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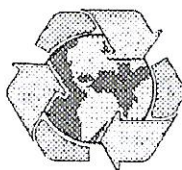
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CHARACTERISTICS AND CONSEQUENCES OF STREET TRADING IN LAGOS METROPOLITAN AREA.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the characteristics and uniqueness of street trading in metropolitan Lagos. Rather than taking the traditional position of perceiving street workers as social outcasts, the paper examines street trading as a survival strategy for the urban poor. The study which was carried out in different locations of Lagos for three years revealed that despite official regulation against street trading and the attempts to enforce the laws, street trading persists and increased in scope and area coverage. Working on the street was discovered to accelerate environmental degradation and promote antisocial behaviours. The paper discusses the possible reasons for these antisocial behaviours and recommends that street trading, as a part of the informal sector of the economy with about 30% of urban population directly and indirectly involved, should not be neglected in economic planning, but should be used as a basis for developing the economic status of the urban poor.

INTRODUCTION

The street of a city serves a wide variety of interrelated purposes: e.g. as axes for the movement of people, goods, and vehicles; as public areas separating enclosed private spaces and providing the essential spatial frame of reference for the city as a whole; as area of recreation, for the diffusion of information, for waiting, resting, and occasionally for 'downs -and-outs and street urchins', sleeping; and as location for economic activities particularly for "street occupations" (Anderson 1978). Within the functional complexity of the street environment, the street occupations are strongly influenced by changes in other environmental factors. They are also contributors to general environmental conditions. Thus, for example, street traders and small-scale transporters depend upon the direction, density, velocity and flexibility of potential customers movements, and are immediately affected by changes in traffic flows and consumer behaviour. At the same time, they influence patterns of movement and overall levels of congestion.

Street trading in urban centres of Nigeria was relatively insignificant before 1980s. The oil boom era of 1970s encouraged rural urban drift and the economic recession that followed since late 80s led to unemployment and underemployment in the urban centres. Street Trading has since constituted a major social problem with spatial and economic consequences. Despite efforts to control it, many areas that were once free of this menace are now highly infested. Consequently, a lot of adverse consequences have been characteristic of the menace. Unfortunately, there has not been much study on this growing menace of the urban centres in Nigeria. This paper is therefore one of the pioneering papers on the topic. The paper examines the characteristics and consequences of street trading with a view to making recommendations on the possible strategies to reduce or curb the menace. The study is with particular reference to the Lagos metropolis which is the fastest growing urban centre in west Africa and where the problems associated with street trading has been found to be greatest.

