



Re-Designing Street Trading in a Mega-City: An Innovative Approach

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Abstract: *This article has attempted a redesigning of street trading in a mega-city using an Innovative Approach. To many people street trading which can be classified as an informal sector activity has always constituted a menace to the government, environmentalist and the public. However taking a retrospect street trading has been discovered to belong to the informal sector of the economy and a contributor to a nation's economic growth and GDP. It is also a source of employment in many urban centres especially for migrants from the rural areas who have no employable skills to gain employment in urban centres. The activities of street trading cut across sexes as both male and female are involved with children not been left out making most of the entrepreneurs. Street trading has always been a problem to the generality of the people as some get knocked down by traffic, some get kidnapped, raped and also they constitute a nuisance to the environment etc. It is as a result of the problems created by street trading that inspired this article to take a new approach at redesigning street trading using a synthesized model of Top-Down, Bottom-Up approach that involved all stake holders in street trading, thereby giving them a voice in their affairs.*

Keyword: *Street trading, Mega-city, Stake holders, Bottom-up, Top-Down*

Introduction

There has been no acceptable definition of street trading. To some people it is an important economic activity that sustains a significant percentage of rural and urban dwellers who engage in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). These are considered the thrust of economic growth and development in many African countries. This class of entrepreneurs operated outside the mainstream economic development but they are with the informal economic activities. To another group of scholars, street trading means selling, exposing or offering for sale any article or commodity in a street. The term street includes any road, footway or other area to which the public have access without payment. Street trading has been christened a menace in Nigeria due to the dangers exposed to by traders, as many got killed, maimed, kidnapped and knocked down by traffic on the road.

However, due to mass migration of people from the rural areas to urban areas across the country, some urban centres have grown to become mega-cities. A mega-city is described as a city with about 10 million inhabitants and in Nigeria, Lagos typifies an example of such a city, currently Lagos is having close to 20 million inhabitants. In principle infrastructural facilities are often overstretched in most mega-cities, especially roads, electricity, water etc (name all that u wish to name). Similarly, due to massive migration from the rural areas to urban centres, many unskilled people after moving to urban centres become frustrated as they have no specific job skills to fit into such urban centres, and in order to survive many become criminals and others who are not criminally minded will engage in street and petty trading. It must also be mentioned that, it is not only migrants that engage in street trading, the population of street traders cut across both migrants and indigent citizens of such urban centres.

For this article attention will be focused on re-designing street trading in a mega-city: An innovative approach, though street trading activities have become an embarrassment to various governments in Nigeria, due to conversion of city roads into make-shift stalls, markets, defacing of aesthetics of city and town etc., with lots of legal punishments and fines, yet the practice continues, it is as a result of this that this article is taking a paradigm shift from previous studies by advocating for an innovative approach to solve the embarrassing menace.

The article is divided into 5 sections, as follows- Introduction, section 2, will look at the review of literatures, while section 3 will look at the methodology for proffering

solution to the menace of street trading, section 4 will look at discussion and policy implications, while section 5 will be the conclusion.

Literature Review

Street and road side trade has been considered a significant economic activity and one of the channels of fostering the private sectors contribution to both growth and equity objectives of development. In Africa the sector has operated outside the mainstream economic development and falls within the informal economic activities. Keith Hart (1973) carried out a study in Accra during which the term Informal sector was first coined and made much reference to small scale distribution, which he justifies due to its importance in urban economic life. The study challenged the notion of urban unemployed and under employed in cities like Accra contributing a passive exploited majority with informal activities having little autonomous capacity to generate growth in the incomes of the urban poor. The study went further to detail a descriptive analysis of the multiple economic activities of the urban poor and the important roles they play in supplying many of the essential services in urban centres. The study constituted a serious challenge to the way development economists had previously approached employment issues in the developing world, however a question was posed "Do we want to shift the emphasis of income opportunities in the direction of formal employment for its own sake or only to reduce participation in socially disapproved of informal activities and those in informal occupations whose marginal productivity is too low?", this study now forced a revision of previous approaches to employment policy. Ondiege (1995) posited that estimates indicate that in the developing countries 40-80% of the urban workforce is in the informal sector, street vendors are the most visible among the workforce. Although their activities, working conditions, relations with authorities, policies and regulations relating to their operations have not been well researched and documented. In 1995 ILO estimates had shown that SMEs account for 59% of sub-Saharan Africa's urban labour force.

