

ACCESS OF FISHERIES INFORMATION TO FISH FARMERS IN HADEJIA, NORTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the challenges of fisheries information to fish farmers in Hadejia, Jigawa State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaires were administered to a sample size of ninety (90) fish farmers but only data from sixty (60) respondents were analyzed using frequency count and percentage. The analyses of the data revealed availability of the information which is however, not readily accessible because of impeding variables among which are; insufficient agricultural extension officers, lack of use of media, language barrier and the unreliable nature of electricity in Nigeria. It is recommended that fisheries information be packaged to suit the end users (fish farmers) in this geographical region.

Keywords: Fisheries information, fish farmers, access, extension workers.

INTRODUCTION

In agriculture, the role of information in enhancing agricultural development cannot be over emphasized. Information is vital in increasing production and improving marketing and distribution strategies {1}. Information also opens windows of sharing experiences, best practices and sources of financial aids and new markets {2}.

Fish farmers need information on fish farming technology, construction and management, breeds and spawning, processing, storage and marketing {3}. In Nigeria agricultural information is available through (WAERLS) and its information services {4}. It is also available in many agricultural research institutes, schools of agriculture, Universities as well as federal and states ministries of agriculture {5}. Many previous study agree that the problem was of farmers to access the agricultural information; and that even with the advent of information technologies which has succeeded in eliminating bottle necks in information dissemination; constraints to access to information is still a problem {6}. The existence of some private fish farms in Jigawa State indicates that the people of the state are aware of the provision and supply of fish resources and activities in the state. However, there are little or no written documents on fisheries and aquaculture development in the state. Majority of the farmers in Nigeria are rural dwellers and Jigawa State is not an exception {7}.

Access to adequate information is very essential to increased agricultural productivity. The information needed on fish farming or fish farming technologies include pond construction and management, breeds and spawning, fish processing and value addition, storage, marketing etc. All these information on fish farming techniques, when acquired and effectively utilized by the fish farmer will help to increase culture fish production and

translate into a higher income improved standard of living in rural and by extension the nation's economy.

Therefore, the focus of this study is to evaluate the challenges of access of fisheries information to fish farmers in Hadejia, Jigawa State, Nigeria.

1.1 Table: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Sex | | |
| Male | 50 | 83.33 |
| Female | 10 | 16.67 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |
| Age | | |
| 20 -25 | 7 | 4.67 |
| 25 – 30 | 28 | 46.67 |
| 35 – 40 | 21 | 35.00 |
| >40 | 4 | 6.67 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |
| Occupation | | |
| Fish farming | 32 | 53.33 |
| Civil servants | 22 | 36.67 |
| Students | 4 | 6.67 |
| Others | 2 | |

1.2 Table: Duration of the fish farming

| Duration | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| <Year | 36 | 60 |
| 1 – 5 Years | 16 | 26.67 |
| 6 – 10 Years | 7 | 11.67 |
| >10 Years | 1 | 1.67 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

1.3 Table: Acquisition methods of the fish farms

| Acquisition method | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Purchase | 26 | 43.33 |
| Inherited | 2 | 3.33 |
| Government | 32 | 53.33 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

1.4 Table: Types of cultured fish species and culture system practiced

| Species | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Clariasspp | 51 | 85.00 |
| Tilapia spp | 9 | 15.00 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |
| Culture system | | |
| Intensive | 55 | 95.67 |
| Extensive | 5 | 8.33 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

1.5 Table: Types of problems encountered

| Problems | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Disease | 3.00 | 5.00 |
| Feed | 12.00 | 20.00 |
| Water scarcity | 4.00 | 6.67 |
| Market | 2.00 | 3.33 |
| Theft | 2.00 | 3.33 |
| Insufficient fund | 36.00 | 60.00 |
| Predation | 1.00 | 1.67 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

1.6 Table: Sources of fisheries information to fish farmers in Hadejia

| Sources of information | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Billboard | ----- | ----- |
| Consultancy | ----- | ----- |
| Co-farmers | 13 | 21.67 |
| Extension workers | 36 | 60.00 |
| Internet | ----- | ----- |
| Journals | ----- | ----- |
| Libraries | ----- | ----- |
| NGO's | ----- | ----- |
| Radio | ----- | ----- |
| Television | ----- | ----- |
| Workshop | ----- | ----- |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

