

Full Length Research Paper

Challenges and opportunities of women participating in informal sector in Ethiopia: A special focus on women street vendors in Arba Minch City

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The study aims to investigate the challenges and opportunities of women participating in the informal sector in Ethiopia with a particular emphasis of street vendors in Arba Minch city. The study employed case study research design which includes solely qualitative approach. The data were gathered from purposely selected interviewees specifically, using convenience sampling technique. The data obtained via interview has been cross checked and validated using focus group discussion. Thematic qualitative analysis technique has been employed to analyze the data. The study found that the major challenges of street vendors women are refusing to pay, damaging goods, housing problem, looting, bribe payment and conflict from formal traders and others. Despite the fact that street vendor's women are faced with these challenges, they are still optimistic about the business.

Key words: Women, informal sector, street vendors.

INTRODUCTION

Although researches and documents about women who participated in informal sector are very limited in Ethiopia, women who participated in informal sectors generally and street vending particularly, have live for a long period of time as one group of the society. Street vending continues to offer economic opportunities, and remains a source of livelihood for many Ethiopian.

There is no common or single definition of the informal sector. Economic theorists differ in their views of how the informal economy comes in to being, what functions it serves and who participates in it. Despite the differences, International Labor Organization (2002) found that the informal economy is that part of an economy that is

unknown to the tax authorities, not supervised by any hierarchies in the government as opposed to the formal economy. Informal sector is generally a bigger source of employment for women than for men.

In general terms, the informal economy is the unregulated non-formal portion of the market economy that produces goods and services for sale or for other forms of remuneration. The term "informal economy" thus refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements (Kristina, 2004). In developing countries, the term 'informal sector' has broadly been associated with unregistered and

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unregulated small-scale activities that generate income and employment for the urban poor dwellers. Over the past 30 years, the term has been used in developing; western industrialized, centrally planned and transition countries to analyze a wide spectrum of activities that escape taxation, measurement and regulation (Ebisaa, 2012).

Informal sector has not only persisted on an international scale since the 1970s, but has also expanded and appeared in new guises in the context of globalization, neo-liberalism and cross-border and rural-urban migration, all of which are highly gendered processes (Sylvia and Carolyn, 2008). Mainly because of the lack of appropriate mechanisms that would have contributed to the absorption of the labor force into the national economy, the bulk of new employment in recent years in many of the developing countries has taken place in the informal economy (Kristina, 2004).

Like any developing countries, in Ethiopia, the major factor that contributed for the expansion of the informal economy is the reaction against government's regulation of the economy. The taxation systems, social legislation, health and environmental controls that are imposed on the activities of the business community and the economic hardship during periods of economic recession forced business people to go informal to operate outside of the regulatory framework (Portes, 1994).

Some scholars have examined whether men or women are more likely to work in the informal economy. In line to this, Losby and Kingslow (2002) investigated that women are more likely to work in the informal sector than men as of their household responsibilities, particularly their responsibilities for the care of children. The types of informal work women do as market or street vendors or hawkers or home workers, expose them to risks to their physical safety and health than men. In addition, women's participation within the informal economy tends to be even higher when the access and the right to control and own property or land are denied to them. Women remain concentrated in "invisible" areas of informal work, such as domestic labor piece-rate homework, and assistance in small family enterprises, which offer precarious employment status, low, irregular or no remuneration, little or no access to social security or protection, and limited ability to organize and to ensure the enforcement of international labor standards and human rights (Abramo, 2006).

As ILO (2008) indicated that the majority of women in the informal sector such as petty trading joined the sector as a means of survival. They turn to the informal business due to low level of economic support from husbands/partners, which force them to find a means of supplementing their low income in order to support the family. Around the world, a large and, perhaps, growing share of the informal workforce operates on streets, sidewalks, and public parks, outside any enclosed

premise or covered work space. Among the many manifestations of informal economy, street vending is one of its major. Street vending is a global phenomenon. In cities, towns, and villages throughout the world, millions of people earn their living wholly or partly by selling a wide range of goods on the streets, sidewalks, and other public spaces. Yet today, in most countries of the world, street vending persists – and probably has expanded – even where local regulations seek to ban or restrict it ILO (2002).

