

TRAINING NEEDS OF RURAL WOMEN ON LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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Rural women face barriers in accessing training as a result of low literacy levels, domestic obligations and gender biasness of training that is targeted primarily at men. The research is design to assess the training needs of rural women on livestock management in Niger State, Nigeria. To achieve the study objectives, multi – stage random sampling technique was used to select 117 respondents from fourteen (14) rural areas. Interview schedule was used to elicit data from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and mean score to identify the areas of training needs of rural women on livestock management in the study area. The result shows that majority (75.20%) of the respondents were in the active age bracket of between 21- 40 years with low level of literacy and extension service delivery. The major livestock management activities undertaken by the respondents were feeding and watering of livestock (89.74%), cleaning and maintenance of livestock sheds (82.91%) and construction of livestock sheds (67.52%). The priority areas of training needs with high mean score were how to identify sick animals (3.94), how to identify symptoms of common diseases (3.84), how to treat common animal diseases (3.83) and how to select good breeds of livestock (3.76). The major constraints experienced by rural women on livestock managements includes inadequate extension service on livestock management (88.90%), inadequate access to credit facilities (88.90%), gender barrier (84.60%), inadequate capital (83.80%) and inadequate information on livestock management practices (80.30%). The involvement of female extension staffs in conducting training for rural women on livestock management will help in checking the discriminations due to gender barrier and religious discrimination to provide maximum education opportunities to rural women regarding livestock production and management strategies.

Key words: Rural women, Livestock and Training needs.

INTRODUCTION

The role of women in fighting current food crisis cannot be underestimated. In Africa, women produce 78 percent of the continent's food, including meat from livestock on subsistence and small land holdings with very limited access to training and other production resources (Wilberforce, 2001). Livestock production is a major income generating activities that offer employment to large proportion of rural women in Africa, including Nigeria. Livestock plays a key role in maintaining rural livelihoods of the farmers by providing food, traction power, manure, raw material, cash security, social and cultural identity, medium of exchange, means of savings and investments (Luqman, Shahbaz, Ahmed Khan and Safdar, 2013). Women play a major role in livestock production in most developing countries. According to Farinde and Ajayi (2005), Nigeria women's role in agriculture does not stop in crop production alone but encompasses other sub-sector of agriculture such as livestock. The foremost tasks performed by women in livestock production include milking, cleaning of barns, carrying and cutting grasses, grazing and mixing fodders. However, despite women's significant roles in livestock management, training programmes about its management in rural areas is far from acceptable level (Rousan, 2007). Similarly, as result of gender biasness that still prevails, agricultural policies on the whole, do not address the needs of women farmers adequately (FAO, 1989).

According to Jacob and George (2013) "Training is an organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him/her attain a require level of knowledge or skills". Training plays an important role in the advancement of human performance in a given situation through acquisition of systematic knowledge, skills, competencies and practices as result of teaching vocational or practical skills and knowledge that leads to improving ones productivity in a given situation. Through training individual becomes functionally effective and efficient in the accomplishment of a given task through application of knowledge and skills learnt on completion of the training. Effective training gives a clear picture of how the trainees will need to use information after training in place of local practices so as to improve his production capacity (Sajeev, Singha and Venkatasubramanian, 2012). Although training plays a significant role in assisting women livestock farmers in identifying their own challenges, initiating change and understanding of how training could impact on their lives and activities. However, women face significant barriers in accessing training as a result of low literacy levels, domestic obligations and gender biasness of training that is targeted primarily at men. Addressing these challenges to improve rural women's access to advanced and more relevant skills acquisition, training is an important step in increasing agricultural productivity especially livestock production so as to boost the rural women's income (Collett and Gale, 2009).

