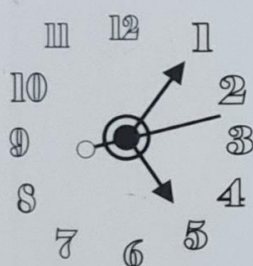




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Contributions are invited from all over the world, and especially from scholars and practitioners working on literacy, adult education and development in general in Nigeria, and other African countries in particular. Book reviews and notes on organisations and agencies as well as research projects and reports of recent conferences are also welcome.

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Assessment of Pastoralist Women's Empowerment and Skills Acquisition in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Pastoralist systems are heavily dependent on livestock for survival but this has been incessantly threatened by the impact of climate change. In this regard, there is a need for an alternative strategy to socio-economic development of pastoralist women, which can be actualized through education and skills acquisition in order to cope with socio-economic shocks. Emphasis on the pastoralist women's need to diversify their income into non-pastoralist ventures could serve as a means of economic empowerment. This study therefore sought to identify the perception of pastoralist women about skills acquisition, the kind of alternative skills that can be acquired for income generation, sources of information and the factors limiting skills acquisition for sustainable development of the pastoralist system. The study was carried out in Kwara State using a questionnaire and interview schedule to elicit information from 120 respondents. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used in testing the hypothesis. The result showed that the

majority of the pastoralist women engage in livestock-related economic activities but they have a strong inclination to acquire education and skills in non-pastoral enterprises. Thus, the establishment of skills acquisition centres by government for pastoralist-women is highly recommended. This would promote economic empowerment and sustainable agricultural development.

Keywords: Livelihood Security, Non-pastoralist Ventures, Socio-economic Shocks, Income Diversification

Introduction

One of the major Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which Nigeria aims to achieve is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger with the target of halving the proportion of people who earn less than a dollar a day through skills acquisition services (Ikegwu et al., 2014). Education, especially skills acquisition, has been described as the recipe for empowering, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating avenues for employment and wealth creation while instilling self-sufficiency and reliance (Isaac, 2011). Skills acquisition is the ability to learn a skill and this can be intellectual: learning to listen, speak, read and write or manual: learning to build or make something. Skills acquisition is an important means of empowerment for women and it helps them to actualise their economic potentials, thereby improving their standard of living. Skills acquisition is key to improving rural productivity, income generating opportunities and promoting sustainable rural development.

Studies have shown that women pastoralists are often marginalized because of their limited decision-making role (Mortimore et al., 2008; Catley et al., 2013; Livingstone & Ruhindi, 2013). Though women can be considered to be more vulnerable than men, they may more easily cope with difficult situations and make the best use of economic and social opportunities afforded them. Thus, people living in remote areas, especially women, are in dire need of skills that will help

improve their livelihood and contribute to household income. Pastoralist women are left with the care of the household owing to the migratory nature of their husbands. Despite the fact that their husbands are rarely around to fend for them, the women are further constrained as culture deters them from engaging in formal economic activities (Meagher, 2000 as cited in Aderinoye-Abdulwahab, 2012). In spite of women's contribution to the livelihood of the household, they are faced with various limitations that inhibit them from maximising their potentials for development. Cultural values and social norms also hinder pastoralist women from accessing resources such as finances and information (Aderinoye-Abdulwahab, 2012).

Pastoralist women lack access to information at all levels, adding to their lack of awareness in decision making. For a variety of reasons many pastoralists have not received formal education. As a result, they are likely to be illiterate and non-numerate. Traditionally nomadic or semi-nomadic societies have relied on oral tradition and bartering of goods, thus there has been little need for the ability to write or do arithmetic (Gardner, 2003 & Flintan, 2008). Providing knowledge through skills acquisition is believed, will enhance their status and boost their confidence and would likely compensate for their lack of literacy skills. As pressure has increased on pastoral societies and economies to become more diversified, livelihoods based on livestock have also become more challenging. Pastoralist women's role in income generation is growing as the need to diversify away from livestock-based pastoral systems is increasingly becoming a necessity. The shift away from livestock-based income can be enhanced through alternative income using skills acquisition to promote well-being and development of the pastoralists. This will translate into socio-economic empowerment for the women. Empowerment refers to having a role in the control and access to resources and related decision making processes. Women empowerment is about equipping them with survival strategy which offers them the choice to live their lives in the way they want. It is also a method which allows greater opportunities for the women to

execute important decisions, a role which was never carried out by those underprivileged women in the past. According to Noreen (2011) empowerment is to create options, acquisition of capabilities and applying negotiating skill through confidence, and having a right in controlling a person's beliefs and abilities. Empowerment also means having access to resources, assets and services.

Statement of the Problem

The primary concern of the pastoralist woman is to ensure the survival of the household. Despite challenges faced, they do find means to ensure that their households' needs are met. The risks affecting pastoral societies include drought, famine, political instability, sedentarization, urban migration and conflict (Fratkin et al., 2012). These factors predispose pastoralist women to social and environmental vulnerability, which have a negative influence on income generation for livelihood sustainability of the pastoralist system.

