



Full Length Research

## Information Needs, Source and Seeking Behaviour among Rural Women Artisan in Ilai, Nigeria and the Implications for Poverty Eradication

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**Abstract:** Information need becomes a necessity for problem solving. Source of information is equally instrumental to addressing pressing problems. This study focused at exploring the information needs, sources, information seeking behaviour of women artisans in Ilai, a rural area in Kogi State, Nigeria. Three objectives were identified for the study. Structured interviewed was used to elicit information from the 15 participants. Findings revealed that information needs are; on local banking, palm oil production, coffee marketing, commercial production of black soap and melon threshing. Sources of information utilized are; place of worship, communal meeting, sister wives and through phone calls. The information seeking behaviour is purposive; mainly in search of information targeted towards enhancing their business activities. It evident from the findings that lack of Library as institution of learning hinders access to information. This is highly essential for decision making towards sustainable economic empower and poverty eradication among women in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria. Having in-depth knowledge of information needs of women artisans will assist in developing a workable intervention to foster poverty eradication. Based on the findings, it is recommended that appropriate channels of communication be made available to facilitate sourcing of information on their information needs. Projects such as good road network, uninterrupted power supply and conventional banking outfit should be made available in the area to foster sustainable poverty eradication.

**Keywords:** Information Needs: Information Seeking Behaviour: Women Artisans: Rural Women: Nigeria.

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## **1.0 Introduction of the Study**

Information is fundamental for everyday life experience and survival among women artisan' in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria. Kennedy (1997) posited that this guides decision making and instrumental for day to day navigation through the complexities of problem solving of affirming the current market value of cash crops. The necessity for problem solving usually bring to light the desire for information needs. Information needs is the recognition for data /information to address identified problems. Scholars have identified that information needs is a complex concept to define (kayode, 2019; Yusuf, 2012). Information need is a situation or task which depends on many factors and changes as the person goes from one stage of task to the next. Information needs is often understood as evolving from a vague awareness of something used and as culminating in locating the information that contribute to understanding and meaning (Kuhlthau, 1993). The necessity to satisfy information needs can be met through using the right information sources.

Kwanya & Nyariki (2019) argued that information sources are the various point of contact used while searching for information to meet needs. Use of valid source of information is a strong key to achieving desired outcomes. Information source is an invaluable resource is being disseminated, transformed and communicated in a variety of environments (Rao, 2000). Information source used at a given time is informed by the problem at hand. Information might not be derived from a single source. The search will continue until the satisfaction is derived through sourced information. Ways in which information is searched is a determinant of individual's information seeking behaviour. However, information-seeking behaviour arises from the perceived need of a user, whereby the individual identifies his or her needs for information, searches for information and finally transfers the information obtained (Ikoja-Odongo & Mostert, 2006). Information seeking behaviour is the collection of actions which people take to identify, seek, evaluate, select and use information to satisfy their information needs. People seek information to enable them to deal with a current need or build their knowledge base (Kwanya & Nyariki, 2019). People seek for information in order to satisfy the need triggered by quest to address identified problem.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

Information needs and source is a great determinant in achieving desired goals and objectives. Women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria are predominantly farmers and business women involved in the sales of farm produce and production of consumables such as black soap and local oil base cream. Information required to enable them flourish well in their chosen way of life is non- existence. It is reported by the women, that selling of their farm produce is usually done incurring loss. Banking of capital accrued through sales made from their produce is always through unorthodox means. This according to the women, have led to huge loss of money among them. Therefore this study, explored the information needs, sources and seeking behaviour to help in wealth generation among the women; mainly geared towards poverty eradication.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

- a) To identify the information needs of women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State.
- b) To determine the sources of information utilized by women artisans in Ilai, Kogi state.
- c) To find out the information seeking of women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State.

