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Investigation of Information Dissemination Mechanisms (IDM) For Rural Dwellers in Bayelsa State, Southern Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focused on information dissemination mechanisms for sustainable livelihoods of rural dwellers in Bayelsa State. The purpose of the study was amongst other to examine the level of adequacy of the information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers. Four research questions and a formulated hypothesis guided the study. The study employed Focus Group Discussion (FDG) method for data gathering. The population for the study were rural dwellers. To test the formulated hypotheses, t-test at 0.05 level of significance was used. The major findings were: information dissemination mechanisms range from village heads to party leaders; most of the information dissemination mechanisms were inadequate for rural information dissemination; while use of indigenous people, use of Pidgin English during town hall meetings to benefit the illiterate [non-educated] rural dwellers were strategies proffered against the challenges. The study concluded that rural dwellers age was significantly related to their opinions on information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers in the study area.

Keywords: information, information dissemination mechanisms, rural dwellers, age, Bayelsa State, Southern Nigeria.

Introduction

The importance of information in the rural developmental process is increasingly being recognized, not only by those involved in development work, but also by the recipients of such information. The researcher observed that rural dwellers in some communities (Igbogene, Ovom, Onopa, Amarata and Akaba among others) in Bayelsa State, South–South Nigeria are using insecticide-treated mosquito nets provided by the government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for the prevention of mosquito bites and malaria, for fishing. This can be attributed to improper information dissemination regarding the use of the nets or lack of adequate information dissemination mechanisms to convey the message to the recipients. Users have different uses and reasons for information such as health, advancement in knowledge, politics, agriculture extension, sustainable livelihoods, cultural

and physical development, among others as disseminated. This is where the sources of information come into play in the rural setting.

The sources of information determine the usability of information disseminated to rural dwellers because information is medium dependent (Etebu, 2009). Where the sources are not familiar to the rural dwellers, disseminated information will not be properly related to and the end result will be far from expectations. Silvio (2006) averred that for rural dwellers to fulfil their information needs, they prefer to use informal sources such as from trusted friends, relatives, co-workers as against unfamiliar sources. They believed that these sources are more reliable and authentic compared to the one provided by the radio, television, Internet and other mass media.

Rural dwellers are expected to make use of available information as disseminated through various mechanisms, but the expected outcomes depend on the packaging of such information. Kamba, (2010) lent credence to this that the kind of information delivered to the rural communities is very much system oriented to which most of the rural dwellers cannot understand and benefit from it, and the provision is dependent on the availability, extent of content, Government interest, format and available modes of delivery.

The available information disseminated to the rural dwellers sometimes does not meet the needs of the people. Harande, (2009) stated that in Nigeria, there is no comprehensive document on the information needs of rural inhabitants. This is a case of neglect. This might lead rural dwellers to interpret information to suit their needs wrongfully, especially where the information was disseminated through unfamiliar mechanisms.

Information dissemination mechanisms are the various channels through which government and its agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public and private companies and individuals involved in the work of providing information put through required and designated information to their target audience. These mechanisms according to Etebu, (2009) are traditional African methods and modern global methods both print (newspapers, magazines, government documents, periodicals, journals and books) and non-print (television, radio and the Internet among others) and library. Meyer (2003) identified methods of information dissemination in traditional rural society to include: bush burning, face to face expression, storytelling, beating of gongs and drums, the use of proverbs and riddles, sign language and body movement. Most of these methods are still practiced by rural populace today. Other traditional mechanisms are person to person discussions in men's meeting places (invisible college), wrestling, dancing and festival grounds.

