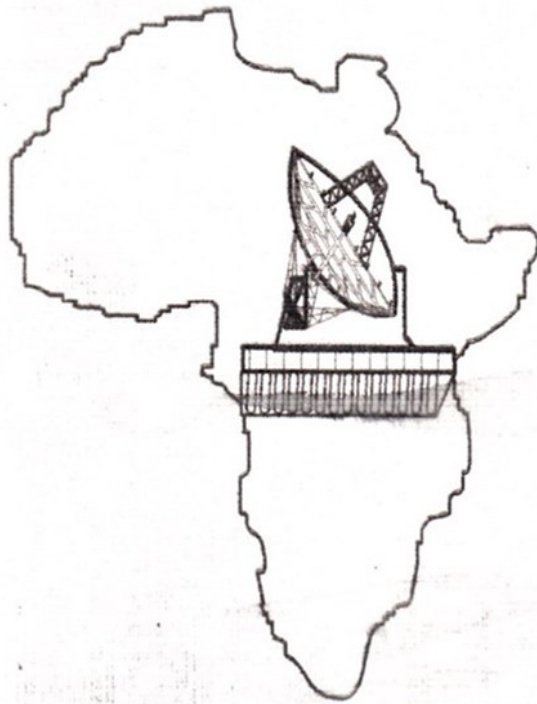


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INFORMATION DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES AND SOURCE OF INCOME GENERATION AMONG RURAL WOMEN IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

Government and non-government efforts towards poverty alleviation and the reduction of the low economic status of Akwa Ibom State rural women have not produced expected results. This was designed to identify the sources of income generation of rural Akwa Ibom State women and the information dissemination strategies available to them. It also investigated the relationship between information dissemination strategies and income generation among the rural women. Farming, trading and oil palm processing have been found to be the most prevalent sources of income generation while town criers, women organisation meetings and agricultural extension agents were the most available strategies for information dissemination. There is a positive relationship between sources of income generation and information dissemination strategies among rural women. This calls for the incorporation of information dissemination components in poverty alleviation programmes in Akwa Ibom State.

INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the century, foreign cultural influences have affected the traditional way of life of Nigerian women. Colonialism and its attendant alien education, political, religious and the new economic order moved the old patterns and redefined the role and place of women in society. Since independence, Nigerian women, particularly Awa Biome State women have been forced to seek a new identity and to find out exactly what roles they could play in the new economic order.

Recently, the identification of women as “vehicles of development” (Mutember 1987) and their inclusion in rural infrastructural development have provided much impetus for women research. This is more so, when it is realised that the women are more dominant actors in the rural socio-economic activities. These rural women have increasingly become aware of new techniques in income generation and have utilized the few opportunities and facilities spread across the state by different women groups.

Despite increased urbanization, some economic development and massive government, quasi and non-governmental efforts to reduce the low economic status of Akwa Ibom State rural women have not yielded expected results. For instance 70% of Akwa Ibom State women reside and work in rural areas with 51% of these living below poverty level (Unwam, 1997). The purpose of this study is to identify the sources of income generation among rural women in Akwa Ibom State; identify the information dissemination strategies available to them and investigate the relationship between their sources of income generation and available information dissemination strategies.

These findings shows that no woman can claim to be unemployed, for it is always possible for an able bodied individual to make a little income even if effort appears to be far out of proportion with the economic returns.

Table 2 shows a percentage analysis of information dissemination strategies that are available to rural women. It was found that town crier/village square meetings was the most available information dissemination strategies (41%). Women development meetings (20%) and agricultural extension agents (16.8%) followed this.

The calculated χ^2 value was 286.84. This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical χ^2 value at 0.05 level of significance with 98 degrees of freedom. The obtained χ^2 value was greater than the critical χ^2 value (43.77%). This means that there is a significant relationship between information dissemination strategies and the sources of income generation by rural women in Akwa Ibom State.

KEY A

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES

- A Selected Dissemination of Information (SDI)
- B Current Awareness Services (CAS)
- C Traditional Lending Services (TLS)
- D Community Development Workers (CDW)
- E Agric Extension Agents (AGS)
- F Family Support Programme Meeting (FSP)
- G Co-operative Societies (CS)
- H Town Crier /Village Square Meeting

KEY B

INCOME GENERATION SOURCES

- A Bakery
- B Farming
- C Fishing
- ~~D~~ General Labour
- E Hair Dressing
- F Herbaling
- G Craft making (mats, Cane
- H Pottery
- I Poultry, Piggery, Goat Rearing
- J Seamstressing/Fashion Designing
- K Trading
- L Traditional Midwifery
- M Oil Palm Processing
- N Garri Processing
- O Faith Healing

CONCLUSION

It has been found that there are information dissemination strategies available for enhanced income generation among rural women in Akwa Ibom State. It has also been proved that there is a positive significant relationship between sources of income generation and information dissemination strategies. Evidence from this study suggests that women invariably prefer local languages for communication. It is also shown that an anticipated change of attitude in favour of socio-economic programmes and poverty alleviation, interpersonal information dissemination strategies should be built into the package. Thus information management can make a positive contribution towards poverty reduction in terms of raising the incomes of the rural women and also helping to reduce rural women vulnerability.

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