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Contents

Agricultural Information, Indigenous Knowledge and Development Communication Strategies among Women in Ijaye Community

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of indigenous development communication strategies on the utilization of Agricultural information among women for rural development. Ijaye community of Akinyele local government area of Oyo State was used as case study. It also investigated the channels of communication adopted by development workers with reference to indigenous knowledge.

The data for the study were collected through the questionnaire; focus group discussion, oral interviews and existing comparative literature. It was revealed in this study that indigenous channels and local strategies have received the desired attention in the development communication process.

From the study, findings reveal that the strategies adopted in a communication encounter, significantly affects the understanding and utilization of the message. The more familiar the strategy/channels, the more result yielding. Some of the indigenous strategies and channels like, local associations, local festivals, songs, folktales etc can be successfully adopted in communicating exogenous information, new idea and practices to the people. If this exogenous information is therefore packaged in format rooted in the culture of the audience, they will have a better chance

of yielding the desired result among the rural recipients. Due to this, the extension worker cannot afford to overlook the media, which are familiar to the people. The study recommends continuous communication between the rural people and development agents, using appropriate media and strategies so that there will be appropriate flow of knowledge which will benefit both parties.

Introduction

Communication has always served a purpose which belongs to the very fabric of life itself. All human activities that result in the production of goods and services depend on effective communication. Communication process is carried out all over the world through different media and strategies at all levels and in all works of life. The very vital ingredient that makes communication possible is information. If there is no information (message), there will be no communication. Communication according to Okwilagwe (1994) is the sharing of information by human beings. The individuals, group of people, business organization, civic organizations, Local, State and Federal governments need information for different purposes which include; reduction of uncertainty, acquisition of knowledge and decision making in a problem-solving situation. Thus the importance of effective communication strategies as tools for dissemination of agricultural information for rural development cannot be over emphasized.

From the above, communication can be defined as the passing of an information (message) to another person or party with the aim of it being understood and acted upon. Okuneye (1998) says communication is the vehicle of information dissemination, which is used to pass across messages to people. While information is that resource which has inherent ability to influence decisions and actions. Saunders in Uhegbu (2001) defines information as a social pre-requisite for living that can be perceived in terms of its everyday sense of facts, data, opinions and the like. Thus information is a unique and critical source of living without which human life may be heading for crisis and isolation (Saundar 1981).

To achieve success in any communication activity, an adoption, of suitable communication strategy is necessary. A strategy is a problem oriented device directed at proffering solution to specific issues in a particular environment at a point in time.

Theoretical Framework

The two communities' theory posits that people who belong to different classes, which could be different social systems, knowledge, levels, culture, status, etc. essentially belong to two different communities. (Community A and Community B). It further states that for these two communities to interact, they have to devise a symbol system.

The assumption here is that the professional, i.e. librarians, information agents and extension workers belong to one community while the farmers in the rural areas belong to another community. The professionals are learned and have information, while the rural farmer is illiterate and needs information to improve his farming methods and agriculture in general. As a result, there is the need to devise effective communication strategies which will make the information as simple as possible for the illiterates to understanding since without communication, information remains useless.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of underdevelopment is a complex one and many observers of the Nigerian rural scene will agree that records of successful development programmes with rural committees are discouraging (Aboyade 1990). Despite the fact that government and non-governmental agencies are committed to rural development it has been very difficult to involve the whole of human resources in the process. This is attributed to the fact that proper attention is not being paid to the role of communication and information transfer in the development process especially in agriculture. Okunna (1992) identified this when he said that;

> Many of the failure of development communication projects arise from the application of inappropriate development paradigms and communication strategies which overemphasizes the mass media as channel of communication in the development process.

In view of the above, what is the role of indigenous knowledge in development communication strategy in the rural areas. This is the main issue in this research as it takes a case study of Ijaya community.

Objective of Study

i. To determine the types of Agricultural Information that is made available by extension workers to farmers.

ii. To determine the indigenous communication strategies being adopted by extension workers, with reference to development communication.

iii. To determine the communication media used by extension workers.

Literature Review

The Nature of Communication

Communication is a skill, an art, a science and a social process of putting messages or ideas across (Oyene 1995.17). It is a process by which people attempt to engender meaning in the mind of listeners through the use of audible and visible symbols. Sequel to its nature.

