

Information Needs And Seeking Behaviour Of Migrant Fishermen: A Case Of Isoko Riverine Communities Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated the information needs and seeking behavior of migrant fishermen in Isoko Riverine community of Delta State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises of 160 migrant fishermen from six (6) Riverine villages in Isoko which constitute the sample of the study. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. A total of four (4) research questions were formulated to guide the study, while frequency counts and percentages were used to answer the research questions. Findings revealed that migrant fishermen needed information mostly on how to obtain credit/loan facility, that migrant fishermen sources of seeking information included personal experiences, neighbours/friends etc.; that the purpose of using and seeking information included better methods of fishing, how to obtain and use storage facility, modern methods of fish harvesting etc. The study revealed that problems encountered while seeking information included lack of good roads to Riverine communities, lack of visit by extension officers etc. It was recommended that government should construct good roads to Riverine villages to enhance easy movement of migrant fishermen. Boat libraries should be established in Riverine communities to enhance flow of information dissemination.

Index Terms: Information needs, Seeking behaviour, Migrant, Fishermen, Riverine, Communities

INTRODUCTION

Information is known to be very significant for each aspect and to understand the information needs is definitely crucial for Librarians or service providers in order to provide better service. Information is a powerful tool in addressing agricultural needs and if it is used appropriately, it can radically change a nation's economy (Tshabalala 2001). Every individual, at one time or the other seeks information. This is done in the bid to answer the why, what, when and how questions which prompts man to search through different information source to satisfy his or her curiosity. Generally information seeking encompasses information needs, user of information sources and information use following retrieval. Information seeking involves how people who need information seek, manage, give, and use information in different ways. Information enables Fishermen to enhance their fishing practices and yields. According to Ballantyne, (2005) information helps to open up and provide opportunities for poor people. It helps them to actually make use of opportunities and to shape their lives, while also helping to reduce their vulnerability to sickness and misfortune. Migrant Fishermen need a wide range of information on modern fishing gears. Fishes are caught by traps, hooks, nets, lines, trawlers, etc. traditionally but with agricultural information, modern technologies would be applied which will result in high productivity (Tawari, 2002). The necessity for seeking a better understanding of the information needs of a group of persons is to assist them to design better systems and provide information to meet their needs (Adewumi, 2003). Fishermen need and seek information on different types of implements used in catching fish on a large scale (Pietro, 2000). Fishermen, like any other professional requires the use of special implements and tools. Among the implements used are: cast net and dragnets, hooks and lines, spears, baskets, trawlers, drained ponds, electro fishing, use of ultrasound etc. Ibegi (2003) identifies gill nets, long lines, cast nets, fish steaks and swamp fishing techniques used by traditional fishing industries apart from the fishing techniques, implements and tools. According to Njoku (2004), the fishermen mostly the literate, married and male adults in their middle ages, where and how to obtain credit facilities remain

the most important need. Berlin (2007), identified information needs of fish farmers to include response of fish to environmental conditions, aquatic vegetation, and personal water craft on fish catches. Similarly research by Panda and Mohanty (2007), asserted that coastal fish farmers need and seek information on climate change, how to manage our ponds and credit facilities. The crux of this study therefore is to critically analyze the information needs and information seeking behaviour of migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities of Delta State, Nigeria.

BACKGROUND SETTING OF THE STUDY

The migrant Fishermen are those who live in Isoko riverine parts of Delta State, Nigeria along River Niger/Ase Creek, stretching from Umeh, Owodokpokpo, Ekregbesi Uzere, Ibedeni, Egbeme, Asafo to some other Local Government and States in the Federation. They migrate from their autonomous communities in search of fish as dictated by the type of fish required in the seasons, the movement of the tide or the season of the year (Tawari, 2002). The basic economic activity of this group of people is fishing. Members of the families migrate from one fishing village or camp to another. Thus in carrying out fishing activities, men, women and children participate. While adult men and boys engage actively in fishing, women and girls participate actively in fish processing, preservation and marketing (Onakamaiye, 1990). The activities of the migrant Fishermen therefore necessitate their information needs and seeking behaviour.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of the study is to examine the information needs and seeking behaviour of migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities of Delta State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study include:

- To examine the information needs of migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities.
- To determine the sources of information used by migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities.
- To ascertain the purpose of information needs and information seek by migrant fishermen.