## **2.0 Background Review of the Study**

Taylor (2008) viewed that information needs is a personal and unconscious conditions. He articulated four levels of information need that an individual pass through before he or she makes formal encounters with an information professional. These levels are visceral need, conscious need, formalized need and compromised need. Information need is an individual or groups desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious need or unconscious need. Kusuma et al. (2020) examined information-seeking behavior in meeting information needs, especially in the undergraduate extension program students in the Faculty of Administrative Science, Universitas Indonesia, a quantitative approach with the descriptive analysis was used. The results showed that the information needs of students related to their role as students were to increase knowledge and

final project references. Workers used information as a means to develop themselves and meet the demands of work. Information-seeking starts from identifying the topic and subject of the information, preparing keywords as a guideline for searching, selecting, and checking information until the information obtained is then used to reference lectures and jobs (Kennedy, 1997). The barriers to information-seeking encountered by students are lack of motivation, limited library collections, and too much and extensive information.

Okoedo-Okojie & Osabuoiien (2016) examined the influence of information source on farmers' knowledge of poultry drugs in Delta State, Nigeria: Implication for rural community development. The study objectives were to ascertain the institutional characteristics of respondents, their access to information sources, awareness/knowledge of poultry drugs, and to ascertain if there is significant relationship between institutional characteristics of poultry farmers and their access to source of information on poultry drugs in the study area. A 3-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents. The primary data used in this study were obtained from field surveyed through the use of structured questionnaire administered to 100 respondents. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation and Chi-square. Finding revealed that respondents have less access to information on poultry drugs usage as respondents have access only to neighbour (M=2.58) source out of the 18 sources of poultry drugs information identified in the study. Respondents are aware and have access to the use of avian charge (60%), happy hen treat (48.8%), petamine (45.0%), and tricero (32.5%) than other poultry farmers. Chi-Square results showed that all the information sources identified except campaign (0.762), exhibition (0.528), and workshop/seminar (2.607) at 1% level were significant. The study recommends that poultry drugs usage should be encouraged among farmers.

### **3.0 Methodology of the Study**

Qualitative methodology was employed for investigating the information needs, source and seeking behaviour of women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria. This methodology is thought to be appropriate for this study in that it captured the worldview of women artisans precisely the way it is. Homogenous purposive sampling was used for the recruitment of 25 women to be participants in this study. Sample size for this study is 15. This was determined when data saturation was reached. Data saturation is when new information no longer emerges during probing. Data was collected with the aid of a structured interviewed informed by the raised research questions. Data was analyzed through narrative analysis.

### **4.0 Results of the Study**

#### **4.1 Information needs of Woman Artisans in Ilai, Kogi State**

This section consists of the information needs of women artisans in Ilai, Nigeria. Five themes emerged from the interview analysis. The themes that emerged from the analysis of information needs are; information on local banking, palm oil production, coffee marketing, commercial production of black soap and information about melon threshing.

##### **4.1.1 Theme One: Information on Local Banking**

This theme consists of the narrative of the participants in this study setting about the information need on the how to thresh melon farmed by the women in Ilai. All the 15 participants expressed their need for information on local banking. Narratives of the participants are stated expressed; *"I need to know how to calculate interest in a local setting. This is very important to me because there was a time that I was underpaid. What was given to me at the end of the year was not what I thought I will be entitled to". Also, other participants expressed her view on information need about local banking thus "I want to know more about the interest I will get on my savings in our local banking. This is as a result of the experience I had sometimes back. I paid a high amount of money in the local banking organized in the village. But what I was given was nothing to write home about"*.

#### **4.1.2 Theme Two: Palm Oil Production**

This section contains the narratives of the participants on the need to have information about palm oil production. 12 out of 15 participants revealed they require information on this theme. They expressed their opinions thus; *“My source of livelihood is through palm oil production. I am aware there is a better technique to the manual technique we presently use”* *“I want to be informed about palm oil production. This is because that is where I get money to take care of my kids”*. *“My information need is only about palm oil production. I must keep myself up to date about it. My aim is to make the best profit. So, any information that I can get to boost, I strive to utilize such to get a better outcome”*.

#### **4.1.3 Theme Three: Coffee Marketing**

This category consists of the narratives of participants' information need about coffee marketing. 9 of the 15 the participants' revealed that they need to always have up to date information about coffee marketing. This is evident from their narratives; *“Coffee is a cash crop and the price changes from time to time. If one is unaware of the current market price, the produce will be sold at a loss”*. Another participant expressed that *“there was a time some buyers came to buy coffee from me. I was so happy that I got buyers for my farm product. It was after they left that the market value had gone up. That I disposed the crop at a very cheap rate. Since then, I vowed to always seek for information about current market value before taking my product to the market or before selling out to prospective buyers”*.

