Information Needs and Source Preference of the Pastoral Nomads in Northern States of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
In an era in which government is gradually turning its attention to the disadvantageous groups, particularly those in the rural areas, there is a need for a study directed at bringing out some of the critical problems confronting some of these groups of disadvantaged people. Literature have indicated that one of such critical problems is understanding the information needs of some of the rural dwellers This will ultimately assist the government in designing functional information programs for the people. This study was therefore carried out to find out about the information needs and source preference of the postural nomads in Northern States of Nigeria. A methodological triangulation, involving a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodology (quan-qual, according to Creswell) was used for the study. In view of the fact that the population of the pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria is undeterminable, large sample theory, proposed by Kerlinger was used to provide the subjects of the study. Questionnaire supplemented by interview and focus group discussions were the instruments used for data collection. Data collected were categorized and analyzed using simple percentages. The study discovered that the information sources preference of the pastoral nomads were radio (as a formal source) and such primordial sources, as family, friends, Ardos etc (as informal sources).It was recommended that libraries, especially, public libraries should form partnership with radio organizations as well as the pastoral NGOs in order to design functional information source programme for the Nomads.

Introduction
Section 38 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended in 2011) recognized information and access to it as a fundamental human right. Information according to Ochogwu (1999), "is a basic resource, as fundamental as food and energy". Beyond the daily individual uses of information, it is (information) a powerful and persuasive force in the operation and functioning of society. Information is used daily to influence behaviour. It is information that makes all other resources available for individual socio-political and economic development. Lester and Koehler (2007) as quoted by Obiyan (2011), points out that "materials and energy resources are dependent on being recognized as such. He stresses further that all other resources are dependent on information and knowledge for their identification, evaluation and utilization. It is therefore not an over statement to posit that information is not only a significant social resources (Diso, 2005) but also, it is a necessary and indeed, an inevitable requirement of anybody. The need for information is equally as strong as the need for food. However, peoples need for information, like food, varies from one individual or group of individuals to another. Hardly you get two or more individuals seeking for the same type and quantity of information at the same time. Hence, pastoral nomads, like any other groups in Nigeria need information, which are undoubtly peculiar to them. The basic questions therefore are "who are the pastoral nomads? "For what do they need information?"

A nomad is a person without fixed places of domicile (Ezeomah, 1990). In other words, any person or group of persons who indulge in perpetual and purposeful movement is a nomad. Thus, pastoral nomads are groups of people who are always and perpetually on the move, primarily in search of foods for their animals. Ezeomah (1990) defined pastoral nomads as "ethnic socio professional groups which travel and migrate in large or small groups in search of means of livelihood within a community, a nation or across international boundaries". Awogbade (1991:P2) described this, a group of nomads more comprehensively as:

> People who depend for their livelihood on the management of ungulates which obtain their
> nourishment primarily from natural vegetation and in doing so, their daily and seasonal rounds
> [or movements] are determined by the needs of the animal for food, water, protection etcetera.

Pastoral nomads are thus mobile groups whose pattern of activity is set by the requirements of the animals. They move in tremendous distance (usually along the bush path(s) in search of pasture for their animals. In the course of their movement, they encounter different groups of people, whose culture and social life patterns differ markedly from theirs; different shapes of physical environment (Harsh or simple); different political, economic, social and religious situations and variety of problems born out of these contacts. No doubt, therefore, pastoral nomads require information in order to successfully cope with the demand of their socio-economic roles, as they move from place to place and in contact with different sets of people. What then are the sorts of information that the pastoral nomads need and what information source or sources best satisfy those information needs. Parts of the answers to these questions could best be located in the general information behaviour of the people.

Information Behaviour: What and How?

Information behaviour could be described as specific ways people, individually or in group, react to their distinct information needs. Rather than defining information behavior, Wilson (1997) prefers to list its component parts. Information behaviour, according to him (Wilson) includes:

> An information need and its driver, i.e. the factors that gives rise to an individual perception of need, the factor that affect individual's response to the perception of need [information seeking behaviour] and the processes or action involved in that response [information use].

In other words, information behaviour is comprised of information need, information seeking (or information grounds) and information use behaviour. Implied in the above definition of information behavior is the concept of information source, which is, the channel through which people satisfy their information needs. The four complementary concepts will be briefly elucidated for proper comprehension.