It is a socially instituted process of sending messages (or a linking process) following an appropriate route from a source to a defined receiver with a view to getting feeble-back (James Ode and Soola 1990:4). Wilson (1995:11) sees communication as a process involving the sorting, selecting and sharing of symbols in such a way as to help receiver elicit from his or her own mind a meaning similar to that contained in the mind of the communication.

Furthermore, Soola (1998), says that communication as a process implies that it is an interactive, transactional relationship between the source and the receiver. In essence, the communication process involves actions, reactions and interactions. We can also elicit from the definitions that the main purpose of communication is to gain positive feedback which can be seen through a behavioural change. The communication process contains components. These components can be presented in a variety of diagrams or models. The basic model figure 1, comprises, a source, message, channel, receiver and feedback, Osborn (1994:10).

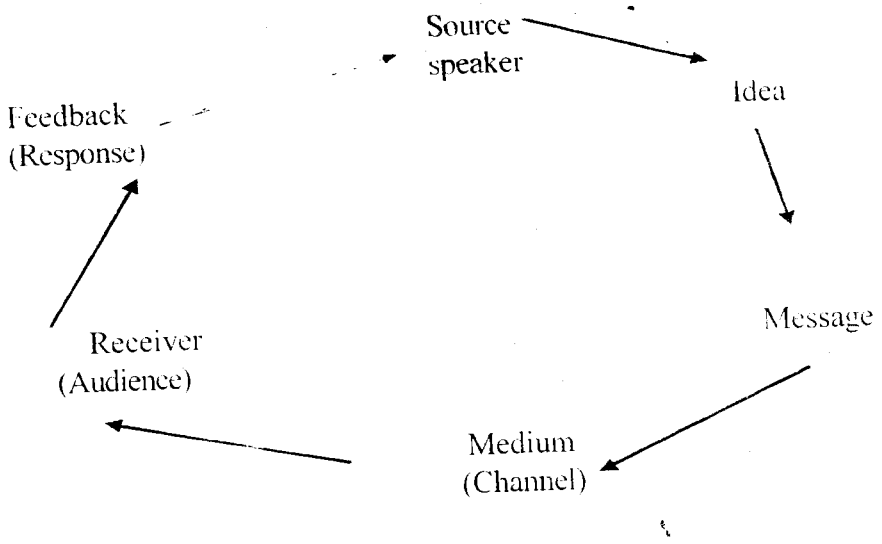

Figure 1: Communication Model (Osborn)

Information

According to Saunders (1981) information is a social pre-requisite for living that can be perceived in terms of its everyday sense of facts, data, opinion and the like, including, but certainly not confined to what is revealed in the result of study, research and scholarship in all fields of knowledge.

However, many scholars have opined that information is the most important ingredient required for rural development effort to succeed in Nigeria. Stanley (1990) says information is one of the basic human needs after air, water, food, and shelter.

The survival of man in his environment depends on information. Therefore, the need to have information for the purposes of decision making is necessary. Man requires information to be able to manipulate the factors of production such as land, labour, and capital resources into meaningful and productive use (Madu 1999). In essence information is an essential instrument for development. UNESCO (1979) defines information as:

> "A commodity, a resource of value capable of being exploited in the same manner as coffee, cotton, machinery, mineral resources, human resources that can be utilized to produce more goods for the consumption of society".

The nature of agricultural information makes its dissemination a teaching process. As a result communication (passing across understandable information), becomes a vital element in extension. It is in view of this that scholars, such as Aiyepeku (1981) and Uhegbu (2001) emphases the need to repackage information into a useable format. The realisation that development is brought about by the people and that there cannot be change for the better without their informed participation, without mobilizing their capacities and energies and without increasing their knowledge and skills, has led to the emergence of a new communication model (Otsyina and Rosenberg 1997).

According to Olowu (1995), integrated communication strategies are necessary for effective agricultural communication. He further opines that integrated communication entails the use of complementary channel to reach a group or groups of farmers. This is with the recognition of existing traditional channels of information exchange (Mundy and Comptan 1997; Monu 1995). Aboyede (1994) comments that these channels of information transfer on the rural communities there hardly been fully utilized.

Rural Development

Different people and organizations see rural development from different perspectives, thus a variety of definitions have been given to the concept. Rural development basically means improved economic and social life in the rural areas Medina (1983), notes that before more than 60% of the world's population live in rural areas. The commonwealth secretariat defines rural development as:

> a comprehensive mode of social transformation which recognizes that national development must involve all elements of the population. It is a socio-economic process which seeks to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources and increases within a society. It involves the integration of the rural poor, the vast majority of the population of all developing countries into all the national economy.

