

**Midlands State**  
**University**  
**Established 2000**



**STREET VENDING AS A PANACEA TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN GWERU  
URBAN DISTRICT**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**BY**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN THE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.**

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**APPROVAL FORM**

The undersigned certify that they have supervised the student Eliphas Chinyakata dissertation entitled: Street Vending as a Panacea to women Empowerment in Gweru Urban District is submitted in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Development Studies Degree at Midlands State University.

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DATE

**DECLARATION**

I Eliphas Chinyakata declare that the thesis: Street Vending As A Panacea To Women Empowerment In Gweru Urban District is my own work and it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. No part of this work may be published without my consent. I declare that all sources I have quoted or used have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references. I authorize Midlands State University to lend this dissertation to other institutions or individuals for purposes of scholarly research only. The views, opinions and suggestions expressed in this study should be attributed to the author only.

ELIPHAS CHINYAKATA.

SIGNATURE .....

## **DEDICATIONS**

Dedications of this study go to my mother Merenciana Chinhava, Elizabeth Manjeru, my young brothers and friends who provided me with both financial and emotional support during my research. May God bless you all!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the Midlands State University at large, my immediate MADS Department lecturers and Department Chairperson Doctor J Matunhu. Special mention also goes to the researcher's direct Academic Supervisor Mr R Sillah whose efforts, commitment, support and contributions resulted in several positive changes and finalization of this research project, without him this work would not have been completed. Secondly, this research was made possible through the invaluable compliments, contributions without support from Gweru city Council officials, Ministry of Women affairs officials and other stakeholders not mentioned and female vendors in Gweru my success in this research project would not have been possible. Lastly my deepest appreciation goes to my family and, relatives, work mates and close academic colleagues among others, who were my pillar of strength for their unwavering support, encouragement and financial aid during this research project and academic period. Thank you for the support and everything.



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBD	Central Business District
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
DIFD	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustments Programs
FTLRP	Fast Truck Land Reform Programmed
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
ILO	International Labor Organization
NASVI	National Association for Street Vendors in India
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
SAPS	Structural Adjustment Programs
SEDCO	Small Enterprises Development Corporation
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises

SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SVB	Street Vending Business
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programmed
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African for National Union- Patriotic
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZHRF	Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum

## **ABSTRACT**

*The study focused on examining the contribution of Street Vending to the empowerment of women in Gweru Urban District. The rise of street vending is closely linked to the rise of informal economy in contemporary Zimbabwe. The death of the formal industry marked the beginning of Street vending business in Zimbabwe and Gweru in Particular .The collapse of the formal industry is attributed to a number of economic and political factors which include adoption unpopular Economic Structural Adjustments Programs (ESAP), the Fast trek Land Programme, Economic Sanctions and the adoption of Black empowerment policies among others. Consequently urban life became increasingly unbearable for poor blacks. Informal economic activities blossomed and started to make a significant contribution to household income and livelihoods. The majority of Zimbabweans especially women resorted to Street vending business. The research used qualitative methods to gather data. Theoretically, the thesis is underpinned by Marxist feminist theory. The findings indicated that street vending is the route to the empowerment of women. Using Sara Longwe women empowerment framework as the base of the findings, women access to income, their welfare, participation in decision making has greatly improved. Female vendors face challenges in the streets of Gweru like municipal raids, competition, poor water and sanitation, lack of capital and losses. In response to these challenges the research developed new inclusive strategies to improve the empowerment status of female vendors.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The present study focused on the contribution of Street vending to women's empowerment. Street vending has become popular for most of the urban poor in developing countries. Most women in Zimbabwe dominate street vending in most urban cities and it has become the main survival strategy for poor Zimbabweans to support their families. The present study traces the rise of street vending phenomenon in Zimbabwe. Most scholars believed that the Zimbabwe crisis since 2000 is major reason which led increase in street vending activities in most urban cities in Zimbabwe, Gweru in particular. The origins of the crisis can be traced back to the 1990s. Many Scholars posit that Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) led to massive retrenchments and created high unemployment levels which forced the majority to join the informal sector -street vending activities especially women who seeks to help their male counterparts on looking after their families. Compensation of war veterans, Fast Track land reform program, poor and inconsistence policies and economic sanctions also contributed to the Zimbabwe economic crisis. This led to the death of the formal sector and rise of informal sector in Zimbabwe. Street vending takes the center stage in the informal economy. Therefore this research looked at the general situation of street vending in and the participation of women in Street vending activities in Gweru. The research also analysed the impact of street vending on women empowerment. Basing on Sara Longwe Empowerment framework this research examined the extent to which street vending enhanced women welfare access to resources, their participation, and awareness and improving their decision making capacity. It is believed that street vending within the informal sector can not only improve the status of women but rather it can contribute to economic growth. This study highlighted the challenges affecting female street vendors in Gweru Urban. The research provided possible ways which can improve the empowerment of female vendors. Realizing