- To identify the problems encountered by migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are information needs of migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities?
- What are sources of information used by migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities?
- To which purpose do migrant fishermen need information?
- What are the problems encountered by migrant fishermen while seeking information?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study on information needs and seeking behaviour of migrant fishermen in Isoko riverine communities of Delta State, Nigeria is imperative; hence the findings will help the library know the challenges and needs of the migrant fishermen and ways to provide the needed materials to attend to their needs in riverine communities.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a descriptive survey research method. The study is concerned with the information needs and seeking behaviour of migrant fishermen in the Isoko riverine communities of Delta State Nigeria. Six (6) Isoko riverine communities which basic economy activity is fishing were identified and used for this survey. A total of (160) One hundred and sixty copies of the questionnaire designed for this study were administered with trained research assistants personally to migrant fishermen in each of the communities. All the 160 (100%) copies of questionnaire were retrieved and used for the study. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	No. of respondents	Percentages (%)
Male	113	70.6
Female	47	29.4
Total	160	100

Table 1 and 2 below summaries the distribution of the respondents by fishing communities and gender. Table 1 shows that 18(11.3%) of the migrant fishermen are from Umeh, Owodokpokpo 65(40.6%), Ekregbesi – Uzere 8(5.0%), Ibedeni 35(21.9%), Egbeme 22(13.8%) and Asafo 12(7.5%). It could be seen from the data that majority of that migrant fishermen are from Owodokpokpo when compared to other communities. The possible reason is that Owodokpokpo is a large fishing community and their major occupation is fishing.

Table 1: Response Rate

S/N	Name of Fishing Community	Frequency	Percentage
1	Umeh	18	11.3
2	Owodokpokpo	65	40.6
3	Ekregbesi-Uzere	8	5.0
4	Ibedeni	35	21.9
5	Egbeme	22	13.8
6	Asafo	12	7.5
Total		160	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents according to gender with 113 (70.60%) male and 47 (29.4%) female. The table shows that male migrant fisher men are more in number than their female counterparts in this study. This shows that both male and female fishermen engage actively in fishing activities in Isoko riverine communities. Figure 1 below shows the graphical representation of the gender of the respondents

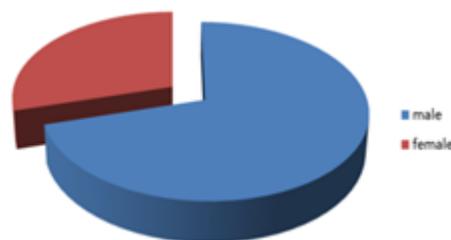


Figure 1: Graphical representation of gender of respondents

Table 3: Information needs of fishermen

Information needs of fishermen	No. of respondents	Percentages (%)
Where to get fishing gears	86	53.8
How to obtain credit/loan facility	123	76.9
How to control water hyacinth	21	13.1
Where to sell fish produce (market)	56	35
How and where to store/preserve fish	101	63.1
How to use improve modern fishing techniques	17	10.6
Where to get fertilizer	6	3.8

Table 3 shows possible list of information needs. Majority of the respondents 123(76.9%) need information on how to obtain credit/loan facilities, this agree with Njoku (2004), who noted that where and how to obtain credit facilities remain the most important needs of the fishermen. The table also reveal that 101(63.1 %) of respondents needs and seek information on how and where to store and preserve fish 86(53.8%) of respondents need and seek information on where to get fishing gear, one of the possible reasons for the high responses for this is that. the fishermen depend on the gears for fishing activities. The least seek information by respondents 6(3.8%) were information needs on how to get fertilizer and information needs on how to use improve modern fishing techniques. The low responses to these area of information need is not farfetched, the possible reason is that

migrant fishermen carry out their fishing activities on river or creek which does not require application of fertilizer.

