

**An Assessment of Street Vending Practice in Ethiopia:
The Case of Addis Ababa, Megenagna Area**

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Introduction

The informal sector, such as street vending, hawking, vulcanizing, local manufacturing, and mending, etc. is usually seen as another sector outside the typically organized formal sector that offers work and sustenance through engaging in a scope of endeavors. The sector is arranged by little scope operations, drudge thorough methodology, low-pay families, confined and privately possessed undertakings that are fundamentally insecure by government (Lawanson, 2011).

Redundancy, resource scarcity, lack of education, low yield in agriculture, high population, high economic competition, insufficiency of working capital, and lack of working place constrained a great many youths of developing nations like Ethiopia to flood to urban centers to get occupation and participate in the informal sector (Aryeetey, 2009).

The informal economy is an essential method to help for the ordinary urban poor in LDCs (ILO, 2002a). It propelled all the more quickly in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) than in different parts of the world (Lyons and Snoxell, 2005). In the most recent decade, for instance, informal employment grew by 6.7 percent in SSA, and the sector has been tirelessly evolving (ILO, 2002a). The portion of informal employment outside agronomy to the all-out non-agribusiness accounts about half or more in all areas of the developing nations. In SSA, it covers around 78 percent; in Asia 65 percent; in Latin America 51 percent; and in North Africa 48 percent. The sector's share of Gross Domestic Product is 41 percent in SSA; 31 percent in Asia; 29 percent in Latin America; and 27 percent in North Africa (ILO, 2002a).

In Ethiopia, the informal economy accounts for around 50-60 percent of the urban employment (UNDP, 2012), and around 42 percent of these informal sector laborers earn their livelihood from microenterprises (CSA, 2005). The Central Statistics Authority (2010) report shows that while the development pace of urbanization in Ethiopia is around 4 percent, the national population growth is about 2.7 percent. The Authority's (2003) report likewise unveils that around 90 percent of rural urban emigrants to the Ethiopian urban communities don't get formal work and hence are required to join the urban informal sector (CSA, 2003).

Among the challenges on street vendors are: no entrance to formal credit, absence of official protection and recognition, non-coverage by social security system, absence of trade union organization, low level of education, little job security or working condition, low income, no fringe benefits, and unregulated markets. Street vendors are settled in a snare of complex business challenges, which go past self- empowerment (Joseph, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

25% of the urban population living in Addis Ababa is tied up in street vending business. The informal sector in the city's economy assumes an indispensable job in decreasing destitution and making work through little units of production and service (CSA, 2014).

Street vending business has an incredible role in producing income for the needy individuals and giving work chances to women, less educated young people, and handicapped people groups in the district. Furthermore, it plays an important role in the development of the overall economy of the nation. So, this sector ought not to be considered as illegal and overlooked, rather it ought to be given the correct accentuation and work productively for poverty reduction, especially in Ethiopia.

The portions of informal economy employment for the years 1999 - 2010 had the extent of working populace in the informal sector with a critical decrease from 72.8% in 1999 to 33.3% in 2010 (MoLSA, 2013). Out of the completely utilized populace in urban regions of the nation, 34.1% were occupied with the informal economy. The most elevated rate share who were working in the informal economy was found in the Somali district (46.5%) trailed by the Gambella area (42.1%). The lowest portion of individuals occupied with the informal economy was found in Addis Ababa City Government (20.5%). The sector additionally provides the majority of the populace with a means of livelihood or fundamental supplementary income. The sector is likewise the only reliable source of livelihood for women and poor people, for whom the formal sector has no accommodation for economic engagement (MoLSA, 2013).

Even though the informal sector is providing a significant contribution to the economic development, it is still hard to find sufficient studies made on the socio-economic impact, challenges related to the informal sector, its role in reducing poverty and unemployment and measures that should be taken. Thus, it is difficult for the government and policymakers to give objective solution to the activities and adds difficulties in the sector. This study will fill in the gap by embarking on a study on the socio-economic impact of street vending, the different issues faced by unregistered street vendors, and make cultural awareness about the informal sector.

Research Question

The paper has identified the following research questions:

1. What are the main sources of capital for street vendors?
2. What are the constraints faced by people involved in street vending business?
3. What is the socio-economic background of street vendors?
4. Why are people engaged in street vending business?