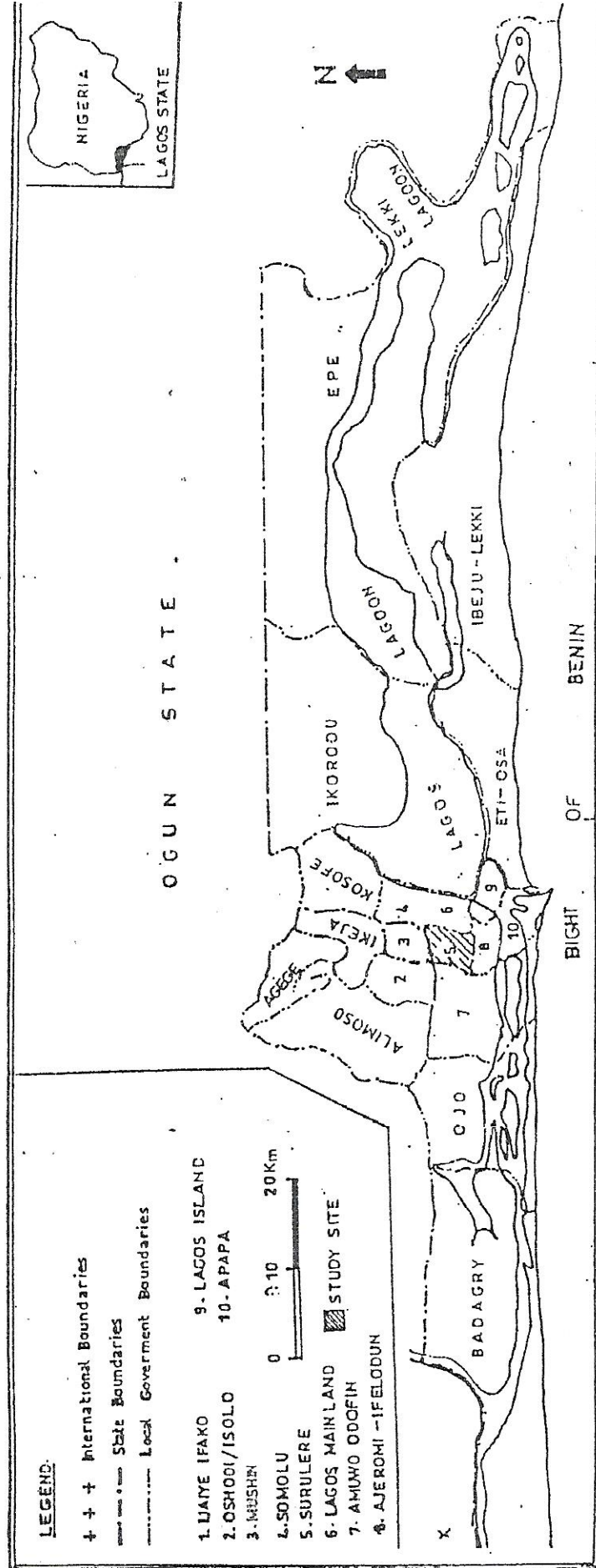


Fig 1: Lagos State Showing Areas Covered By the Study

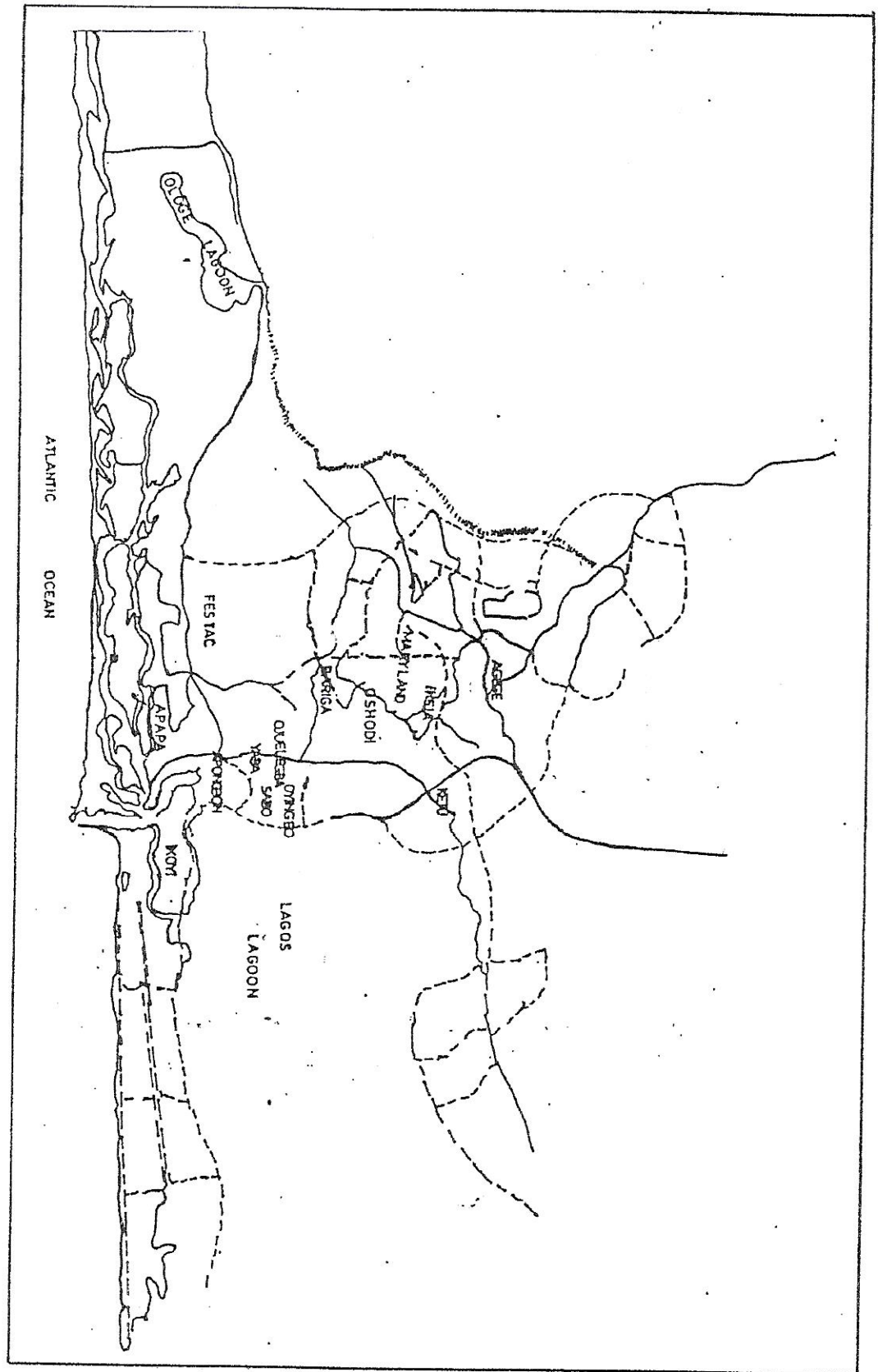


Fig 2: Lagos Metropolitan Area

THE STUDY AREA – LAGOS

Lagos metropolitan area is located to the Southwest of Nigeria. It is bounded to the south by the Bight of Benin, to the east by the Lagos Lagoon and Majidun Creek, to the north and on the west. Ogun State. The metropolis in early 90s covered an area of about 167,700 hectares (1677 sq. km.) – about 50 per cent of the State – out of which the lagoon and other water bodies occupy 20,900 hectares (209 sq. km.). Considering its growth ever since, especially along the major axial of Badagry road, Ikorodu road, Lagos Ibadan express road and Epe Lekki, the metropolis now covers about 70% of the state land mass. Lagos State population was put at 7.5 million in 1987 – about 7% of the national population. About 88% of the population reside in the metropolitan area.

The development of Lagos from the time of its settlement went through various stages coinciding with important events in the history of the area. In particular, the metropolis was effected by slave trade, the early missionaries especially in 1852, the commencement of colonial rule in 1862, the political independence in 1960, the creation of states in 1967 and 1976, accelerated growth over the period of the oil boom (1972 – 1982) and most recently, the implementation of the regional master-plan prepared for the period 1980 to 2000. (Omirin 1990 Nubi 1990). The development of infrastructural facilities also brought influxes of migrants. This includes the construction of a railway linking Lagos to the sources of raw materials in the hinterland in 1895. Others are the development of the Lagos harbour between 1908 and 1917, which provided employment opportunities in goods handling and related activities, and the construction of the Carter Bridge in 1900, which