

Short Research Article

Women vegetable vendors face challenges in Arusha, Tanzania : A case of the
Tengeru market.

ABSTRACT

The study aims to analyse the obstacles that women vegetable vendors face in Arusha, Tanzania, with a focus on Tengeru market. The cross-sectional research design was adopted in this study. A case study, as opposed to a broad statistical survey, focuses on a specific circumstance. It refers to the process of getting an understanding of a topic without including the entire population. The survey's findings showed that the majority of respondents were female due to the nature of the study, were in their 21s to 25s, and had only completed primary education. The study's findings again showed that the majority of respondents sold vegetables in their community local markets to generate revenue. Also, the majority of these people were participating in vegetable vending activities due to persuasion from their families, spouses, local government officials, societal seminars, and other groups. Furthermore, it was found that few individuals claimed that the income they were generating from their activities was insufficient to satisfy their households' requirements or other socioeconomic activities.

The study discovered that vegetable vendors experienced a variety of difficulties, including a lack of support from the government, a lack of support from their families, a lack of confidence, a lack of skills and expertise, and gender-based violence that interfered with their activity. The study generally suggests that the government should offer loans to these women who work as vending employees, as well as create legislation and bylaws, raise awareness, and produce supportive materials.

Keywords: Challenges, women, vegetable, vending, entrepreneurship

1. INTRODUCTION

“Vegetables production constitutes a substantial part of the world economy. The statistics show that World's leading three producers of fresh vegetables are China, India and United State of America. China is the leading producer with annual production volume of nearly 554 million metric tons, followed by India with approximately 127 million metric tons of fresh vegetables. Cabbage, Chinese spinach, Chinese cabbage, bock Choy, cucumber, white radish and Chinese eggplant are main vegetables produced in China. India is the largest producer of vegetables such as ginger and okra and ranks second in production of onions, cauliflowers, Brinjal and cabbages” (Shahbandeh, 2017).

“Women’s general disadvantaged employment positions have contributed to the debate that the labor market itself is “feminized” which suggests that the employment in which women engage in is associated with low pay, insecurity and precariousness (Heintz, 2006). Furthermore, the “feminization” of the global labor force is connected to urban growth and the expansion of informal employment” (Tacoli, 2012). “Sub-Saharan Africa is urbanizing at an average of almost 5 percent annually which is twice as high as in Asia and Latin America” (UN-HABITAT, 2009). “The economic liberalizations in East Asia that have been characterized by an increase in urban-based employment have generally not taken place in sub-Saharan Africa” (Potts, 2009).

“It has been stated that the African urbanization is not consistent with the assumptions of conventional economic theory since the link between industrialization and urbanization has not been witnessed in the region” (Rakodi, 1997; World Bank, 2009). “Instead, urbanization is occurring at lower rates of economic growth and is accompanied by a lack of employment generation as well as an increase in slum dwellers” (UN-HABITAT, 2010). “Moreover, the general lack of jobs in African cities becomes further challenging when the urbanization process has not been preceded by an overall structural transformation in the agricultural sector” (Hillbom and Green, 2010)

“Arusha City Council is a tourism city of Tanzania where there is flow of population from different regions to seek for formal and informal employment including vegetable selling business. In most cases vegetables are sold in both whole sale and retail at Kilombero market grounds, Tengeru market and other markets” (Makwavila, 2017). “Various studies have reported on women vegetable vending business” (Chinomona and Maziriri, 2015; Daudi, 2015; Heilbrunn, 2014; Jagero and Kushoka, 2011; Domja'n and Fekete, 2011). However, there is little attention on women vegetable seller’s challenges.

“Although there is an increased participation of women in the micro and small enterprise (MSE) sector and particularly vegetable vending sector over the past few years, women vegetable vendors are still found predominantly in low growth areas, earning lower revenues

than their male counterparts. Several studies on women entrepreneurs have been conducted by a number of researchers. For example, a study by ILO (2010) on women entrepreneurs found that, poor infrastructure, high production costs and non-conducive business environment tend to impact more on business women than men” (ILO, 2010).

Despite the existence of abundant scholarly work on challenges facing women vegetable vendors, these studies, overlooked challenges facing women in the informal sector on balancing their reproductive roles of childcare and productive roles in Tanzania. Besides, literatures have generalized the problems to all levels and types of enterprises in the informal sector. In reality the incidence and impact of these constraints may vary significantly from one size and category of entrepreneur and enterprises. It should be noted that the role of childcare in many countries including Tanzania is gendered towards women.