In today's rural setting information is being disseminated through mechanisms as inter-personal referred to as face-to-face communication. It is the exchange of ideas and information between sender and receiver. The mode of interaction is usually of a conversational nature and involves the exchange of either verbal or non-verbal information between two or more people in a face-to-face or voice-to-voice setting (Ifukor, 2013). Also the use of town criers, social political meetings, lecture demonstrations and shows, audio visual channels and rural libraries and information dissemination mechanisms in use. James (2012) posited that the modern trends of information dissemination, involve the use of electronic and print media such as radio, television, newspapers and GSM (handsets), and institutions such as libraries and information centres in disseminating information to rural dwellers. The implication of using all these available methods is that the rural populace should be able to relate to one or several of them in an attempt to make use of information disseminated for the improvement of impoverished living conditions. Successive Nigerian governments explored these mechanisms, yet, inhumane living conditions persists.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the information dissemination mechanisms rural dwellers in Bayelsa State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. ascertain the various information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers.
2. examine the level of adequacy of the information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers.
3. find out the challenges to effective rural information dissemination
4. identify the various strategies to enhance information disseminated to rural dwellers in Bayelsa State.
5. measure the opinion of rural dwellers on information dissemination mechanisms.

Research Questions

This research work was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the information dissemination mechanisms used for rural dwellers?
2. How adequate are the information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers?
3. What are the challenges to effective rural information dissemination?
4. What are the various strategies to enhance information disseminated to rural dwellers in Bayelsa State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis tested at 0.05 levels of significance guided this study:

H01: There is no significant difference between the opinions of young and old rural dwellers on the types of information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers in Bayelsa State, South-South Nigeria.

Review of Literature

It is obvious that rural dwellers constitute the majority of mankind. The picture as it exists for Nigeria, cuts across the entire developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. Ruralism is synonymous with the general condition of underdevelopment in these countries. James (2012) puts it that rural societies imply ways of life that are traditionally oriented, linked with, but separate from urban centres, combining market activities with subsistence production. The above implies that the rural populace is, in essence, characterized by such features as widespread ignorance which results from their inability to read and write, scattered settlements and high level of illiteracy. In addition, the rural populace represents the constituency of the bulk of victims of inaccessibility to such urban amenities as good shelter and health facilities.

Obviously, the rural populace suffers from an acute low productivity, social and economic retrogression due mainly to ignorance, which is also a direct consequence of either inadequate or total lack of information provision to them, resulting in their social exclusion from active participation in national development efforts. Considering their numerical strength in relation to the potentiality of what positively significant contributions they stand to make in the society generally, their exclusion from the main-stream of events can, at best be described as a cog in the wheel of the nation's progress. Concurring, Anele (2012) added that after all, the fact that information has always played an important role in human life and as a basic human need was never a subject of controversy. If it is then true that information and ideas, agreed upon by information experts, are basic human needs, it will not be out of place making bold to state that free and equal accessibility to such information and ideas by every member of the society irrespective of racial, religious, geopolitical and socio-economic status becomes even more foundational.

The rural dwellers are far from the government of the country and seem almost neglected. Anele (2012) underpinned the situation we he averred that, generally, the level of government presence in rural areas is abysmally low, creating the erroneous impression that rural dwellers are second class citizens who do not deserve modern amenities that make life more comfortable. For example, epileptic electricity supply which is a general problem in Nigeria is worse in the villages ... the major problem is that political office holders are

alienated from the grassroots, from the people they are supposed to serve. As a result, they do not really understand the enormity of the sufferings experienced by rural dwellers on a daily basis. Clearly, the local government system was created to bring government closer to the people. This to an extent explains why the rural people have low purchasing power and standard of living.