Information needs is conceptualized by Agada (1999) as a problem situation that requires resolution; 'a gap in individual's knowledge in sense making situation (Dervinand Nilan, 1986); 'an anomalous state of knowledge (ASK) (Belkin, et al, 1982); "what an individual ought to have for whatever reasons" (Aguolu, 1989); "cognitive state arising between a state of uncertainty and the information seeker's knowledge state, externalities, (environmental objects) and the new knowledge state desired (ATKINS, 1973, in Laster &Kochler, 2007). Need, which is the object of the phrase "information need" "is situational, according to Dervin (2003). That is, it (need) occurs in specific context, and that it is the situation or context that in large part, determines both what information will satisfy the need and how the information will be sought (information seeking behavior Iwhwhu (2012), Ormandy, 2010, Hearst, 2009, Hjorland, 2007).

Information seeking behavior is defined by Bello (2006) as "the distinct approach people, individually or in group, take to get information to satisfy their information needs". Erdelez, (2005) and Lester and Koehler, (2007) as cited in Aliu (2010), described information seeking behavior as a conscious or unconscious; intentional or unintentional browsing of environment or environmental objects (intrinsic and extrinsic objects) for information that may satisfy the browser's information needs. Lester and Koehler (2007) as reiterated by Robinson (2010) observed in their studies that most information seekers engage themselves in serendipitous browsing for information, which more often results in serendipitous finds or information encounter. According to Erdelez (2005), that is, accidental acquisition of relevant information. A very useful and instructive concept relating to information seeking behavior is the idea of an 'information grounds', developed by Fisher (2006). The idea of the information grounds is that a space for exchange of information is formed when individuals gather for some specific purpose and construct a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information". This kind of information setting or channels dissolves when the individuals or groups that form it disperse. Information ground is an information behavior that is highly common among the pastorals nomads in Nigeria.

The ultimate aim of any information is 'use' in whatever form or application (Umoru, 2010). Information use is the entire process of utilizing information or useful or organized data acquired, discovered, or obtained via one information source and another. Information source is the channel or the method through which people receive and communicate information. Information source varies according to the information needs that often dictate the source. People do not seek for the same source of information. "Play theory" as propounded by Dozier and Rice, (1984) and Shepherd, Duffy, Watters and Gugle (2001) (in Olabode, 2008) helps to explain why information seekers select or prefer to seek information from one set of sources over another. The major trust of this theory is that people's preference for one sources or set of sources of information instead of another is born out of the perceived reliability, validity, relevance and timeliness of the sources as well as the 'context' orientation of the information seeker. For example, as a result of the environmental (context) orientation of the information seeker, information sources are selected on the basis of primordial consideration-who is familiar to who. There are of course, a number of reasons why people prefer one source of information to another. These reasons vary from one individual or group of individuals to another. Discovering these reasons in relation to a specific group (pastoral nomads) is a further justification for this study.

Statement of Problem

Bello (2006) discovered in his studies of the pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigerian that pastoral nomads' information need is dictated primarily, among others, by their socio-cultural roles as specialized herders. In other words, the survival needs of their herds generally and always dictate the pastoralist information needs. Though pastoralists are regarded by some authors such as (Evans-Pritchard, 1940) as conservative sets of people, but it is difficult to exempt them from the human dynamics. It is therefore, necessary to find out whether the findings of Bello (2006) are still relevant in relation to the pastoral nomads of today.

It is also important to find out the source or sources through which the pastoral nomads get information to satisfy their information needs. And which of the identified information sources are often utilized by them, and accepted as the most preferred sources. Also in Bello (2006), it was discovered that Pastoral Nomads' choice

of information sources were dictated almost completely by primordial factors such as complete trust for information originating from the Kinsmen and friends or very close associates. With the increasing number of pastoral nomads receiving western education, in the present democratic politicking, do the pastoral nomads still rely on their usual sources of information? This and a few other questions establish the focus of this research.

Research Questions

This study was carried out basically to provide reliable answers to the following research questions:
1. What categories of human needs informed the information needs of the present day pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria?
2. Which information source or sources do the present day pastoral nomads utilize to satisfy their information needs?
3. Among the information sources pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria utilize to satisfy information needs , which of the information sources are the most preferred to the nomads?
4. What reasons are responsible for the preference of the information sources?
5. To what extent are the pastoral nomads satisfied with the preferred sources of information?

