



## Importance of Communication in Sustaining Nigeria Agriculture

**Ogidi, Armstrong Emmanuel**

Department of Agribusiness, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Nigeria | E-mail:

[armstrongogidi@gmail.com](mailto:armstrongogidi@gmail.com) | Tel: 08036228671; 07057240174

**Abstract** – Nigeria has abundant agricultural land. There are some challenges concerning the utilization and effectiveness of the various communication channels in agricultural extension services. There are problems associated with availability of communication channels used to disseminate farm innovation messages to the farmers. The main aim of this study is to examine the importance of communication in Nigeria agriculture. Lack of knowledge of the information needs of users constitutes formidable barriers to information communication. Information agents seem to be ignorant of users' information needs. Lack of cooperation among related information systems create barriers to information flow. Lectures, demonstrations, and shows, are also methods of information dissemination to both the elites and rural people. Community rural television stations should be established to feature special programmes targeted at rural farmers. Public television viewing and radio listening centers should be established to facilitate patronage of agricultural programmes featured by these mass media.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, communication, Nigeria, sustaining



## Importance of Communication in Sustaining Nigeria Agriculture

Ogidi, Armstrong Emmanuel

Department of Agribusiness, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Nigeria

**Abstract:** Nigeria has abundant agricultural land. There are some challenges concerning the utilization and effectiveness of the various communication channels in agricultural extension services. There are problems associated with availability of communication channels used to disseminate farm innovation messages to the farmers. The main aim of this study is to examine the importance of communication in Nigeria agriculture. Lack of knowledge of the information needs of users constitutes formidable barriers to information communication. Information agents seem to be ignorant of users' information needs. Lack of cooperation among related information systems create barriers to information flow. Lectures, demonstrations, and shows, are also methods of information dissemination to both the elites and rural people. Community rural television stations should be established to feature special programmes targeted at rural farmers. Public television viewing and radio listening centers should be established to facilitate patronage of agricultural programmes featured by these mass media.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, communication, Nigeria, sustaining

**Corresponding author** – E-mail: [armstrongogidi@gmail.com](mailto:armstrongogidi@gmail.com) | Tel: 08036228671; 07057240174

### 1. Introduction

Communities' in Africa has suffered from enjoying any meaningful development largely because of policy implementation gap artificially created by the African governments and leaders (Ogidi, 2014). Rural communities in Africa constitutes the larger percentage of the population whose information and developmental needs are not adequately met and consequently they have not been able to productively participate in the development process and enjoy the benefits thereof (Chester and Neelameghan, 2006). Equity and justice requires that any programme for socio-economic development, whether general or in a specific sector, should cover and benefit all sections of the society, irrespective of race, caste, colour, religion, culture and other social, economic or political differences (Ogidi, 2014).

Rural farmers can use various channels to improve their farming: farmers and other rural groups can easily use powerful multimedia training programmes with touch screens. Even if they are illiterates; farmers can get information about daily market prices on the radio or through e-mail notices posted at a local centre before taking products to a Market; rural midwives can get immediate information about particular health problems from microcomputer at a local clinic.

Nigeria has abundant agricultural land. There are some challenges concerning the utilization and effectiveness of the various communication channels in agricultural extension

services. There are problems associated with availability of communication channels used to disseminate farm innovation messages to the farmers. There are challenges with the relative usage of the channels by farmers (Ogidi, 2014). The farmer faces the challenge of the most effective type of channels to use. Lastly, the disseminated messages may not be relevant to the agricultural information needs of the farmers. Attempts were made by Ilevbaoje (1998), Jeffery (2001) and Obinne *et al.* (2000) to address some of these challenges. However, none of the studies was comprehensive enough to address all the questions raised. Moreover, there is need for generalizations about communication and the consequences for human activities to be continuously re-examined and re-tested against the realities of a changing social world. Thus Israel and Wilson (2006) have suggested that periodic studies be carried out to identify trends among audience.

### 1.1. Research Questions

- a) What is the relevance of communication channels in increasing agriculture production in Nigeria?
- b) How effective is communication channels in improving agriculture in Nigeria?
- c) What are the communication channels that can sustain agricultural production in Nigeria?