It is pertinent at this juncture to look at age as a demographic issue of rural dwellers. Touching the issue of rural dwellers' age, Deji and Enuenwemba (2005) who worked on 'Assessment of the Awareness of HIV/AIDS Among the Rural Dwellers in Ife Zone of Osun State Nigeria', stated that majority of their respondents were still in their active ages, which has significant implications on level of awareness and accessibility to sources of information in the rural areas. Obidike (2011) found out that in the area she studied (Nsukka LGA), majority of the rural farmers' respondents who practice farming are in the age range of 46-55 years. Few of the respondents in the age range of 36-45 years also practice farming in their different communities, and noted that these days, the active young men and women (26-35 years and 36-45 years) who should form the bulk of the work force have deserted the rural communities and moved to the cities in search of government employment. Obidike (2011) cited (Adebayo, 1999) to conclude that obviously this trend has not encouraged rural productivity as it has left farming in the hands of the old, the illiterate and very few energetic young men who live in the villages, perhaps only due to unavoidable circumstances. This by implication shows that the calibre and age range of those in majority and actively engaged in rural activities should be measured when disseminating information for sustainable livelihoods to rural dwellers.

Mechanisms are channels, systems or methods used to communicate information to rural dwellers. The nature of the mechanism or medium through which information is transmitted also contributes to the success or otherwise of the communication. Varieties of mechanisms of information transfer abound in rural communities. James (2012) quoted Aboyade (1987) who listed some mechanisms of information communication to rural societies of Nigeria. These include the use of town criers or dispatch riders to outlying

districts, talking drums are also used for messages involving distant areas. She also added that formal and informal giving and sharing of information happen all the time at market places and village squares usually situated in front of the traditional ruler's palaces, and concluded that nowadays, churches, mosques and schools provide avenues for passing around information affecting the life of a community.

The success of the above channels depends largely on the knowledge of the literacy level and culture of the rural society involved. Any new idea that is transmitted without taking into consideration those two factors is bound to fail. Hence this promotes sustainable cultural development and livelihood in the rural society.

Information disseminators may not exploit all available mechanisms in their quest, while continuing the use of a few with evaluating their adequacy to meet the needs of the rural dwellers. Egbule, Agwu and Uzokwe (2013) lamented the inadequacy of information dissemination mechanisms to rural dwellers that while radios can be used across all segments of the population, it provides limited range of information. Newspapers though accessible, are primarily concentrated in urban areas, and are expensive (the cost of newspapers in Nigeria average N150), and are irrelevant to illiterate populations.

Going further, Egbule et al (2013) quoted (ITU, 2009) that less than 19 percent of individuals in sub-Saharan Africa can boast of reading a newspaper at least once per week, with a much smaller share in rural areas. Landline coverage has been limited, with less than one landline subscriber per 1,000 people in 2008. In the same vein, access to other search mechanisms, such as fax machines, e-mail, and Internet, is similarly low, primarily due to their dependence upon landline infrastructure. Also, personal travel to different villages and markets to obtain information not only requires transport costs, but also the opportunity costs of an individual's time.

Concurring, Ozowa (1995) noted that there are some limiting factors and apparent constraints in agricultural information dissemination in Nigeria, including status differences between extension agents and their clients; agents' inadequate knowledge of rural setting, how communication works among the rural communities, lack of interagency cooperation both in programme planning and implementation; and the extension's general lack of interest in traditional media.

Furthermore, Ozowa (1995) stated that the use of the broadcasting media in Nigeria and its poor reception quality and the area covered is a major constraint. The messages carried are not tailored to the information needs of rural populations. Even when the

information is relevant, it is seldom aired at the proper time and so does not get to the targeted audience.

He continued that other major constraint is the use of print media: Leaflets and newsletters as message carriers are of limited use in reaching illiterate farmers. Technical language used in communicating information is incomprehensible to the farmers. When local language is used, emphasis is often on the three major Nigerian languages Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba. These programmes are broadcast when farmers are far away in the fields or too tired to listen after the day's toil. A majority of the farmers do not own radio sets. Ozowa (1995) concluded that the present ratio of 1 extension worker to 3,000 farmers is inadequate for effective agricultural information diffusion. The problem is compounded by the paucity of women in extension agents especially in a society where cultural and religious taboos make it impossible for male extension workers to reach women farmers who outnumber male small scale farmers.

