

Access to, and Utilization of Information on Sanitation and Hygiene by Rural Households in Alaba Special District, Southern Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT The main objective of this study was assessing the level of sanitation and hygiene information and identifying factors that determine its access and utilization by rural households in Alaba District, Southern Ethiopia. The study generated the required data from 162 respondents selected from four rural 'kebeles'/villages using multistage sampling technique. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, and then the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Ordered Logit Model. The analysis revealed that rural households in the study area have limited access to sanitation and hygiene information. Taking selected indicators of sanitation and hygiene: once in a week basis, 3.1% of the respondents accessed the messages on hand washing which is followed by safe excreta disposal (1.9%), safe water collection and storage (1.2%), food hygiene (0.6%), household waste disposal (0.6%) and disease causing vectors (0%). With regard to utilization of the accessed information, safe excreta disposal accounts for (57.4%), hand washing (26.5%), safe water collection and storage (16%), disease causing vectors (9.3%), food hygiene (4.3%), and household waste disposal (3.1%). The Ordered Logit regression result indicated that educational status of the respondent, health extension worker contact, information seeking behavior and perception of the respondent were found to be significant determinants of access to sanitation and hygiene information among rural households in the study area. Regarding sanitation and hygiene information utilization, the analysis of Ordered Logit showed that educational status of the respondent, contact with health extension worker and knowledge level significantly affect the utilization decision of sanitation and hygiene information accessed by rural households. The overall findings of the study underlined the importance of communication and behavioral factors in the areas of sanitation and hygiene information access and level of utilization. Therefore, policy and health interventions should give emphasis to improvement of information sources, which can address the rural households and more focuses should be given to adult education and behavioral change communication approaches.