According to international labor organization (ILO), there are no labor standards at the international level dealing directly with street vendors. Many countries specifically regulate this activity, providing a clear legal framework and jurisdictional mandates, while others have overlapping jurisdictional mandates, which create confusion and conflict. The case in Arba Minch city, despite being one of the important components of informal economy in the city, they are simply considered as illegal. Street vendors occupy a significant proportion of the total employment in the city. Street vending units constitute a significant share of the total enterprises in the Arba Minch city.

Statement of the problem

In developing countries like Ethiopia, the informal sector including street vending absorbs the majority of the urban unemployed growing labor force particularly, women. It creates a wide employment opportunity; it is a means for income generation for the marginalized groups and the urban poor especially for those women. Though it is difficult to state the exact number of women engaged in street vending business activities in Ethiopia, research reports reveal that quite a large number of women earn their living in this business. For instance, 2008 Central Statistical Authority reported that out of the total street vendors, women account for 60%. The number of women engaging in this business is increasing particularly because of alarming rate of migration from rural to urban areas. They search work in the formal sector but most of them find themselves jobless and they join the street vending business to secure employment.

However, despite its increasing importance in the total economy (especially for women in the city), policies, regulations, services and institutional support program are not available for the street vendors and the environment under which they vendor operate their business are not suitable for their health and well being. Women who are participated in informal sector it continue to suffer challenges in their business and in the community that brings devastating socio-economic effects on them.

Although there are many indications that women who engaged in informal sector generally in Ethiopia

suffer disproportionate disadvantages in life as compared to men, there are only few studies to provide strong evidence for the problems of women street vendors in particular. The problem has not yet been recognized by many stakeholders in Ethiopia. Therefore, there is absolute need to further study the problem in the Ethiopian context. As evidence, a few researches were undertaken in some informal sectors like domestic worker. Some facts from a handful researches conducted in Ethiopia are discussed below.

The study conducted in Addis Ababa by Testate (2007) shows the challenges of women in the informal sectors. The research focused mainly on women domestic workers in Addis Ababa. It examines the challenges of these those women in terms of their social, cultural and legal status in the country. It was mainly concerned with the problems that domestic workers undergo in their daily lives as well as the type of legal protections that they are awarded with both in labor and human rights legislations based on qualitative research method. Accordingly, the research found that women domestic workers are dissatisfied with their current situations. They have been either victim of physical, sexual and verbal forms of harassments during their time of working as a domestic worker.

Another study has been undertaken by Etsubdink (2014) in Addis Ababa. The research focused mainly on causes of informal sector: the case of street vendors in Addis Ababa. The findings of the study shown the main factors determining the reasons of street vendors to engage in the informal sector are unable to fulfill criteria of formal sector and lack of job opportunity in the formal sector. The study failed to see obstacles of street vendors and their opportunities as they engaged in it as it relied on identifying its causes.

Thus, this research is intended to fill this gap by studying the challenges and opportunities of women street vendors in Arba Minch city. The findings of this study would be helpful for some practical purposes. The study can serve as a source of information for development practitioners and agents. The governmental bureaus like ministry of labor and social affair can use it as a source to take action against the socio-economic problems of women street vendors.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to examine the challenges and opportunities of women participating in informal sectors. In line with this, the specific objectives of the study are intended to:

1. Identify the social problems that women street vendors facing in the area.
2. Investigate the economic problems of women street vendors facing in Arba Minch city.

3. Identify the prospects of women street vendors in Arba Minch city.

Research question

1. What are the economic problems women faces while engaging in street vending in Arba Minch city?
2. What are the social problems that women street vendors face in Arba Minch city?
3. What are the opportunities of women street vendors in Arba Minch city?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Using appropriate research approach is a key step to achieve the proposed research objectives. Likewise, for the achievements of this study, the researcher relied on qualitative approach for its most advantage over quantitative approach. As Creswell (2003) argued that qualitative approach gives no prior social order external to the lived experience of the actors that predetermines outcomes of the research. Again among the various types of research design with in qualitative approach, case study was taken as appropriate research design to achieve these research objectives. As Robert (2009) claimed that case study is the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

In this study, primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. Primary data were collected through unstructured in-depth interview. The researcher also used secondary data information such as, different studies, documents, reports, publications, discussion papers, conducted by individual researchers, journals, books, international and regional conventions, treatise and documents, electronic resources from internet were amply reviewed.

