Impact of Street Vendors’ Eviction from Harare Central Business District (CBD)

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Abstract: This study aimed at gathering information on the impact of street vendors’ eviction from the Harare Central Business District (CBD). Quantitative methodology was used to gather data. The main objectives of the study were to identify factors that promote street vending, find out surviving strategies for evicted street vendors and identify ways in which government assisted the ex-street vendors. A chi-square test was used to find out if there was any difference in standard of living on street vendors after their eviction. Significant level was tested at 0.05%. The results showed that there is association between standard of living before and after street vendors’ eviction. There were various factors that influenced people's choice of vending location. The results showed that unemployment among others constituted 40% and was the highest contributor towards street vending. Theories in support of the topic were adopted to get insights into the issues of street vendors’ eviction. Based on survey results, the study showed that for street vendors, accessibility of customers was a key consideration and they strategically located on the streets to avoid formalization costs such as rent, taxes and licence. The study showed that despite numerous constraints placed on various groups of street vendors these groups had actually developed survival and resistance strategies that enabled them to maintain their livelihoods from public urban space. Revival of industries is a cause for concern. There is need to resuscitate industries to curb the problem of unemployment.

Key Word: CBD; City of Harare; government; street vending; unemployment.

I. INTRODUCTION

This research sought to evaluate on impact of ex-street vendor’s eviction from the Harare Central Business District and also to identify factors that contribute to this operation and to understand social, psychological and economic challenges that are being faced by ex-street vendors. Street vendors are part of an extremely visible category of informal workers who invariably escape compliance with state regulations of their business enterprises. Although street vendors have occupied the streets of Harare, their activities and motivations have remained poorly understood (Njaya, 2014).

The rise in the number of street vending was not unique to Zimbabwe. Carr and Chen (2002) observed that the number of street vendors had been increasing worldwide. The growing number of people depending on street vending often intensified tensions between street vendors and the City of Harare authorities. The street vendors wanted to earn a living from public urban space.

Tibajuka (2005) highlighted that, the government decided to relax some of the colonial rule adjusting the RTCPA Use Groups Regulations through Statutory Instrument (SI) 216 of 1994. Such was a move, in letter and spirit, to incorporate the street vending activities like fleas-markets, stalls, shacks and home industries by special consent. However this relaxation of the colonial rule opened the flood gates of street vending activities in most urban areas. Thus the street vending became a reserve army and a seedbed of the unemployed as noted by (Gibson and Kelley 1994; cf. Chirisa, 2007; 2009). About a decade later from 1998, street vending was labelled as trouble causing to the economy (Vambe 2008) cited by Chirisa (2012).

The City of Harare has responded to the challenges brought about by street vending by evicting the street vendors. Njaya (2014) noted that despite these violent evictions, street traders continued to occupy new locations and to operate outside the bounds of the law. This was because street entrepreneurs devised strategies of evading compliance with state regulations of their street businesses. In the literature, street vendors have used various resistance strategies including “quiet” forms of resistance; small-scale individual actions; subtle and innovative arrangements and sometimes open protest and direct confrontation (Bromley, 2000; Crossa, 1999; Lindell, 2010).

Economic crisis lead to increased unemployment through loss of jobs in the formal economy and increased employment in the informal economy. Greater number of people have lost their jobs and turned to vending as a possible source of income and in response to poverty. Workers who are laid off and cannot find formal jobs often end up working in the informal economy. Streets vending is one area that many poor people depend on to survive. The problems faced in Harare between the local authorities and street vendors are found in cities all over the world especially in developing countries. Street vending is one of the major activities in the informal economy and it is known to be an old practice that has always had a presence in the composition of cities. Sally (2014), added that, Worldwide by-laws governing street vending can be confusing leaving street vendors vulnerable to harassment and eviction.

However, street vending in Zimbabwe is illegal and considered as a public nuisance. Even though statistics are hard to get, the increase in street vending can be seen on the streets being more populated than it was before. In response
to the street vending problem, the Zimbabwean government has been putting up formal market infrastructure across the country so that street vendors can trade in an orderly, safer and good environment. This was against the background of the various problems that the country has been facing with regards to street vending. Some of these problems include stealing customers from the formal economy, non-payment of taxes, causing road traffic congestion and sanitation related diseases such as cholera, crime (pick-pocketing) and walking in the city centre is sheer agony for shoppers and pedestrians.