Research Method

The research employed survey design for the study. The instrument for data collection was Focus Group Discussion. FGD was organized in ten different communities. The tape recorded responses of the respondents were transcribed and analysed by the researcher and some research assistants. The population of the study was rural dwellers from ten rural communities (Igbedi, Akaibiri, Otuokpoti, Nembe, Ayakoroma, Tungbo, Adagbabiri, Trofani, Ebeni and Biseni from which 60 rural dwellers were purposively selected as sample size. Each of the focus groups were made up of six (6) male and female respondents. This small number of participants in a group was to prevent a phenomenon termed 'social floating' by Cronin, (2008) as observed in larger groups.

Analysis of the FGD

FGD Question 1

Moderator: Which of the following information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers are you familiar with?

Village head, Town criers, Market square, Agricultural extension workers, Radio Television, GSM, Health workers, Billboard, Newspapers, School teachers, Friends/neighbours, Library, Cooperative societies, Pastors/Imams, Posters, Internet Government circulars, Banks marketing representatives and Party leaders.

Response: The respondents were familiar with village heads, town criers, market square, agricultural extension workers, radio, television, GSM, health workers, billboards, newspapers, school teachers, friends/neighbours, cooperative societies, pastors/imams, posters, Internet, government circulars, banks marketing representatives to party leaders as information dissemination mechanisms. Although some of the respondents don't own radio, television sets and GSM and as such do not get information disseminated through those mechanisms. Information disseminated through newspapers, government circulars and Internet are also not beneficial to them.

FGD Question 2

Moderator: Are these information dissemination mechanisms adequate for you?

Village head, Town criers, Market square, Agricultural extension workers, Radio Television, GSM, Health workers, Billboard, Newspapers, School teachers, Friends/neighbours, Library, Cooperative societies, Pastors/Imams, Posters, Internet Government circulars, Banks marketing representatives and Party leaders.

Response: Apart from village head, town crier and friends and neighbours, other items like market square, agricultural extension workers, radio, television, GSM, health workers, billboards, newspapers, school teachers, library, cooperative societies, pastors/imams, posters, Internet, government circulars, banks marketing representatives and party leaders were inadequate information dissemination mechanisms to rural dwellers of the South-South.

FGD Question 3

Moderator: What do you think are the challenges to effective rural information dissemination?

Response: The timing of the information dissemination is not conducive; most of the rural dwellers are not always at home from morning till evening, especially the farmers, scavengers and daily paid labourers. The language used (English) is not well understood by the very illiterate ones without proper interpretation. Distortion in the flow of disseminated information. This is manifested in hoarding of disseminated information by the educated ones and those who receive the information first hand, in some cases wanting to be paid to pass on the information.

FGD Question 4

Moderator: What way can you suggest to improve information dissemination?

Response: The use of Pidgin English during town hall meetings to benefit the illiterate [non-educated] rural dwellers should be introduced. Also, the timing of the information dissemination should be looked into because of rural dwellers that are mostly in their farms

or bushes or places of occupation outside their residences for most part of the day. They also suggested that community radio should be used to disseminate information in the early hours of the morning and at night. Town hall meetings conducted by indigenes of the communities.

Hypotheses

HO “There is no significant difference between the opinions of young and old rural dwellers on the types of information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria”.

t-test of significant difference between the opinions of young and old rural dwellers on the types of information dissemination mechanisms known to rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria

Information Dissemination Mechanisms for Rural Dwellers

Statement	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P-value
Types of Information	Young	37	2.82	0.92	-0.13	346	0.16
	Old	23	2.96	0.83			

Key: N = Respondents, SD = Standard Deviation, df = Degree of Freedom, t = t-calculated

The above table shows the analysed opinions of young and old rural dwellers on the types of information dissemination mechanisms known to rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria. The calculated P-value of 0.16 is higher than the 0.05 level of significance. It could be said that there is a significant difference between the opinions of young and old rural dwellers and the various types of information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected

Findings of the Study

The following are outlined as the major research findings of the study based on the research questions answered through focus group discussion analyzed and formulated null hypotheses tested.

