

**Provision of Library and Information Services for Rural Communities
development in Nigeria: A Case of Ewatto Community in Esan South East LGA of
Edo State, Nigeria.**

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Abstract

This paper examines library and information provisions for rural communities' development. A case study of Ewatto Town in Esan South East LGA of Edo State Nigeria. Literatures related to the study were reviewed. Survey research was used for the study with the aid of structured questions. The study found out that the rural dwellers has various information needs ranging from occupation, health, social family and so on. It was discovered that presently there is no organized information provision to this community either by the federal, state or local government

Introduction:

Information is crucial to the development of any nation; the difference between the developed and the developing nations can be attributed to the amount of information available and accessible to both of them, information rule the world. More importantly the rural dwellers need information for development because no meaningful development can take place in any nation if the rural communities are not developed and it has been said that information leads to development. According to Issa (2011) rural areas in Nigeria are inhabited by the buck of the nation population and they produce food and fiber and they are also Major sources of Capital formation for any country. Majority of the population dwell in the rural area. Adeloje (2007) affirmed to this that more than 70% of the Nigerian population lives in the rural areas.

Information is universally viewed as an essential commodity for development, it is important for the social, political, educational and economic development of any community, it also creates awareness among the members of that community (Kamba 2009).

Information is a resource that all individuals use to improve their condition of living and is important for any development to take place. Information expands the vision of people in terms of development in education, social, cultural, political, economic; it creates awareness and empowerment of the citizenry. Idiegbeyan-ose, and Akpoghome (2009), affirms that information is so crucial to individuals, society, community and organization and the importance of information cannot be overemphasized; it is useful in decision making and the availability of information to individuals or groups enables them to make rational decisions and reduce their level of uncertainty. In the same way, Onu (2005) refers to information as the oil that greases the wheel of governance programmes and the activities of government and individuals.

Literature Review

Kamba (2009) cited Agha and Akhtar (1992) posits that information is regarded as a strategic resource along with human, financial and natural resources. Popoola (2007) explained that these exist nowadays as five factors of production: Land, Labour, Capital, entrepreneur and information; therefore, for any meaningful development to take place in any community, adequate information must be provided.

Opeke (2004) Explained that information has received a widespread acceptance as the essential feature of production Consumption and exchange in this modern era. Information empowers the citizens in various ways, and rural dwellers are not exclusive, they need to benefit from available Information for development.

Kamba (2009) cited Robert (1993) and pointed out that rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, the rural dwellers to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need, rural process leading to improvement in the quality of life of rural people.

Unagha (2011) posits that among the ingredients needed to developmental process in rural community is the supply of needed information for empowerment and decisions making, rural dwellers need information to empower them and improve their living Conditions. Seneviratne (2007) posits that Communities needs information for living and for participation in social activities more also access to information is a basic right of citizens either in rural or urban area.

In this globalised and information driven Society, information has become a necessity and valuable commodity to individual, Organisations and Society in their existence (unagha 2011).

Issa (2011) Lamented that information accessibility of the rural persons is far from adequate, Social inequality is been perpetuated as the rural populace is in further Stressed that research findings attested to this , and Observation will be quick to reveal the establishments and

operations of agencies whose responsibilities are to ensure information dissemination in Nigeria have an orientation that is Strongly Urban-biased. Libraries are hardly established in most rural areas.

Women living in the rural areas of Nigeria are generally known to be suffering from general deprivation including access to information, they are not able to have access to information to meet the demand of the challenges of daily living.(Zaid and Popoola,2010)

Information is a Crucial factor of production in this Contemporary and emergent global village. (Nnadozie, Egwin and Ossai- Onah 2010). They further cited Berezi (1981) and posit that information is the fifth factor of production.

Information is essential for agricultural and rural development and bringing about social and economic change, Achugbue and Anie(2011) Lamented that African countries have not devoted attention to providing their citizen with access to information especially the rural dwellers where 70-80 % of the African population resides.

Information is a raw material that leads to development for both urban and rural dwellers. Prosperity, Progress and development of any individual, Community or Nation depend upon their ability to access and use relevant information (Harande, 2009). Harande(2009) holds the view that the development of Countries globally cannot be achieved without the development of the rural Community because 75-80 percent of the people in developing Countries live in the rural areas and they need relevant, accurate, up-to-date and timely information.

He further stressed that Serious; active, conscious, sensitive government would not neglect rural Communities in terms of provision of information to the rural dwellers. he also posits that the slow rate or lack of development in African Countries has a Positive Correlation with the neglect of the rural areas. To Support this point, Alegbeleye and Aina (1985) Stated that the third world Countries have recently come to realize that unless the rural areas are well developed, and provided with adequate and timely information for development, hardly would any meaningful development occur in these countries.