the relevance of informal economy and in particular street vending, this study developed new theories on how street vending can improve on women empowerment issues.

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

Street vending in Zimbabwe can be traced back to 1980. In the late 1970s and early 1980s street vending was regarded as black market practice which sold products that were occasionally not available in retail shops. Some of the common products that were being sold on the streets included detergents, candles, cooking oil, bread and sugar (Hansen 2004). The term black market was used to refer to any illegal marketing activity such as vending in streets, yards and homes. However, during this time street vending was not so visible, it became more visible after the adoption of the neo liberal reform policies in the 1990s. This shift towards liberalization brought many effects on the Zimbabwean citizens. Privatization of major national companies and downsizing of the civil service led to huge unemployment leaving people without any other option but to join the informal economy. Consequently, the reduction of the formal economy fuelled the rapid expansion of the informal sector. Msoka (2006) posit that the main actors in street vending are the most vulnerable people in a society such like migrants, the poor, the less educated, youth looking for employment, and other disadvantaged groups within the society like the disabled people. He further noted that Street vending serves as a livelihood strategy for the poor or supplementary activity where, individuals in the formal economy employ it as a coping strategy when the economy is not doing well.

In the case of Zimbabwe, the informal economy has overshadowed the formal economy due to a combination of economic and political crises and unfavorable weather conditions in the

form of recurrent droughts which forced a number of companies to close down. Therefore, the informal sector has become the largest employer in Zimbabwe. Economic downturn, rapid urban population growth, upsurge in HIV and AIDS epidemic, political instability, rising unemployment and lower take-home pay drove some Gweru residents into the informal sector as street vendors. The increase of street vending in the early 2000 led to illegal activities in the urban cities and the government of Zimbabwe decided to remove all illegal street Vendors in urban areas during the operation Murambatsvina campaign in 2005. Operation Murambatsvina, restored order in Gweru urban district in places such as Mkoba, Mutapa and Kudzanai bus terminus as most street vendors were displaced. However, this was short-lived as street vendors returned into streets during the 2008 economic crisis. The growth of street vending from 2008 to date was as a result unemployment, job losses and unstable economy. As most men were retrenched from companies like Bata Shoe Company, Zimbabwe Alloys and Zimbabwe Glass among other industries in Gweru, most residents resorted to street vending. Recent surveys show that most of the street vendors in Gweru urban district are women because their husbands are no longer employed due closer of many companies in Gweru Urban. According to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2008), women dominate the informal sector in most Sub-Saharan African countries, where they are found in the fields of trading, agriculture and food processing.

In addition women have been largely involved in the informal sector as street vendors to look at their families to supplement the incomes of their husbands. Some women street vendors are single mothers who have seen street vending as their main survival strategy. Unemployed youth specifically women has also joined street vending after completion of their studies at colleges and universities. Women street vendors in Gweru sell small items like clothes, vegetables, tomatoes, street food and air time among other items to be highlighted in this

