Extension Agents' Perception of the Information Needs Of Women Farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was carried out to examine the extension agents? perceptions of the information needs of women farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Data were obtained form 84 extension agents in the Oyo state Agricultural Development Programme. Simple random sampling technique was employed in the selection of 84 extension agents in the state while structured interview schedule was adopted in the collection of information from the sampled respondents. Data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage and chi-square as analytical tool. The mean age is 38 years. The agents are of various educational backgrounds, while majority (44

Index terms— pre-class speaking, public speaking, Korean education, output, effect analysis.

Extension Agents' Perception of the Information Needs Of Women Farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria Adeola, R. G. ? , Ayoade, A. R. ? Abstract -The study was carried out to examine the extension agents' perceptions of the information needs of women farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Data were obtained form 84 extension agents in the Oyo state Agricultural Development Programme. Simple random sampling technique was employed in the selection of 84 extension agents in the state while structured interview schedule was adopted in the collection of information from the sampled respondents. Data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage and chi-square as analytical tool. The mean age is 38 years. The agents are of various educational backgrounds, while majority (44 %) of them holds B.Sc. degrees and they specialized in different fields of agriculture. The agents indicate different levels of information needs of women farmers in the study area. Areas of information needs of women farmers as perceived by the agents include soil fertility management, how to increase productivity, use of machine farm implements, record keepings and loan acquisition, keeping family safe, household maintenance, controlling pests, and education on hygienic conditions. The agents also indicated different levels of agreement about the differences between the information needs of women farmers and their men counterparts. Socio-economic characteristics of the agents significantly (P ? 0.01) influenced their perceptions of women information needs. The study concludes that the extension agents have developed in-depth knowledge of the information needs of women farmers and their perceptions are mostly shaped by their direct experience with women farmers. Therefore, extension agents' contributions toward the designing of relevant and appropriate programmes for women farmers should be encouraged by the extension administrators.

1 I.

2 INTRODUCTION

omen contributions to agriculture right from creation cannot be overemphasized and they actually constitute the bulk of the world's food producers. However, despite rural women active involvements in food processing and marketing, they do not have access to scientific and technological information. Therefore, for consistent growth in agricultural production, it is very important to equip rural women farmers with relevant and timely information to improve their production techniques and increase their income (Salilaja and Reddy 2003 and (Goldey et al.

3 2001).

These women lack agricultural extension services support hence, having no agricultural Author ? : Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, P.M.B. 4000 Ogbomoso, Nigeria, E-mail : adeola20022000@yahoo.com information sources related to crops and livestock production, inadequate technical competency and exposure to outer world (Olowu and Yahaya, 1998; Percy, 1998;) In most developing countries, rural women form the mainstay of small-scale agriculture, the farm labour force and day-to-day family subsistence and yet are faced with a number of constraints.

Women farmers have inadequate access to extension services due to their engagement in both on and off farm that make them have less time to enjoy the offered extension services (Obinne, 1995). Similarly, Protz (1997) conceived that due to the multiple roles of women in the rural household tasks, they do not fully benefit from extension services, especially, when the time of delivery (of extension service) conflicts with their other household responsibilities. FAO (1998), also posited that rural women are loaded with domestic tasks and family obligations and controlled by social restraints such that they are constrained time-wise to be away from home to attend to extension training programmes.

Many studies in the recent past have identified unique information needs of women farmers. However there has been limited research on the specific extension programme that will effectively meet the need of women farmers. This study intends to understand the extension agent's knowledge of the experiences of women and the extent to which this agent perceive the needs of women farmers. The specific objectives of the study are to: identify the personal characteristics of the extension agent in the study area; examine the information needs of women farmers as perceived by the extension agents and investigate factors that influence the perception of the ext agents. Relationships between extension agents' socio-economic characteristics and their perceptions of information needs of women farmers were also examined.

4 II.

5 METHODOLOGY

The There are 170 extension agents in the Oyo state ADP with Ibadan/ibarapa zone having 56 extension agents while saki zone has 42 extension agent, oyo zone has 40 extension agents and Ogbomoso has 32 extension agents. For the purpose of this study 50% of extension agents were randomly selected from the list of the extension agents in each zone to arrive at a total number of 85 extension agents that constituted the sample size (Table 1). Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire whose content comprised open and closed ended questions. However, eighty four copies of the questionnaires were returned for the analysis.Perception of the information needs of women farmers was measured in terms of asking the extension agent to describe women farmer's information need based on their experiences. Descriptive analysis such as frequency counts, percentages and the means were used to describe and chi-square was used to test the hypothesis.

6 III.

7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study indicates that majority (34.5%) were within the age range of 32 -36 years with a mean age of 38 years. This implies that majority of the respondents are young and active and this is likely to positively influence their performance on the field. A larger percentage (64.3%) of the extension agents were males while only 35.7% were females. This is an indication that ADP extension service is still dominated by men and this corroborates the observation of Jiggins et al, (1998) that extension services have been staffed predominantly by men. The educational status of the extension agents sampled for the study showed that 22.6% of them held Masters degree (M. Sc.) in various fields of agricultural sciences while 44% of them held Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degrees and 26.2% held Higher National Diploma (HND) certificates. About 6% of the extension agents were holders of Ordinary national Diploma (OND) certificates. Crop production was the area where 29.8% of the respondents specialized while, 20.2% had livestock as their areas of specialization and 17.9% and 26.2% specialized in agricultural extension and agricultural economics. Only 6% of them specialized in environmental and crop protection. This phenomenon suggests that different areas of specialization will assist their organization to effectively practice its unified extension agents perceived that women need information included controlling pests, record keeping, keeping family safe, use of machine and farm implements, education on farm hygienic conditions and loan acquisition. Only 3.6% of the agents perceived that women do not need information on household maintenance (Table 2).