Rural development entails comprehensive and integrated programmes of action rather than the ad hoc method of the past if there had to be any improvement in the rural economy. Kumar in Madu (1999), opines that development involves the gradual improvement of substance agriculture and the rise of living levels in traditional rural societies.

Commenting on rural development, Mochonbu (1992), Idachaba (1984), Komyan (1981), Identified the real to situate rural development within an integrated society. Making observation for low success of rural development efforts, Idachaba (1984) says:

> Rural development programmes are planned from top without adequate consideration for economic, social and cultural aspiration of the rural people.

Mchombul (1992) supports this view by saying that,

> The failure of rural development programmes in East Africa and Nigeria was due to the process of information transfer within the rural committees.

Methodology

The survey method was adopted in this study because of its ability to deal with a large population that cannot be directly observed. Moreso, the survey method was chosen because it focuses on people, their belief, opinion, attitude and behaviour (Okuneye 1998:43).

The Sampling Procedure

Different sampling techniques were used for this study. 240 respondents were chosen for the study. 220 respondents were chosen for the questionnaire, who are women farmer in Ijaye, while 20 were chosen to represent agricultural development personnel. In choosing respondents for the questionnaire, from Ijaye, the stratified and simple random sampling techniques were adopted. Respondents were stratified according to the quarters in the town. The quarters in Ijaye include Sariki, Arekurunmi, Oritamerin, Isale Oja, high school road, Balogun, Ajobo, Akinola - Faginmi, Alakita and Agesingbena. From each of these quarter (Stratum), 22 respondents were randomly selected.

The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting subjects from the agricultural agencies. These agricultural development representatives, were both respondents to questionnaire and were interviewed.

Finally, there was a focus groups discussion (FGD). For the FGD, 10 women farmers were selected, five of these were young farmers while five were elderly farmers. The convenience sampling technique was adopted, for the selection.

TABLE I: DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE TO RESPONDENTS IN IJAYE TOWN

S/N	QUARTERS	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
I	Sariki	22	10%
Ii	Arekurunmi	22	10%
Iii	Critannerin	22	10%
Iv	Isale Oja	22	10%
V	High school raod	22	10%
vi	Balogun	22	10%
vii	Ajobo	22	10%
viii	Akinola Faginmi	22	10%
ix	Alakita	22	10%
x	Agesingbena	22	10%
	Total	220	100%

TABLE II: DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL PERSONNEL RESPONDENTS

S/N	AGRICULTURAL AGENCIES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	RCENTAGE
I	IITA	5	25%
ii	Oyo State Ministry of Agric. (OYSADEP)	5	25%
iii	COWAD	5	25%
iv	University of Ibadan Agric extension	5	25%
	Total	20	100%

Methods of Data Analysis

The frequency method of analysis was used. Data were coded in simple percentages and were presented in tables. Data obtained through the questionnaire were discussed in relation to the research questions. Finding of the interview and focus group discussion were also discussed in relation to the research question.

TABLE III: DISTRIBUTION OF TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION RECEIVED BY FARMERS (WOMEN)

No	Types of Information	SA	A	D	SD	Non Resp	Total
1	Receive information planting method	96(36.3)	76(37.8)	42(20.9)	4(2.0)	-	201
2	Receive information harvesting	47(23.4)	102(50.7)	10(5.0)	42(20.9)	-	201
3	Receive information processing products	37(18.4)	54(26.9)	99(49.3)	11(5.5)	-	201
4	Receive information weeding	84(41.8)	61(30.3)	9(4.5)	47(23.4)	-	201
5	Receive information ploughing	53(26.4)	51(25.4)	50(24.9)	47(23.4)	-	201
6	Receive information. present of proud.	26(12.9)	53(26.4)	108(53.7)	11(5.5)	-	201
7	Receive information disease	80(36.8)	52(25.9)	58(28.9)	50(24.9)	-	201
8	Receive information cultivate	68(33.8)	65(32.3)	18(9.0)	47(23.4)	-	201
9	Receive information cropping periods	52(25.9)	69(34.3)	32(15.9)	15(7.5)	-	201
10	Receive information soil fertility	33(16.4)	51(25.4)	102(50.7)	64(31.8)	-	201
11	Receive information soil maintenance	25(12.4)	21(10.4)	91(45.3)	69(44.2)	-	201
12	Receive information new technologies	45(22.4)	34(16.9)	53(26.4)	60(29.9)	-	201
13	Receive information improved seed variety	8(4.0)	75(37.3)	57(28.4)	29(14.4)	1(0.5)	201
14	Receive information s seed various pesticide	14(5.5)	24(11.9)	107(68.2)	15(7.5)	-	201
15	Ears portion of crop	18(9.0)	84(42.0)	76(38.0)	10(5.0)	7(3.5)	201
16	Receive information soil fatality	48(23.9)	62(30.8)	61(30.3)	20(10.0)		201