linked the Lagos Island with the Lagos mainland. In addition, the introduction of social amenities – Banks, schools, hospitals, electricity, pipe borne water, modes of transport to a modern architectural outlook, together with the relative glamour of city life brought more influxes of people and transformation of the urban centres.

By the time Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the city had expanded to approximately 70 square kilometres having engulfed the nearest villages existing on the mainland. In 1976, the metropolitan area covered 17,228 hectares and houses more than 3,300,00 people giving an overall population density of nearly 200 people per hectare of developed land. By 1963, Lagos had become Nigeria's most populous city and was growing at a rate of about 11% per annum four times that of the entire country. Today the metropolitan Lagos has distinct lands uses: resident, commercial, industrial, agriculture etc. The rate of growth was such that Lagos was classified as the second world fastest growing city. By the United Nations population projection Lagos will likely be the second most populated city by the year 2015 with population size of about 16 million. Lagos remains the commercial nerve of Nigeria.

The main transport system is the road- though there are other means of inter city transportation, like railway and waterways. Lagos landscape is dominated by network of highways, collector roads and access roads. Land uses like industrial uses in Ikeja, Yaba and Ilupeju, commercial uses in Lagos Island Yaba, Orile, Mushin, Ikeja and other institutional uses are connected with residential areas of Ikoyi, Ikeja, Festac, Ikorodu, Ketu, Agege, Alagbado through network of roads. The volume of movement is usually heavy leading always to road congestion. This factor is one of the reasons for increase in street trading activity in Lagos as enumerated later in this paper.