Results in table 3 show that 42.9% of the extension agents agreed that needs of women farmers are the same as men's while, 45.6% of them disagreed with the statement. However majority (66.7%) of the agents agreed that needs of women farmers are somewhat different and 9.5% disagreed with the statement. About 70% of the extension agents also agreed that learning style of women farmers are very different and 20% disagreed with the statement. It was also agreed that learning environment of women farmers should be different from that of men by 41.7% of the agents and 46.4% disagreed with such statement.

Demographic characteristics of the extension agents significantly influenced their perception of women information needs. The significant influence of age (X 2 = 66.592, P ?0.01) suggests that older extension agents

are likely to be more experienced and had interactions with more women are likely to understand needs of women farmers than their younger counterparts. Sex also had a significant (X 2 = 6.857, P ?0.01) influence on extension agents' perception of women needs. This may be due to the fact that extension services in the study area is male dominated and female agents are likely to understand the needs of women farmers better. The significant (X 2 = 49.333, P ?0.01) influence of education on extension agents' perception of information needs of women farmers suggests that agents with higher education are likely to be more knowledgeable to ascertain the information needs of women farmers. Area of specialisation had significant (X 2 = 14.095, P ?0.01) relationship with extension agents' perception. This is an indication that different areas of specialization of extension agents are likely to result into different opinions about women's information needs.

IV.

8 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that extension agents in Oyo state have developed great depth of understanding the information needs of women farmers. Perceptions of extension agents regarding women farmers' information needs are mostly shaped by their direct experience with women farmers. The study Global Journal of Human Social Science Volume XI Issue X Version I system of extension. Majority (97.6%) of the respondents perceived that women need information on how to increase their productivity while, soil fertility management is the area where 80.9% of them perceived that women need information. Other areas where the therefore recommends that relevant agencies should create opportunity for extension agents to interact with women farmers in educational and professional settings. This interaction opportunity will assist the extension agents in making their contribution toward the development of relevant and appropriate programmes that will meet the needs of women farmers. [1] [2] [3]

Figure 1:

1

Zone	No of extension agents	Number selected
Ibadan/ibarapa	56	28
Saki	42	21
Oyo	40	20
Ogbomosho	32	16
Total	170	85

Figure 2: Table 1 :

[1] © 2011 Global Journals Inc. (US) December cowpea and tree crops such as cocoa, oil palm, cola

[2] © 2011 Global Journals Inc. (US) 2011 34 December Extension Agents' Perception of the Information Needs Of Women Farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria

[3] © 2011 Global Journals Inc. (US)DecemberExtension Agents' Perception of the Information Needs Of Women Farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age range (Years)		
27 -31	12	14.3
32 -36	29	34.5
37 -41	19	22.7
42 -46	16	19.0
> 46	8	9.5
Total	84	100
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	54	64.3
Female	30	35.7
Total	84	100
Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
M Sc.	19	22.6
B. Sc.	37	44.0
HND	22	26.2
OND	5	6.0
NCE	1	1.2
Total	84	100
Area of specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Crops	25	29.8
Livestock	17	20.2
Agric. Economics	15	17.9
Agric Extension	22	26.2
Environmental Management & Protection	5	6.0
Total	84	100

[Note: Source : Field survey 2010]

Figure 3: Table 2 :

3

Area of Needs	Fairly Needed	Needed	Very Needed	Not Needed
Increasing productivity	2(2.4)	65 (77.4)	17(20.2)	-
Soil fertility management	16(19.0)	40(47.6)	28(33.3)	-
Controlling pests	17(20.2)	48(57.1)	19(22.6)	-
Record keeping	15(17.9)	51(60.7)	18(21.4)	
Household maintenance	20(23.8)	42(50.0)	19(22.6)	3(3.6)
Keeping family safe	16(19.0)	46(54.8)	22(26.2)	-
Use of machine and farm implements	12(14.3)	53(63.10)	19(22.6)	
Education on hygienic conditions	9(10.7)	51(60.7	24(28.6)	
Loan acquisition	8(9.5)	45(53.6)	30(35.7)	

Source : Field survey 2010
Figures in parentheses are in percentage

Figure 4: Table 3 :

4

	Extension Agents'		
2011 December 2 36			
Global Journal of Human Social Science Volume XI Issue X Version I	Extent of differences Needs of women are same as men Needs of women Are somewhat different Learning style of Women farmers are very different Learning environment of women farmers should be different from that of men Never really considered Source : Field survey 2010 Figures in parentheses are in percentage Agree 36(42.9) 5(66.7) 59(70.2) 35(41.7) 15(17.9)	Indifferend 10(11.9) 20(23.8) 8(9.5) 10(11.9) 39(46.4)	Disagree 38(45.6) 8(9.5) 17(20.2) 39(46.4) 30(35.7)

Figure 5: Table 4 :

5

Variables	X 2 -value	Df	P -value	Decision
Age	66.592	22	0.00	Significant
Sex	6.857	1	0.00	Significant
Education	49.333	4	0.00	Significant
Area of specialization	14.095	4	0.07	Significant

[Note: Source : Field survey 2010]

Figure 6: Table 5 :

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