

Abstract

High level of unemployment rate in the country has led to increasing rate of urban poverty. This situation has led the less fortunate in urban centres to resort joining informal trading as a survival technique¹. Most studies have been done on the informality of the roadside vendors especially through urban informality and the survival of the urban poor in various cities around the world majorly focusing on the developing countries. However few studies have been focusing on the challenges the traders are facing on a day to day basis on where they work from. Therefore the research study focused on the various planning challenges the informal traders are facing putting into focus the space they are using, the conditions of the infrastructure available for them to use, permission to do businesses and their compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. It also aims to establish the factors that as to why the informal roadside vendors prefer selling their goods along the highway despite the fact that there are formal markets in place that are able to accommodate them. The study further explores potential ways of improving the informal trading and vending activities by making use of plausible planning interventions.

The study revealed the main reason as to why the vendors preferred the roadside to the formal markets was because of the high client base. It also revealed that the main challenges and conflicts that the vendors faced included harassment by the county officials over delayment of tax payment, competition over space and high number of traders concentrated in one area. Also some of the coping mechanisms employed by the county council and traders included making use of traffic marshals to control the traffic flow and serialing of the vendors to facilitate easier collection of taxes. Findings from this study were followed by important short and long term measures such as relocating the vendors to a permanent location and expansion of the road. Enforcement of the policies by the county council also came into play.

Even with the current measures and policies in place that aim to reduce and eradicate the challenges and conflicts brought about by the informal roadside vendors, Daraja Mbili will continue to face the challenges that it is facing if proper planning and enforcement measures are not employed. If the planning measures suggested are followed efficient and effective trading will take place and the same measures can be replicated and used in a Market in a different town facing a similar predicament as that of Daraja Mbili Market.