METHODOLOGY DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The research was conducted between 1998 and 1999. In various sections of the Lagos metropolis, using the stratified random sampling approach – i.e. in the low, medium and high-density neighbourhoods were studied. The traders were later picked randomly for interview. The study covered Victoria Island/Ikoyi; Herbert Macaulay Street; Pen Cinema area of Agege; Demurin Street of Ketu; Orile Road; Oworonsoki/Bariga of Shomolu; Mile 12; Maryland; Yaba;

Oshodi interchange and Oyingbo. The choice of these areas is to ensure spread and proper coverage of the metropolis. Details of the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Characteristics of population engaged in street trading:

A: Marital status

MARITAL STATUS	NO	PERCENTAGE
Single	88	57.86
Married	64	42.11
Total	152	100

B: Age distribution

AGE DISTRIBUTION	NO	PERCENTAGE
Below 18 years	44	28.95
18-25	62	40.79
26-35	46	26.32
36-45	6	3.94
Total	152	100

C: Sex distribution

SEX	NO	PERCENTAGE
Male	86	52.63
Female	72	47.37
Total	152	100

D: Educational level

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	NO	PERCENTAGE
Illiterate	12	7.89
Primary Education	32	21.05
Post – Primary Education	92	60.53
Tertiary Education	16	10.53
Total	152	100

E: Length of service as street trader

LENGTH OF SERVICE AS STREET TRADER	NO	PERCENTAGE
From childhood	14	9.12
Less than 6 months	26	7.11
1-5 years	96	63.16
6-12 years	10	6.7
13-18	4	2.63
19 years	2	1.32
Total	152	100

Source: Field survey (1999)

Street trading is not restricted to a particular area in Lagos and there is no major street that is not affected. The only difference is the hierarchy of the area in terms of economic strength, which

affects the nature of goods marketed. While it is common to see foodstuff in the slums, items noticeable in the high-class areas are mainly imported foods, flowers and other expensive household goods. Where a group of traders had to be interviewed, the selection was through random sampling and willingness to co-operate. Efforts were made to ensure minimum of 10% sampling size in any given location. That is out of every 100 street traders in a location 10 were interviewed. The survey was not restricted to sellers. 120 buyers were equally interviewed. 50% of these were buying from car and bus windows. This is made possible when there were traffic hold-ups in some cases the interviewers had to travel as a passenger so that co passengers who indulge in street trading could be interviewed. The remaining 50% were interviewed while buying from roadsides.

The occupations along the streets of Lagos are remarkably diverse, but they can be crudely described under nine major headings. These include:

(a) Retail distribution: (e.g. hawking or trading in foodstuffs and manufactured goods, including newspaper distribution). (b) Small-scale transport: (e.g. the lifting of cargo by motor or horse drawn carts, bicycles, tricycles, and handcarts, as well as head porters). (c) personal services: (e.g. shoe shining, shoe repairs, watch repair, the typing of documents, etc). (d) Security services: (e.g. night watchmen, car-parking attendants, etc). (e) gambling services: (e.g. the sale of tickets for lotteries and chances, a betting game based on guessing the last three digits of the number winning an official lottery). (f) recuperation: (e.g. door-to-door collection of old newspapers, bottles, etc., 'scavenging' for similar products in dustbins, rubbish heaps, and the municipal tip, and the bulking of recuperated products). (g) prostitution: (h) begging. (i) property crimes: (e.g. the illegal appropriations of movable objects with the intention of realising at least part of their value through sale, barter, or direct use. This appropriation can be by stealing (theft), armed robbery; or deception- ('conning'). Of these categories, 'retail distribution' is the largest, accounting for about 33 percent of the work force in the street occupations. (Bromley 1994).

JUSTIFICATION OF TREET TRADING

As already noted, the informal sector has emerged as a significant source of employment and income generation for millions of urban dwellers in Nigeria. Within an estimated urban population of 12.2 million people in 1966 and a total urban labour force of 4.9 million, the formal sector employed only 0.8 million workers while the informal sector employed 4.1 million people. This figure rose to 4.4 million in 1974 and 5.2 million in 1977. With this figure the informal sector employed about 72.2% of the urban labour force of Nigeria. In the face of serious financial difficulties since 1982, formal sector's establishments have had to lay off thousands of workers, and most of such workers have moved into informal sector for self-employment. (F.O.S. 1997).