Statement of Problem

The importance of information to individual, Communities, Nations and the world at large cannot be over emphasized Information transform individuals, Societies, and the world. Adequate, timely and up-to-date information can transform individuals, communities and Nation. No nation can developed without adequate provisions of development ingredients to the rural dwellers. To this end this research investigates provision of library and information services to Ewatto community in Esan South East East LGA of Edo State Nigeria.

The Objectives of the study are to:

- Find out the information need of Ewatto Community dwellers.
- Find out their sources of information.
- Find out provision of Library/Information Services to them.

- Challenges to information usage
- Make recommendations.

A Brief History of Ewatto Community in Esan South Esat LGA of Edo State Nigeria.

Ewatto is a town in Esan South East LGA of Edo State with 18 villages. Its centre lies at a latitude of 6.49673 and longitude of 6.3700 and it has elevation of 155 meters above sea level, her neighboring towns includes, Ewohimi, Okhue- Esan, Ohordua, Udo- Neria. The predominant languages Spoken by the people are Esan and English Languages. Their major Occupation are farming, Hunting , Trading, Traditional Medicine practicing, teaching, Craftsman, Health work, and so on Majority of the people in Ewatto are farmer and their major farm products are: Yams, Tomatoes, Pineapple, Kolanut, Rubber, Palm Oil, Cassava, Oranges, and so on. Ewatto town is headed by the Onojie of Ewatto he is responsible to Edo State Governnor for the administration of the villages . There are village heads in each of the 18 villages called the chief who is in charge of the different villages and responsible to the Onojie.

Methodology

Interview method was used to collect information for this study, structured questions were asked in relation to the objectives of the Study. This was also supported with personal observation of what is presently on ground in the community under study.

Interpretation and Discussion of findings

Question 1: What is the information need of Ewatto dwellers?

Answer: The People in Ewatto Community have vast and divergent information needs, they need information their different Occupation the farmers stressed that the need information on how to migrate from Sustenance agriculture to commercial agriculture, they need information on how to access credit facilities for their farming, they need information about farm products, also they need market information. The teachers posits that they need information on Modern method of teaching, they lamented that even in this 21st Century information age, access to internet resources is not available for use. The health workers explained that they need information on various health issues.

Question 2: What are the sources of information available to Ewatto community dwellers?

Answer: Their Sources of information are mostly town cries, friends, radio and television.

Question 3: Is there library in Ewatto communities?

Answer: No library of any type in Ewatto Community even though there are so many primary and secondary schools owned by state government, communities and private Individuals.

Question 4: What are the challenges to Information Usage in Ewatto communities?

Answer

- Unavailable of information Centre

- Poor and outdated information

- Lack of internet Connectivity

- Poor attitude of government agriculture extension workers.

Discussions of Findings

The Findings revealed that the rural dwellers in Ewatto Community has various information needs ranging from Occupation information, health information, Political information, recreational information, family information, retirement planning information, It was discovered that the sources of information to the Categories of rural dwellers are the town Criers that is information through the village heads to the people, friends that is those their friends and relatives give them information through phone calls, another source of information for Ewatto Community dwellers are the radio and the televisions for those that can afford them. The findings also pointed out to the fact that there is no Library/ Information centre of any type situated in the Community that Comprised of 18 villages , therefore the Community is in urgent need of Libraries and information Centres to provide them with their information needs and also encourage the youth on the importance of Cultivating reading habit, the study also found out that the major challenges to the community information usage are unavailability

of Libraries/ information centre's, poor and outdated information, lack of internet Connectivity and poor attitude of government agriculture extension workers.

Recommendations

- 1) Libraries/ Information Centre's should be established in this Community to Cater for their Information needs.
- 2) The State and local government should established Public Libraries in Ewatto Community
- 3) The ministry of Education and Edo State Library board should revive the dead mobile Library Services to rural Communities.
- 4) There is need for government at the two level State and local to provide internet services to the rural dwellers
- 5) The ministry of agriculture should wake up to their responsibilities by providing agricultural extension services to Ewatto community dwellers.

Conclusion

No nation can develop if the rural communities are not developed, therefore there is urgent call for Nigerian government both at federal, State and local government levels to wake up to their responsibilities by providing adequate, timely, unbiased information to the rural dwellers,

Ewatto community inclusive, this eventually will leads to National development because no meaningful development can take place in any nation if the rural communities are not developed.

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