Despite the potential of livestock as a source of income and poverty reduction for farming households, livestock productivity is low in rural areas. Livestock owners especially women are constrained by poor access to markets and extension support services, weak institutions, and lack of appropriate training. Throughout the world, farm women have very limited access to training facilities regarding livestock production and management (Rousan, 2007). Conducting a research on the training needs of rural women in livestock management opens up the crucial steps towards identifying the area of farmers' interest, design and development of curriculum that can best suit to the existing real conditions of the rural women involved in livestock farming (Sajeev, Singha and Venkatasubramanian, 2012). Training needs assessment of rural women involved in livestock management is required to serve as a base for planning strategy for the success of any development intervention to boost livestock production in the study area. It is against this back drop, the research is design to assess the training needs of rural women on livestock management in Niger State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: describe the socio-economic characteristic of rural women in the study areas, determine the level of involvement of rural women in livestock management in the study area, identify the training needs of rural women on livestock management in the study area and identify the constraints experienced by women in livestock management the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in agricultural zone 1 of Niger State. The study area falls in guinea savannah zone with an annual rainfall of between 1000mm – 1200mm and has an average temperature of 27°C to 34°C. To achieve the study objectives, multi – stage random sampling technique was used through purposive selection of the zone based on prior knowledge of high concentration of rural women with few livestock. From the zone, three Local Government Areas were randomly selected for the study. A total of 117 respondents were randomly selected from fourteen (14) rural areas based on their proportion of the total. Interview schedule was used to elicit data from the respondents. The responses were analyzed using frequency counts and mean score. Areas of training needs for rural women in livestock production and management were identified with the help of 4 point Likert scale and scored as: Strongly needed (Sn) = 4, Moderately needed (Mn) = 3, Least needed (Ln) = 2, Not needed (Nn) = 1. Aggregate mean of the Likert scale regarding areas of training need was calculated which was 2.5 and considered as a decision point. The score was rated as follows, 2.5 and above is considered highly needed and less than 2.5 not needed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents: Keeping in view the important roles played by socio – economic characteristics in social research. The following socio – economic characteristics were studied: Age: Age is a major determinant that shows the level of performance in every human activity that needs to be productive; it influences ones behavior and widens the vision of an individual through experience. Age also influences individuals' ability in taking rational decisions regarding the adoption of latest and improved agricultural technologies (Luqman *et al.*, 2013; Tyabo *et al.*, 2014; Rehman, Muhammad, Ashraf and Hussain; 2011). The result in Table 1 shows that majority (75.20%) of the respondents were in the age bracket of between 21- 40 years. This is an indication that they are young adults who are still strong and capable of undertaking rigorous activities in livestock management effectively. This findings can be collaborated with results of Luqman *et al.*(2013) who reported that majority of the rural women involved in livestock management and production are within the middle age range of 31-45 years.

Education: Education leads to development of individual's mental ability to gain knowledge about a particular concept which ultimately leads to change in behavior, attitudes and practices. Good level of education can influence individual's ability to higher economic returns, better access to technology and sources of information (Mamen and Paxson, 2000). The result in Table 1 indicated that only 18.60% of the respondents had acquired one form of formal education or the other. This implies that majority of the respondents have low level of literacy. The low level of literacy may not be unconnected to the importance given to a male child in acquiring education and the culture of the area that preaches early marriage for female child. This can lower their level of economic productivity, social and political participation, and low access to adequate information on livestock management techniques.

Access to extension service: Level of access of rural women involved in livestock production and management to extension services is expected to enhance their knowledge, skills and competency on livestock management techniques. The result in Table 1 revealed that majority (82.10%) of the respondents indicated not having access to extension services on livestock production and management in the study area. Hence, the level of extension services to disseminate improved system of livestock management is low in the study area. The low level of extension services may have negative effect on management practices to adopt, level of understanding and usage of knowledge on livestock management strategies. According to Laogun (2005), frequency of extension contact and poor sources of information on how to apply improved techniques are factors which affect farmer's response to adapt management practices.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the study area (n = 117)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		
<20	10	8.50
21 - 30	40	34.20
31 - 40	48	41.00
41 - 50	17	14.50
>50	2	1.70
Educational Status		
No formal education	22	18.80
Quranic	72	61.50
Primary	9	7.70
Secondary	10	8.50
Tertiary	4	3.40
Access to Extension service		
Yes	21	17.90
No	96	82.10

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Level of Involvement of Rural Women in some selected Livestock Management Activities: Level of involvement of rural women in livestock management outlines detail information about the extent of their participation in different stages of livestock management such as feeding and watering, milking and milk processing, rearing of calf, making feed concentrate, cutting of fodder and construction of livestock sheds. Table 2 showed the level of frequency of participation of the respondents in different livestock management activities in the study area. The result in Table 2 revealed that the major livestock management activities undertaken by the respondents are feeding and watering of livestock (89.74%), cleaning and maintenance of livestock sheds (82.91%) and construction of livestock sheds (67.52%). On the contrary, the least task undertaken by rural women on livestock management were making feed concentrate (19.66%) and milking and milk processing (39.32%). The reason behind the least participation of rural women in these activities may be as result of inadequate access to technical expertise and knowledge regarding these livestock management tasks. This implies that upgraded knowledge and skill is much required in these areas so as to boost their efficiency and effectiveness in livestock management (Farinde and Ajayi, 2005).

Table 2: Distribution of respondent's level of involvement in some selected livestock management activities (n = 117)

Selected livestock management activities	Frequency	Percentage*	Rank
Feeding and watering of livestock	105	89.74	1 st
Cleaning and maintenance of livestock sheds	97	82.91	2 nd
Rearing of calf	53	45.30	4 th
Making feed concentrate	23	19.66	7 th
Cutting of fodder	47	40.17	5 th
Construction of livestock sheds	79	67.52	3 rd
Milking and milk processing	46	39.32	6 th

Source: Field survey, 2014.