Significance of the Study

This study provides insights to understand the importance of street vending business in Addis Ababa. The study is expected to raise societal awareness of street vending business, to identify the factors that contribute to this operation and to understand the challenges faced by the vendors. It may also have some contribution to the formulation of appropriate policies for

reducing and managing the problems of street vendors. It will also help as reference for those who are studying on the assessment of informal market, and the concerned bodies will use the research findings to focus on the root causes of street vending and give appropriate focus to the observed problems.

Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study is restricted to un-registered street vendors in Addis Ababa city, particularly in Megenagna area. The study focuses on the socio-economic background analysis of street vendors, the causes of street vending, challenges faced by the street vendors and the socio-economic impact of street vending.

Methodology

Research Design and Approach

Descriptive research design was employed since a descriptive research design describes the present status of a phenomenon. It is more suitable for the subject matter under study, which aims to assess the street vending practice in Addis Ababa, particularly in Megenagna area.

Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study size is limited to Megenagna area. It includes the whole area of Megenagna square. Through observation, street vendors working in this area are estimated to be 500, and formal vendors are 150. These construct the population. A total of 10 law enforcement officers work in the area -5 in the morning and 5 in the afternoon. With regard to customers, an average of 2 customers is estimated for a single vendor. Thus, the population is estimated to be 1000 as a whole. Concerning sampling technique, non-probability sampling technique, particularly convenience sampling was used. Because the exact number of participants is not available, and therefore, selection was based on participants available at the moment.

The sample size is determined by using Solvin's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Thus, assuming a 7 % error margin, a sample of 145 street vendors, 150 formal vendors, 169 customers and 10 law enforcement officers were taken. Questionnaire was distributed to all the above-mentioned samples.

Data Sources and Data Collection Method

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were collected through interviews and questionnaire. The questionnaire included both open ended and close ended questions in order to obtain adequate information in carrying out the research. And some information was gathered through direct observation while the vendors were at work on the street. Secondary data were gathered from published and unpublished materials.

Method of Data Analysis

Mixed research approach, that is, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used in the study. Quantitative data analysis techniques specifically descriptive data

analysis technique was used, which included frequency and percentages. And the summarized data collected from the sample respondents were presented in the form of tables and graphs.

Also, qualitative data analysis technique, specifically narrative, was used to analyze the responses obtained from the interviews and open-ended questionnaires.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter is about the research finding and the interpretations. The findings are presented in four parts. The first part shows the background of street vendors, characteristics of street vending, causes of street vending, the source of capital, and challenges faced by street vendors. 145 questionnaires were given to the street vendors and 124 were returned. The second part describes the formal vendors' opinion in which 150 questionnaires were given out and 101 questionnaires were returned. The third part focuses on the law enforcement officers' perspective on street vending. Out of 10 questionnaires given to the law enforcement officers 9 were returned. This section concentrates on customers' views, and out of the distributed 169 questionnaires to the customers, 121 were returned.

Presentation and Analysis of Data Collected from Street Vendors

Table 1: Respondents' Background

No.	Item	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender	Male	85	68.5
		Female	39	31.5
		Total	124	100
2.	Age	<18	30	24
		19-29	59	47.5
		30-45	35	28.5
		Total	124	100
3.	Educational background	No schooling	19	15.5
		Primary school	75	60.8
		Secondary school	30	24.7
		Diploma or above		
		Total	124	100
4.	Marital status	Married	20	16.5
		Single	80	64.5
		Divorced	20	16.5
		Widowed	4	3.5
		Total	124	100

Source: Own survey (2022)

According to the above table, out of the 145 street vendors, 85 (68.5%) are male, and 31 respondents (31.5%) are female. This shows that male involvement on street vending business is greater than female.

Age plays an important role in the physical and mental capabilities of individuals at work. In the same table item 2 describes the ages of the respondents. The Age result shows that 24% of the respondents are below 18, 47.5% are between 19 – 29, and 28.5% fall between 30- 45. This implies that the majority of the young population which is the productive age group participates in street vending. And as the economic development of a country lies at the shoulder of the young population, this finding indicates that this sector should be given much more attention from the government.

According to the above table, 16.5% of the respondents are married. However, 64.5% are single and out of these respondents, 16.5% of them have children; 3.5% are separated; and 0.05% are widowed. In this way, despite the fact that most sellers are single and without any kids, countless vendors have a family duty to take care by working on the street. This supports the assumption that the informal sector creates job opportunity and is a source of livelihood for vendors.