Moreover, in order to cross check and validate the data obtained via interviews and to come up with a common understanding about the conditions of women street vendors, the researcher facilitated focus group discussion with women street vendors. To this effect, one focus group discussion consisted of 10 participants. With regard to sampling technique, the researcher employed non-probability sampling technique as the research process is one of 'discovery' rather than the testing of hypotheses. From the non probability sampling technique, the researcher purposively employed convenience (availability) sampling technique. The sample was selected from the target population on the basis of their accessibility or convenience to the researcher.

Thematic analysis

To interpret the data, thematic qualitative data analysis as an inductive way of data analysis was utilized. The data analysis process began with a researcher's interest in substantive general areas; the researcher gave way to relevant themes to come out from the data. In this regard, the analysis of the raw data involved five stages. At the beginning, the data obtained from interviews and focused group discussion were translated from Amharic to English; the raw data were then coded and organized on the basis of their dimension; the conditions of each dimension and category of data were interpreted. Following this, the description and classification of the raw data was made, and finally they were analyzed

qualitatively. In addition to common themes, unique ideas raised from single interviews were also taken into consideration for their distinctive contribution. During analysis, the redundant information obtained from the data was eliminated.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the findings of the study. The findings were summarized and grouped in to two major sections. These are challenges and opportunities of women street vendors.

Challenges of women street vendors

The study investigate that women street vendors were facing a lot of financial and social obstacles and constraints.

Below are challenges that women street vendors have confronted, as the study findings pinpointed.

Refused to pay

The major economic challenges that women street vendors are facing in work place is the refused to pay for what customers consumed. In line with this, the focus group discussants revealed that in the business of street vending, there are people who want to have money by refusing to pay for their consumption. The experiences of the following interviewee explain the situation as follows:

Case 1: The places by which I run my business are venerable to different problems. Most of the time, I sell fruits far from my home up-to the mid night. As a result, I am faced with different problems. Most of the people in the night time are gangsters and alcoholic, and these sets of people find it difficult to pay for the things they bought. Mostly in normal business, I have gotten 10 to 15 birr profit per a day. After that I regularly should buy 'Injera' for dinner to my family. In informal business, I always give my fruits to customers before they pay. However, most of them don't want to pay after having the goods. I am usually begging them to pay back after a long arguments, a few customers only pay.

The aforementioned interview show that despite intense competition and lack of general trust over money, the exchange of goods to customers before they pay is a widespread mechanism used by vendors in their day-to-day life.

Damaging goods

According to the focus group discussants, women street vendors also suffered economical challenges of

damaging of their goods by local residents and customers while they sell on street. The spaces occupied by street vendors are open, and these expose traders to harsh environmental conditions. Most commodities of trade such as fruits, vegetables and clothes are affected by the rain and sun struck. In addition, their goods were drop to the ground when their basket that carried their goods are kicked by others. Moreover, the study investigated that those street vendors women who engaged in selling perishable products like, vegetables and fruits, and some of eatables and drinks need a lot of care. Summers are particularly bad for those perishable items. Therefore, in order to keep the stock of the goods, vendors who sell had to go to wholesale market every day. The following case further strengthens damaging good as a factor hampering women street vendors.

Case 2: Because, his home is close to my business area where I sell eggs and banana he is always around. He is always asking me to be his girlfriend but I refused. Because of this, he becomes anger. As revenge, one day he approached me and caught my back and kicked my vessel that carried eggs and banana on asphalt and water canals. After that, he ran away while my good fell on the ground. Then after, he starts playing together with his friend. I couldn't do anything except caring my empty basket home.

In addition to the aforementioned narration, the group discussants revealed that they have to keep a lot of things on top of each other, and found that some goods are broken. The lack of adequate storage house also exacerbates damaging of goods for vendors of perishable products. This is because of the impact of rain and sun; the containers in which they stored their product were rotten, and rats and mice could get into the storage area and eat their goods over night.