1. The various information dissemination mechanisms presently used for rural dwellers are numerous ranging from village heads to party leaders.
2. Most of the information dissemination mechanisms are not adequate for rural dwellers especially the library.

3. Challenges to effective information dissemination and utilisation range from acute shortage of librarians'/extension workers, lack of rural libraries/information centre to paucity of development workers in the rural areas. Also, constraints include the timing of the information dissemination, the language used, distortion in the flow of the disseminated information, hoarding of information by the educated and those who receive the information first hand wanting to be paid to pass on the information.
4. Strategies to enhance information dissemination to rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria range from identifying rural dwellers information needs first, to use of indigenous people for information dissemination as gleaned from the study. Use of Pidgin English during town hall meetings to benefit the illiterate [non-educated] rural dwellers should also be encouraged.
5. The Hypothesis was rejected as there was a significant difference between the opinions of young and old rural dwellers and the types of information dissemination mechanisms known to rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study, drawing inferences from the researcher's views and relating to reviewed literatures.

Various information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers

The various information dissemination mechanisms used for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods for rural dwellers were found to range from village heads, town criers, market square, agricultural extension workers, radio, television, GSM, health workers, billboards, newspapers, school teachers, friends/neighbours, library, cooperative societies, pastors/imams, posters, Internet, government circulars, banks marketing representatives to party leaders. Varieties of mechanisms of information transfer abound in rural communities. This research finding is buttressed by the works of James (2012) which quoted Aboyade (1987) who listed some mechanisms of information communication to rural societies of Nigeria. These include the use of town criers or dispatch riders to outlying districts, talking drums are also used for messages involving distant areas. She also added that formal and informal giving and sharing of information happens all the time at market places and village

squares usually situated in front of the rulers' palaces, and concluded that nowadays, churches, mosques and schools provide avenues for passing around information affecting the life of a community. Etebu (2009) also concurred to this that in Africa information is viewed as a vital resource for the uplifting and development of the people both in rural and urban dwellings, which absence may impede development. Traditional indicators are still widely used as modes of forecasting and land use management. The indicators are mostly local and are well understood in communities. These traditional indicators include: plants, birds, insects (bees, butterfly, red ants and termites), stars, hill shadows, moon, winds (direction, strength, and time of starting and ending), clouds (position and movement), lightning (location and pattern), springs and swamps, cowries, and so on.

Information dissemination is medium dependent. Information disseminated through radio, television, newspapers, Internet and GSM may make sense to literate and semi-literate rural dwellers, but the illiterate rural dwellers who do not own those gadgets, cannot and do not relate with those mechanisms will not make sense of information emanating from them. As such, they rely heavily on human sources to relate with information provided through other information dissemination mechanisms.

Adequacy of the information dissemination mechanisms for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihood of rural dwellers

Most of the information dissemination mechanisms (village heads, town criers, market square, agricultural extension workers, radio, television, GSM, health workers, billboards, newspapers, school teachers, friends/neighbours, library, cooperative societies, pastors/imams, posters, Internet, government circulars, banks marketing representatives and party leaders) were deemed inadequate for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods for rural dwellers. Information disseminators may not exploit all available mechanisms in their quest, while continuing the use of a few with evaluating their adequacy to meet the needs of the rural dwellers. This finding corroborated the findings of Egbule, Agwu and Uzokwe (2013) as they lamented the inadequacy of information dissemination mechanisms to rural dwellers that while radios can be used across all segments of the population, it provides

limited range of information. Newspapers though accessible, are primarily concentrated in urban areas, and are expensive (the cost of newspapers in Nigeria average N150; which is about \$1[before 2015]), and are irrelevant to illiterate populations. Going further, Egbule et al (2013) stated that less than 19 percent of individuals in sub-Saharan Africa can boast of reading a newspaper at least once per week, with a much smaller share in rural areas.