Related with education-level of street vendors, the discoveries show that 15.5% of the respondents have no tutoring experience; 60.5% have achieved primary education; 24.5% have accomplished secondary education; and the last 10% of them have certificate or more. This shows that the literacy level of the majority of the vendors is primary and secondary education. And just a few of them have procured advanced education. And even though most of them did not achieve a higher education, it is safe to say that they are literate. Some of them may have tried to find a job in the formal sector but with the high unemployment rate, they became unsuccessful and that led most vendors to join street vending business. And it seems reasonable that these literate people would be able to run a business on the streets if they acquire enough skills and experience. Moreover, this supports the assumption that lower education is one of the causes of street vending.

Characteristics of Street Vending

Table 2: Kind of goods for sell

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Clothing and shoes	70	56.5
Food item	25	20
Home equipment	20	16
Cosmetics	9	7.5
Total	124	100

Source: Own survey (2022)

This study tried to look at the type of business that street vendors are engaged in, and as the above table demonstrates the majority of them, i.e., 56.5% sell clothes and shoes; 20% of them sell food items; 16% of them sell home appliances, and the remaining 7.5% are occupied with

selling beauty care products. The type of business that the street vendors participate does not require high capital and complex asset. This suggests why the entry to this sector is easy.

Table 3: Years of experience on the business

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-3 years	100	80
4-6 years	20	16.5
>6 years	4	3.5
Total	124	100

Source: Own survey (2022)

According to the above table, the majority of the vendors, 80% of them reacted that they have been in the business for 1 to 3 years. 16.5% reacted they have been in the business for 4 to 6 years, and 3.5% have been in the business for over 6 years. This shows that the vendors have acquired a great deal of experience and the business is stable.

Causes of Street Vending

Table 4: Reason for operating current activity on a street

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Only source of income	85	68.5%
To avoid tax and registration	24	19.5%
Not fulfilled minimum requirement for registration	15	12%
Total	124	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

As it is portrayed above, the outcome shows 68.5% of the respondents decided to take a shot at street vending since it is their only income; 19.5% picked the business to dodge tax, and the rest 12% stated that they want to avoid any registration. Along these lines, in addition to the lower level of education, being the only source of income is the fundamental driver of street vending.

Table 5: Source of startup capital

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Personal saving or Iqub	32	26
Borrowing from family, friends, relatives	68	54.5
Assistance from formal business registration	24	19.5
Total	124	100

Source: Own survey (2022)

The above table shows the finding of the source of capital for the respondents when they started the business. 26% of them said their source of capital was saving; the source of capital for 54% of the respondents was getting from loved ones; and the remaining 19.5% stated that they

acquired assistance from the formal sellers. This shows that most of the vendors acquired startup capital by borrowing from family and loved ones and then, saving is the second major source of startup capital.

Table 6: Areas to get the goods

Alternatives	No of respondent	Percentage
From formal sectors	81	65.5%
From producers	23	18.5%
From contraband	20	16%
Total	124	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

According to the above table, 65.5% of the respondents said they get merchandise from the formal sector: 18.5% get from producers; and 16% of them asserted that they get products through contrabands.

Table 7: Income per day

Item	Frequency	Percentage
100-500	80	64.5%
501-1000	36	29.5%
>1000	8	6%
Total	124	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

Concerning what amount is the respondent's daily income, 64.5% of them replied that their daily income falls between Birr 100 – 500; 29.5% of them earn between Birr 501 – 1000; and 6% of the respondents make over Birr 1000 per day. This shows that the vast majority of the respondent earns Birr 100 – 500 per day. If we take an average of Birr 300 per day, it implies that they earn more than Birr 9000 every month which demonstrates that street vendors around Megegnagna have a good income. In spite of the fact that the quantity of the respondents' household and family obligation ought to be thought of, one can expect from the findings that street vendors procure enough cash to make a decent work.

This could be one reason why the number of street vendors is increasing. And this fact also justifies why street vending business is contributing a lot to poverty alleviation and reducing unemployment.

Challenging Factors Faced by Street Vendors During Operation

Table 8: Harassment by police and private shop guardians

Item	Frequency	Percentage
A small extent	2	1.5%
Moderate extent	4	3.5%
Large extent	12	9.5%

A very large extent	106	85.5%
Total	124	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

With respect to harassment by police and private shop watchmen, 1.5% said it affects them to a little degree; 3.5% said it affects them to a moderate degree; 9.5 % said it has an enormous impact; and the majority of the respondents, 85.5% concurred that it influences their activity to a very large extent.