The size of informal sector, the big umbrella that accommodates street working, is quite substantial and deserves attention to identify its role in national or urban economy. According to Moses (1978), there had been problem with the definition and what constitutes a formal sector. But Sethuraman (1981) provided working definition and methodological approach, which sees informal sector as consisting of small scale units engaged in production and distribution of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and income (as opposed to profit maximisation) of their participants notwithstanding the constraints of capital, both physical and human know-how. International Labour Organisation used the following to define informal sector: ease of entry; reliance on indigenous resources; family ownership of enterprises; small-scale operation; labour intensive; adapted technology and skill acquired outside formal education system and competitive markets.

The economic situation in Nigeria in the last three decades encourages street trading. The level of inflation and unemployment that rose beyond measure in the 90's is a major reason being quickly tendered by those that are involved in the illegal and illegitimate part of street trading.

There is a strong pressure on all household members to seek for employment. Work in this regard is a form of personal security as well as a contribution to the household budget, especially where women and children cannot assume that an adult male breadwinner will support them. Instability and insecurity of work and income opportunities are endemic amongst the urban poor. The regular retrenchment or loss of job at shortest notice, or a breadwinner suddenly abandoning the family, spending his money on himself alone or marrying more wives or becoming alcoholic, make financial independence among members the best option. Personal income is as low as N1,500 per annum i.e. fifteen U.S dollars per annum. Membership of households is often unstable.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STREET TRADING

A close look at the street trading indicates that one can identify some established pattern. The goods traded vary from simple take away food (snacks), kola-nut, handkerchiefs and belts to hardwares such as electronic goods, telephone sets, bicycles and other high hierarchy goods. The areas with concentrated street trading are major road intersections like Maryland, Apongbon, Oshodi and Mile 2, which can simply be described as 'moving supermarket'. Complete shopping of any description can be done from inside a car or bus window and at bus stops.

Table 2: Characteristics of Good Sold in Street Trading

TYPES OF GOODS	NO	PERCENTAGE
Consumer goods	90	59.21
Profitable goods	18	11.84
Convenience goods	18	11.84
Industrial goods	26	17.11

Source: Field survey (1999 – 2000)

Table 3: Income from street trading

DAILY INCOME (N)	NO	PERCENTAGE
50 – 200	30	19.74
201 – 400	56	36.84
401 – 800	22	14.46
More than 800	20	13.17
No response	24	15.79

Source: Field survey (1999 – 2000)

Table 4: Worth of stock

TOTAL WORTH OF STOCK (N)	NO	PERCENTAGE
Below 500	36	23.68
501 – 2000	50	32.89
Above 2000	46	30.26
No response	20	13.17

Source: Field survey (1999 – 2000)

Street trading starts as early 5.00 a.m. mostly at bus stops. Take away foods or local snacks such as fried cake, bread and tea served hot are usually ready at this time. Newspaper vendors are also among the early risers. Street trading at this early hours concentrate where there is traffic build-up. The slow flow of traffic creates a conducive atmosphere for marketing. It is interesting to note that the traders are not limited to a particular good. Their goods are seasonal and varied. The newspapers vendors in the morning hours sometimes turn to be apple, bread or sausage sellers in the evening.

A particular trader may operate at different locations. In the morning, he may sell perfume and air freshener along Agege Motor Road or at the Airport Road intersection. In the evening, he may move to Pen cinema area to enjoy the traffic build-up at that time of the day. Traders are seen right in the middle of the road manoeuvring in a dangerous manner that sometimes results in accident. Another category of street traders is the permanent one that has permanent or semi-permanent structures along railway line or along a road. This category usually operates between about 6.00 a.m. and 11.00 p.m., sometimes late at night. As women dominate prostitution so men dominate theft and pick pocketing activities in street trading. Women constitute about 47% of the street trading population, while children constitute about 30%. (see table 1).

Average income per worker involved in street trading in Lagos in 1997 was about N250.00 per day. (See table 3). This is comparable to the sums paid to unskilled waged worker in casual employment like construction industry. Employment in the casual labour is irregular and insecure. The actual distribution of income in the street trading is highly skewed, with the majority of workers having incomes below N250.00 per day. Very few of the traders have incomes far in excess of this mean value especially those that sell in high-class neighbourhood of Victoria Island, Ikoyi, and Apongbon etc. These traders trade in hardware and expensive items like wrist watches and electronic goods (Table 4).