research. Therefore this research revisited this background looking at how street vending has contributed to women's empowerment in Gweru Urban. Batliwala (1995) defined empowerment as "the process, and the outcome of the process, by which woman gain greater control over material and intellectual resources, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of the society". In light of this definition the present study seeks to assess how street vending in Gweru Urban has transformed the lives of women in terms of decision making, access to economic resources, marketing skills and economic independence.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There has been a significant influx of female street vendors in Gweru. Vending has become a life line for many families in an economy that has crumbled and has become more informal than formal. There is however a need to find out the extent to which street vending as an economic activity has led to the empowerment of women using Gweru as a case study. The informal sector economic activities are rapidly increasing globally especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe. In Africa for example informal sector activities account for almost 80% of non-agricultural employment, over 60% of urban employment and 90% of new jobs for the past decades( Manganga 2007:4). For example, for urban Zimbabwe, it is currently estimated that 80% of households rely in some way and to some extent on informal economic activities. Poor black women in many cases dominate the informal sector and they show acts of ingenuity and courage in thorny circumstances in contributing to household income generation. According to the dualist theory, the persistence of informal activities is due to the fact that not enough formal job opportunities have been produced to take in surplus labour due to a slow rate of economic development and a faster rate of urbanization (Tokman 1978).

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To discuss the rise of street Vending Phenomenon in Zimbabwe
2. To assess the contribution of street vending to women empowerment in Gweru Urban district
3. To suggest measures aimed at enhancing the empowerment of female vendors in Gweru Urban.

#### **1.3.1 Research Questions**

1. What are the causes of street vending in Gweru Urban district?
2. What are the benefits of Street Vending on women livelihoods?
3. To what extent have been problems faced by women been solved by street vending?
4. Does street vending help increase income and decision making power of women?
5. How does street vending enhance the participation of women in development issues in urban areas?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the research aimed to bring to light the voices of women street vendors and it helps in understanding why they do not trade from formal designated markets. This study strives to inform policy makers to understand the dynamics of street vending and empowerment of women in the informal sector. The study encourages local authorities to respect the voices of women street vendors. Local development practitioners will also gain



better insights in managing the problems of street vending specifically affecting women and women empowerment policy gaps will be identified. The study contributes to the body of knowledge in understanding why women Street vendors do not use designated market infrastructure. Most of the body of knowledge is about why women street vendors exist and the pros and cons of vending on women since not much has been written on the empowerment of women through street vending. This study therefore, adds to the body of knowledge on understanding women empowerment dynamics in the informal sector particularly through street vending.

In addition the research is significant in the broader context because it highlights the progress made by African countries in addressing the constraints affecting women empowerment such as poverty. Ghaida (2002) posit that the number of people living in extreme poverty on (US\$ 1 a day or less in Sub Saharan Africa) increased from 217 million in 1999 to 290 million in the year 2000, and the majority is women. Therefore the study is also important in examining how development initiatives in the informal sector like street vending has raised the status of women and alleviate poverty. Furthermore, there are very limited empirical studies upon the empowerment of women through street vending activities. Therefore there is need for a systematic study on it. Earlier studies have concentrated on rural women empowerment and development. The present study provides valuable information to the government and private sector about the extent of empowerment of women through street vending and the factors influencing or constraining the empowerment of women. This will assist in identifying new methods that enhance the extent of women empowerment.

### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

The Researcher used the Marxist Feminist theory as the driver of this study. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels (1870) used three major tenants which include class, wealth and capitalism as best explanations to women oppression Marx and Engels believes that women's oppression originated in the introduction of private property. They further noted that capitalism is the cause of women's oppression and Marxist Feminism believed that women emancipation can only be achieved if the capitalist system is overthrown. They argued that capitalist system must be replaced by a socialist system in which the means of production belong to one and all. In this regard the research also proved that Marx views to be correct as lack of women freedom and empowerment is a result of capitalist dominated society where women in Zimbabwe and Gweru in particular are denied access to own means of production. Capitalism perpetuates the subordination of women by enforcing their economic dependence on men. The Marxist thinking guided this research as it was found out that women are not empowered because of depending on man for so long in the formal economy. However, death of the informal economy in Zimbabwe which was mainly capitalist forced women to feel the pressure and find ways to free themselves from economic bondage. Women resorted to informal activities such as street vending as a way empowering themselves and not to depend on men. This initiative by Gweru female vendors is in line with Marxist thinking which supports that woman freedoms are only achieved if a capitalist system abandoned. The research adopted the Marx views to analyses the dependence of women on men and the implications on women emancipation. Thus the theory guided this research to identify the problems that emanate as a result of exploitation women in a capitalist society, and which have forced female vendors to become aware of their needs and freedoms. The Marxist feminist theory confirmed that the involvement women in street vending activities is a genuine respond to fight the effects and crisis brought by capitalism and replace with

socialist activities such like street vending which they believed as a proper route to women emancipation.