Apart from village head, town crier and friends and neighbours, other items like market square, agricultural extension workers, radio, television, GSM, health workers, billboards, newspapers, school teachers, friends/neighbours, library, cooperative societies, pastors/imams, posters, Internet, government circulars, banks marketing representatives and party leaders were inadequate information dissemination mechanisms for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods for rural dwellers of the South-South. Etebu (2009) supported this finding that information dissemination methods that are based on traditional definitions of literacy may not work well for rural dwellers, which are used to an oral tradition. This is also supported by NPC (2011) report that the elusive desire to develop the hinterland is as a result of lack of proper channel of information dissemination to the rural populace.

The timing and manner the information is delivered can be largely responsible for most of the information dissemination mechanisms not being adequate to the illiterate rural dwellers. Most of them go to farm in the morning and return when it is almost dark to prepare for and eat supper. Information disseminated during that time period cannot get to the farmers first hand and becomes distorted when and if it finally reaches them. They know some things about newspapers, television sets, radio and mobile phones amongst others, but this gadgets being information dissemination mechanisms through which they are expected to get information from is of little or no meaning to them in that respect. While these mechanisms are well known human sources of information dissemination, suitable to spread gossips and other neighbourhood informal matters, the government, NGOs and other information disseminators might not be abreast of it and many see them as formal mechanisms. Since the rural people are not getting information for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods from these sources, they are deemed inadequate.

Challenges to effective information dissemination to rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria

Constraints associated with information dissemination range from acute shortage of librarians/extension workers, no linkage between public libraries and extension workers, lack of motivation for public librarians/extension workers, high cost of information materials, lack of rural libraries/information centres, language barriers, inability of rural dwellers to appreciate library resources to paucity of development workers in the rural areas as itemized

on the questionnaire. This finding is buttressed by Tire (2006) which stated that there are a number of factors that often hinder the free flow of information to where it is mostly needed. Some of the bottlenecks include information inappropriately packaged or information that is not in line with the literacy level of the target audience, not conducting enough research on what the intended users' needs are, conducting and providing research results on issues that are not relevant to the rural communities and failing to engage these communities on what their real needs are instead of what we perceive them to be.

Supporting this research finding to another level, Tire (2006) went further to say that according to the Economic Commission for Africa for information, poverty of the developing countries manifest itself in a number of key activities these include: Rural dwellers failing to access information on time e.g. market produce prices, bulletins dealing with pest infestation; Information presented to the rural communities is often presented in written form making it impossible for those with low levels of literacy or no literacy to make use of this information; Rural communities often find it difficult to share information and experience amongst themselves beyond the face-to-face contacts; Indigenous knowledge is seldom documented and stored thus leading to future generations losing out on this valuable information. There is poor linkage between researchers and field workers, very often field workers have limited access about information on communities that they are expected to serve as well as current research findings on these communities, while researchers on the other hand have little access to up-to-date information from the field; Most of the government plans and decisions are based on insufficient information that the government has at its disposal; Lack of quality communication services dedicated to serve the rural areas is a major stumbling block to rural development. Once these barriers are overcome, the impact of distance will be minimized; the situation in developing countries does not easily lend itself to the exchange of information between one another.

Furthermore, Coetzee, et al. (2001) supported this finding by listing five common mistakes that are often committed when developing communication strategy, these are: mistake in choosing a target audience; mistake in deciding on communication objective; mistake in message design; mistake in choosing the means and media to get a message across to the audience; and mistake in organizing communication effectively. Coetzee, et al. (2001) concluded that in other instances limited resources prevent those responsible for disseminating information from doing so. Staff shortages also add on to problems that prevent free flow of information.