MATERIALS AND METHODS**The study area**

Jigawa state is predominantly classified as Sudan zone with open park land and savannah whose grasses and trees are adequately adapted the shorter rainy season. The dry season lasts from October to May while the rainy season is concentrated between June and September. Rainfall ranges between 650 – 880mm annually {8}. The main occupation of the people is crop farming which is followed by rearing of livestock and fishing activities which is mainly concentrated along Hadejia River valley as well as the Hadejia – Nguru wetland area. The state occupies a total land area of 22,410km² and it lies between latitudes 11⁰⁰'N to 13⁰⁰'N and longitudes 8⁰⁰'E to 10³⁵'E.

Data collection and analysis

A purposive sampling of at least ninety fish farmers were selected for the study, while thirty structured questionnaire were allocated to three areas (Kirikasamma, Hadejia and Auyo) to collect various data on their various fish farming activities, however only sixty of the questionnaires were duly completed. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It shows that 83.33% of the fish farmers were males while females represented 16.67%. Majority of the respondents

were within the age bracket of 25 -30 years (46.67%) followed by 34 – 40 years (35%); 20 – 25 years (11.67%) and >40 years (6.67%). Occupational status indicated that out of the (53.33%) engaged in fish farming activities (36.67%) were civil servants while (6.67%) were students. In terms of educational status (43.33%) obtained secondary school certificates, (21.67%) adult education, (8.33%) tertiary primary educations and (18.33%) qur'anic schools.

Table 2 indicates that the highest duration was obtained from less than one year (60%) and the lowest from the duration of more than ten years (1.67%).

Table 3 shows the acquisition method of the fish farms in the study area and it shows that (53.33%) were obtained from the government and (43.33%) were purchased while only (3.33%) were inherited.

Table 4 reveals both the major types of cultured fishes and the culture systems practiced with (85%) representing catfish and only (15%) for tilapia. Intensive farming system has (55%), while extensive culture system recorded (8.33).

Table 5 presents the types of problems encountered by the farmers. Insufficient fund recorded the highest value of (60%), feed (20%), and the lowest value of (1.67%) recorded for predation.

Table 6 shows the sources of fisheries information to fish farmers in the study area. The result recorded highest value (60%) from extension workers, (21.67%) co farmers and (18%) from workshops.

The recorded value of (83.33%) for males and (16.67%) females in the present study were similar to those reported by {9}. This could be due to the nature of fish farming which involves regular and close monitoring and supervision. The findings of this study for p(53.33%) fish farming, (36.67%) civil servants also tallies with the work of {1}.

The result obtained for educational status (43.33%) secondary school and (21.67%) adult education is in agreement with the work of {10}. The duration of fish farming recorded in the present work were (60%) for less than 1 year, (26.67%) for 1 – 5 years and the lowest value (1.67%) for above 10 years. This also conforms to the result obtained by {3}. The result presented for sources of fisheries information in table 6 indicated that extension workers had the highest value of (60.00%) followed by co-farmers (25.00%) and (18.00%) for workshop. The result shows that neither printed nor electronic media were accessed as source of information to the fish farmers as observed by {6}.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this study demonstrate the difficulty encountered in accessing vital fisheries information especially from printed and electronic media sources which would have created a more convenient platform for improved and increased fish yield which by extension translates into higher profit and more job opportunities. This information could be accessed from the ministry of agriculture, ADP (agricultural development projects) offices, National Agricultural and Liaison Services (NAERLS), agricultural research centers, libraries and privately organized workshops, seminars and conferences. This wealth of information is however not readily accessible because of impeding variables among which are insufficient

and less qualified extension officers, lack of use of media, language barriers and the unreliable nature of electricity in Nigeria.

Considering the findings of this study the paper recommends as follows;

- Extension agencies should encourage fish farmers to subscribe to various fish farmers groups as a means of making the required information readily accessible.
- Formatting and packaging of fisheries information should be done to impart the desired knowledge.
- Train the trainer programmes should be regularly organized for the extension workers with a view to keeping them updated and
- More extension officers and agents should be engaged to cover more farming areas.

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