problem concerning their work. According to some (40) of the beads producers they had tried to look for means of solving their knowledge gap problems, while others (12) said they did not. Those who said they tried searching for information concerning their work, were asked to state the sources where they access information from. According to most (29) of the participants they basically sought information from their immediate family members such as parents, children, or grandparents. As one young bead producer indicated *“I always contact my mother or my grandmother for help whenever I am confronted with any problem concerning my work”*. According to some (11) of the beads producers especially, those who were in beads making associations, they seek information from NGOs, such as “Plan International”, and their association members. Others (5) also indicated that they seek help from friends/neighbours. , while some (5) said they get information from individual beads sellers/and exporters. Few (4) of the participants mentioned specifically that they also seek information from beads making training seminars/workshops, while others (2) also said they seek information from village meetings, and government agencies.

When the beads producers were asked if they seek information from printed materials concerning their work; according to most (47) of the participants they did not make use of printed materials such as books, newspapers, magazines or posters when searching for information concerning their work. Only a few (4) of them indicated seeking information from printed materials. It appears that participants sought information from the local sources because they were readily available and dependable.

Most (76) of the participants who took part in the focus group map disclosed that the main sources where they obtained information from were family/parents/children, some (20) mentioned friends/neighbours. Others (22) stated beads making associations, and village meetings. Others (5) stated individual beads sellers/and exporters. From the information maps most (99) of the participants revealed that they did not search for information concerning their job in printed materials, while (13) of them indicated searching for information in printed materials. According to some (35) of the participants there were information centers at Otokper, Odumase, Asesewa, and Somanya. The beads producers however, indicated that these centres had no relevant programmes that they run, and that the centres were only meant for making announcements. At Lower Manya the participants revealed that KW Radio broadcasted its programmes through the three information centres in the District. Most of the bead producers however, said the content of the radio programmes had no relevant information concerning the bead industry.

The finding of the current study is in conformity with Anunobi, Ogbonna and Osuchukwu (2014) who revealed that the major information sources used by the artisans were informal conversations, and listening to radio. The most used information sources were radio, colleagues, and newspapers. Maluku (2015) also reported that the major information sources used by cattle farmers in Zambia were interpersonal sources such as friends, relatives and neighbours and information sources which were used to a lesser extent were extension officers, veterinary doctors, radio, newspapers and books. Mwakaje (2010) cited in Arua (2016) noted that farmers market information sources are dominated by fellow farmers, relatives and traders. Yusuf (2012) also indicated that women artisans in Nigeria basically seek information from friends and relatives and mass media.

Challenges that hindered beads producers from accessing information

The beads producers were asked to state problems that hindered them from accessing information in their communities. Most (19) of the participants indicated that the major problem that they encountered when accessing information was lack of awareness of available information sources, others (11) mentioned lack of indigenous knowledge centres, some (11) stated poor response to information requests from government and village leaders such as assembly men, others (4) indicated lack of funds to attend workshops and seminars on beads making, some (4) also mentioned lack of community libraries, while few (3) of them mentioned illiteracy and poor knowledge sharing culture among them.

Lack of awareness of formal information sources- Some of the beads producers indicated that they were not aware that they could consult formal sources of knowledge, such as the National Commission on Culture district officials through their assembly men or the beads making association leaders when they encountered any problem relating to their work or even when they needed general information about their work. Hence, most of them relied on the informal sources of knowledge such as family, neighbours and friends, who sometimes were not able to assist them or reliable to solve their problems.

Poor response from government officials--Some of the beads producers lamented bitterly about how government officials especially their members of parliament failed them on several occasions whenever they promised to help them. For instance, at Tsebi Tei, and Ahaba, the respondents indicated *“our member of parliament promised to provide us with glass grinding machines but he failed so how can we contact him again if we need any help?* At Otrokper some of the participants said *“our member of parliament promised to assist us with the grant meant for*

artisans or the Member of Parliament common fund but he did not fulfill his promise so we decided not to seek help or information from any government official again”.