Bromley (2000) highlighted that street vending generates enormous controversy in cities throughout the world. However, despite government putting up formal market infrastructure, street vendors keep trading from the streets. One such infrastructure is the new Coca cola granite side industrial site market in Harare. This market will be used as a case in establishing why traders choose to trade from the streets. Thus, the paper argues that the informal sector has a specific function in the economy and that it is not inferior, it is not invisible, it is not stealing customers away from the formal economy, it is not a third class economy and it is not submerged in the formal economy but it is a specific segment of the consumers market, it is visible and operates in the open, it is just another sector which government happens not to like.

II. METHODS

Participants were drawn from vendors who are survivors of evictions from the Harare CBD considering the three areas namely, Speke Avenue, Charge office, and market square. Purposive sampling was used since the research targeted man and woman evicted from street vending. The researcher sampled one hundred (100) participants for the research. A pre-test is a small study conducted for helping to design a further confirmatory study. Quantitative research method was used to find out the survival strategies in use by the evicted vendors and a chi-square was employed in the research to scientifically measure if there is association between standard of living before and after street vendors’ eviction. Questioners were used to gather data. Arrangements were made to ensure that they would answer the questions with confidentiality and without fear of repercussion occurring to them as a result of their participation in the study. The researcher informed the participants on why they were participating in the research and on how the data was going to be handled and got their informed consent

III. RESULT

Demography of Participants

The study sought demographic data from respondents on age, sex, qualifications and marital status. The responses received indicated the distribution of respondents by age group and sex for evicted street vendors.

![Percentage distribution of evicted street vendor](image)

Figure 4.1: Demographic profile of evicted street vendors (n=100)

The pie chart represents the percentage of both male and female evicted street vendors. The total number constituting the sample is 100 and 60 were females which culminate to 60% and 40 were male constituting 40% of the sample.

![Evicted vendors by age and sex](image)

Fig 4.2: Age distribution of evicted street vendors n=100

The bar graph represents age groups of evicted street vendors both males and females. The collected data showed that 55% of the populations are evicted street vendors between the age of 31 years and 45 years. Of the population 35% of 55% are female whereas the remaining 20% are males . Moreso, 20% of the populations are from the age of 20-30years. Both males and female share equal percentage of 10% each. The other remaining 25% are for vendors from the age of 50 and above. Also 15% being the percentage of females and the remaining 10% for males. So all in all females constitute 60% of the population whereas males constitute 40%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Marital status of evicted street vendors
Factors That Promote Street Vending

The table above is clearly showing that single parents constitute a bigger percentage of 40%. The same with divorced who have 30% and the widowed with 10%. The 20% of the population are those married.

The bar graph clearly pointed that the level of education in the country does tally with the kind of work done (employment). More people are educated but the kind of employment does not tally with their qualification. Also 30% of the vendors from the sample 100 are degreed and it’s a sign that the economic performance of the country is far below par. Diploma holders constitute 25% who were trained to specialize in different profession which they are failing to practice but engage in street vending.

Factors That Promote Street Vending

The pie chart shows that people engage in street vending due to various reasons. From the data that has been collected it is clear that most people became street vendors as a result of low wages, unemployment, poverty and retrenchment. Of the respondents, 10% of the population indicated that low wages were a contributory factor towards street vendors’ vending. Moreso, 40% of the populations were unemployed so for them to feed, clothe their families as well as paying rates they were forced to go in streets as the only way of raising the money. Due to economic hardships they did not have any other source of income. Retrenchment also constituted 20% of the population. Lastly 30% of the populations were those people who were poor.

Table 4.2: How ex-street vendors used to spend money raised from street vending (n=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School fees</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/clothes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above is showing how ex-street vendors used money raised from street vending. School fees, food and clothes constitute the same percentage of 30% whereas rent and rate constitute 20% each.