Research Objectives

The study was conducted to fulfill the following objectives
1. To identify the information needs of the pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria
2. To discover the information source or sources through which pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria utilize to meet their information needs.
3. To find out among the available information sources to the pastoral nomads the source or sources most preferred by the nomads in meeting their information needs.
4. To establish the reasons dictating the information source preference of the pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria.
5. To determine the level of satisfaction of the pastoral nomads with their most preferred source of information.

Research Methodology

This is more a qualitative than a quantitative study, thus, an interpretative survey research technique, which is an aspect of mixed methodology according to Creswell (2008) and as re-echoed by Kothari (2012) was employed. This is because of the subject of the study-pastoral nomads-most of who are illiterate and who are predominantly residing in the rural areas. Even in the rural areas, they have no fixed place of domicile. Since the context in which people live affects their general behaviour including their information behaviour, the idea to study nomads in their natural setting could not be ruled out. Studying people in their natural setting is one of the stock-in-trade of qualitative research (Creswell). Nevertheless, due to their large population, only a sample of them has been involved in the study.

In this study also methodological triangulation which involves the combination of questionnaire, interview, observation and focus-group study, was utilized for data collection. The questionnaire was employed to elicit information from the pastoral nomads. Interview instrument as well as focus group study was administered to pastoral NGOs, such as Myetti Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Association for the Promotion of Livestock Development in the Sahel Savana (APESS), Fulbe Development Association of Nigeria (FULDAN), Pastoral Resolves (PARES) etc. Since these NGOs work directly with the Nomads there is no gainsaying the fact that they are in appropriate position to provide useful information about the nomads.

The pastoral nomads were directly observed in their natural setting, especially at market stalls where they frequently exchange information. At this point also, available pastoral Ardos (Clan Heads) were interviewed and willing ones were involved in focus group discussions. It must be emphasized that access to the pastoral nomads at the market stall, was made possible by these groups of Ardos, who must be contacted and convinced about the mission of the research before access to the nomads is allowed. In some cases, a more superior officers, Dagechi (ward heads) or even Hakimi (District Head) would need to be contacted for permission to see and have any discussion with the pastoral nomads. Access to these superior officers is difficult but could be simplified through one kind of motivation or the other; certainly not physical cash. Records were taken of the observations and they were analyzed along with other data obtained from the administration of other data collection instruments utilized in this study. Collation of data collected was based on nominal scale, therefore, frequency count and simple percentages were used in the analysis.

The Results

These have been presented according to the major variables of the study, as exemplified by the research questions:

Research Question 1: What category of human needs informed the information needs of the pastoral nomads in northern states of Nigeria?

It is clear from the data collected from the pastoral nomads and as confirmed by the interview with the pastoral NGOs that the category of human needs, which have tremendous influence on the information needs of the pastoral nomads, were the physiological and safety needs (comprising of location of good pasture, water, free from human and animal deceases, human and animal raiding, natural disasters etc), all of which attracted 100% response rate from the three states Kano, Kaduna and Adamawa in Northern part of Nigeria. Other categories of human needs dictating the information needs of the pastoral nomads were social needs comprising of the desire to understand others to know and relate harmoniously with neighbours, to make good friends etc and esteem needs (comprising of self-respect, autonomy, achievement, social status etc). The response rate for both the social and esteem needs in all the three states varies from 80-95%. It is obvious from this finding that pastoral nomads information needs were strongly related to their primary socioeconomic and professional roles of herding of herbivore. This discovery is virtually the same with that of Bello (2006).

Research Question 2: Which information source or sources pastoral nomads in northern states of Nigerian utilize to satisfy their information needs?

2.1 Information Sources through which Pastoral Nomads in Northern States of Nigeria Meet their Information Needs

In a bid to satisfy information need, people tend to place premium on specific type of information source (Herrera, 2009). In line with this understanding, the pastoral nomads were required to tick, from the list of information sources, ranging from informal to formal sources, the ones they would like to use to satisfy their information needs. The following represents their responses.