#### **4.1.4 Theme Four: Commercial Production of Black Soap**

This theme represents the views of the participants who expressed that need information about black soap production. 6 of the 15 participants indicated that they need information on the commercial production methods. Their personal worldview is presented as expressed; *“I make black soap for sale. But the quantity I can make is very small. I will be very happy if I can get information on how I can make many within a short period of time”*. *“I am interested in knowing how to make black in large quantities”*. Similarly, another participant stated that *“I will be very happy if I know how to make black in large commercial quantities. This method I am using is very tedious, tiring and time consuming; and the profit margin is not to write home about”*.

#### **4.1.5 Theme Five: Information on Melon Threshing**

This theme consists of the narrative of the participants in this study setting about the information need on the how to thresh melon farmed by the women in Ilai. Out of the 15 participants', 11 of them stated that their need for information is very crucial about this theme. Narratives of the participants are captured as follows;

*“I farm melon every planting season. After harvesting, me and my children will then start to shell the melon by hand. This is always very tiring; since we go to farm and have other things to do. If I can get to know the modern way of how to thresh this melon, I will very happy about that”*. *“This method of using my hand to peel the melon is time consuming. I do not get to finish in time and thereby taking time for to get it to the market. If there are faster ways of doing this, I would not mind finding the information about it.”* *“I once heard through discussion from a neighbouring village, that there is a modern way of threshing melon. I think I need more information about it because it will be of greater help to me and my family”*

#### **4.2 Sources of Information Utilized by Women Artisans in Ilai, Kogi State**

This section sought to determine sources of information consulted by women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria to satisfy their information needs. Four themes emerged as sources of information used for satisfying information needs. These are; place of worship, communal meeting, sister wives and through phone calls.

#### **4.2.1 Theme One: Place of Worship**

This theme consists of the narratives of participants who expressed that they use their place of worship as source of information. 14 of the 15 participants expressed that their source of information is their place of worship. Examples of their narratives concerning this theme are presented as follows; *“When I go to the church on Sundays or during the week days, I discuss with members about any problem I have. Information I get during this interaction have been very useful for me; especially about price of farm produce”*. *“I usually look towards church programmes because I get information that assist me through fellow worshippers”*. Another participant stated that *“my main source of information is through the church”*. *“Our pastor usually provides us with information. I rely on this source of information because the pastor has contact with the zonal headquarter. He usually has access to current information. That is the reason why I use him as my source of information”*

#### **4.2.2 Theme Two: Communal Meeting**

This section consists of the narratives of participants who revealed that they used communal meetings as source of information. 8 of the 15 participants were in alignment with this assertion. Their worldview about this theme is exposed in their narratives presented as follow; *“Meetings are held in the village on a regular basis. I get information at such meetings. Issues which are of paramount importance to the entire kinsmen/women are tabled for discussion. If I have problems, I make enquiries about them there. And usually, my doubts get cleared during the meeting”*. *“I do not like missing the communal meeting, this because I get useful information from there”*. *“I meet with many people at the village meetings and I get information from such individuals”*.

#### **4.2.3 Theme Three: Sister Wives**

This theme consists of the narratives of women artisans who expressed that they used sister wives for sourcing for information to satisfy their information needs. 13 of the 15 participants indicated they use sister wives as their source of information. Narratives of the participants in relation to this are captured thus; *“I get information through my co-wife”*. Similarly, another participant stated that *“I do not like socializing but my sister wife is the outgoing type with many friends. She has contacts in many places; even in neighbouring towns and villages. This makes to have access to information. So, I rely on her for information”*. *“We usually have monthly meeting of sister wives. I get information during such meetings. Even when it is not meeting and I need information, I reach out to my co-wife to make clarification about my information needs, I ask for guidance through them”*.