The continuous striving of the street traders should not be mistaken as being justified by the prosperity it offers. Lack of alternative occupation is the main reason. The study revealed that about 50% of those involved in street trading have learnt one vocation or the other. Some are tailors, vulcanisers or welders carpenters etc. Lack of capital to establish their own off street business is a major problem they identified. About 15% of the interviewees have shops and workshops off the street but low sales as a result of poor shopping habit of the people and lack of infrastructural facilities like electricity and water needed in the workshop led them to abandon the shops and workshops and take to the streets for survival. 85% of street traders interviewed claimed that they could not afford the high cost of renting shops and workshops off the street which in most cases are obtainable after paying high premium in form of 2-5yrs advance rent. Table 5 gives a summary of reasons for involvement in street trading. Apart from these, the price survey carried out showed that the street vendors' prices are generally lower than those supermarkets. The reason often offered for this is that the overhead of street worker is almost zero. They neither pay any rents nor tax.

Table 5: Responses to Questions Relating to Reasons for street trading

REASONS FOR STREET TRADING	NO	PERCENTAGE
Unemployment	48	31.58
Lack of Capital	48	31.58
Contribution to parents income	10	6.57
More lucrative than others	14	9.21
Security of self – employment	20	13.17
High cost of market stalls.	12	7.89

Source: field survey (1999)

It is the view of the author that street trading is double facet. There are sellers and buyers. The survey of selected buyers revealed that about 80% of those who buy from street traders, do so because it is convenient and time saving. Buying inside go-slow from car window is likened to "killing two birds with a stone". About 63% claimed that goods bought in such manner are cheaper. About 30% claimed that they sometimes buy fake goods. 72% percent of people buying from car windows around existing markets claimed that lack of parking facilities often forced them

to buy along roadsides. Popular food item like snacks and soft drinks and 'pure water' receive high volume of patronage because of the regular hold up that induces thirst especially during dry season.

PROBLEMS OF STREET TRADING

Street trading has numerous socio-economic as well as physical implications. These are discussed as follows.

Social Problems

There is no doubt that trading like prostitution; drug peddling; and begging create a lot of social problems in Nigeria. In particular, these practices pose a lot of danger to the society. For example, it has been discovered that roadside alcohol sellers also operate as middlemen and their booths under bridges were meeting places for criminals. Guns are often hidden in such unsuspected location. This was for example, confirmed in 1998 when the police raided the beggars at Oyingbo and Bornu Way at Ebute-Meta and guns and foreign currencies were found in their possession. The percentage of children that are involved in street trading and other criminal activities is quite alarming. For example, many children are usually exposed to all sorts of criminal activities like pick pocketing, prostitution and begging. The report of rapid spread of AIDS can be traced to increase in commercial sex hawking and many abandoned children are usually found in the street.

Physical Problems

The environmental degradation also caused by street trading is enormous. Most of the streets in Lagos look like waste dumps while major highways in the metropolis are dirty and filthy. This is particularly the case in the medium and low-density areas of Lagos like Shomolu, Ketu, Ojota, Ogudu, Agege, Orile and Mile 2.

Street trading generates high volume of waste. Common waste include packs of food item, like pure water, snacks, remain of fruits etc. is usually dumped into public drainage thereby blocking the free flow of sewage and causing flooding which affects millions of people and destroys property worth millions of Naira. Street trading on overhead bridges and roadside deny people easy passage. In some areas, the roads have been reduced from four lanes to only two, slowing down vehicular movement. Accidents are common in such areas. People are usually forced to cross the express road when the overhead bridges have already been taken over by street traders, beggars and thieves. This also results in loss of lives. Aesthetically, street traders' invasions of street always present poor scenery. For example, street traders have spoilt many beautiful places in the metropolis and the effects of goods displayed around them. This is for example the case around the Tinubu Square in Lagos. The same thing goes with other monuments that are supposed to serve as focal points of attraction but are being messed up by street traders.

Encroachments on set back and building beyond building lines are another characteristics. In many areas of Lagos set backs along the street have been taken over by street traders making the whole metropolis look slummy. Areas such as Oworonsoki – Bariga road, Ojuelegba – Lawanson road, Moloney – Obalende, Demurin road at Ketu for example present ugly pictures of street trading invasion. Pedestrians and cyclists are often forced to share the motor passages. There are also the high risks of fire outbreaks especially because of the highly flammable shanties and stalls in front of virtually every house in many areas especially the medium and low-income areas.