Table 2.1; Information Sources utilized by the pastoral Nomads in Northern States of Nigeria

	Kano State N=275		Kaduna State N=155		Adamawa State N=150		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
A. Informal sources								
Family members	95	34.5	69	44.5	29	19.3	193	33.3
Neighbours	6	2.2	0	0	0	0	6	1.0
Friends	48	17.5	37	23.9	15	10	10.0	16.7
Acquaintances	3	1.1	0	0	0	0	3	0.5
Ardos	51	18.5	22	14.2	55	36.7	128	22.1
Imams	9	3.3	5	3.2	6	4	20	3.4
Pastors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Politicians	6	2.2	1	0.6	0	0	7	1.2
B. Formal sources								
Libraries	3	1.1	3	1.9	0	0	6	1.0
Books	9	3.3	0	0	0	0	9	1.6
Newspaper	2	0.7	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
Magazines	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Extension Agents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Radio	43	15.6	18	11.6	45	30	106	183
Grand Total 218 + 57	**257**	**100**	**155**	**100**	**150**	**100**	**580**	**100**

It is obvious from table 2.1 that pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria utilize informal information sources to meet their information needs. This fact is indicated by 78.8% of the respondents from the three selected states of Northern Nigeria. Substantial parts of their information needs were met frequently through, family members, Ardos, friends and other community leaders such as Imams. The interview responses also confirm the fact that the informal sources that pastoral nomads often used include friends, family members, and scouts. Pastoral nomads are generally fund of sending able body young men on errand to scout for information usually from members of their kindreds far off in another town or village. Such Information include the best and safety movement routes, the clan heads and the resident nomads that can be contacted for any other , usually, directional guide to intended destination. Pastoral nomads become resident nomads either because of their leadership status or their old age status. Among the formal sources the radio was the most used information source by the pastoral nomads in Northern State of Nigeria. This is not unconnected, according to Bello (2006), with the purpose for which pastoral nomads buy radio. Pastoral nomads use radio for both entertainment and as companion while travelling with their animals in the bush. This findings is in line with Ezeomah (1983) and St. de Croix (1956 as edited by G.K Dauda, 1999), observations in their respective studies that pastoral nomads

usually use four informal sources of information (Representative at the host community, scout, discussion at market stall and Ardo) and one formal source (Radio) to meet their information needs.

It was found that library extension agents, books and newspapers were the least used sources among the pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria. This is not surprising as majority of them (Pastoral Nomads) were illiterates. Despite the education policy (Nomadic Education) put in place to enhance the literacy level of the nomads, their value for books and newspapers as sources of information was still poor. The status of education of the pastoral nomads has not improved since 2006 (Bello), despite increase emphasis on nomadic education.

Research Question 3: Among the information sources pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria utilize to satisfy their information needs, which of the information sources are the most preferred to by the nomads?

3.1 Most Preferred Information Resources to the Pastoral Nomads in Northern States of Nigeria
Information generally, is provided for use. Thus, information that is most sought after and used is that which is congruent with the need for which it is required (Joseph & Kebem, 2011). If public libraries must enlist the patronage of the pastoral nomads (as they are expected to do as part of their social responsibilities) they must understand the information sources or sources most preferred by the pastoral nomads. This will help in drawing a valuable information provision project for the pastoral nomads. This is why it is considered important in this research to find out which information source or sources is or/are the most preferred to by the pastoral nomads, especially out of those that they actually utilize for their information needs. Thus, the responses to the research question 3 have been summarized in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Most Preferred Sources of Information by the Pastoral Nomads

Information Sources	Sample areas of study = N = 580						
	Kano State = 275		Kaduna State = 155		Adamawa State = 150		Total
Most preferred and utilized sources	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.%
Family members	101	37%	45	29%	41	27%	187(32%)
Friends	41	15%	22	14%	20	13%	83(15%)
Ardo	59	21%	27	18%	31	21%	117(20%)
Radio	74	27%	61	39%	58	39%	193(33%)
Total	275%	100%	155	100%	150	100%	580

It is obvious from table 3.1 that the most preferred source of information by the pastoral nomads in Northern States of Nigeria is radio, followed closely by information from family members. This observation indicates very clearly that pastoral nomads do not use radio just for entertainment, as earlier observed by Bello (2006). Radio according to Abdulrahman (2009), is a significant source of information for the pastoral nomads. From the interview responses, the pastoral NGOs also confirmed that radio has become an important companion to the pastoral nomads. This is because pastoral nomads often times, move alone with his/her animals in the bush. As a gregarious or social animal, the need to socialize, even with invisible persons, is very high among the pastoral nomads. Thus, radio, to a very large extent, reduces the tension associated with lack of satisfaction of this category of need – social needs. Some of the NGOs indicated that radio provide the nomads with requisite entertainment need. The more interesting is the entertainment, the less the nomads feel he/she is alone in the bush. Radio is really a companion to any pastoral nomads; a good substitute for the physical presence of another nomads, as a companion. These findings might also not be unconnected with the increasing acceptance of radio as a significant education tool for the nomads. Thus, quite a number of radio education programmes are designed for the nomads in general and pastoral nomads in particular. A high percentage of these pieces of information have direct relationship with the socio-professional roles of the pastoral nomads. Almost all the pastoral NGOs e.g. MACBAN, FULDAN have developed a number of job-related programmes which are regularly relayed through radio, to the pastoral nomads in Nigeria. It is therefore, important and instructive that public libraries, especially in Northern States of Nigeria, should equally endeavour to explore the possibility of using radio in their information dissemination services to the pastoral nomads. The radio is not only useful for entertainment, but, as Bello (2006) observed, it serves as a companion to them (nomads). As a companion it reduces the tension of loneliness. Family sources are still the chief sources of informal information for the pastoral nomads just as Bello (2006) recorded.