Focus on street vendors began with the Bellagio International declaration of street vendors which called for national policies on street vendors and follow-up actions by individual vendors, vendors association, city governments and international organizations. The Bellagio declaration identified 6 common problems of street trading around the world and this includes, lack of legal status, right to vend, lack of space, poor location, restriction on licensing, cost of regulation, harassment, confiscation, evictions, lack of services, lack of infrastructure and lack of representation or voice.

Another international network (Women in Employment, Globalising and Organising) WIEGO, has spearheaded research and policy dialogue on street trading, WIEGO has worked closely with street net on leveraging of funds for research and policy in some African countries and this includes South Africa, Ghana, Cote-divoire, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Studies conducted on street trading indicate that street vendors are many and they form a significant percentage of SMEs, Charmes (1998), in his work estimated that the share of street vendors in total non-agricultural employment ranges from less than 2 % in Costa-Rica in 1997 to 9% in Guatemala in 2000 with about 4% or more in Tunisia, Benin, Kenya ,Mexico, Venezuela and Guatemala.

A study by Agadjanian (2001) discovered that in Africa many people were retrenched by government under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and in Mozambique it was discovered that a good number of street vendors were former mainstream male workers and such people though dissatisfied with street trading but wish for the day they will get real jobs.

The ILO employment mission to Kenya popularised the idea of an informal sector and they acknowledge street trading as an important component of the informal sector but does not emphasize that the visibility of street activities tends to lead to the neglect of other segment of the informal sector like manufacturing.

According to ILO (2002) 90% of informal employment in Sub- Saharan Africa is dominated by the women especially in non- agriculture labour force. Charmes (2000) noted that Africa has the largest percentage of people engaged in informal work which is higher than those provided for Latin American, Caribbean and Asia.

Bromley (1978) in his comment on the speed at which the notion of the informal sector was adopted by the ILO and other international development institutions argues that the notion “offers the possibility of helping the poor without any major treat to the rich”. It offers a potential compromise between pressures for the redistribution of income and wealth with the desire for stability on the part of the economic and political elite.

Moser (1978) drawing on Marxist theory expanded Bromley’s critics, she challenged the notion of two sector dualism used by the ILO and others pointing to a continuum of productive activities in the city of developing countries with complex linkages and dependent relations between production and distribution systems. Furthermore, Moser (1978) argues that the petty commodity sector is articulated as part of the capitalist mode of production with development control by and linked to the capitalist mode.

Petty commodity production is argued to play a number of important roles within the capitalist mode of production (e.g maintaining low level of subsistence and low cost of labour reproduction). The study therefore noted that the political dimension of development planning can no longer be ignored. Though the policy implication of our analysis are fairly bleak but recognising the need for grass root intervention and she stated that it must be recognised that the function of these measures is no more than to alleviate some of the worst economies not to change the overall structure which she argues is essentially exploitative. The empirical material used to substantiate her and other non-Marxist analyst tend to focus on production rather than distribution of products with no mention of street trading. The implication of her analysis is that they are part of the capitalist distribution process.

It must be mentioned that street trading is undertaken by both men and women outside enclosed premises or covered work space which includes street pavements, corners, sidewalks, neighbourhood sidewalks and by main transport nodes such as railway stations, bus stop, lorry parks, construction sites etc. According to Adiko and Anoh (2003) they observed that in Abidjan women dominate both street and market trade which they share with their male counterparts. In other studies carried out in Zimbabwe (Tsiti,2002), Uganda (Ahikire and Ampaire, 2003) , Ghana (King and Ayeh, 2003) South Africa (Lund and Skinner, 2000) also affirmed that women dominated the informal sector. Though in all the countries, there are different reasons why the females dominate the informal sector. In Zimbabwe this is attributed to limited economic opportunities in both urban and rural areas, as men have comparative advantage over women because of their higher education level and limited household roles. In the Ghanaian study, it was pointed out that people are driven into the street due to increasing poverty in the rural areas, which arose from failures in the agricultural sectors. In South-Africa the study noted that women are sole bread winners and they support large families with majority of them landless. It could be stated that for women the activities has the advantage of flexibility in terms of working hours and independence making it more compatible with their domestic duties and reproductive roles.