Housing problem

The study revealed that availability of housing is a priority challenge and of compliance with various street vendors relating to business operation. Winnie (2003) claimed that most street vendors in Africa have no authorized sites of operation, which results in incidences of confrontation and brutality between them and urban authorities. The authorities are reluctant to allocate vending houses.

The results of the group discussants also ensured that they face challenges of getting house to sell their good, instead they sell their goods from the street or in the open air. It creates a difficulty to protect them from burning sun. In line to this, Marriott (2005) found that street vendors were expose to weather – extreme temperatures, wind, rain and sun, poor access to clean water and sanitation, dirty streets and poor drainage, as well as waste

produces from other vendors, diseases transmitted by vermin. They did not have permanent house from which they carried out their businesses. Consequently, they had to pack and carry their goods every morning to their chosen selling spots and do the same again after business hours.

Tshuma and Jari (2013) posit that street vending in the town face a number of constraints. However, of all these constraints, the most dominant one is storage problems. Storage is a problem in the sense that these traders did not have permanent stalls from which they carried out their businesses. The following interviewee also identified the lack of shelter as a significant problem in the context of strong sun and heavy rains as follows:

Case 3: Because I do not have shelter to sell my goods, when it rains, I drag my stock to the dry part under the veranda of the shop that is next to my trading site. When the owner sees this, he insults me and gives warning not to do so again. Currently, I store my stock in the shops. If my stock gets lost, I only get a big sorry from him, nothing else to compensate me for the loss. The result is that I end up buying less stock so that I can manage to take leftovers home and bring back the next day.

The aforementioned interview shows that lack of access to secure storage, forced women street vendors to buy only as much stock as they can sell in one day or carry home at night. The problem is that they do not have safe storage to keep their goods. Consequently, they had to pack and carry their goods every morning to their chosen selling spots and do the same again after business hours. Street vending has been deemed problematic for reasons such as nuisance and congestion, undercutting formal businesses, and as signifiers of underdevelopment. The cat and mouse interaction of the state and street vendors is a century's old phenomenon, with vendors stigmatized as lazy or underhanded and infringing on public space (Girma, 2009)

Looting

Based on the data collected from the interview, looting is the other problem that women street vendors faced. Concerning this, the following interviewees stated as follows:

Case 4: When I was 17, by receiving some money from my parents, I migrated to Arba Minch city to seek job. After I stayed some days observing the business opportunities; consequentially, I involved in street vending business, selling (gums, cigarette, and soft). I have two years of experience by selling goods starting from 3:00 morning time to 6:00 night time.

The time was 2005 EC, the first year of getting involved

in street vending business. I mostly spent my working time on main streets of the city's restaurants and local alcohol house. The whole story begin after selling enough goods up to the mid of the night, I started to recollect what put on grounds. I can't remember who is and how he approached to my side; just he kicked my body part. When I emotionally turn my face, I saw a man having knife in front of me. Because it was my first to face in such problem, for minutes I beg him not to harm any of my body. But, he didn't give care about my situation; first, he orders me to get in to the ground. Secondly, he orders me to give him cigarette and what I have in my pocket about 65 birr. He didn't even count how much it was, just he run out off my eyes in seconds. Likewise, the other interviewee also strengthened the above looting challenges of women street vendors as follows:

I remember the day which was Saturday, the beginning of the year 2006 EC. I was selling my products as usual here and there around Secha Kebele, one of administrative Kebele of Arba Minch city. As the day was a new year, so many customers were drank alcohol and bought me a lot of my items. After selling what I had, I went to my house by crossing the slum areas which never had a light. One middle aged man run out of somewhere and take off my bag out off my hand. Although I couldn't run well, I just tried to hold him. I didn't exactly know what amount of money he took but I guess that it was more than 100 birr.