### 1.2. Research Objectives

The main aim of this study is to examine the importance of communication in Nigeria agriculture. The specific objectives are to:

- a) find out the relevance of communication channels in increasing agriculture production in Nigeria;
- b) analyze the effect of communication channels in improving agriculture in Nigeria; and
- c) examine the communication channels that can sustain agricultural production in Nigeria

## 2. Conceptual Clarification

The conceptual clarification will take into cognizance, two important concepts namely, the concept of agriculture and the concept of communication

### 2.1. Concept of Agriculture

The term agriculture refers to cultivation of land, rearing of animals, fishing, crop production, forestry and wildlife undertakings, and associated activities that aid food and fibre production to sustain livelihood (Obinne, Ndubilo and Ozowa, (2000). **Agribusiness:** It is also a field of study or an enterprise that is concerned with large-scale, inputs supply, production, processing, storage and marketing of agricultural products (Ogidi, 2014). In order words, it is also a market oriented or a commercial agricultural venture (Jeffery, 2001). It represents two part system made up of (1) the agricultural input sector (2) the production sector. Agriculture can be subsistent and mechanized depending on the capability of the farmer. Agriculture is concerned with profit maximization, because of this, management skills and expertise are needed for effective, efficient and proficient running of agri-based activities.

## 2.2. Concept of Communication

Communication is defined as channels that enable the easy conveyance of information from point “A” to point “B” (Ngwaimbi, 1995). Some of the communication types are discussed as follows:

### a) Audio visual channels

Films, slides or videotapes presented on any subject-matter relating to health, income generation and the general environment will be useful in educating the rural people. Audio-visual technologies offer rich opportunities for skills acquisition and in solving meaningful problems. Munyua (2000) observed that traditional and modern Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) could be used concurrently to speed up the circulation of information. Audio visual channels can also be in the form of drama, dance, folklore, group discussion, meetings, exhibitions, demonstrations, visits, farmers’ fields, schools, agricultural shows, radio, television, telephone calls and many others. Audio-visual media are popular with illiterate rural people. It gives them opportunity to see and discuss complete agricultural techniques before using them. Radio cassette players can be operated with batteries if the community can afford it. A battery television set will be very useful in the teaching of new skills. Radio stations are also a unique channel of communication for promoting agriculture in Nigerian (Opeke and Ifukor (2000).

### b) Inter-personal channels

This is simply referred to as face-to-face communication. It is the exchange of ideas and information between sender and receiver (Aderibigbe, 1990). The mode of interaction is usually of a conversational nature and involves the exchange of either verbal or non-verbal information between two or more people in a face-to-face or voice-to-voice setting. Interpersonal communication dominates our activities at home, office, market and elsewhere. It helps to break the barrier of formal relationships, generates warmth and creates harmony that is necessary for socio-economic development.

### c) Information Technology

The intelligent use of information technology increases the already tremendous potential of information systems and services. e.g. vast information storage capability, fast and inexpensive transmission of information to an entire region, links between different types of media, networking capacity, and provision of other means of communication other than face-to-face (Zijp, 1994). However, there has been a great deal of concern about the applications of information technology in developing countries. Information technology transfer from developed to developing countries, has sometimes led to disappointment, disillusionment, and many problems or even failures (Davies, 1985). Software is also required as a means of communication with farmers via mobile devices and computers.

## 3. Review of Previous Related Studies

### 3.1. Relevance of communication channels in increasing agriculture production in Nigeria

The study by Orata (2014) aimed to: find out the relevance of communication channels in increasing agriculture production in Nigeria. Research method used is descriptive research. Data was collected from documents. The population for the study was 185. Research findings:

Lack of knowledge of the information needs of users constitutes formidable barriers to information communication. Information agents seem to be ignorant of users' information needs. Lack of cooperation among related information systems create barriers to information flow. Sampling technique: Taro-Yamane sampling technique was used giving us a sample size of 102. The study recommended that: Information agents should study the users in order to discover and use the best acceptable method to disseminate information to their audience. Functional literacy should be encouraged among rural people. This will enable them learn how to read, write and acquire information through the use of multi channels