Moreover the dominance of women in street trading was brought to the fore in a study by Agadjanian (1999) on the feminization of men's labour and its implication for gender relations in Mozambique, and it was observed that street vending attracts the disadvantage segment of the society with limited skills and capital. He was referring to

women due to their low education, skill and child care. In Maputo most people including the men do not consider street trading as an appropriate occupation for men but appropriate for women, and this notion was due to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which led to many male street vendors after being laid off their jobs and the tolerance of the Maputo government to street trading made many males to participate in street vending which is an indication of the changes in urban labour market. The study also discovered that some categories of men were not compromised by doing women's jobs and these included many young, old, the physically challenged and the socially marginalised.

Ahikire (1999) did a study on street trading in Uganda and noted that it attracts those who have less opportunity in terms of formal employment and prestigious business, poverty, orphanhood, widowhood and low education which prevented such people from getting jobs in the formal sector. It can therefore be concluded that street trading in Africa is an activity that involves both women, men and children. Opoku (1998) observed that most vendors are aged between 20 – 50 years with few falling below 20 and above 50 years and children as young as 10 years of age engaged in vending along street and road side. Similarly it was discovered that some of these children are entrepreneurs with some assisting their parents and relatives. In Accra and other urban centres street trading accounted for 12% of child labour.

Similarly, in Abidjan a study was conducted and it revealed that most street traders were young women below 40 years with no professional training and less than 10 years of working experience in formal employment, most of these women are business owners and they live within walking distance of their operational site i.e. they operate near their residential area mostly married with comparative low education. In retrospect all the studies conducted in the 70's and 80's are categorised into two broad traditions, on the right is the neo-liberal position which has a very celebratory view of informality (it is a process deregulation from below).

The relationship between the formal and informal economies is either not looked at or assumed to benign. (????). On the left of the spectrum is the structuralised position where informality is seen as a crisis of capitalist development demonstrating the inability of capitalism to absorb the mass of unemployed, with research detailing the exploitative relationship between the formal and informal economics. The informal economy is seen as largely assisting in capitalist accumulation. Though more recent studies does not address these debate directly but the differences essentially remains.

Natgrass (1987) draws on what she called a reformist and Marxist approach to the informal economy and identifies the strengths of the former as descriptively powerful but argues that it shows little understanding of the dynamics of the sectors. The power of the Marxist position she argues is its ability to understand the informal sector economic position and long term growth prospect and these she presented in an integrative approach using survey and interview data from street traders, demonstrating the strength of drawing from both traditions. (stopped 2.04 am 6th of June)

Lorenzo- Lindell (2004) did a study of trading in Guinea-Bissau and reframes the debate in terms of where state- society relating and informal economics activities cross-paths. She re-framed the neo-liberal position on informality as societal disengagement from the state and formal market channels. Drawing on the works of structuralists like Castells and Portes but posing an opposing approach as one of “engagement” in which capital is using informality in its strategies to protect profits with the complicity of the state. Using her rich analysis of trade in Bissau to argue for combining different elements of both approaches, she concluded that the politics of informalisation in Bissau has involved instances of both engagement and disengagement. Furthermore, some components of disengagement perspectives lend credence to the struggles and achievements of popular groups. On the other hand, the informalisation perspectives gives us the tools to understand current changes and development in informal economics including the role of the state and international actors.

It must be stated that these debates on the nature of the informal economy are increasing by implicit (???? Chk cjk pls) in the bulk of literature on street trading in Africa, a concept that is now frequently referred to as that of livelihood, which was first developed in analysing rural poverty, with an increasing tendency for the same approach to be applied in urban poverty.

Lynons and Snoxell (2005a), Lynons and Snoxell (2005b), Brown (2006), Tranberg Hansen and Vaa, (2004), Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) on street trading in Africa developed a frame work. Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) defines a livelihood as comprising the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. Five forms of assets are identified (financial, human, natural, physical and social) Brown and Rakodi (2006), Brown and Lloyd-Jones have identified access to public spaces as a key physical asset in the livelihood strategies of the urban poor.

Another concept that has not been applied to street trading issues directly but popular in conceptualising urban poverty in general is the notion of social exclusion which was developed by Beali (2000) in France to explain persistent pockets of poverty and is popular in European social policy analysis and these has been applied to developing countries context. According to De-Haan (1998) social exclusion in its original formulation is a rupture of social bonds – a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partly excluded from full participation in the society within which they live. This concept is useful in that it focuses on processes mechanism and institutions that exclude people.