Research Question 4; what reason or reasons is or are responsible for the nomads preference for certain information source?

The idea of expressing preference for one thing in relation to another is often informed by one reason or another. From the focus group session had with the pastoral Ardos, it became very clear that pastoral nomads,

especially of the on-going generation are attached so much to radio because of the nature of information they often got from it. To them, radio provides relevant, reliable, valid and timely information. They also spoke about the accessibility of radio information. According to the Ardos, most of their highly needed information are available nowadays through radio and because of their attachment to radio, these information are no longer far-fetched. They are aware of the time when a particular information will be erred in the radio. All they need to do is simply to turn the radio button to the time and the information comes into hand effortlessly.

It was also gathered from the focus group interaction that information from the family groups, neighbors, friends, Ardos etc. are needed mostly to maintain social relationship, to show royalty and to sustain social cohesion. Thus, primordial information sources, according to some Ardos are gradually being superseded by radio as an information source, in terms of importance and relevance. Thus, their continuous relevance now depends mainly on primordial sentiments or consideration, as listed in this paragraph.

Research Question 5: To what extent are the pastoral nomads satisfied with the preferred sources of information.

From the list of "highly satisfied" "satisfy" "dissatisfied" and "highly dissatisfied" pastoral nomads were required to tick whichever of the option they considered best summarized their preferred sources of information. In their responses while 95% of the pastoral nomads ticked "highly satisfied" with radio as most preferred source of information, 89% of the nomad ticked "satisfied" with the family as a preferred source of information. Clearly pastoral nomads are satisfied with their two preferred sources of information but more with radio. This discovery confirmed earlier observations of Bello (2006) and AbdulRahman, (2009) that pastoral nomads are highly satisfied with both family and radio as sources of information.

Conclusion

There is no doubt therefore, that even though pastoral nomads still attach much importance to primordial informal sources of information, the very high rate accorded to radio as a formal source of information these days shows that the pendulum is gradually shifting towards formal sources of information. The libraries, especially public librarians should take note of this historic change, which was hitherto inconceivable by the nomads themselves as well as researchers in the areas.

Recommendations

Public librarians should try as much as possible to set up a committee in their libraries to brainstorm over how interpersonal and radio communication can be incorporated into the public library services.

Gone were the days when librarians sit tight in their offices waiting for customers or patrons to come to the library. Most important patrons may, for one reason or the other, not be able to come to the library yet satisfaction of their information needs is inevitable for a holistic individual and national development. It becomes imperative for the librarians to get up and do something positive about such patrons. For example, the librarians should comb the environment for requisite information, record them using audio and audio-visual mechanisms and process them as part of the library materials or information resources. They should also form partnership with radio organizations and the nomadic NGOs in order to deliver appropriate information to the people especially the nomads at the most needed time, place and by the right delivery package. Failure to do this tantamount to jettisoning one of the very important responsibilities of Librarians to another group of professionals to take. The cumulative effect of such negligence of duty is social and professional doom. We in the library services may become socially irrelevant and therefore unable to justify our continuous existence as librarians (self-influenced annihilation) or as social institutions, if we cannot think and come out with a better way of serving the public or some crucial segments or members of the public, such as the pastoral nomads. We must remind ourselves at this juncture that like the medical physicians, we are in the people-oriented profession. In the course of our professional services, our target audiences are the people, irrespective of their individual differences. Our success, as professionals, depends on the extent we are able to carry every group in a community along. This, no doubt is our aspiration, fulfillment of which dictate the degree of our satisfaction. We need to be proactive, decisive, committed and foresighted in our roles, which are almost completely social in all its ramifications.

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