Ex-Street Vendors’ Survival Strategies

Surviving strategies of evicted street vendors (n=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vending at night</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in cahoots with Shop owners</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party alliance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribing city fathers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above is showing how evicted street vendors survived after their eviction from the Harare CBD. Only 25% of the population indicated that they survived on vending at night when the municipal police would not be there to harass them though they will be at risk with thieves. A Of the respondents, 20% of the population also worked in cahoots with shop owners so that they will be in a position to sell their goods without the police’s disturbances. This also gave them room to sell their products on shop verandas and also used the shops for storing their goods. Moreso, 15% of the population were politically party allied such that they used political power to stay in the streets. Most of the evicted street vendors who constituted the bigger percentage of 40% indicated that they bribe the municipal police to sell their goods freely.
Ways of Assisting Evicted Street Vendors

Fig 4.5: How ex-street vendors can be assisted

From the pie chart above, revival of industry had been advocated by the majority constituting 70% of the total sample. Thus if industry goes back to its hay days, it will help to reduce or eliminate street vending since everyone would be fully occupied in a more profitable way. Of the respondents, 25% of the sample had the opinion that Government loans should be availed to evicted vendors in a bid to start bigger projects. However, 5% of the sample proposed that salary increment will go a long way in addressing street vending.

IV. DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

The total number constituted the sample was 100 and 60 were females which culminated to 60% and 40 were male constituted 40% of the sample. Females dominated street vendors’ population due to motherly responsibility since they come face to face with the children’s demands most of the time. Hence it spear headed their courage to spend more time vending than man. In support of the above assertion is Chhabra (2003) who highlighted that the economic hardship within the country has promoted at most street vending systems which most females’ uptake quickly as compared to their male counterparts. Women tend to swallow their pride more than man and that’s why they flood the street more than their male counterpart parts.

The collected data showed that 55% of the populations were evicted street vendors between the age of 31 years and 45 years. Moreso, 35% of 55% were females whereas the remaining 20% were males. Of the respondents, 20% of the population were from the age of 20-30 years. Both males and female shared equal percentage of 10% each. The other remaining 25% were vendors from the age of 50 and above. Only 15% was the percentage for females and the remaining 10% for males. So all in all females constituted 60% of the population whereas males constituted 40%. This might be because of responsibilities which women normally face when the children are growing up.

The data showed that single parents constituted a bigger percentage of 40%. This indicated that due to economic hardships which the country is facing, single parents may find it difficult to carry the load of looking after the family alone so, they eventually resorted to street vending to raise money for rates, school fees and food. This is the same reason for the divorced who had 30% and the widowed with 10%. At last 20% of the population were those married.

More people are educated but the kind of employment does not tally with their qualifications. Only 30% of the vendors from the sample were degreeed and it’s a sign that the economic performance of the country is far below par. Diploma holders constituted 25%. These were trained to specialize in different professions which they are failing to practice but engaged in street vending. It showed that the economy of the country is more or less in an intensive care unit.

Reasons for vending

From the data that had been collected it was clear that most people became street vendors as a result of low wages, unemployment, poverty and retrenchment. The 10% of the population had indicated that low wages was a contributory factor towards street vending. Moreso, 40% of the population were unemployed so for them to feed, clothe their families as well as paying rates they were forced in streets as the only way of raising the money. The data is being supported by Gomez; (2008: 11) who highlighted that in Zambia most street vendors sell in the streets for survival due to the fact that they have failed to find employment in the formal economy. They get involved in street vending as their only option. Chen, (2002) highlighted that capital intensification leads to a reduction of the work force, or what in the US referred to as ‘‘dawn sizing’’ workers who cannot find attractive jobs in the modern sector typically join the ranks of unemployed thus street vending.

Due to economic hardships they do not have any other source of income. Retrenchment also constituted 20% of the population. Then 30% of the populations were those people who were poor. Due to poverty most people have decided to get into the street for vending as a way to survive.

Surviving strategies for evicted street vendors

Of the population 25% indicated that they survived on vending at night where the municipal police will not be there to harass them though they will be at risk with thieves. Moreso, 20% of the populations also were working in cahoots with shop owners for them to be in a position to sell their goods without the police’s disturbances. This also gave them room to sell their product on shop verandas and also use the shops for storing their goods. Moreso, 15% of the population
were politically party allied such that they used political power to stay in the streets. Most of the evicted street vendors who constituted the bigger percentage of 40% indicated that they bribe the municipal police such that they sell their goods freely.

The data collected showed that evicted street vendors were still occupying the streets though in different ways using different strategies. Most of the evicted street vendors have decided to sell their goods in the evening. It is during this time when evicted street vendors believed that the council police would have been dismissed from duty. By doing so, they were to sell their goods freely without fearing the police. These findings go hand in hand with those by Njaya. Njaya (2014) observed that the first strategy involved street vending in the CBD around 5pm after municipal police finished work for the day. After 5 pm the number of street vendors would begin to swell and the groups begin to enjoy the freedom of controlling public urban space as they made sales uninterrupted by police raids.