Moreover Hickey and Du-Toit (2007) argues that social exclusion involves a clear awareness of the multidimensionality of deprivation and draws attention to political and historical of exclusions. They however concluded that societal exclusion lacks focus on agency and thus risks portraying the excluded as helpless victims. The implicit assumption is that inclusion is good.

Drawing on a study of farm workers in South Africa, Du-Toit (2004) noted that poverty results not from people exclusion but from the ways they are included and to address these problems Hickey and Du-Toit (2007) combined analysis of social exclusion with a focus on the terms of inclusion or adverse incorporation. They argue that the framework draws attention to causal process that lead poverty to persist and to the politics of the political economy of these processes with the associated relationship over time. This echoes the structuralist position on informalities as already outlined above but broadens the focus to include not only economic processes but also historical political and institutional dynamics.

A careful review of literatures from the various perspectives of street trading across the various cities and urban centres has revealed that street trading belongs to the informal sector of the economy with a lot of contradictions, ambiguities, diversity and interconnectedness to modern cities with its expansion across discrete sectors and domain of urban life which have made many Africans to live and work through the provisions of a platform for the creation of different types of sustainable urban life that we are yet to generally appreciate in many urban centres. It is against this background that this article will attempt to fill the research gap on street trading with special focus on a mega city like Lagos. It is therefore the aim of this article to review how the informal sector (street trading) can provide a platform for sustainable living for the people and revenue for the government. (Stopped 2.22am June6th)

Methodology

In Africa Street trading is classified as part of the informal sector of the economy and accounted for 60% of all urban jobs Charmes, (2000) and for about 90% of all new urban jobs. However this article would have adopted an empirical study of street trading but was faced with some constrains which includes the facts that most street traders are illiterates who cannot read or write or people with low education. Similarly street traders do not resume at the same and don not have specific spots to locate them if questioners were to be administered on them. As a result of this constraints the article will adopt a stake holder approach to re-define the concept of street trading and this will include representative of the government, Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), local government, representatives of the shops/store owners, representative of the street traders and the agencies of government in charge of monitoring and punishing of street traders and Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA). It is hoped that this approach will inspire both the government, their agent and some member of the public who sees street trading as a menace, as the approach will deal with the challenges and prospects presented by street trading to the informal sector of the economy. The stake holders approach will be inform of a synthesized version of a combination of the top-down and bottom-up approach which included an analysis of the strength and weaknesses of both approaches which will be applied to a longer time frame for policy formation and implementation purposes. The Synthetic frame work will consider both the policy instrument and other resources at the disposal of the policy maker with the incentive structure of the ultimate target groups (street traders) success which is contingent on merging both (top-down and bottom-up). Similarly the approach will aid policy practitioners by indicating the need to use multiple perspectives in designing and implementing policies. Though at that very practical level it is excellent but does not provide a model of the policy which can be used by social scientist to explain outcomes in wide varieties of settings.

Moreover, the approach will explicitly attempt to develop such a general model of the policy process which combines the best features of the bottom- up and top-down approaches while also applying them to a longer time frame that is the case of most other implementation approach. This synthesised perspective is then applied to the analysis of policy change over period of a decade or more allowing for a time frame to deal with the role of policy oriented learning. Similarly the synthesised perspective adopt the intellectual style or (methodological perspective) of many top-downers in its

willingness to utilise fairly abstract theoretical construct and to operate from an admittedly simplified portrait of reality. Finally it is primarily concerned with theory construction rather than with providing guidelines for practitioners or detailed portrait of particular situations.