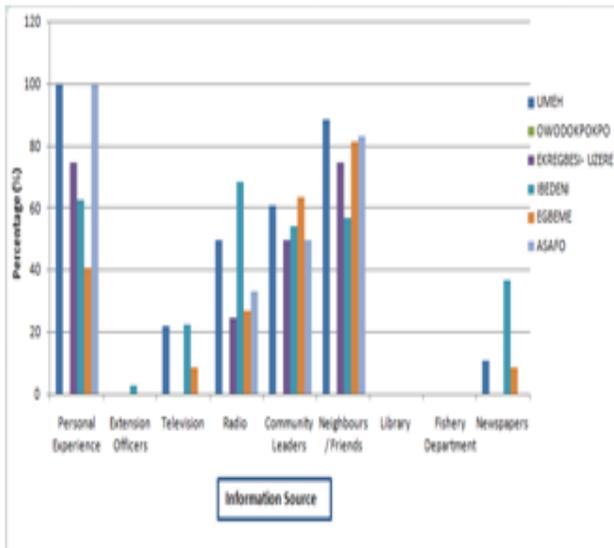


Figure 2: Information needs of fishermen

Table 4: Sources of Information Used By Migrant Fishermen

INFORMATION SOURCES	UMEH N=18	OWODOKPO-KPO N=65	EKREGRES-UZERE N=8	IBEDENE N=35	EGBEDEME N=22	ASAFO=N=12	TOTAL =160	%
Personal Experience	18(100%)	48(73.9%)	6(75%)	22(62.9%)	9(40.9%)	12(100%)	115	71.9
Extension Officer	0(0%)	2(3.1%)	0(0%)	1(2.9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	3	1.9
Television	4(22.2%)	17(26.2%)	0(0%)	8(22.9%)	2(9.1%)	0(0%)	31	19.4
Radio	9(50%)	36(55.4%)	2(25%)	24(68.6%)	6(27.3%)	4(33.3%)	81	50.5
Community Leaders	11(61.1%)	52(80.4%)	4(50%)	24(68.6%)	14(63.6%)	6(50%)	106	66.3
Neighbours/Friends	16(8.9)	22(33.9%)	6(75%)	19(54)	18(81.8%)	10(83%)	92	57.5
Library	0(0%)	1(1.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1	0.6
Fishing Department	0(0%)	2(3.1%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2	1.3
Newspapers	2(11.1%)	11(16.9%)	0(0%)	13(27.1%)	2(9.1%)	0(0%)	28	17.5

Table 4: Sources of Information used by migrant fishermen

Table 4 above shows list of possible sources of information where migrant fishermen use information. A considerable number of respondents 115 (7 1.9%) source of information was from their personal experience. 106 (66.3%) of the respondents considered community leaders as their source of information needs. Also, 92 (57.5%) of the respondents derived their information source from neighbours friends. Very few of them source their information through library 1 (0.6%), fishery department 2 (1.3%), extension officers 3 (1.9%). The possible reason for this could be that fishing communities are mostly in rural and remote environment devoid of basic amenities that are information carriers to the rural dwellers. The finding corroborates with Zijp (1997) who posits that most rural people are non-literate hence they are not book readers.

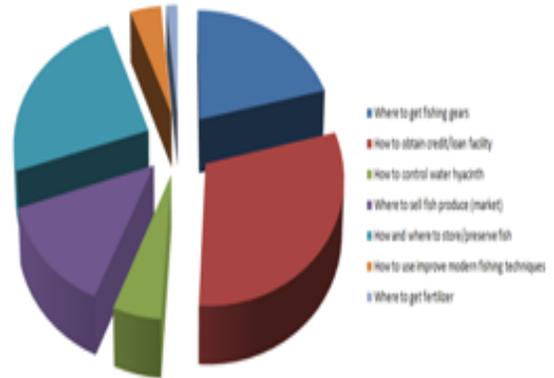


Figure 3: Sources of Information used by migrant fishermen

Table 5: Purpose of seeking information

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rate
Better methods of fishing technique	106	66.3	3 rd
How to apply fertilizer to fish ponds/lake	6	3.8	8 th
How to obtain use improved fishing gears	132	82.5	2 nd
For fish preservation	86	53.8	5 th
How to obtain and use storage facilities	79	49.4	6 th
For processing of fish products	21	13.1	7 th

Tables 5 above reveal the purpose of seeking information by migrant fishermen. It is obvious from the finding of this study that fishermen have several purposes for seeking information A vast number of respondents 153 (95.6%) seek information for modern methods of fish harvesting and ranked 1st 132 (82.5%) of respondents seek information in how to obtain and use improved fishing gears and also ranked 2nd on information used. Respondents 106(66.3%) ranked better methods of fishing technique as 3rd purpose of seeking information. The least purpose of seeking information ranked 4th with 6(3.8%) of respondents was information on how to apply fertilizer to fish ponds l lakes and information for processing of fish products which was ranked 7th with 21(13.1%) of respondents. This finding is in conformity with Morris & Stilwell (2003) who observed that farmer need and seek information to improved agricultural activities like harvesting, storage and fish preservation etc. It also agrees with Ikoja-Odongo (2001) who indicated that information is used for the purpose for assessing market and pricing techniques. Figure 4 graphically shows the purpose of information seeking.