Secondly, Njaya (2014) observed that street vendors continued to occupy new locations and to operate outside the bounds of the law. As a result, street vendors devised various strategies in order to cope with informality and noncompliance of their street vending with municipal by-laws and regulations. This was because for many street vendors, the street provided them with an honourable and respectable means of livelihoods.

The third coping strategy was the use of safe places or “strategic bases” to keep merchandise awaiting sale. These safe places included offices, licensed shop parcel counters, storm drains, alleyways and vehicle parking lots. The vendors paid a certain fee to the security guards where goods were being stored in offices or behind licensed shop premises. These findings match well with those in Mexico. Crossa (2009) noted that in Mexico such informal associations between street vendors and shop owners actually boosted sales of licensed shops. However in Harare, the practice had the potential to encourage thieves to present themselves as vendors and as a result very few shop owners were willing to have vendors selling their products within shop premises.

Lund (2009: 37) also highlighted that in Lusaka besides resisting removal from the streets, some street vendors established mutual informal associations with shop owners. Under such subtle agreements, the shop owners and vendors agreed to share electricity and water bills as well as the sweeping of the streets. Sometimes the shop owners provided refuge or sanctuary to vendors’ merchandise in the event of police raids and even stored the goods overnight. In return the street vendors sometimes agreed to sell products on the street on behalf of the shop owners.

According to Njaya (2014) street vendors paying bribes had become a norm. Street vendors’ resistance strategies sometimes extended into formal political spheres. This entailed groups of street vendors seeking leverage with prominent politician(s) or political party in order to retain their vending sites. These findings are the same with those in Zambia where politics play a major role in the formalisation of street vending. Lund (2009) went on to say that in Lusaka, street vendors were protected during election time by the politicians so that they get their votes. On the other hand, street vendors took advantage of political interests and maximise the benefits of selling from the streets.

How city fathers will assist evicted street vendors

The data on ways of assisting evicted street vendors clearly states that, revival of industry has been advocated by the majority constituting 70% of the total sample. Thus if industry goes back to its hay days, it will help to reduce or eliminate street vending since everyone would be fully occupied in a more profitable way. Mores, 25% of the sample had the opinion that the Government should made loans availed to evicted vendors in a bid to start bigger projects. However, 5% of the sample proposed that salary increment will go a long way in addressing street vending. The data is being supported by Gomez, (2008: 11) who highlighted that in Zambia most street vendors sell in the streets for survival due to the fact that they have failed to find employment in the formal economy. They get involved in street vending as their only option.

As for Zimbabwe street vendors were allocated places outside the CBD near Coca cola. The same situation happened in Lusaka Zambia; in 2009 the Zambian government completed the construction of Soweto Market and allotted the vendors with stores. However the allotted vendors did not occupy instead they continue vending on the street. The reason for rejection was high rent rates ranging from 12.6 USD to 6290.5 USD per month depending on the size (Ndhlouv, 2010). The fact is that, street vendors can’t operate where there are no customers. Mores, Nelson & De Bruijn, (2005) added that in Tanzania, street vendors were served by Nguvu Kazi hawkers’ License since 1980s. It was issued by the local government authorities under the Human Resources Development Act, and its purpose was to legalise street vending.

V. LIMITATIONS

Some people were reluctant to give me the necessary information due to suspicions that the information may be used against them. In addition, since street vending is illegal, it was difficult to do field work as some vendors were not willing to participate in the study. It was also difficult to take pictures in the streets because some street vendors were aggressive. Furthermore, it was a challenge to find the ex-street vendors as they were scattered in different places and it was time consuming for me because I had to move from one vendor to the other asking if they were in the streets. Nonetheless, I managed to carry out my field work.

VI. CONCLUSION

After analysing and synthesizing the results and discussion points the following conclusions emerged from the research:
Total revival of industries in the country so as to help evicted street vendors who are right now facing challenges on economic hardships. The increased number of vendors in streets was due to unemployment and as a result, for their families to survive, they resorted to Illegal Street vending which then resulted in their eviction.

Furthermore the study revealed that ex-street vendors are in great need of assistance from both the government at large and non-governmental organizations. The evicted street vendors have indicated that they are looking forward to be given loans so as to make their life better. If they are to be given places to sell their goods they need places which are nearer to the CBD if not in the CBD where they believe it’s nearer to customers.

REFERENCES