### **3.2. Effect of communication channels in improving agriculture in Nigeria**

This study by (Mbanasor, 2015) is aimed at the examining effect of communication channels in improving agriculture in Nigeria. A sample of 324 farm families made up of 36 each from nine extension blocks in Benue State, Nigeria was used for the study. A 4-stage stratified random sampling technique was used to select the farmer-respondents. This was in line with the agricultural and ecological division of the state into zones, blocks, cells and sub-cells. Research method used in this study is cross sectional field survey was carried out to obtain required primary data for the study. An interview schedule was designed to elicit information from the farmers since most of them were not educated enough to be administered with questionnaire. Validity of the instrument was ascertained through Jury method after the scrutiny of relevant experts. The test-retest method of affirming instrument reliability was employed afterwards. The population for the study was made up of all the farmers in Nigeria. Research findings indicate that: Lack of knowledge of the information needs of users constitutes formidable barriers to information communication. Information agents seem to be ignorant of users' information needs. Lack of cooperation among related information systems create barriers to information flow.

### **3.3. Communication channels that can sustain agricultural production in Nigeria**

The study by Adebayo (2015) is aimed at analyzing the communication channels that can sustain agricultural production in Nigeria. Research method used in this study is descriptive research via questionnaire used for data collection. The population was made up of all female farmers from the three senatorial districts that made up Delta State. Three communities were selected to represent each of the senatorial districts using Multi Stage Sampling Design. 1000 respondents were selected for this study. Three communities were selected to represent each of the senatorial districts. Research findings show that: a) It is very interesting to observe in some of the rural areas, the use of Internet services by the rural female farmers. b) The rural farmers were made to know about the activities of the ministry of Agriculture in Delta State and were compelled to form Rural Farmers Agricultural Cooperative Societies. Based on the study, the following are the recommendations: a) Adequate training and awareness given to the rural female farmers should be promoted by the government. b) The state government should engage the services of veterinary doctors to assist poultry female farmers with minimum charges or subsidized amounts.

#### 4. Discussion

Communication, entertainment and information are important for rural living, as they are for urban. Bame (1990) noted that access to modern communication media, makes rural lives more productive and comfortable. Today, rural projects, businesses, schools and growing number of households make daily use of audio-visual equipments like radio, television, video, mobile phone and so on. The services are wide, and they could be as crucial as a 2-way radio link between a remote clinic and an urban hospital or a computer for a rural NGO office or a radio cassette player used in a household for entertainment. The modern communication equipment for rural people such as radio, telephone, video and video-player and public address system GSM are very important channels of information acquisition and dissemination to rural people.

Aboyade (1985) did not consider the library a luxury in any community. She sees it as an essential organ in provision of information for developmental programmes. She explained that the library is often seen in the light of educated elitist users and not associated with rural non-reading people. She suggested that the ideal situation would be that every village or community should have a library in form of "A General Information Centre" (GIC) under the care of a supervisor. Each community should be able to develop the type of library services that suit and enhance its social goals and development objectives. Hansan (1991) stated that each community has to collect and keep information about the community life so that future generations will have something to build upon.

Lectures, demonstrations, and shows, are also methods of information dissemination to both the elites and rural people. To support this, Lapido (1990) emphasized that lectures and demonstrations are effective means of passing new information to a group. For example, a lecture on oral rehydration therapy (ORT) may be combined with the demonstration of how to prepare the sugar/salt solution for the treatment of diarrhoea. Ajakaiye (1978) suggested that agricultural shows and exhibitions should be used to educate farmers on improved methods of farming. It offers opportunity to farmers to see and consider for adoption, results of materials used in research institutes and agro-allied concerns; and it helps farmers in assessing the success of previous efforts and in formulating policies that would help farming population of rapid agricultural development, Aina (1986) opined that it is an excellent technique for reaching a larger number of farmers with convincing evidence of the efficiency of improved farm practice.

#### 5. Conclusion

The channels of communication that are currently used by various agents to disseminate information to farmers are elitist and urban-centred. This, therefore tend to further widen the information gap between the agents and the users. There is need for proper classification of information and assessment of information acquisition and dissemination channels to bridge the gap between information providers and information agents and rural dwellers.

Interpersonal channels were generally found to be more available, accessible and used by the farmers than the mass media to obtain information on improved farm technologies in Nigeria. Relatives/friends/neighbours constituted the most regularly available, accessible and used interpersonal channels. Extension agents were not readily available and used by the

farmers although it was mentioned as the most preferred communication channel. Radios stations feature regular agricultural programmes and it is the most often used mass medium by the farmers in Nigeria. Television and newspapers were hardly accessible to and used by the farmers. Many farmers indicate television as the most preferred channel if it were available and accessible to them. They should be resuscitated. Community rural television stations should be established to feature special programmes targeted at rural farmers. Public television viewing and radio listening centers should be established to facilitate patronage of agricultural programmes featured by these mass media.