Thus, promoting skills acquisition and participation of pastoralist women in training, education and economic empowerment is important in increasing the income and sustenance of their households' livelihood. Since pastoralist women might be hindered by culture and lack of information, they need to depend on other income sources to secure their livelihood. Hence, the need for skills acquisition in other income generating activities and livelihood diversification options. It is as a result of the aforementioned that this study aims to analyse the response of pastoralist women to skills acquisition.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Describe the socio-economic characteristics of the pastoralist women.
2. Identify the types of skills acquired by the pastoralist women in the study area.
3. Identify their preferred options of skills acquisition and empowerment.

4. Examine the perception of pastoralist women about skills acquisition and empowerment.
5. Identify the constraints limiting pastoralist women from skills acquisition.

The hypothesis tested for the study was:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the type of skill acquired and the constraints faced by the pastoralist women.

Methodology

The study was carried out among pastoralist women in Kwara State, Nigeria. The target population was the pastoralist women in the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) zones in the state. A questionnaire and interview schedule were used to elicit information from the respondents. The study adopted the multi-stage sampling procedure. Stage one involved random selection of two ADP zones from the four zones (A, B, C and D). The two selected zones are B and C and they have two and five local government areas (LGAs) respectively. Stage two involved purposive selection of four LGAs from the selected two ADP zones. These LGAs are Edu, Ilorin east, Moro and Asa. Stage three involved the extraction of thirty pastoralist women from each of the selected LGAs and this constituted a sample frame of one hundred and twenty respondents. The data was subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used were frequencies, percentages, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in testing the hypothesis.

Findings

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The majority were in the age range of ≤ 30 (46%) and 31-40 years (48%). This implies that the women are in their active and productive years. The study also indicates that the majority of the women (95.8%) receive Qur'anic education. This is not surprising as all (100%) of the women are Muslim. It was further observed that they have no formal education (Table 1).

This might be due to the migratory lifestyle of pastoralists as well as lack of educational facilities in their areas. The majority (79.2%) are married and around 60% come from polygamous families. This further suggests that they are indeed of the Islamic faith as the religion accepts polygamy. Most of the women favour large household size. In a pastoralist setting, the larger the household size, the more the number of hands available both for herding and helping with household chores.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the pastoralist women

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
< 30	46	38.3
31 – 40	58	48.3
41 – 50	12	10.0
51 and above	4	3.4
Total	120	100.0
Level of Education		
Qur'anic education	115	95.8
Primary education	4	3.4
Secondary education	1	0.8
Total	120	100.0
Religion		
Islam	120	100.0
Christianity	-	-
Total	120	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	12	10.0
Married	95	79.2
Divorced	1	0.8
Widowed	12	10.0
Total	120	100.0
Family Structure		
Monogamy	47	39.2
Polygamy	73	60.8
Total	120	100.0
Household Size		
<3	10	8.3
4 – 6	46	38.3
7 – 9	51	42.5
>10	13	10.9
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Types of skills acquired by the pastoralist women

Findings in Table 2 show that 100% of the pastoralist women have acquired mainly livestock-related skills, such as milking, cheese making and butter making, even though the acquisition of such skills are not based on improved methods. Skills acquisition is knowledge acquired through training which can be intellectual or by learning a handiwork. Also, with regards to non-livestock related skills, 62.5 % indicated that they have acquired hairdressing skill, 5% indicated that they have acquired skill in tailoring and 8.3% indicated ability in trading of foodstuff and houseware. This suggests that the women lack skills needed to improve their livestock-related processing activities in the same manner that they lack skills that will encourage or inspire them into non-livestock related diversification options in order to improve their standard of living.

Table 2: Distribution of pastoralist women based on of the type of skill acquired

Item no	Types of skills acquired by the pastoralist women	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Milking	120	100
2	Cheese making	120	100
3	Butter making	120	100
4	Veterinary skill	6	5
5	Hairdressing	65	62.5
6	Tailoring	6	5
7	Others	10	8.3

Source: Field Survey, 2016 (Multiple responses)

Preferred skills acquisition option by the pastoralist women

Table 3 further shows the distribution of pastoralist women based on the types of skills acquisition they prefer. The findings show that all of the women indicated a high affinity for skills acquisition geared towards empowerment. All of the women showed their preference for acquiring skills in milking, cheese making and butter making since these are the main ways they

earn their income. Majority (90.8%, 85% and 83%) indicated preference for trading skill, tailoring and soap making. The results also show that pastoralist women want to diversify into non-livestock enterprise so as to have additional options for income as they face hardship during dry season when income from the sale of cheese and milk is low. These findings are in line with those found in East Africa where pastoralist women are seeking ways to diversify into non-livestock related activities if provided with adequate training and manpower (Ruhindi & Livingstone 2013).