#### **4.2.4 Theme Four: Phone Calls**

This theme contains of the narratives of the participants who indicated that they used their phones to source for information through making calls to her friends and contacts. Their narratives are as follows; *“I make calls to my friends. Those women to my friends whom I always call do assist me with whatever information I desire. In most cases, it is always information related to my family business”*. Likewise, another participant expressed that *“My phone is what I use for making calls to find out information about current price of palm kernel, palm oil and melon”*. *“You see, this handset has really been very helpful in aiding me to get information. I always*

### **4.3 Information Seeking Behaviour of Women Artisans in Ila, Kogi State**

This section sought to find out the information seeking behaviour of women artisans in Ila, Kogi state, Nigeria. Only one theme emerged from this section. This is purposive and active information seeking.

#### **4.3.1 Theme One: Purposive and Active Information Seeking**

This section contains the information seeking behaviour exhibited by the women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria. All the 15 participants in this study setting seek for information based on the problem that needs to be addressed. Tales of the participants about that is presented as follows; *“I always seek for information to find out the current price rate of my farm produce. Anything outside this is of no use to me. Nor do I even bother myself to seek for information outside this. This is mainly because my source of livelihood comes from my farming practice. And I try as much as much possible to be informed about how much I will make at the end of the season”* Likewise, another participant stated that *“I only search for information that is tailored towards my activities; which is my black soap business. I do not go out of my way to search for information that will not address my business information needs”*. Also, it was revealed by another participant that, *“I look for information that have to do with farming techniques. And I do not care about other anything. This is because all that I am concerned about is my farming and how I will sell the produce at the end of the day”*.

### **5.0 Discussion of Findings**

#### **5.1 Information needs of Women Artisans in Ilai, Kogi State**

Finding revealed that women artisans have five typologies of information needs. These are information on local banking, palm oil production, coffee marketing, commercial production of black soap and information about melon threshing. Information needs is influenced by several factors, depending on context and situations. This finding is not surprising though as studies (Adekanye, 2019; Shenton, 2007) have reported that information needs are multifarious. Adekanye (2019) established that information needs is usually tailored towards specific life experiences. Shenton (2007) observed that information needs can be divided into five categories. The author stated the types of information needs. These are: needs that are known to the individual but not to the information professional; needs that are known to both parties; needs that are known to the professional, but not to the individual; needs that are misunderstood by the individual and needs that are not known to either the individual or information professional. Similarly, this finding has also been documented by Kumar (2008) that information needs vary from function to function, from environment to environment. The implication of this finding for Library and Information Science is that meeting information needs of library users could be through diverse sources. For this mandate to be met, multifarious sources should be made available. This is in alignment with the tenants of resource development that emphasized on making available different types of information resources available to meet the needs of the users.

#### **5.2 Sources of Information used by Women Artisans in Ilai, Kogi State**

Findings of this study revealed that four sources of information were used by women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State for sourcing for information. This is through; place of worship, communal meeting, sister wives and through phone calls. Sources of information can be through any source. The predominant factor is for the need for the search to be met. This finding is not surprising as studies (Afful-Arthur & Filson, 2019) identified that information can be source from various sources. In 2019, Afful-Arthur & Filson observed that sources of information used by auto mechanics are through their, masters, friends amongst. The implication of this finding to Library and Information Science is that if information is sourced through undocumented sources, knowledge sharing and information transfer will become a fantasy. In profession of Library and Information Science, Information is shared via both print and electronic format. Unfortunately, the Library as an institution is non-existence in Ilai, Nigeria. Thereby making it difficult to document and store information shared among rural women artisans' in Ilai. Knowledge and information shared among these women will remain dormant where the information is generated. Scholars have emphasized the impact of information seeking, needs and behaviour towards poverty eradication. Empowerment of Women forms the basis of sustainable poverty eradication. Most especially as women artisans in Ilai are strong contender in wealth generation in the community.