Findings on table 5 show that majority of the women farmers receive information on planting methods with 155(77.1%) respondents 149(74.1%) indicated that they receive information on harvesting. While 145 (72.1%) indicated that they received information weeding. However 117(50.2) indicated that they do not receive information on soil maintenance and 122 (60.7%) indicated that they are given information on preservation of products. This explains why there is shortage of food in the nation. If farmer do not know how to maintain the soil and preserve their products, then they will wait for the next season for a crop.

All the women farmer with higher number of farms, most frequently received information on planting, fewer number of farmer had access to information on planting the implication of this as shown by the list of hypothesis two issuing chi-square test shows that there is significant relationship between the type of agricultural information provided and the involvement of women in large-scale agriculture. Below is a table showing at hypothesis II.

TABLE IV: DISTRIBUTION OF SOURCES OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

	Sources of Information	Get Information	I don't get Information
7a	Government Agencies	135(672)	66(32.8)
7b	Research Institutes	34(16.9)	167(88.1)
7c	NGOs	8(40)	193(96.0)
7d	Fellow farmers	153(76.1)	48(23.9)
7e	Agricultural Consultants	50(24.9)	151(75.1)
7f	Others	5(2.5)	196(97.5)

TABLE V: FREQUENCY OF INFORMATION RECEIVED BY FARMERS (WOMEN)

Information Sources	None Resp.	Regular	Some-times	Rarely	Never
8a Government Agencies	34(16.9)	51(25.4)	63(31.3)	8(4.0)	45(22.4)
8b Research Institutes	73(36.3)	-	40(19.9)	34(16.9)	54(26.9)
8c NGOs	59(29.4)	62(30.8)	5(2.5)	8(4.0)	67(33.3)
8d Fellow farmers	19(9.5)	133(66.2)	5(2.5)	2(1.0)	42(20.0)
8e Agricultural Consultants	75.(37.3)	6(3.0)	20(10.0)	10(5.0)	90(44.8)
8f Others	109(94.2)	4(2.0)	7(3.5)	53(26.4)	28(13.9)

Findings on tables 7 and 8 reveal that the main source of agricultural information are the government agencies 135 (67.2%) and fellow farmer 153 (76.1%) respondents. While 167 (83.1%) indicated that they don't get information from research institutes, 193 (96.0) indicated that they don't get information from NGOs and 151 (75.1%) indicated that they do not get information from agricultural consultants. It was also indicated that information from the government agencies get to fellow farmers regularly 133 (66.2%). Some of the respondents indicated that they get information regularly from fellow farmers while 51 (25.4%) indicated that they get information from government agencies regularly. This is confirmed by the response to the interview conducted for the agricultural personnels when the government agencies indicated that they give out information regularly in it forth Night Training (FTN).

TABLE VI: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AS RECEIVED BY FARMERS (WOMEN)