“Hence, despite the important role played by women in the informal sector particularly in vegetable vending sub-sector in meeting vegetable demand of urban dwellers in developing countries including Tanzania, there is a concern about the ability of those women to balance their involvement in vegetable vending business and provision of child care at home” (ILO, 2010). The study had the following objectives:

- i. To explore the factors, influence women to join in vegetable vending activities in Tengeru market
- ii. To examine the challenges facing vegetable vending activities to women in Tengeru market

In spite of the studies conducted by other researchers, still there is no research conducted in Tengeru market concerning women vegetable vendors. So, this study intended to assess the challenges facing women vegetable vendors in Tengeru market.

3. Literature review

The study conducted by Parker (2018) was assessing the factors which influenced the challenges facing fruits vendors in Bolivia. It found that, poverty, lack of formal employment and influence of the vitamins found in Carrots were the reasons influenced people of Bolivian to engaged on vegetable vending activities. “This high altitude stretches from Northern Peru, through the Plurinational State of Bolivia into Northern Chile and Northeast Argentina. In line with altitude, and in the valley floors, subsistence-based production adds cereals to carrots and potatoes, the main staple of the country. In Kenya, Carrots which is a source of the diets in Sub Saharan Africa – makes up for more than half of a smallholder household production”. (Parker, 2018).

“The report of FAO (2018) Shows that, vegetables are one of the richest sources of Vitamin A and an excellent source of antioxidants. Example, Carrots are fat free, low in sodium, cholesterol free, a good source of Vitamin C, and low in calories”. (FAO 2007). “Tanzania has rich natural resources for agricultural development. The country has 94.5 million

hectares of land of which 44 million hectares are classified as arable, but only 24% of the arable land is under cultivation. About the 12million hectares, suitable for production of carrots". (ESRF, 2011).The findings from Jason (2017) shows that, 39% of the produced carrot are exported to different countries like Sudan, Malawi, Zambia as well as other countries nearby Tanzania which production is low and the remained 68% are consumed by the Tanzanian themselves. This shows how significant the production of carrot is carrying to the community.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Arusha region at Arumeru district, Tanzania. The district is one among 6 districts of Arusha Region in the northern Tanzania. The economy of the district is entirely dependent on agriculture, consisting mainly of subsistence farming and livestock keeping. It lies between longitudes 36.50 to 37.50 East and latitudes 3.50 to 3.70 South of the Equator. The equatorial climate of the district is favorable for food and cash crops cultivation throughout the year. The cultivation ranges from grains, legumes, vegetables to fruits and it is predominantly characterized by small-scale farmers. The district is in a good location for export of agricultural produce because of its proximity to the commercial markets in major towns and cities in East Africa.

The study involved respondents aged from 15-above 40 years. The findings shows that, most of the respondents were aged from 21-25 years and few respondents were aged above 40 years. Marital status of the respondents shows that, 48.3% were married, 43.3% were single and 8.3% were divorced. Also 20% of respondents were employed, 46.7% were self-employed and most in vegetable vending in local community markets, and 33.3% were unemployed. From the study, most of the respondents were self-employed due to the problem of employment, many of them still perform different activities so as to generate income for the wellbeing of their families.

In fulfilling the purpose of the study, a cross-sectional approach was employed to collect data at once in a specified time. The approach was chosen because it was satisfying the requirements of the objectives of the study. A sample of 100 respondents was drawn from the population of smallholder carrot farmers by using a multi-stage sampling procedure. At first stage, Arusha region was conveniently selected from a list of carrot producing regions in Tanzania. At second stage, Arumeru district was chosen randomly from a list of carrot producing districts while at the third stage, two wards Songoro and Akheri were purposively selected from a list of main carrot producing wards in the district. At the last stage, 150 carrot smallholder farmers were selected randomly from a list of smallholder carrot farmers.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data involved gender, marital status, level of education and household assets whereas quantitative data covered age, family size, input cost and output. The data was collected by using household questionnaires and key informant interview methods to farmers and district agricultural

officer respectively. Specifically, the household questionnaire collected data on socio-economic characteristics, farm characteristics, input and output, and household livelihood assets. While the interview guide supported the collection of data regarding the main carrot producing wards within the district. The tools of data collection were relevantly applied because of the suitability and reliability of the methods designed for data collection in the study area.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study involved respondents who were aged from 15-40 years. The findings shows that, most of the respondents were aged from 21-25 years and few respondents were aged above 40 years. These findings shows that, other groups was 23.3% aged from 15-20 years, 28.3% were aged from 26-30 years and 11.7% were aged from 36-40 years

Table 1 Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
15-20	14	23.3
21-25	20	33.3
26-30	17	28.3
36-40	7	11.7
Above 40 years	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2022

3.2 Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status of the respondents is well presented to table 2. It shows that, 48.3% were married, 43.3% were single and 8.3% were divorced. The findings show that, most of the respondents were married. Even through normal observation from the study shows that, most of the respondents were married and they were conducting those activities for the wellbeing of their families.