In their theory, Marx and Engels put great emphasis on the social nature which determines people consciousness. A woman's conception of herself is a product of her social existence which is largely defined by the kind of work she does. Marx states that women are relegated largely to domestic work in the private sphere and the reproduction of the species. The views by Marxist feminist guided the research to examine whether women capabilities are affected by gender roles and the type of work which they do. In line with this theory it true that the capabilities of female vendors were not recognized before they joined street vending. They had no access to income, skills and lack decision making power since they were doing unproductive work. As suggested by Karl Marx and Engels this research understand that the empowerment of female vendors is disturbed by domestic duties. Female vendors are burdened by doing street vending business and at the same time doing household chores. However, the research findings also cemented Marxist views as it was found out that women involvement in street vending which is more productive than domestic work has largely contribute to the empowerment of female vendors in Gweru. The research concluded that Karl Marx views are very relevant since street vending automatically empower women as they engage in more productive work.

Karl Marx one of the major thinking is on labour market. Women's increased oppression is caused by their exclusion from wage work. Marx argues that while men are oppressed by having to do wage work, women are oppressed by not being allowed to do wage work. He noted that women exclusion from the wage labour force has been caused primarily by capitalism, because capitalism both creates wage work outside the home and requires women to work in the home in order to reproduce wage workers for the capitalist system. In line with

Marxist philosophy this research examined the inclusion of female vendors in the labour market through street vending in improving their welfare, access to basic needs and control of resources. This research was based on Marxism assessment of how women's participation in the labour force (street vending) is the key to their emancipation.

In addition, Karl Marx theory suggest that family system also benefits capitalism because women are forced / socialised into unpaid domestic labour like taking responsibility for child rearing. Again in this case women are found lagging behind in the capitalist dominated economy. Therefore, this research used the Marxist feminism as the driver in understanding how the family set up can be a stumbling block to women emancipation. Although the family system is affecting the participation of women, female vendors are managing street business and family duties.

Furthermore, Marxist severely criticizes the family as a source of women's oppression and exploitation. If a woman works for her family at home she has to be supported since she is economically dependent on the man of the house just like her children. If she works outside the home, she is still expected to fulfill her domestic duties. Therefore she ends up working twice as hard as a man and usually for a lot less pay. Marxist thinking helped this research to verify the importance of street vending in improving the wages and income of female vendors who seems to undertake a lot of work at home and in streets.

Engels' also pointed out that under capitalism a women's sexuality becomes a commodity. Women do not have access to job market or workplace. Therefore, they submit themselves to men for financial reasons. In contrary to the views by Engels and Marx the study found out that some female vendors are no longer depending on men for financial support after their

involvement in street vending business. In addition contrary to Marxist views female vendors can make decisions against their male counterparts after gaining financial power from street vending activities and street vending end their financial dependent on men or stop them. However, most female vendors remain submissive to men.

Marxist thinking left some key factors which were added by this study. For example, Marxism has viewed women oppression only from the economic viewpoint. Marxist theory on women position is highly linked to the economic system, rather than their relationship to men. Karl Marx concluded that all women's oppression is connected lack of production yet he failed to fully explain the issue of patriarchy (male dominated society) which deprived women to take economic initiatives necessary for production. The issues of patriarchy has also denied women to own means of production, participation in all matters affecting them and negated their decision making capacity. Therefore against this background this research strived to close gaps left by Marx theory by assessing some other factors which has hinders the attainment of women freedoms. The study will also sought to understand how female vendors have managed to get rid of patriarchy and engage in economic production activities like street vending. The theory is silent on economic crisis which affect women. Economic meltdown forced women in informal activities like vending. The study revisited this area by examining how Zimbabwe economic crisis pushed women in the informal sector for economic survival. In this regard women were able to identify their empowerment concerns through this survival strategy.

