

ROAD SIDE VENDING, GROWTH OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR AND LEARNING NEEDS OF VENDORS IN GABORONE CITY OF BOTSWANA

Idowu Biao

Dept. of Adult Education, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

Abstract

This study examined the phenomenon known as road side vending within the spatial arena of Gaborone city of Botswana. In clarifying the concepts employed in the study, a difference was made among the terminologies 'street vendors'(mobile vendors moving all over within and about the streets), 'hawkers'(mobile vendors moving both within and beyond the streets) and 'road side vendors'(immobile vendors using road sidewalks and road/street corners for economic activities). The study employed a 15-item inventory on the one hand, to elicit the factors that accounted for the recent phenomenal surge in road side vending in Gaborone and on the other hand, to highlight the expectations of the actors of this sector of the economy. The findings revealed that between 2012 and 2014, road side vending grew by 50% in Gaborone and 74% of Gaborone road side vendors were aged between 38-54years, suggesting that this market is run by mature adults. The findings equally revealed that the growth of road side vending in Gaborone coincided with an era when unemployment began to be discussed within government circles, the press and in the streets of Botswana. This finding is supported by the literature which states that in general, the informal sector of the economy of less developed countries tend to grow under the impulse of unemployment and increasing poverty rate. The study ended with one major recommendation that called on the Gaborone City Council to use the instrumentality of learning to bring about the change it desires for Gaborone without excluding road side vendors from its Gaborone developmental blueprint.