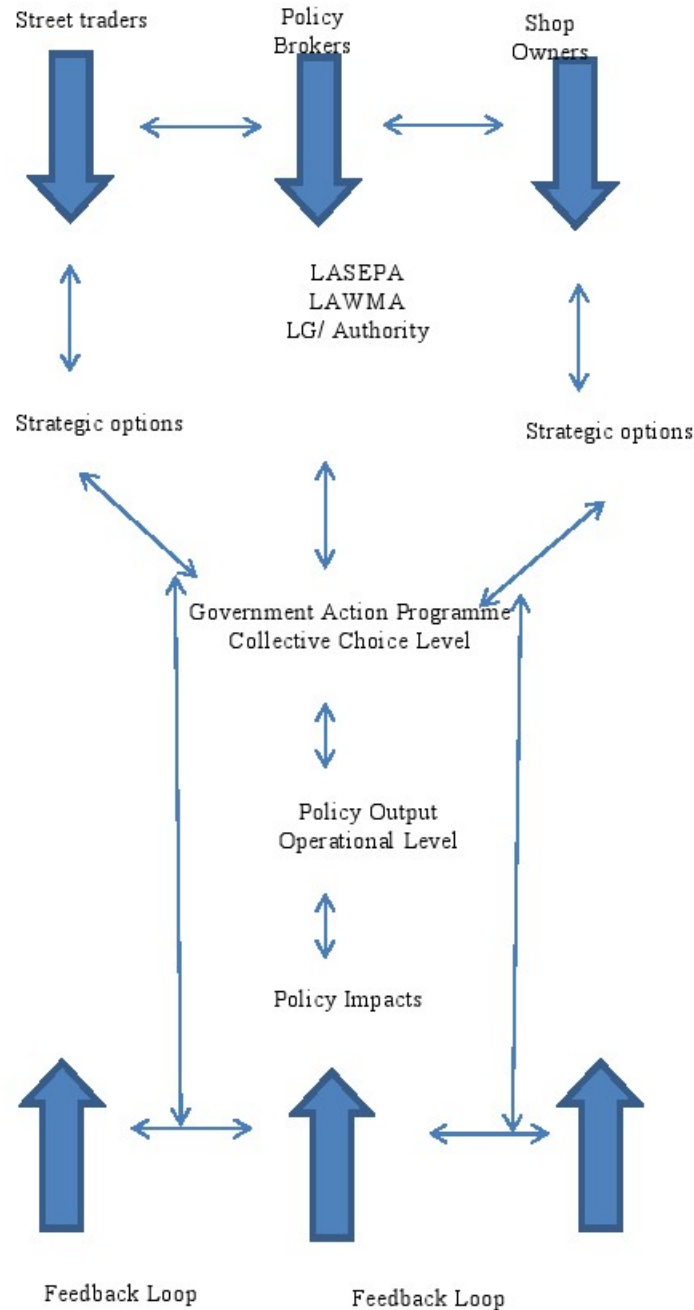


Figure 1: A Conceptual Frame Work of Synthesized Top-Down/Bottom-Up Policy System

This frame work draws heavily upon the bottom-up approach, it is assumed that stake holders can be aggregated into a number of advocacy coalitions composed of street traders/ street vendors, shop owners/stores in the market, local government officials, environmental task force officials, waste management officials and any other groups who share a set of normative and causal beliefs on the policy issues pertaining to street trading. At any point in time each coalition of stake holders adopt a strategy envisaging one or more changes in governmental institutions perceived to further his policy objectives. Any perceived conflicting strategy from the coalitions of stake holders are mediated by a third group of actors referred to as “policy brokers” whose principal concern is to find some reasonable compromise which will reduce intense conflict. The result of which is legislation or governmental decrees establishing or modifying one or more governmental action programmes at the collective choice level which will in turn produce policy output at the operational level (e.g issuance of trade permit). The output at the operational level mediated by a number of other factors will result in a variety of impacts on targeted problems parameters as well as its side effects which can be measure through feedback by all the different stake holders’ coalitions groups.

The frame work support the core aspect of a governmental action programme and the relative strength of the competing stake holders’ coalition groups within the policy sub system and this will typically remain stable over a long period of time unless there are changes in the system wide governing coalition.

Discussion And Policy Implication

Street trading has been classified as part of the informal sector of any economy and a contributor to a country’s GDP. However this article has advocated for redesigning of street trading to be a source of revenue for the government and to be more organised in its operations through a policy redirection that involves all the stakes holders (government, ministry of environment, local government, owners of shops/stores and the street traders themselves). This inclusive approach will reduce the menace of street trading and make it more organised especially in these modern time, with an organising principles making it an appealing paradigm for those concerned with recognising the informal sector of the economy.

Moreover, this new approach will help recreate a new platform for the creation of very different kind of sustainable urban configuration than previously known. This approach if seriously considered will help re-invent a mega city like Lagos as an urban centre

which has recreated informal urban economic social system. As a mega city (Lagos) due to low barriers of entry will continue to be a haven to new comers/migrants from the rural areas and these migrants may always opt for street trading as a way of survival.