## **1.6 Conceptual Framework**

### **Understanding Women empowerment**

The term empowerment has different meanings in different socio-cultural and political contexts and does not translate easily into all languages. An exploration of local terms and

indicators associated with empowerment around the world always leads to lively discussions. To conceptualize the major variables of this study, the researcher adopted the women empowerment framework developed by 1994 by Sara Longwe and Robert Clarke in Zambia. The framework was a response to the development workers perceived inability to understand the issues and concerns of women in the third world. Longwe argues that the most of development work has tended to leave women out of the development process. For Longwe empowerment means enabling people to take charge of their own lives, and escape from poverty. The framework identifies five hierarchical levels in the empowering process. The extent to which these are evident in any area of social or economic life determines the level of women's empowerment. The levels are interconnected illustrating that the empowerment is found in the movement from one level to another, which is from the stage of welfare, access, conscientisation, participation to control/empowerment. The Framework enabled the researcher to analyses the indicators of women empowerment basing on Sara Longwe's views. Therefore using welfare, access to income, awareness and participation as the major indicators of women empowerment this study discussed the extent to which street vending enable women to attain the above indicators suggested by Sara Longwe as discussed below.

#### Sara Longwe Women Empowerment framework

Welfare is the lowest level and looks at women "material welfare to men. At this level one looks at whether women have access to resources like food, income, medical care. The present study seeks to understand women empowerment in Gweru by analyzing the extent to which street vending is improving the welfare of women. In line with Longwe views it is believed that street vending can enable women to get food, income and medical care therefore automatically it means women are empowered however in contrary to this assumption there is need to see the extent the quality of food, sufficient income, and better

medical care accessed by women as result of street vending business. For example some scholars argues that if women get income of a dollar a day it does not means they are totally empowered since it is not enough to meet their needs.

Access has been defined as women access to factors of production on an equal footing with their male counterparts, equal access to land, labor, credit, training, marketing, facilities, public service and benefits. For example female vendors can improve their production and general welfare by increased access to land, markets, skill and information. For Longwe, equality of access can be obtained by applying the principle of opportunity which calls for reforms in the laws and administrative practices to eradicate all form of discrimination. In response to the above aspect the researcher proposed to use Longwe views when assessing the importance of street vending increasing women access to land, markets and technical ability.

Concientisation is the next level where there is conscious understanding of the difference between sex and gender and an awareness that gender differences are cultural and can be changed. Empowerment means sensitizing people against the traditional division of labor as God given and recognizing that women “s subordination is not part of a natural order of the things but is imposed therefore the present study will shed more light on Longwe empowerment indicators by examining how street vending enables potential strategies or actual concretization of women about the underlying causes of their problems and to identify strategies for action. The study seeks to highlight that street vending can bring awareness to women that gender roles can be changed thus contributing to women empowerment. However this research seeks to understand street vending can concientise women all personal

and family problems affecting them thus street vending will be necessary for women empowerment through awareness.

Longwe defines the participation level as women's equal participation in decision making process, policy making, planning and administration. This will guide this research to see whether the involvement of women in street vending is turning point of women participation in policy making in issues affecting them. In addition mobilization complements conscientisation as women come together to identify and analyses their problems, to identify strategies to overcome discriminatory practices and for collective action to remove these practices. They connect with larger women groups to learn about successes of women in similar situations. At this level leadership is important in the mobilization process. The level of participation of women in street vending and informal trading is on the increase in Gweru urban district. The present study analysed Longwe indicators of empowerment process by highlighting the participation and involvement of women in the mobilization process. The researcher seeks to trace the extent to which street vending can shortchange or advances women participation in economic development initiatives. Finally the empowerment level calls for women "s control over decision making process through conscientisation and mobilization to achieve equality of control over the factors of production and distribution of benefits. Equality of control means a balance of control between women and men so that neither side dominates. Women have to take action so that there is gender equality in decision making over access to resources-women have direct access to resources and no longer wait to be given resources at men's discretion, for example as in the case of widow struggle to retain her property after husband death. The argument by Longwe enabled the researcher to find out whether street vending helps woman in Gweru urban to have control over resources and gain decision making power. Therefore the women empowerment



indicators by Sara Longwe was useful in identifying the gaps between rhetoric and reality intervention and permits an assessment of whether female vendors already have equality and what still remains to be done.