The other interviewee also narrates about looting event as follows:

I had unforgettable experience that badly affects my family's relationship very badly. In the year 2003, I was selling up to 5:00 night time. According my regular time line, I walked slowly to return my home by having my son at my back. After walking some distance, I couldn't remember his face well; just I saw someone sleep in to the asphalt side. Meters back after passing that man, he called me to stop and asked me to give him some cents for cigarette. I tried to show him a sign to express I am a poor in order to get his mercy but all my attempt remained failed. When I was thinking about what will be the consequences of saying no at that time, I decided to give him 50 cents. After seconds, when I put my hand in to my money bag the man took it out of my hand with all money that I had. While the man used an excessive force to take over my property, my son at the back was I crammed in to asphalt road.

From the aforementioned three interviewees, the researcher concluded that looting was the major economical challenge of women street vendors. Such criminalities were mostly committed by local residents and gang boys.

Payment of bribes: An alternative way to sustain the business in the market

The study found that majority of street vendors in Arba Minch city, undertake business with fear of eviction, jailed and harassed because the laws do not recognize their operations. In many cases they pay a part of their daily profits as a bribe in order to continue do business.

In the course of the present study, the focus group discussants were reported that they somehow manages to conduct their businesses by negotiating with the police and the municipal authorities. This has, in fact, become the norm for those vendors, without which the police would evict them from their market places. This interferes with their 'right to work with dignity' since if they were not pay, the police would disturbed and harassed them. They were treated as criminals instead of hard-working self-employed people.

The results of the study was consistent with Debdulal (2011), which show that street vendors are required to pay bribes to two main groups of civic authorities, the police, and the municipal authority. He found that in the case of most vendors, nearly 5 to 10% of their daily incomes are usurped by the police and municipal authority.

In addition to the focus group discussants, the following description by a woman street vendor of her payment of bribe exemplifies the conditions under which street vendors have to expose for the problems of bribe:

Case-5: I wake up around 12 o'clock in the morning and I go to the wholesale market to collect the vegetables. I clean the vegetables for two to three hours and I keep the vegetables in the market where I sit. Since I work at the roadside, the market is often perceived in terms of encroachments upon public space leading to overcrowding, traffic jams and road accidents. As a result the police always forced me to stand from here and move to other space. Despite they are not asked me to pay bribes directly, they indirectly enforce me to do so. To continue staying in the workplace, I provide more than three bananas to the police.

Generally, from the aforementioned narration one can conclude that women street vendors are concerned with confrontation with police or municipal authorities, and frequently need to pay bribes in order to be able to continue selling on the streets, as well as to escape evictions and the confiscation or destruction of their property. Girma (2009) showed that street vendors faced problem of accidents and loss of products during attempts to escape from sudden arrival of police and discriminations that they faced from private shop owners and governmental bodies. He claimed that during eviction and harassment, their products were confiscated. To get back their commodities that were confiscated by police

they have to pay 50 to 200 birr as penalty.

Conflict from formal traders

Conflicts among formal traders are other challenges that street vendors faced. The group discussant report the case to the police and urban authorities, they condemned themselves rather than dealing the case. The urban authorities use the fact that the traders are not licensed, as a justification for not providing services and negotiate them. The participants talked about the frequent conflict from people who pass the narrow aisles between seller stalls walk sideways. Drivers and other road users dislike them for their road encroachment. Beneath, there are voices that talked about conflict from street vendor women which are as follows:

Case-6: I am a street vending engaged in selling orange and banana. I always operate my business by moving here and there. One day the market was very interested and more than six customers were approached to me to buy goods. While they were choice their preferable goods, two men walked in the street. When they approached to me, they become angry as my customers were closed the road and they were unable to pass via such narrow road. Immediately, they insult me and try to kick me. That incident also results for losing my customers temporarily and permanently because they feel unsecured by the confrontation.

Most studies found that conflicts among street traders, formal traders and local authorities are frequent. They mainly arise from the site of operation, and the consequent arrests and confiscation of goods. However, though some local authorities reviewing their outdated laws on street trade, there is still need to relocate trader's specific vending sites outside the central business district and facilitate street vendors to organize themselves in strong associations in order to influence changes taking place in their favor.