Table 2: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	29	48.3
Single	26	43.3
Divorced	5	8.3

Total	60	100.0
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Source: Survey Data, 2022

3.3. Factors influencing women to join into vegetable vending activities

The findings shows that, 30% were faced with un-employment hence they decided to engage in vegetable vending activities as a way of improving their life, 30% were faced with poverty, 26.7% had low income and 13.3% was the influence from the peer groups.

These findings shows that, most of women in the community engaged vegetable vending activities due to un-employment and excessive poverty. To them, vegetable vending activities help them to get basic needs and improve their wellbeing, improvement of household, and improve community at large.

Table 3: Factors influencing women to join into vegetable vending activities

Factors	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment	18	30.0
Poverty	18	30.0
Low income	16	26.7
influence from peer groups	8	13.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2022

The findings from this study were similar to the findings from the study conducted by Parker (2018) who assessed the challenges facing fruits vendors in Bolivia. It found that, poverty, lack of formal employment and influence of the vitamins found in Carrots were the reasons influenced people of Bolkivia to engaged on vegetable vending activities to the study area.

This high altitude stretches from Northern Peru, through the Plurinational State of Bolivia into Northern Chile and Northeast Argentina. In line with altitude, and in the valley floors, subsistence-based production adds cereals to carrots and potatoes, the main staple of the country.

In Kenya, Carrots which is a source of the diets in Sub Saharan Africa – makes up for more than half of a smallholder household production. (Parker, 2018). Generally, there were many factors which were affected women and caused them to engage to income generating activities in order to improve their economic status.

3.4. Challenges facing women in conducting vegetable vending in Arusha

Based on the findings as presented in table 4 below 23.3% of respondents lack support from the government, 25% lack support from their husbands, 16.7% faced with poor perception from the community members on vegetable vending, 11.7% of respondents were affected

with lack of confidence, and other 11.7% were faced with gender based violence which affected them in vending activities.

The findings show that, most of women were affected with the lack of support from their husbands and support from the government, which affected women in conducting the vegetable vending activities in the communities.

Table 4: Challenges faced women in conducting vegetable vending activities

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of support from the government	14	23.3
lack of support from their husbands and families	15	25.0
poor perception from the community members	10	16.7
lack of confidence	7	11.7
Lack of skills and knowledge	7	11.7
gender based violence	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

Source: Survey Data 2022.

The study were similar from the study conducted by ECA, 2018, Which found that, "Vegetable vending activities is very much the domain of women in many countries including Tanzania" (ECA, 2018). "There is generally a shift towards eating vegetables prepared outside (away) from home" (WHO, 2006).

"Millions of people use street food daily because they work far away from their homes and the vendors offers a wide variety of foods at a low cost and easily accessible. Street vegetable vending assures vegetable security for low income urban population and offers opportunity for developing small scale entrepreneurs" (WHO, 1996).

The study results are in line with those reported by Anderson (2017) and Kumburu et al. (2013) who explained that "poor infrastructure facilities, lack of entrepreneurship skills, technical support and training, unreliable business premises, lack of reliable markets, lack of capital and competition were the major obstacles of income generating activities to flourish".

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

The study found that, vegetable vending activities and entrepreneurship is of vital to women in the community since it helps to reduce poverty, solve unemployment, decrease dependency rate, and help in income generation as well as other impacts. Vegetable vending has become something very important to the community since people do not have formal employment hence they decide to become entrepreneurs in order to generate income for the wellbeing of their households and community at large.

The study explored that, poverty, influence from families, female headed households, lack of formal employment as well as dependency from men are some of the factors which influence women to become vegetable entrepreneurs in the community as they want to have self and dependency income generating activities.

The study found that, women are faced with different challenges in conducting vegetable vending activities in their community. They are faced with the lack of fund, poverty, lack of knowledge and skills, lack of support from their families, lack of support from the husbands and lack of support from the government.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the conclusion made above the study recommended the following: The Arumeru District should improve Tengeru market infrastructures including storage facilities, racks, shelter, water supply, and electricity power and drainage systems to enhance women vegetable selling business.

Using NGOs and government support there should be capacity building through registered women groups lending in order to enhance accessibility of more financial resources to women vegetable sellers such as soft loans to increase their capital to expand their businesses.

Furthermore, there should be government support to women vegetable venders in Arusha region and specifically Tengeru Market. Capacity building to vegetable vending business should also be given priority to help women improve their business. This will increase vegetables value and therefore market availability. Also husband and the entire community should be educated on women empowering so that they allow them to engage in vegetable and other small business to help improve family life.

Consent:

In ensuring ethical issues to this research work, the researcher considered privacy of information and data given by respondents, the use of polite language as well as the use of all principles of data collection accordingly.

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