The study revealed new types of constraints or challenges to effective information dissemination entirely. The timing of the information dissemination, the language used, distortion in the flow of the disseminated information, hoarding of information by the educated and those who receive the information first hand wanting to be paid to pass on the information were newly identified trends as challenges to effective information dissemination.

In some rural communities, some people are well recognized and seem to lay claim to their communities. Government officials, individuals, corporate bodies and others on visit to such communities must see these people to intimate them of their purpose of visiting at the first instance. Information provided to such people to disseminate to the entire community becomes a weapon in their hands. They will disseminate the information as it suits them in their own way and the end product will be useless information to those who need them the most.

Strategies to enhance information disseminated to rural dwellers of South-South Nigeria

Strategies to enhance information dissemination to rural dwellers of South–South Nigeria were found to range from establishment of community library, recruitment of indigenous librarians, use of indigenous extension workers, linkage between public libraries and extension workers, identifying rural dwellers information needs first, identifying the most effective information dissemination mechanisms to use, collaboration between the various information disseminators, packaging and repackaging information in the right format, use of local language to disseminate information, regular use of audio-visual by public librarians/extension workers, regular use of town hall meetings for government information dissemination and use of indigenous people for information dissemination as gleaned from the study. This finding supports the work of Coetzee, et al (2001) that recommends the following steps as strategies to enhance information dissemination: determine issues that are top on the priority table; list all role players; conduct an analysis of the target group; formulation of clear objectives; design appealing and understandable message elements; select the media; communication design; pre-test materials and develop an action plan for implementation of the strategy.

Also, this finding is in corroboration with the research work of Annune et al (2014) which put forward some strategies for enhancing information sources to rural dwellers as: identifying the most effective sources of information needed by fishermen and dissemination of same for enhanced fishery production, linking public libraries with extension workers for effective information dissemination, the establishment of agricultural advisory boards

comprising librarians and extension workers to make extensive use of non-print media as a means of overcoming ineffective dissemination of information to farmers and fishermen.

The use of Pidgin English during town hall meetings to benefit the illiterate [non-educated] rural dwellers was stressed. The finding is also in synergy with Tire (2006) which suggested that Tele-centres and information kiosks should serve people in the language they are comfortable with using audio interface and a lot of graphics. Also, the timing of the information dissemination should be looked into because of rural dwellers that are mostly in their farms or bushes or places of occupation outside their residences for most part of the day. They also suggested that community radio should be used to disseminate information in the morning and night.

Many of the rural communities of the South-South play host to people of other tribes who migrate to and stay in such communities for economic reasons. This has made Pidgin English the most accepted medium of communication. Since the information disseminated is for the rural populace, it becomes evitable to package information in Pidgin English. The community radios in villages in the South-South are not actually formal radio stations with radio broadcasting frequencies. They are referred to as Radio Houses used by town criers, as noted by Etebu (2009) that a microphone in a central position (radio house) and wired loudspeakers placed in different locations in the communities ensure that town criers cover a wider range without moving from their positions. Through these radio houses announcements are broadcast, instructions passed as deemed necessary to the people. They are normally under the control of the Amanana-Owei (community head chief) ruling the particular community.

Opinions of young and old rural dwellers and the types of information available

The formulated null hypothesis was accepted as there was a significant difference between the opinions of young and old rural dwellers and the types of information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers. Touching the issue of rural dwellers' age, Deji and Enuenwemba (2005) supported the finding when they stated that majority of their respondents were still in their active ages, which has significant implications on level of awareness and accessibility to sources of information in the rural areas. This finding however, is in contrast with the research work of Obidike (2011) whose area of study was Nsukka Local Government Area (Eastern Nigeria). Obidike (2011) stated that, these days the active young men and women (26-35 years) who should form the bulk of the work force have deserted the rural communities and moved to the cities in search of government employment

and that very few energetic young men live in the villages, perhaps only due to unavoidable circumstances.