Municipal authorities have been the major source of insecurity for street vendors. The authorities harass, beat and confiscate goods of street vendors without any warning. This does not only threaten the security of vendors but also their customers. In line to this, Winnie (2003) claimed that most street vendors in Africa have no authorized sites of operation, which results in incidences of confrontation and brutality between street vendors and urban authorities. A study held by Etsubdink (2014) also noted that an insecure environment results in loss of customers, frightens tourists, cripples business, reduces incomes, and generally interferes with trading. During harassments traders lose their commodities with some closing their businesses after losing their capital goods. ILO (2002) also show that street vendors are

often viewed as a nuisance or obstruction to other commerce and the free flow of traffic. Since they typically lack legal status and recognition, they often experience frequent harassment and evictions from their selling place by local authorities or competing shopkeepers. Their goods may be confiscated and arrests are common.

It should be acknowledged that the success and effectiveness of street vending is not automatic and does not depend solely on the informal enterprises themselves. The opportunities for development of these enterprises and for them to fulfill their roles in the transitional economies and provide employment opportunities for the less educated and formally unemployed (thereby providing them with income) must be supported by a favorable environment which takes account of their particular characteristics.

Opportunities

For street vending, investment costs were relatively small and one could say that the accessibility of this particular type of trading activity was therefore very easy. Furthermore, it required no specific education. Therefore, street vending particularly could have acted as a last resort for people who were unable to find a job in any other sector of the economy, for instance, migrants or women. Therefore, the study investigated that the following are prospects that women street vendors were optimistic about engaging in such businesses.

Reducing obstacles for survival

There is no doubt that street vending offers a source of employment to the urban poor particularly for women who otherwise find various, often inhibiting entry barriers into the labor market or in self-employment ventures. The group discussants revealed that though many have low and unpredictable earnings, those earnings are essential to their households: earnings from street vending were the main source of household income. The participants of the discussion viewed the incomes generated through street vending as opportunities to keep them alive. They are vocal about their role in addressing poverty and hunger within their own households. Most fundamentally, the earnings they generate help feed their families and send children to school. In line to this, Mukta (2014) show that in most urban cities street vending are a common survival strategy for unskilled or semi-skilled migrants, including women from rural areas. It costs governments hardly anything to create this informal job, yet vendors cheaply and effectively distribute goods and services.

Mukta (2014) show that even though vendors choose

their means of livelihood owing to a lack of option, they no longer feel denigrated; in fact, they see themselves as grassroots entrepreneurs. He saw street vendors in two buckets-survivalist and graduates. Compatible to this, from the results of the group discussants of this study, the researcher found that women street vendors were survivalist rather than graduates to other formal sector.

Discussants told that by generating income via selling their goods in the street, they fight poverty. Their families no longer suffer from hunger; they were able to pay for their children's education. This would mean that the income earned would be eroded by the cost of maintaining their dependents. Consistent to this, Sharit and Debdulal (2012) found that the cost of maintaining their families of women street vendors would affect reinvestment in their business. Hence, even though the vendors earn income from their business, they also have expenditure on other non-earning members of their families. This also implies lower per capita income for people of these households.

Street vending has had a meaningful impact in the lives of various households in city. Tshuma and Jari (2013) have demonstrated how street vending is important as a source of livelihood mostly because of households' increased reliance on the social grants (such as the old age grant and the child grants) as a main source of income. In addition, Girma (2009) showed street vendors were mainly those who are unsuccessful or unable to get regular jobs, they get different benefits such as helping their family, improving their livelihood and employment opportunity from being a street vendor. Therefore, street vending presents an alternative avenue for women to escape the circle of poverty that is so rife in most households in Arba Minch city and the rest of the country.

Freedom of work

The focus group discussants revealed that women were interested in participating in street vendors business because they need freedom of operating their own business; they were flexible in determining hours or days of operation; they can use and develop their creativity. Vendors were quite sanguine about the freedom they felt in their lives and the fact that they did not pay any taxes or meet any other requirements. In line with this, one of the interviewees shared her experience as follows:

Case 7: I am in the vending business as a result my income is not dependent on others. I can work whenever I want. I do not have to wait till the end of the month to receive the money for which I have worked so hard the whole month. When I decided to earn, I could not see other options. I mobilized little amounts of money, bought a few items in small quantities and started

vending from that day. This performed without any external force rather it is my interest.