Economic problem

The value of a property is not determined by the property in isolation but also by a combination of many other factors including the environment. A slummy environment will no doubt command poor property value. Typical examples of slummy environment are found in and Ojota, Shangisha and Mushin. In contrast, the planned and well-controlled ones where street trading is restricted do exhibit higher property value than those in degenerated environment. For example while a plot of land goes for about N1m in Ojota, similar plot of land command a market value of about N6m in adjacent Ogudu GRA, which is planned. While the same plot of land goes for less than N800, 000.00 in Shangisha, it's about N3 million in Magodo.

The study did not analyse the consequences of street trading on those that have invested on acquisition of shops in formal shopping centres. But the study revealed that some of the street traders have shops but are forced to partake in street trading to avert total loss. This is enough prove that street trading have adversarial effect on owners of shop in organised markets.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AGAINST STREET TRADING IN LAGOS

Governments have always embarked upon many activities to check the incidence of street trading. For example, a major step taken by government is the enactment of the Street Trading and Illegal Market (Prohibition) Edict No 1 of 1984, which was published in the Lagos State Government Gazette Extraordinary No 14, volume 17 of 5th April, 1984. This legislative act was amended in 1996. The main provisions of the edicts are to be found in Sections 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the edit. Section 1 for example prohibits hawking by stating that 'No person shall sell or hawk or expose for sale any goods, wares, articles or things or services whether or not from a stationary position in any place on street specified in the first schedule to this edict or within any public building in the state'. Section 2 controls the construction of illegal markets by providing that 'No person other than the state or local government or statutory corporation shall establish or maintain any market in any place in the state'. To enforce these prohibitions, Section 4 vested powers in authorised persons to seize goods, wares or articles where found to be in contravention. Section 5 on its part legalised the forfeiture of goods seized. Section 3 of the 1996 Edict amended Section 1 of the 1984' edict by awarding punishment to offenders of this law. Under this section, a first offender shall be liable to a fine of N5, 000.00 or six months imprisonment with hard labour.

Among the reasons offered for the enactment of the laws are (a) The quality of good sold along the street could not be guaranteed. Product standardisation enforced by the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) cannot be enforced among the faceless street traders. Expired drugs and foods are sold to the innocent people and (b) There is also the menace of area boys and girls usually called 'touts'. Government also set up a 'Lagos State Task force on Environmental Sanitation and Special Offences' to implement all the objectives of the edict. This task force has the power to arrest offenders. As part of efforts to avoid the officials, the traders have coded signals for alerting their members of the presence of government officials. Within a short time they disperse.

The law has however had limited impact on stopping street trading. For example, this study reveals that about 43% of the street traders are ignorant of the Edict. On a number of occasions, illegal market stalls had been demolished and their wares burnt. But not long after regrouping are noticed and the trade continues to thrive.

For example, mass demolition of street shops was carried out early in 1999. Kiosks and traders' tables along major streets of Ikeja, Surulere, Lagos Island and Festac demolished. There were a lot of arrest made and a lot of goods were seized. But soon after the traders were back. Demolition is often condemned it is regarded as denying people of their livelihood. The

persistent nature of street trading, which defy official intimidation and elimination, shows that there is need to examine the root causes which may probably be linked to the economic situation in the country.

STREET TRADING: A VEHICLE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria has a population of about 120 million people According to the 1998 Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) report; Nigeria has a low per capital income of less than N100, high level of unemployment, high inflation rate and inadequate social infrastructure. Published data on education, health, and access to water and sanitation and food security in Nigeria show an economic decline from the peak levels achieved in the 1980s. Only about 52.5 percent of the population are literate, access to health services though at 72 percent seems impressive, ratio of population to hospital bed is as low as 1:1,277 people. Only about 53 percent of urban households and 36 percent of rural ones in Nigeria have access to safe drinking water. At the current rate of growth, the population of the country will double the 1991 figure of 88 million by the year 2020. This would further compound the demands for social services and infrastructural facilities.