Table 3: Distribution of pastoralist women based on preferred skills acquisition options

Item	Type of skills acquisition preferred	Frequency	%
1	Improved technology on milking	120	100
2	Modern cheese making	120	100
3	Modern butter making	120	100
4	Veterinary skills	65	54.1
5	Midwifery	10	8.3
6	Craft making	94	78.3
7	Tailoring	102	85
8	Honey making	35	29
9	Soap making	100	83.3
10	Hair dressing	30	25
11	Trading	109	90.8

Source: Field Survey, 2016 (Multiple responses).

In Table 4, the perception of the women was measured using the Likert scale method. The scale ranked from 1 to 4 with 1 being the most important and 4 the least important for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The perception score of the women on skills acquisition was obtained by adding together the scores of all 9 items. Given that a score of 1 implies a high perception of strongly agreed, it means that the lower the total score, the higher the perception of pastoralist women about acquiring skills. Thus the results indicate that the perception was strongest at 128 which means that skills acquisition will greatly influence the reduction of

shocks such as climate change impact and other environmental and social vulnerabilities. The second strongest perception with a score of 138 implies that skills acquisition will help improve standard of living. Perception score was weakest at 176 and this alluded to the fact that pastoralist women were not of the opinion that skills acquisition will help contribute to decision making in the household. The implication of these perception scores is that the pastoralist women were of the view that skills acquisition is highly required by women in pastoralist system and this will bring about empowerment and better livelihood standards for the women and the entire pastoralist households.

Table 4: Perception of pastoralist women about skills acquisition and empowerment

Item	Perception about skills acquisition	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Score	Rank
1	Skills acquisition increases income	84	36	-	-	120	156	4th
2	Skills acquisition promotes women empowerment	75	45	-	-	120	165	6th
3	Skills acquisition improves standard of living	102	18	-	-	120	138	2nd
4	Skills acquisition promotes entrepreneurial ability	73	47	-	-	120	167	7th
5	Skills acquisition provides means of ownership	84	36	-	-	120	156	4th
6	Skills acquisition helps to reduce shocks	112	8	-	-	120	128	1st
7	Skills acquisition contributes to decision making	64	56	-	-	120	176	9th
8	Skills acquisition promotes livelihood sustainability	93	27	-	-	120	147	3rd
9	Skills acquisition helps to increase self-esteem	71	49	-	-	120	169	8th

Source: Field Survey, 2016 (Multiple responses).

Constraints faced by pastoralist women in acquiring skills

Table 5 shows the major problems faced by women in acquiring skills. Lack of education ranked first, being the major constraint inhibiting them from acquiring skills. This implies that access to education would afford them the opportunity to learn different ideas and obtain information aimed towards

development. Access to skills acquisition centres ranked second among the constraints. Access to skills acquisition centres will present opportunities for the women to acquire skills.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on constraints faced

No.	Constraints	Frequency	%	Rank
1	Cultural constraints	78	65	6th
2	Lack of funds	84	70	5th
3	Access to skills acquisition	105	87.5	2nd
4	Access to information	94	78.3	3rd
5	Lack of education	115	95.8	1st
6	Interest	64	53.3	7th
7	Long distance to tow	90	75	4th

Source: Field Survey, 2016 (Multiple responses)

The results in Table 6 ($r=0.44$; $p>0.05$ at significance value of 0.00) showed that there is a significant relationship between the type of skill acquired and the constraints faced. The implication is that the constraints influence the type of skill acquired. For example, lack of funds by a pastoralist may hinder her ability to engage in a given vocational skill. Likewise, lack of education can limit how effective it will be for a pastoralist woman to learn certain skills. Similarly, proximity to skills acquisition centres can, to a large extent, affect who will acquire skills and how much such a person will learn.

Table 6: Correlation analysis between skill acquired and constraints

Variable	No	df	Cal.r	Sig.(2-tailed)	Decision
Acquired skill	120	118	0.44	0.00	H_{01} Rejected
Constraints	120				

$P > 0.05$

Conclusion

The study found that pastoralist women live in a large households with many of them in their active and productive years. All are Muslims with the majority of the respondents having Qur'anic education. It was also found that most of the women were interested in acquiring improved livestock skills

and highly interested in acquiring non-livestock skills. Currently, what is obtainable among the women is that skills acquired are livestock skills with no knowledge of improved technologies. They however showed a positive perception to skills acquisition as a means of empowering themselves so as to ensure a sustainable pastoralist system. It was also found that constraints such as lack of education and lack of access to skills acquisition centres restrain them from acquiring skill.

Recommendations

1. Skills acquisition centres should be situated within the reach of pastoralist women for easy access and should be adequately funded for sustainability.
2. Skills taught should be in line with economic upliftment and development of the pastoralist women.
3. It is recommended that workshops or seminars be organised by either the government or stakeholders in the government sector to further sensitise pastoralist women on the need for skills acquisition.

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