No	Communication Strategies	None Rep.	Most Highly	Frothily	Occa-sional	Never	Total
1	Organising farmers as a group to listen to broadcast	1(0.5)	86 (43.0)	37 (18.5)	28) 14.0)	48 (24.0)	201
2	Broadcast discussion	32(15.9)	30(14.9)	76(37.8)	17(5.8)	46(22.9)	201
3	Radio-based training	4(2.0)	52(25.4)	75(37.3)	24(11.9)	45(22.4)	201
4	Farm and home visits	16(8.0)	27(13.4)	67(33.3)	32(15.9)	59(29.4)	201
5	Office calls	39(19.4)	22(10.9)	19(9.5)	42(20.9)	78(38.8)	201
6	Social days e.g. local festival	38(18.9)	30(14.9)	31(15.4)	73(36.3)	29(14.4)	201
7	Result demonstration	41(20.4)	14(7.0)	35(17.4)	71(35 3	40(19.9)	201
8	Field days	41(20.4)	11(5.5)	35(17.4)	25(12.4)	89(14.3)	201
9	Field trips	41(20.4)	9(4.5)	24(11.9)	46(22.9)	80(39.8)	201
10	Agricultural shows	42(20.9)	15(7.5)	17(8.5)	32(15.9)	95(47.3)	201
11	The use of magazines	42(20.9)	16(8.0)	17(8.5)	30(14.9)	96(47.8)	201
12	The use of flip charts	41(20.4)	4(2.0)	23(11.45)	41(20.4)	9(45.3)	201
13	The use of poster	80(39.8)	16(8.0)	23(11.4)	45(22.4)	39(18.4)	201
14	The use of flannel graph	82(40.8)	5(2.5)	25(12.4)	22(10.9)	66(32.8)	201
15	The use of flash cards	96(47.8)	6(3.0)	18(9.0)	28(13.9)	53(26.4)	201
16	The film show or slide	140(69.7)	7(3.5)	11(5.5)	14(7.0)	29(14.4)	201
17	Exhibits and displays	148(73.8)	1(0.5)	14(7.0)	8(4.0)	29(14.4)	201

Findings on the frequency of the communication strategies adopted by extension agents according to the women reveal that organising farmers as groups is most frequently used 8b (43.0% indicated in support of this. While 76(37.8%) and 75(37.5%) indicated that both broadcast discussion and Radio-based trainings are frequently adopted. However the finding show that the strategies that are never adopted include the use of magazines with 96(47.3%) respondents, agricultural shows 95(47.3%) respondents and field days and field trips with 89(44.3%) and 80(39,8%) respondents. But the result of the questionnaire which was administered to the agricultural personnel reveal that result demonstration exhibits and display, social days e.g. local festivals field trips are the strategies they adopt more frequently. This is contrary to the response of the women. Anyhow the test of hypothesis three shows that there is a significant relationship between utilisation of agricultural information and the communication strategy adopted.

TABLE VII: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ADOPTED: ACCORDING TO (AGRICULTURAL PERSONNELS)

No	Communication Strategies	None Rep.	Most Highly	Frothily	Occa-sional	Never	Total
1	Organizing farmers as a group to listen to broadcast	1(5.6)	7(38.9)	2(4.1)	2(11.1)	9(50.0)	18
2	Broadcast discussion	1(5.6)	6(33.3)	4(22.2)	4(22.2)	3(16.7)	18
3	Radio-based training	1(5.6)	10(55.6)	4(22.2)	2(11.1)	1(5.6)	18
4	Farm and home visits	-	10(55.6)	6(33.3)	2(11.1)	-	18
5	Office calls	3(16.7)	4(22.2)	6(33.3)	2(11.1)	3(16.7)	18
6	Social days e.g. local festival	-	7(38.9)	3(16.7)	5(27.8)	(16.7)	18
7	Result demonstration	1(5.6)	5(22.8)	8(44.4)	4(22.2)	-	18
8	Field days	1(5.6)	10(55.6)	4(22.2)	2(11.1)	(5.6)	18
9	Field trips	-	13(72.2)	3(16.7)	2(11.3)	-	18
10	Agricultural shows	1(5.6)	4(22.2)	7(38.9)	5(27.8)	1(5-6)	18
11	The use of magazines	1(5.6)	3(16.7)	3(16.7)	7(43.8)	4(25.0)	18
12	The use of flip charts	1(5.6)	2(4.1)	4(22.2)	6(33.3)	5(0.8)	18
13	The use of poster	-	4(22.2)	5(27.8)	3(16.7)	6(33.3)	18
14	The use of flannel graph	1(5.6)	2(11.1)	2(11.1)	4(22.2)	9(50.0)	18
15	The use of flash cards	1(5.6)	2(11.1)	2(11.1)	2(11.1)	11(61.1)	18
16	The film show or slide	1(5.6)	3(16.7)	4(22.2)	4(22.2)	6(33.3)	18
17	Exhibits and displays	2(11.1)	8(44.4)	(16.7)	2(11.1)	3(16.7)	18

The finding from this table reveals that Field trip is most frequently used by 13(72.2%) of usage while radio-based training and field days are used by 90(55.6%) of usage respectively. On the other hand, flash card is less used with 11(61.1%0 indicating that they never used it. While organizing farmers as groups to listen to broadcast and flannelgraph are not also used with 9(50%) indicating that they never used them.