Table 9: Lack of freedom during operation and psychological instability

Item	Frequency	Percentage
A small extent	1	0.8%
Moderate extent	7	5.5%
Large extent	25	20%
A very large extent	91	73.5%
Total	124	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

The other factor is the absence of psychological stability and freedom. 0.8% of respondents stated that it has a little impact; 5.5% claimed it has a moderate impact; 20% stated that it affected them to a large extent; and 73.5% concurred that it affected them to a very large extent.

Table 10: Working place is unsanitary and hazardous

Item	Frequency	Percentage
A small extent	10	8.5%
Moderate extent	78	62%
Large extent	31	25%
A very large extent	5	4.5%
Total	124	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

The last one is an unsanitary and perilous working place, in which 8% said it affects them to a small degree; 62% said it has a moderate impact; 25% expressed that it affected them to a large degree; and the remaining 4.5% of them concurred that it affected their activity to a very large extent.

Thus, most of the vendors agreed that harassment and eviction by police, absence of psychological stability and freedom, unsanitary and hazardous working place are the most challenging factors that affected their business operation.

Presentation And Analysis of Data Collected from Law Enforcement Officers

Table 11: Age of street vendors

Item	Frequency	Percent
<18	2	22.2%
19-29	7	77.8%
Total	9	100%

Source: Survey (2022)

As it is shown in the table out of the 10 law officers who responded to the questionnaire, 2 of them (22.2%) said that the age of most street vendors is between 1-18, while most of the authorities (77.8%) said as they would see it, the age of most sellers' falls between 19-29. These outcomes are consistent with the findings acquired from the street vendors themselves; the age of street vendors who reacted was between 19-29. Along these lines, both participants' results demonstrate that most street vendors are young and in their productive age.

Table 12: Major street vendors

Item	Frequency	Percent
Men	2	22.2%
women	1	11%
Both	6	66.8%
Total	9	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

Concerning who the major vendors are, the majority of the enforcers (66.8%) concurred that they watch both men and women working on the street almost equally. Furthermore, 22.2% of the law enforcers claimed men are the major vendors, and 11% of them stated that women are the major vendors.

Table 13: Major products observed in street vending

Item	Frequency	Percent
Dressing and shoes item	5	55.5%
Food item	4	44.5%
Total	9	100.0%

Source: Own survey (2022)

Related to the major products on the streets, 55.5% of the officers' replied cloths and shoes are the major products observed on the street, and 44.5% said they usually observe food items.

Table 14: Increment of number of street vendors

Item	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	100.0%

Source: Own survey (2022)

As to the number of street vendors, all the officers 100% responded that the number of street vendors is increasing each day.

Law enforcement officers' Opinion on the Contribution of Street Vending to the Economy and Urban Poor

All the officers questioned agreed it has a little benefit to the urban poor because although it provides them access to goods with cheap price, the goods are of lower quality and do not last long. With respect to the economy, they added that it has a negative impact because the government is not able to get the revenue that it was supposed to get from tax.

Presentation and Analysis of Data Collected from Formal Vendors

Table 15: Gender

Item	Frequency	Percent
Male	76	75.5%
Female	25	24.5%
Total	101	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

As indicated above, out of 101 questionnaires that have been replied by respondents, 75% of the respondents are male and 25% of them are female.

Table 16: Things that should be done by the government to solve negative impact

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Taxing street vendor	8	7.9%
Formalizing street vendors	25	24.5%
Set strong policy related to pricing	68	67.5%
Total	101	100%

Source: Survey (2022)

With respect to measures that ought to be taken by the government to take care of the issue, 7.9% of respondents said the administration should tax the street vendors; 24.5% answered they believe it is better if the legislature formalizes them; and 67.5% said the administration should set a strong measure against street vendors.

Formal Vendor's Opinion on the Advantages of Street Vending to the Economic Development

The respondents were asked their opinion about the value or advantage of street vending for economic development. Some of them replied that it has no advantage and the others said street vending plays an important role in the economic development by reducing unemployment; it is a source of livelihood and enables many of them to support their families; it prevents the young population from spending their time in useless places and prevents crimes; the respondents also added that street vending offers goods with cheap price so it has a great role in helping the lower class part of society living in the city. On the other hand, some of the respondents claimed it rather has a negative effect on the economic development because it reduces the government's revenue that it should collect by taxing the vendors; and added that it is decreasing the young and productive population of the county by exposing them to traffic accidents.