Exemption from formal taxation

The focus group discussants explained that even though they were dissatisfied by the sites they run their business, they were enjoying as their business are free from formal taxation, hence the temporary nature of the structures and display tools they use. The study supported by Tutik (2014) argued that the informal sector employment and incomes are notoriously difficult to tax, particularly street vendors. In the extreme situation, they do business informally as a response to high taxation and regulation enforced by the government. In other words, high cost of formality tends to increase street vendors. A study by Winnie (2003) showed licensing of street traders is a major problem and has contributed to the confrontation between street traders and urban authorities. Few street vendors have a license to trade. The prevailing situation is that many vendors are trading without any license and there by exempted from taxation. This would attract more street vendors in the streets.

Conclusion

Street vending is an important source of income for many poorer segment of the society in the urban area. However, the operators are considered as unlawful entities and are subjected to continue harassment by civic authorities. The study claimed that women involved in street vending livelihoods face more problems in the courses of running their activities. Every business day poses a challenge to their survival because they do not have legal recognition. A snapshot of their everyday life reflects different images, symbols and spaces which categorize women street vendors as being "hopeless poor".

The study revealed that the greatest challenge facing street vendors in the study area were with site of operation and conflict from formal traders, police and municipal authorities which in turn exposed them to pay bribe for them. Most of the spaces street vendors occupy are considered as illegal since the spaces have not been set aside for trade. In cases where they are allowed to operate, the spaces are considered temporary and eviction occurs at the will of urban authorities and police. There are various conflicts relating to their sites of operation. A major conflict often arises when the vendors are sitting in a specific place and tried to crowd the road. This brings them into direct confrontation with urban authorities and polices. At the same time, the street vendors are also in conflict with formal shop owners who contend that the traders infringe on their businesses

and/or premises Most of the spaces the traders occupy have no tenure, and are not allocated and sanctioned by urban authorities. As a result women street vendors in Arba Minch city are forced to pay bribes in order to work. Moreover, working outside, street vendors and their goods are exposed to strong sun, heavy rains and extreme heat or cold.

The study investigated that street vendors are exposed for threat from the local people as well as looting. Moreover, there are other factors like the trust between the whole seller and the vendors that affect them. This is true that sometimes street vendors were unable to sell all goods per a day; they enforced to sell it to the whole sellers without payment. The whole seller was unable to make the payment since the goods were not sold on time. This is the major challenge for those participants particularly, those engaged in selling perishable goods.

Despite many challenges that women street vendors faced, they were optimist in some circumstances. Among these, they often bring home the main source of income for their households. They are survivalists entrepreneurs with very few growths oriented. The study investigate that women street vendors are enter to street business as a survival strategy as they cannot find wage employment; they attempt to increase security and smoothen consumption rather than maximizing profits; for this purpose they diversify their activities instead of specializing. They revealed street vending as the last resort for them to earn livelihood

Generally, street vending add vibrancy to urban life and in many places is considered as a cornerstone of development yet, in this study , they were faced many challenges and are not often overlooked as economic agents like other business, are hindered rather than helped by municipal policed. Therefore, if there are successful routes by which street vendors may find their ways into permanent employment, then those who had already done so would not be revealed by the methodology employed here.

Implications

In light of the aforementioned findings, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. The municipality should take steps to provide space by reviewing which are appropriate to street vending without creating traffic congestion and jeopardizing the free movement of the people. In this regard, the city planners should seek ways to maximize the public space to street vending by widening sidewalks and removing illegal impediments.
2. Most of street vendors were migrants from rural areas. Therefore, the government should emphasized on how to minimize this migration by developing other sectors such

as small- scale agro industries besides agricultural sectors in rural area, because this sector have the potential to absorb large number of labor force which are largely vulnerable for migration.

3. Provide the street vendors with training and know-how based on needs assessment. The training that is provided to them should focus on entrepreneurships and creativity.

4. Street vendors are many in number and operate in different sites; it is difficult for the municipality to deal with the activity and to make meaningful dialogues with them street vendors. Therefore, the municipality must support self-management by organizing the street vendors.

Conflicts of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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