### **5.3 Place of Worship as Source of Information**

Findings revealed that women in this study setting utilized place of worship as a source of information. Information is shared often in such gathering because as it is a common place where people converge frequently; definitely information will be shared. Therefore, it is not out of place if places of worship are utilized as sources of information by women artisans in Ilai, Kogi state, Nigeria. Studies have emphasized the use of social spaces as source of information (Hayatu, 2018; Musa, 2013; Gunton, 2011). In addition, Gunton (2011) reported that place of worship is used as learning environment. This implies that information is made available and shared before learning can take place. Similarly, Musa (2013) reported that information is shared by religious leaders and people in Kano, Nigeria use them as source of information. The implication of this finding is that access to information is a fundamental human right. And those individuals can decide to use desire source of information for acquiring of information to address pressing problem.

### **5.4 Communal Meeting as Source of Information**

Finding revealed that women artisan use communal meeting as a source of information. Most rural communities like Ilai engage in community development themselves. For instance, there is no evidence of governance in the village. Most of the infrastructures in the village are through community development. Therefore, information is shared and exchange. So, it is did not come as a surprise went is theme emerged as a source of information. Scholars have documented that source of information is diverse depending on context and situations. It is reported that public spaces are important asset to our cities. This is because it provides many opportunities for people to come together and engage with the community. This is the real scenario of what takes place at the communal meeting in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria. The ability of the women artisans in Ilai to be themselves at such meetings. It is reported that one of the greatest joy of been at public space is for people to be able to interact with themselves and exchange information. Thereby, that becomes avenue for sourcing for information.

### **5.5 Sister Wives as Source of Information**

Finding indicated that women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State, Nigeria use sister wives as source of information for addressing their information. These sister wives are usually at close proximity to one another. They are those used as the first of contact whenever there is need to seek for information. Information needs is met through interaction between the concerned parties. This is further funneled by socialization. Socialization prepares women artisans in Ilai, Nigeria for social life by educating them about group's shared norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Socialization enables people to connect more, so more information could be exchanged (Cole, 2020). Socialization is the process through which people are taught to be proficient members of a society. This is very true of women artisan in Ilai, Nigeria in that they gained through the experiences of one another. It describes the ways that people come to understand societal norms and expectations, to accept society's beliefs, and to be aware of societal values

### **5.6 Phone Calls as Source of Information**

Women artisans in Ilai revealed that they used their phone as source of information. The use of phone for communication has come to stay. Though they revealed it is used as a source but they complained of network problem. According to them, connecting with people using at times has been very traumatic. In te sense, that it made them lose a huge amount of money. Studies revealed that women uses phone for making contacts to foster their activities (Karim et al., 2020; Pwashikai & Apuke, 2018). Also it is reported that mobile phone is utilized for business transaction among market women. Similarly, Karim et al. (2020) affirmed that mobile phone apps were identified which are most frequently used by the women farmers. This indicated that women artisans are at par with counterparts in other parts of the world in the use of phones are source of information. Komunte (2015) stated that mobile phone is an economic tool that liberates women entrepreneurs from poverty and empowers them with knowledge. Mobile phone is being used for business transaction services (Brandie &

Abbott, 2011). This implies that technology have changed ways of conducting business. Use of phone as a source of information has led to a shift in paradigm from the conventional way of performing task to a new way powered by technology.

### **5.7 Information seeking Behaviour of Women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State**

Information seeking is essential for the maneuvering of the complex information environment. Seeking for information will provide artisan women to be actively being empowered to address problem encountered by them in the day to day life experiences. Scholars have reported that having indepth knowledge of the information seeking behaviour of people or groups of people is critical to self development and empowerment for economic development. In essence, information seeking has a positive impact on poverty eradication. Afful-Arthur & Filson (2019) affirmed that knowing the level of information-seeking behaviour of people in every manner of job is essential in the nation's human resource development.

### **5.8 Implication for Poverty Eradication**

With access to sources of information that will foster the growth of their business, women artisans in Ilai, Kogi State, and wealth creation will be simplified. Thereby empowering the women economically and also eradicate poverty among the women.

### **6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study concluded that women artisans in Ilai seek for information purposely to address their information needs. This is mainly targeted towards the need to solve problems encountered in their various activities for daily survival. They seek for information actively and mainly for particular purpose. Based on the findings, it is recommended that appropriate channels of communication be made available to facilitate sourcing of information on their information needs. Projects such as good road network, uninterrupted power supply and conventional banking outfit should be made available in the area to foster sustainable poverty eradication

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