Presentation and Analysis of Data Collected from Customers

Table 17: Gender of customers

Item	Frequency	Percent
Male	23	22.7%
Female	78	78.3%
Total	101	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

Out of the 169 questionnaires distributed to customers, 101 questionnaires were replied. 22.7% of the respondents were men and 78.3% were women.

Table 18: Preference to buy goods from vendors

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	87.1%
No	13	12.9%
Total	101	100%

Source: Own survey (2022)

87.1% of the respondents said they usually purchase from street vendors due to the fact that the price is cheap and it's the main way they get products that they can afford with the salary they earn. Furthermore, it gives an opportunity for an accidental purchase as they get access to the products they need as they pass by the street. So, it helps them save time. Some of the respondents said they lean towards purchasing from the street since they can find various sorts of goods at the same time at one specific area.

However, the entire respondents agreed they feel discomfort while going through street vendors, and some of them mentioned that they have survived traffic accidents?

Customers' Opinion on Measures Taken against Street Vendors

Most of the respondents said they don't believe the measures taken are appropriate because while the law enforcement officers harass the vendors, they get exposed to accidents and lose their lives. Moreover, taking away their goods is not helpful. Since it is the only source of income for most of the street vendors, if they are not allowed to do their job, they will be unemployed and exposed to poverty and danger including their families. This may lead them to involve themselves in crimes like stealing and so on. Thus, the measures that are currently being taken are not helpful. Instead, it is better if the government give them places, and let them work formally. Others think the measures taken are appropriate because it helps reduce illegal acts and solve all the related problems that come with street vending. But the measures taken are not consistent because the law enforcement officers do not control them regularly. Therefore, the measures should be consistent in order to make change.

Summary of Major Findings

This study was designed to assess the causes and the main source of capital of street vending, the challenges faced by the vendors, and the socio-economic impact of street vending. In order to address these issues, questionnaires, interviews and observations were used. And the major findings are summarized as follows:

Most of the street vendors have acquired primary and secondary education but they were forced to join the street vending business to support their livelihood because there was no job opportunity available to them. It was discovered that most young people whose age falls between 19-29 participate in the business. Likewise, the vendors make a good earning to support their lives despite the number of family members they have to support and this leads to the number of street vendors to increase.

As to the living conditions of street vendors, most of the street vendors, especially women, have dual responsibilities to work on the streets and look after their families. Street vendors face so many challenges such as lack of working place, lack of working capital, police harassment and lack of freedom and psychological stability.

Majority of formal vendors confirmed that street vending business negatively influences their business and that the government should make an effort for formalizing them. With regard to the government's actions, the law enforcement officers stated that despite the government's relentless effort to formalize street vendors, the number is increasing by the day.

Street vending business has important contributions to poverty alleviation by being a good source of income for the vendors and helping them have a sustainable livelihood and reducing unemployment. It also creates opportunity for the urban poor to have access to different goods with a price they can afford. However, it has also a negative impact on the government's ability to collect revenue through tax.

Conclusion

Megenagna area provides livelihood to huge population, mainly to the groups of the society struggling with poverty. The participation of young population in street vending business activities has been increasing mainly due to lack of job opportunities and insufficient monthly income of households. There are various factors that impede the success and profit earning potential of these street vending business participants. These include, lack of comfortable working place, shortage of working capital, lack of experience and skill, strong competition, lack of institutional and government support, and police harassment. Street vending business in Megenagna area supports the livelihood of the poor. Most of the vendors depend on it for living while some others used it as an additional source of income. Many of the participants borrowed money and obtained assistance from their families, relatives and friends. Street vending business participants do not have access to credit facility and training support from government or other institutions despite their activity in contributing to employment creation and poverty alleviation in the city. From the analysis, it can be concluded that most of the street vending business participants in this study were challenged by lack of convenient working place, shortage of working capital, lack of experience and skill, strong competition, lack of institutional and government support, and police harassment. Initially most of the participants had only small amount of startup capital and skill before they start work; however, after their engagement in the street vending business, they are able to create jobs and alleviate poverty even if their living condition is still unsatisfactory.

Recommendations

- The government should assemble a systematized data base and official statistics of the street vending business that will guide policy design and implementation and help design support programs for the sector in order to measure its contribution to the national economy.
- The government should provide a working place and formalize street vendors so that they could contribute to poverty alleviation and reducing unemployment.
- The government should provide credit opportunities to the vendors.
- The City Administration should make basic infrastructure like water and toilets available at streets so that it keeps the city attractive and protect from environmental pollutions.
- There should be good relations between the formal and street vending business so that there will be a mutual benefit for both sectors.

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