Lack of funds to attend workshops and seminars--Again, some of the participants said they did not have funds to attend workshops or seminars which were organized sometimes for artisans in general. As one of them illustrated *“most of the time these workshops demanded participants to pay some fees, and in some cases we had to travel to the regional or national capitals to attend these workshops which also called for travelling expenses because our communities are far from the regional capital”.*

Lack of community libraries and IK resource centres--- In all the surveyed districts the participants disclosed that there were neither indigenous knowledge resource centres nor community libraries where they could go if they needed information about their work. The participants said there was only one community library at Odumase Krobo district. However, a tour of the library by the researcher revealed that there were no relevant materials on beads. Again, the semi- structured interview conducted with the one in charge of library as well as his assistants revealed that none of them was a professional librarian. Therefore, they did not have the requisite knowledge and skills about how to organize indigenous knowledge materials even if there were some in the library.

During the focus groups discussions most (52) of the participants confirmed that the major challenge that hindered them from accessing information was poor response to information requests from government and village leaders such as assembly men and parliamentarians, others (22) mentioned lack of awareness of available information sources. Some (15) of the beads producers indicated that they did not have funds to attend workshops and seminars on beads

making, while others (8) said locations for consultations with public officials such as the National Commission on Culture and banks were far from their communities. Others (4) indicated illiteracy, for instance, one respondent said “*I did not attend school so I cannot read books*” while few of them stated lack of IK resource centres and libraries. According to them most of them relied on the informal sources of knowledge such as family, neighbours and friends, who sometimes were not able to assist them.

These challenges were in conformity with Ikoja-Odongo and Mostert’s (2006) categories of internal (personal) and external or environmental factors (such as, illiteracy, culture, poor information services, costly information materials, poverty, and the multiplicity of local languages) which inhibited Ugandan informal entrepreneurs from seeking information. In Tanzania, Chilimo (2009) reported that local communities did not tackle their problems because of ignorance, low social status, and the unavailability of the extension officers. Likewise, illiteracy and language challenges limited rural dwellers from seeking information in Nigeria (Momodu 2002). Similar findings were reported in the information seeking studies of Nigerian fishermen (Njoku, 2004), and Nigeria women artisan (Yusif, 2012).

Conclusion

From the findings of the study it could be concluded that the beads producers information needs were associated to their work, and that their main knowledge gaps were registration of their designs, branding of their beads, copyright issues, production of transparent beads, credit and loan facilities, health issues, marketing of their beads, and formation of beads making associations. The participants said they basically sought information from friends/neighbours, family/parents/children, radio, television, and individual beads sellers/exporters, the respondents

said they sought information from other sources such as NGOs, beads making associations, training, seminars/workshops, and village meetings. The participants indicated that they made little use of, printed materials such as books, newspapers, posters, and ICTs whenever they needed information concerning their work. Lack of awareness of available information sources, lack of indigenous knowledge centres, poor response to information requests from government and village leaders such as members of parliament, lack of funds to attend workshops and seminars on beads making, lack of community libraries, as well as illiteracy and poor knowledge sharing culture among the participants were the problems that hinder them from accessing information..

9.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings the study is making the following recommendations to enhance effective access to information within the Krobo beads making communities.

- This study is recommending that officials of community radio stations, especially state owned radio and the information centres in the local communities should consciously develop and broadcast programmes to disseminate information that are relevant to bead producers in order to enhance bead making knowledge creation and development in the communities. These programmes should be woven around storytelling, drama, and traditional dance and singing competitions through the local language in the evenings.
- Further, information professionals such as public librarians should be proactive by organizing workshops for people who are engaged in small scale industrial activities in their communities in order to equip them with information literacy competences.

- It is also important for government officials (e.g. the National Commission on Culture and the Tourism Board) in the Eastern Region to build the capacity of the beads producers through continuous training (at least once a year) on product finishing, packaging, simple marketing skills, and copyright issues.
- The National Commission on Culture should create awareness among the beads producers about various platforms such as fairs where they can market their beads. In some cases discount should be given to people who are engaged in small scale industrial activities to enable them patronize such fairs.

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