It must also be mentioned that the various economic reforms embarked upon by the government has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of unemployed in both the public and private firms which has now encouraged increased activities in the informal sector of the economy especially women who has no formal education but needs to survive tends to dominate street trading.

Similarly, it must also be stated that the liberalisation of the Nigerian economy has led to an increase in the importation of many articles with the final point of sale for many of these goods coming to the street through these informal traders. This is a current phenomenon all over the country, it must also be mentioned that a combination of urbanization, migration and economic development trends has led to a rapid increase in the activities of street trading.

The Way Forward

Generally, street trading has come to stay in many urban centres and it is also recognised as a part of the informal sector of the economy. However, it is pertinent on the part of the government to integrate street trading into the economy through a re-organisation of their activities for effective monitoring and as source of income for the local governments.

Therefore this article will advocate the following: The creation of a policy on street trading by the local government authorities, taking into consideration the input of all the stake-holders (i.e street vendors, shop owners, environmental ministries and KAI (Kick Against Indiscipline, the environmental enforcement arm of the ministry of environment). In order to create a street trading policy which compliments shop/stalls based-trading which is sensitive to the needs of residents, provides diversity and consumer choice, thereby giving the street traders a voice in policy formation and implementation and also to enhance the character, ambience and safety of the local environments.

Similarly local government authorities should designate certain places as area where street trading can take place, any place outside these consented areas should be prohibited and offenders heavily sanctioned. In some local government areas apart

from places designated for street trading, time can also be fixed for trading in order to clean up the place, so as to discourage environmental filth.

The local government authorities need to ensure that there is free flow of traffic in all designated street trading areas, in order to prevent traffic snarl and safety of both the street traders and their customers.

There is also need for constant consultation between stakeholders in order to keep abreast of government policies on street trading and for feedback on workability of some of the policy agreement with responses from members of the public on their opinions

However any objection from any quarters may be referred to appropriate sub-committees for consideration and deliberation. Any proposed change will be passed to appropriate stake holders. It must also be mentioned that local government authorities can regulate some of the products to be sold by street traders in order to prevent protest from owners of lockup shops and stalls in the market.

Moreover, local government authorities in conjunction with other stake holders can design the appearance and construction of stalls, carts, barrows, vans etc. used for street trading.

The issuance of licence to street traders should always be for a short period and renewal is for those traders who conform to the rules and regulations guiding street trading. All fees must be paid in full and in advance in case of licence renewal. Failure to comply may result in license not being renewed. Similarly, license for street trading should not be issued to anybody below 18 years of age. The payment for license/permit and other fees for street trading will always be determined by the location of the street and products to sell.

On the other hand, the environmental enforcement agency (KAI) will always ensure that the responsibilities of each licensed street trader is communicated to them to maintain public safety, avoid nuisance and maintain the aesthetics of local environment and similarly attached conditions to days and time when street trading is permitted, the goods/wares to sell and size of stalls. Failure to comply may lead to revocation and non-renewal of license/permit.

There is also the need to consider people with disability and other minority groups when giving out license/permit for street trading to ensure that all interest groups are taking care of.

Conclusion

This article has taken a look at redesigning street trading in a mega city, as street trading become a phenomenon in many urban centres and a source of employment to many migrants from the rural areas. The activities of street trading cuts across many countries in Africa and Latin American countries. In some countries the activities of street trading is now recognised as part of the informal sector of the economy and a contributor to a country's economic growth. Though in Nigeria their activities has always been considered a menace due to their loose nature and un-coordinated activities, which has now necessitated this article to advocate a re-designing of street trading in many urban centres especially as most urban centre are now acquiring a status of mega-city, with over 10 million inhabitants. The trend of migration to these mega-cities will continue and therefore it is this that the article has noted, thereby clamouring for a change of approach to street trading through the coming together of all stake holders which will involve the government and their agencies, local government authorities and the street traders and shop/stall owners, thereby giving the street traders a voice in policy formulation and direction concerning their activities.

Similarly, the redesigning of street trading will act a source of revenue for the government through the regulation and licensing of their activities, while promoting the beauty and the aesthetics of these mega-cities and at the same time promote tourism in such cities for tourists will always visit such places to buy things.

It must be mentioned that, this article has only focused attention on re-designing street trading in a mega-city from an innovation perspective. However, there is need for further research to be carried out on the planning implication of street trading in mega-city. In order to find out the sustainability of the stake-holders approach employed in this article.

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