The reason for this slight difference in both findings is that in Eastern Nigeria, it is an orientation for the young men to leave the rural setting and venture into the urban cities in search of greener pasture as Anele (2012) puts it that since the youths, especially in Igboland, have gone to the towns in search of employment and better life and return to their bases after Christmas celebrations, the rural areas sink into a condition of existential hibernation by middle of January until the Yuletide comes again. The South-South part of Nigeria is a little bit different. With few farfetched opportunities in the urban cities, a lot of the young people in the rural areas eke out their livelihoods from farming, fishing and artisan occupations in their vicinities. This by implication shows that the calibre and age range of those in majority and actively engaged in rural activities should be measured when disseminating information, and the mechanisms considered for effective result by the rural dwellers in the South-South.

Implications of the Study

1. This has highlighted various information dissemination mechanisms used for rural dwellers ranging from village heads to party leaders as itemized on the questionnaire. In the rural settings, information is medium dependent and true knowledge of this will aid information dissemination mechanisms selected for information flow to rural dwellers.
2. This study has revealed that of the various information dissemination mechanisms few of them were adequate while majority of them were inadequate. Assessing the adequacy of used mechanisms for information dissemination should be seen as a vital tool in evaluation of the overall performance of information disseminated to rural dwellers for any purpose in the South-South Nigeria.
3. It has been exposed that a lot of constraints such as language barrier, timing of information dissemination, places of information dissemination, manner of information dissemination and mechanisms of information dissemination do exist against the effective dissemination of information. This implies that proper remediation is needed to enhance effective information dissemination for the rural dwellers.
4. This study reveals that strategies to enhance information dissemination to rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria should be regular town hall meetings for information dissemination and use of Pidgin English to enhance information dissemination if well-

articulated by information providers and disseminators will cater for many shortfalls in this regard.

5. This study is affirmative that challenges militating against effective dissemination of information to the intended target audience can be surmounted. The strategies proffered to curb the challenges identified by this study will go a long way in making disseminated information work to reasonably appreciable level.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. Amongst the various information dissemination mechanisms used for rural dwellers ranging from village heads to party leaders as itemized on the questionnaire, Government and other information disseminators should evaluate, pinpoint and make regular use of those ones the rural people are attuned to the most, for effective information dissemination.
2. Due to numerous constraints associated with information dissemination and utilisation as found out by the study, information disseminators should be vast in the knowledge of how best to reach targeted audiences with particular information tailored towards achieving specific objectives.
3. Regarding strategies to enhance information dissemination to rural dwellers in South–South Nigeria, it should be noted that availability as well as accuracy and currency of information are a must to the rural dwellers. Therefore, information providers and disseminators should make sure to know that for information to achieve the desired results in the rural communities, the sources and mechanisms are of utmost importance.

Conclusion

Information dissemination mechanisms for rural dwellers in South-South Nigeria is apt as several programmes designated for rural dwellers have been initiated and carried out by successive government of the country, past and present, but have recorded little progress due to information dissemination challenges. Nigeria is described as a paradox because the living conditions of the people especially the rural dwellers do not reflect the riches of the country in economic, socio/cultural and political terms.

Research questions raised and answered and null hypothesis formulated and tested show that there are numerous sources of information and information dissemination mechanisms to rural dwellers. Some of these information dissemination mechanisms were deemed adequate while the public library was significantly absent, implying that the benefits of library as an information disseminator is lost to the rural dwellers. Challenges to rural information dissemination were highlighted while solutions to effectively enhance information flow were proffered. It was revealed that rural dwellers age was significantly related to their opinions on information dissemination mechanisms.

Challenges militating against effective dissemination of information to the intended target audience were highlighted. The strategies proffered to curb the challenges identified by this study such as the use of indigenous people for information dissemination, use of Pidgin English during town hall meetings to benefit the illiterate [non-educated] rural dwellers among others will go a long way if implemented in solving information dissemination issues in rural settings of South-South Nigeria.

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