## References

- Aboyade B.O. (1985). Communication Potential of Library for non literate: An Experiment in Providing Information Service in a Rural setting Library. 34(3): 245-248.
- Adebayo, R. (2015). Communication channels that can sustain agricultural production in Nigeria. *ijur Journal of Information and Communication*, 11(3): 78-88
- Aderibigbe, A.S. (1990). *An Evaluation of the Efforts of Communication Pattern on the Adoption of IITA Research Findings by the Grass Root Farmers in Ayepe, Alabata and Ijaiyi Village in Oyo State*. M.L.A. Dissertation, Department of Communication and Language Arts, University of Ibadan. 97
- Achugbue, E.I. and Anje, S.O. (2013). ICTs and Information Needs of Rural Female Farmers in Delta State, Nigeria. *Journal of Library Philosophy and Practice*, 5(10):01-07.
- Aina, L.O. (1988). Agricultural Information Provision in Nigeria. *J. Libr. Arch. Info. Special*, 2(4): 214.
- Ajakaiye P (1978). Modern Technology transfer in Agriculture. *Agricultural Research Institute Agricultural Newsletter*, 19(3): 105.
- Bame, K.N. (1990). Some Strategies of Effective use of Research Information in Africa: Some Ghanaian and other Africa Experiences: In Arnold, E. and Nitechki, A. *Culture and Development in Africa*. New York: N.S Africa World Press. pp. 131-143.
- CTA (1996). The role of information for rural development in ACP countries: review and perspectives. Proceedings of an international seminar, Montpellier, France, 12 – 16 June, 1995. Aniane: Louma Production, pp. 117 - 132.
- Ifukor, M.O. (2013). Channels of information acquisition and dissemination among rural dwellers. *International Journal of Library and Information Science*, 5(10):306-312.
- Ilevboje, I.E. (1998). Determinants of utilization of selected information sources by farmers in Benue and Plateau states of Nigeria. *J. Agric. Rural Dev.*, 6(1): 1 -7
- Israel, G.D. Wilson KM (2006). Sources and channels of information used by educational program clients. *J. Appl. Comm.*, 90 (4): 55-78
- Jeffery, M. (2001). Mass media monitoring and evaluation. Cooperative Extension centre/Improved Farmer Participation in Research and Extension, Benue, University of Agriculture, Makurdi.
- Ithiel de Sola, P. (1983). Traditional Media in Information. New York, John Wiley pp. 81-89.

- Ladipo, O.A. (1990). *The Experience of the Community Based Distribute Programmes. University in Training Village Health Workers. The Use of Volunteer Village Health Workers and Traditional Birth Attendance Nigeria experience* Aroo, S. (Ed.). Lagos: Federal Ministry of Health pp. 12-32.
- Mbanasor, O.G. (2015) Effect of communication channels in improving agriculture in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(5): 228-232
- Munyua, B. (2000). Information Management in Africa: An uncharted terrain. *FID News Bulletin*, 4: 185-186.
- Ngwaimbi, E. (1995). *Rural Mass Communication* Westport C. T. Greenwood Press p. 204.
- Obinne, C.P., Ndubilo, E.O. and Ozowa, V.N. ( 2000) . Mass media and agricultural innovations diffusion in Benue State, Nigeria. *J. Soc. Pol. Stud.*, 1: 54 – 62.
- Ogidi, A.E. (2014). Modern Channels of Information used for Agriculture in Rural Farm Communities in Nigeria. *SCSR Journal of Development (SCSR-JD)*, 1(4): 78 – 89.
- Okwu, O.J. and Shimayohol, D. (2011). Extension Communication Channels' usage and Preference by Farmers in Benue State. *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, 3(5):88-94.
- Opeke, R. and Ifukor, M.O. (2000). An Analysis of Information Environment of women in Ukwuani local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review*, 18(1&2): 31-37.
- Orata, P. (2014). Relevance of communication channels in increasing agriculture production in Nigeria. *International of Agriculture and Agribusiness*, 4(4): 87-107