*Percentage added to more than 100 due to multiple responses

Priority areas of Training Needs on Livestock Management: Data on Table 3 revealed that rural women had high mean score on how to identify sick animals (3.94), how to identify symptoms of common diseases (3.84) how to treat common animal diseases (3.83) and how to select good breeds of livestock (3.76). Other priority areas of training needs indicated by rural women include: how to make feed concentrate (3.44), how to vaccinate livestock (3.36) and how to compound balance diet using locally available resources. The perception of the rural women on the need to acquire training on the above mentioned livestock management activities can be connected to the technicalities involve in carrying out these activities. Other reasons can also be associated to the non availability of professional at the odd hours and the financial burden that can be encountered in the process of conducting some of these activities especially making of feed concentrate, vaccination, identification and treatment of common sick animal diseases. This finding can be related to the results of Jacob and George (2013) who reported that vaccination, timely identification and treatment of common animal diseases and compounding balance feed using locally available resources were among the pressing needs of rural women in livestock management. On the other hand, the result further showed areas where training are least need/ not needed with

low mean score as indicated by the rural women were how to feed and water animals (2.43), how to dictate animals on heat (2.35) and how to process milk (1.85).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to priority areas of training needs on livestock management in the study area

Priority areas of training needs	Sn	Mn	Ln	Nn	M(SD)	Remarks
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)		
How to identify sick animals	101(94.0)	7(6.0)	-	-	3.94(0.23)	Needed
How to identify symptoms of common diseases	102(87.2)	12(10.3)	3(2.6)	-	3.84(0.42)	Needed
How to treat common animal diseases	101(86.3)	13(11.1)	3(2.6)	-	3.83(0.43)	Needed
How to select good breeds of livestock	94(80.3)	18(15.4)	5(4.3)	-	3.76(0.51)	Needed
How to make feed concentrate	63(53.8)	43(38.5)	7(6.0)	1(0.9)	3.44(0.68)	Needed
How to vaccinate livestock	60(51.3)	43(36.8)	11(9.4)	3(2.6)	3.36(0.76)	Needed
How to compound balance diet using local available resources	42(35.9)	46(39.3)	15(12.8)	14(12.0)	2.99(0.98)	Needed
How to feed and water animals	24(20.5)	28(23.9)	40(34.2)	25(21.4)	2.43(1.04)	Not needed
How to detect animal on heat	25(21.4)	28(23.9)	27(23.1)	37(31.6)	2.35(1.13)	Not needed
How to process milk	14(12.0)	14(12.0)	30(25.6)	59(50.4)	1.85(1.04)	Not needed

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Constraints experienced by rural women on livestock management: The result on Table 4 revealed that, the major constraints experienced by rural women on livestock managements includes inadequate extension service on livestock management (88.90%), inadequate access to credit facilities (88.90%), gender barrier (84.60%), inadequate capital (83.80%) and inadequate information on livestock management practices (80.30%). Proper dissemination of information through adequate provision of extension services coupled with training on livestock management techniques can serve as a key factor in driving change towards development of rural women's knowledge on livestock management techniques which can lead to improvement in their production. The involvement of female extension staffs in conducting training for rural women on livestock management will help in checking the discriminations due to gender barrier and religious discrimination of not allowing male counterparts' access to females especially in some Muslim communities that disallow access of matured male to married women.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents on the constraints experienced on livestock management

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage*
Inadequate capital	98	83.80
Inadequate information on livestock management	94	80.30
Inadequate extension service on livestock management	104	88.90
Inadequate access to credit facilities	104	88.90
Religious misinterpretation	79	67.50
Gender barrier	99	84.60

Source: Field survey, 2014.

*Percentage added to more than 100 due to multiple responses

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has revealed that majority of the respondents are in the age bracket of between 21- 40 years with low level of literacy and the level of extension services to disseminate improved system of livestock management is also low. The major livestock management activities undertaken by the respondents are feeding and watering of livestock, cleaning and maintenance of livestock sheds and construction of livestock sheds. The priority areas of training needs on livestock management are how to identify sick animals, how to identify symptoms of common diseases, how to treat common animal diseases and how to select good breeds of livestock. The major constraints experienced by rural women in livestock managements includes inadequate extension service on livestock management, inadequate access to credit facilities, gender barrier, inadequate capital and inadequate information on livestock management. Rural women should be advised to form cooperative societies to ease conduction of training, information dissemination on livestock development and motivated through credit facilities to boost their production capacity. The involvement of female extension staffs in conducting training for rural women on livestock management will help in checking the discriminations due to gender barrier and religious discrimination

to provide maximum education opportunities to rural women regarding livestock production and management strategies.

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