

NON-AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AMONG RURAL DWELLERS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines non-agricultural information needs and seeking behaviour among rural dwellers in Oyo State, Nigeria. This is predicated on the fact that livelihood activities in rural areas where agricultural activities predominate go beyond farming activities. Rural non-farm income generating activities offer more remunerative activities to supplement or replace agricultural income, absorb surplus labour in rural areas, help farm-based households spread risks, offer income potential during agricultural off-season and provide a means to cope or survive when farming fails. Due to the importance of information in the production system, the changing information environment calls for meeting the need of information users.

The study was carried out in Oyo State in the South Western Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. From 33 Local Government Areas, three were selected for the study because they are classified as highly rural (NPC, 2007). From the Local Government Area, 3, 4, and 5 villages were selected from Ibarapa, Iwajowa and Orire, respectively. Ten households were randomly selected from each village to make a total of 120 for the study. Data were collected from the respondents sampled for the study using interview schedule. The results show that majority are males belonging to 40-49 years age group, married, Christians, without formal education and have a family size of between 10-14 members (56.7). Prominent sources of information among rural dwellers are neighbours/friends, job colleagues, Radio, Television and commercial agents. Prominent activities for which information is needed are petty trading, grinding of products, dress making, carpentry and leather work. The types of information needed are knowledge/skill information, equipment information and marketing information. The study concludes by advocating that the extension messages should be expanded to cover the non-agricultural income generating activities in order to enhance the livelihoods of people engaged in it.