TABLE VIII: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA AS USED BY EXTENSION WORKERS

No	Communication Strategies	Most Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Never	Non-Response	Total
1	Broadcast Media	5(27.8)	3(16.7)	7(38.9)	2(11.1)	1(5.6)	18
2	Print		-4(22.2)	5(27.8)	7(38.9)	2(11.1)	18
3	Local Festivals	6(33.3)	3(16.7)	2(11.1)	5(27.8)	2(11.1)	18
4	Songs	2(11.1)	1(5.6)	8(44.4)	5(27.8)	2(11.1)	18
5	Oral Poetry	1(5.6)	2(11.1)	8(44.4)	5(27.8)	2(11.1)	18
6	Motion Pictures	1(5.6)	3(16.7)	4(22.2)	8(44.4)	2(11.1)	18
7	Drama	3(16.7)	4(22.2)	6(33.3)	3(16.7)	2(11.1)	18
8	Village Leaders	6(33.3)	5(27.8)	3(16.7)	3(16.7)	-	18
9	Local Ass. Meeting	11(61.1)	3(16.7)	3(16.7)	1(5.6)	1(5.6)	18
10	Local Drummers	7(38.9)	6(33.3)	2(11.1)	2(11.1)	1(5.6)	18
11	Librarian	3(16.7)	3(16.7)	7(38.9)	2(11.1)	3(16.7)	18
12	Town Criers	3(16.7)	5(27.8)	1(5.6)	7(38.9)	2(11.1)	18
13	Town Obas	6(33.3)	3(16.7)	2(11.1)	5(27.8)	2(11.1)	18

This table shows that local association (meeting) is the most frequently used medium ranking 11(61.1%) usage. Local dramas rank second in usage with 7(40.0%). While village leaders, local festivals and town obas are third in ranking of media being used with a percentage of 6(33.3) respectively. On the other hand, Motion Picture is highly on the scale of those that are never used with 8(44.4%) while print and town criers rank second in the scale with 7(38.9%)

Conclusion

Findings of this study have revealed that the type of agricultural information made available to these farmers (women) is more of planting, harvesting and weeding. However much knowledge on planting harvesting and weeding without any knowledge on storage and preservation will amount to little success. This is because a seasonal product will only be enjoyed during its season which

will consequently lead to lack and scarcity findings also reveal that there is not one proper strategy which the extension workers adopt in passing across information or rather they adopt a strategy that is convenient for them. There is no consistency between the farmers' response and the response of the agents. The farmers claimed to have been part of strategies in which they were organized as groups to listen to broadcast and radio-based training, while the extension agents indicated that they adopt strategies that include result demonstration, social day (local festivals) field trips and exhibits and displays. It becomes difficult to know the group that is not telling the truth. Yet the farmers indicated that they prefer their indigenous strategies.

Moreso, findings from this study revealed that the main sources of information are the government agencies and fellow farmers.

The result also shows that the extent to which women are involved in large-scale agriculture little. Out of a total of 201 respondents only 45 indicated to own between 5 and 8 hecters of land and only 1 run a piggery.

Furthermore the findings revealed that the little agricultural information the farmers receive has been used to a great extension. So if they get more they will use also.

Finally the result showed that factors that hinder the adoption of new agricultural measure among women include; fund, land, feeder roads, storage and transportation.

Recommendation

Since findings at this study have shown that some of the sources of information are not effective, it is recommended that the agricultural agencies, NGOs and Research institutes, should encourage the effectiveness of those sources by intensifying the enlightenment programmes.

Findings of this study also revealed that some of the major constraints to agricultural development include lack of fund, access to land, good roads, storage and transport. It is recommended that government and all other agricultural agencies should make available some fund in the form of loan or in kind. They should also make land accessible to women as much as they would need, construct feeder roads to ease transportation and make available proper storage facilities.

An important variable in development is accessibility and availability of information. However a prominent feature of the rural people is illiteracy, which is prominent in the finding of the study. As a result, it is recommended that effort on adult education be intensified.

Furthermore, the findings show that strategic communication yields better result in development. Therefore a good audience analysis should be done in our rural areas in order to know the strategy that best suits a people.

Finally it was noted in the course of this study that the staff strength of extension workers is low and that, the government agencies (workers) need refresher's training to be more effective in their field.

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