It is against this background that the issue of street trading in Lagos should be carefully examined. In Indonesia and Philippine with a population of 112 million people and 67 million respectively, street trading has been used as a vehicle for socio-economic development. From the data got from this study, about 63 percent of the 152 traders interviewed claimed that unemployment and lack of capital were responsible for their taking to street trading.

In a nation where over 500,000 lost with about two years and where the market cannot absorb over 90% of the graduates turned out of higher educational institutions, a crisis point is inevitable. It is therefore advocated in this study that officials give street trading another look. Illegal and illegitimate trade should be identified and separated. The harsh condition of operating many business of the Nigeria urban centres, high inflation rate, (78% in 1995, 75% in 1996), poor state of infrastructures, low capacity utilisation of manufacturing industries (30.4% in 1994) and high lending rates of 19-21%, all constitute strong disincentive to small scale investors wishing to operate formal business unit. (CBN report 1996).

In most developing countries, small and medium enterprises are promoted by the governments probably a first step to legalise street trading activity in Lagos, putting in place an enabling environment for street trading to flourish. However, government should regulate street trading by putting in place environmental sanitation conditions in areas where the activity is allowed. Government could limit operations of street trading to certain ages limit and proper orientations must be given as regards traffic codes, waste disposal methods, hygiene and environmental conditions of products. Other areas in which government should be involved are the quality of products. All products sold by street traders must be products whose companies have been certified and formally permitted to do so by appropriate government laws.

Government must also be seen to set-up programs and plans of action that would benefit the street traders. Such programs include range from promotion of micro-credit to finance street trading and educational empowerment of the street traders. According to data collected on this project about 21% of the traders questioned had a minimum of primary or secondary education certificate. Government should reactivate the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to actualise its three core programs namely: (a) vocational skills development and (b) Public works (c) small-scale enterprises, which should be made relevant to Nigeria's cultural, social and economic patterns. NDE should evaluate their programs. The initial plan of getting the trained youth established in-groups, through financial assistance from government should be pursued. Industrialist, both small and big relies upon electricity as a major source of energy. Government should ensuring regular power supply. Skilled workmen and women that abandoned the

workshops for the street as a result of electricity failure should be helped to succeed in their vocation.

Recently micro-credit for small scale enterprises has been a new-dimension in credit finance in Nigeria. It is expected that government will come out with a clear-cut policy on this issue. This is because of its profound effect on monetary and fiscal policies of government. Government budgeted N4 billion through the Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP) in 1997. Tagged an investment promotion program, FEAP aims at the poor, but the change in government and the restructuring of the economy has reduced attention in urban poor. Government should encourage the registration of the urban poor with specified institutions such as the People's Bank and Community Banks and guidelines guiding the granting of credits to this set of people must be given. The report of People's Bank shows that the urban poor are faithful in amortising their loan.

The state of the rehabilitation centre at Owutu in Ikorodu, Lagos, does not speak well of the centre. Such centres should provide vocation training and assist those rehabilitated to settle down into normal life by giving needed financial assistance. Prostitution portends great dangers for the future of the country. It is the debasement of women and all that humanity stands for. It marks up an increase in cases of street violence; murders (mostly ritual murders) and upsurge in communicable diseases especially AIDS. A return to African traditional values in sexual behaviour is advocated. The family unit must be kept alive through viable economic policies. Love must be allowed to permeate the society in all strata and opportunities in the job market must increase.

The general condition of existing markets must be improved upon. Government can apply for facility under the Infrastructural Development Fund (IDF) from the World Bank. Such facility is usually granted based on the rating policy of the government, its administration and connection. The facility will be used to improve both the quantity and quality of infrastructure provided at markets. Such infrastructures include roads, proper drainage system, provision of basic health clinics etc. This will increase the level of clientele currently enjoyed by the market. Street trading should not be allowed around established market. Constructing stalls around the fence of existing markets should be prohibited. This often denies the shops owners inside the market the needed patronage and forces them to the street for survival.

Local Planning Authorities should be put in place in all council areas as stipulated in Urban and Regional Planning Decree 88 of 1992. Grass root planning will ensure proper monitoring and development control. Structures built on road setbacks must be demolished to reinstate the beauty of the urban areas.

Traffic control devices should be repaired. Roads should be manned to ensure free flow of traffic. Since street trading thrives better when there is go-slow or hold-ups, solving traffic problems also means reducing street trading.

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