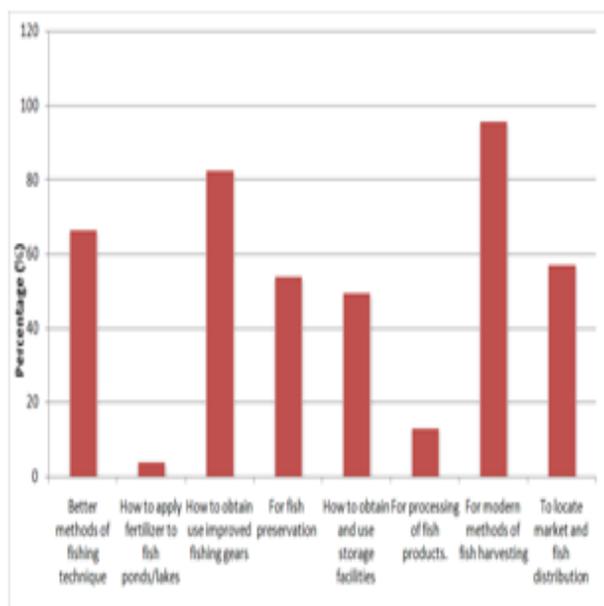


Figure 4: Purpose of seeking information

Table 6: Problems Encountered By Migrant Fishermen While Seeking Information

Problems Encountered While Seeking Information	No. of respondents	Percentage %
Lack of visitation by extension officer	142	88.8
Literacy	61	21.9
Lack of agricultural information materials on native language	35	21.9
Lack of good roads to riverine villages	160	100
No nearby library	98	61.3
Lack of personal television	74	46.3
High cost of mobile services/information technology facilities	76	47.5
Lack of personal radio	44	27.5

Table 6 reveals the problems encountered by fishermen while seeking information. Both gender of fishermen male and female agreed to the following factors as the major problems militating against information seeking behavior of migrant fishermen. All the respondents 160 (100%) in our study indicated lack of good roads to riverine villages as the major problem faced while seeking information others are lack of visitation by extension officers 142 (88.8%), no nearby library as (61.3%), high cost of mobile services information technology facilities 76 (47.5%). The table also revealed that the minor factors included lack of agricultural information materials on native language 35 (21.9%), lack of personal radio 44 (27.5%) and literacy 61 (38.1%). The finding corroborates Fawuni (1983) who asserted that most migrant fishermen have elementary education which enables them to read and write.

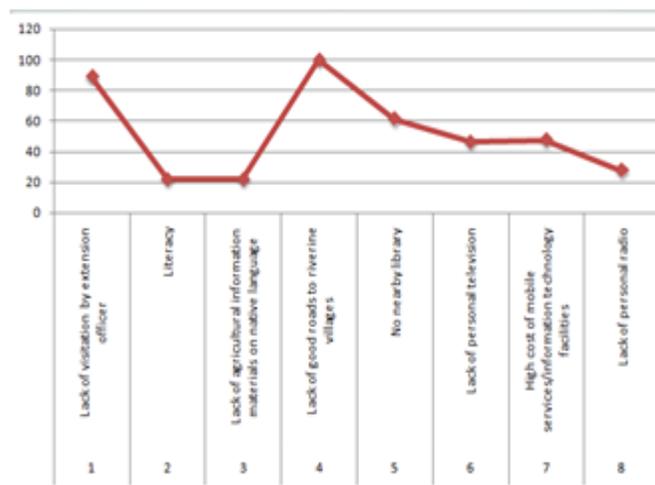


Figure 5: Problems Encountered By Migrant Fishermen While Seeking Information

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded from the findings of the study that in Isoko riverine communities both male and female fishermen engaged actively in fishing and both gender need and seek information. The information acquired was to improve on their fishing techniques, how to obtain and use modern fishing gears, how to acquire and use storage facilities. The studied have shown that migrant fishermen utilized personal experience as the major source of seeking and use information. The major purpose of seeking and use information was to apply modern methods of fish harvesting to improved food productivity. All the respondents stressed on lack of good roads to Riverine villages. Lack of visitation by extension officers 142 (88.8%), No nearby library 98 (61.3%) as the major problems encountered by migrant fishermen while seeking information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

- Government should construct good roads to links urban and riverine areas to facilitate free transportation of fish and riverine area to facilitate free transportation of fish and fish products to urban areas.
- Government should established mobiles libraries in riverine communities to enhance information dissemination.
- Government should provide enough funds to be allocated towards improving fishing activities.
- Extension workers should be sent to riverine communities to train and retain fishermen on how to use information to improve fish production.

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