Although the indicators pointed out by Longwe are essential when looking at issues of women empowerment, it is important note that Longwe views are not enough to explain women empowerment issues. Longwe generalize the issue of women decision making capacity by simply saying that if a women owns the means of production automatically she gained the decision making power. The present study seeks to confirm some of the assumptions which entail that women decision capacity are easily achieved through gaining skills, earning income and having better access to markets. There is need to understand that women empowerment can be only achieved in a society where there is policy framework which respected the needs of citizens. The study will develop new and add some women empowerment indicators not well analysed by Longwe which include self-strength, control, self-power, self-reliance, own choice, life of dignity in accordance with one's values, capable of fighting for one's rights, independence, being free, awakening, and capability.

This research also considered various women empowerment indicators (concepts) propounded by various scholars and development organizations. These indicators are also linked and similar to Sara Longwe views though there some few differences. The UNICEF Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework emphasizes women's access, awareness of causes of inequality, capacity to direct one's own interests, and taking control and action to overcome obstacles to reducing structural inequality (UNICEF 2001). Other writers explore empowerment at different levels: personal, involving a sense of self-confidence and capacity; relational, implying ability to negotiate and influence relationship and decisions; and

collective (Rowlands 2011). In an extensive exploration of the term empowerment, Kabeer (1999, 2001) focuses on three dimensions that define the capacity to exercise strategic life choices: access to resources, agency, and outcomes. Amartya Sen (1985, 1999) has written extensively on the importance of substantive freedoms and the individual freedom to choose and achieve different outcomes. This research applied all these concepts to find if street vending can bring women freedoms, access to resources, decision making, women rights and participation.

## **1.7 Research Methodology and Methods**

### 1.7.1 Research Approach

This study was based on the approach to social science research that is the qualitative methodology. A qualitative approach is concerned with the way people interpret data, and their experiences and patterns of behavior. Denscombe (1998 p.6) argues that it is the approach of collecting and analyzing data that distinguishes it from quantitative method. In addition qualitative research is an approach that helped the researcher examine female vendor's experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations (Hennick, Hutter and Bailey 2011). According to Babbie (1999), a few key features that must be visible in qualitative research, and these features are; research is conducted in the natural setting; the primary aim is an in-depth understanding of the actors and events and the focus is rather on the process rather than the outcome. Qualitative research was opted in this study because it made it easier for the researcher to flexibly explore the field with the aim of assessing specific empowerment issues of female street vendors. Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from female street vendors. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining

culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of female vendors.

Furthermore this research preferred qualitative methods because they were typically more flexible as they allowed greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participants. For example, qualitative methods ask mostly “open-ended” questions that are not necessarily worded in exactly the same way with each participant. With open-ended questions, participants are free to respond in their own words, and these responses tend to be more complex than simply “yes” or “no.” As such, this allowed female vendors to fully explain the concepts without being guided by the closed questions as in the case of quantitative methods. In this study, a qualitative research approach provided the researcher with the chance to determine the challenges, experiences and views of the research participants. This study endeavored to analyse the contribution of street vending to women empowerment in Gweru Urban District.

### 1.7.2 Research Design

Cooper and Schindler (2003) define a research design as a plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions. The main purpose of the research design is to provide a plan of action and answers for questions such as; what techniques were used to access data? Or what sampling technique was used in the study? Huysamen (2001) poses that a research design is a plan or blueprint according to which data is to be collected to investigate the research hypothesis or questions in the most economical manner.

This study used descriptive research to trace the reasons behind the rise of street vending phenomenon. (To be discussed in Chapter 1 of this study). Descriptive research helped this study to map the terrain of a street vending phenomenon in Zimbabwe and Gweru in

particular. As its name suggests, descriptive research sought to provide an accurate description of observations of a phenomena. Although some people dismiss descriptive research as 'mere description' however it is important to this study as it will add knowledge on the nature of street vending society and its importance to women empowerment. Good description provokes the 'why' questions of explanatory research. For example, if we had an increase of female vendors for the past 20 years we are forced to ask 'Why is this happening?' But before asking 'why?' we must be sure about the dimensions of the phenomenon of Street vending in Zimbabwe. Descriptive design was useful in applying and testing Marxist feminist theories in street vending issues and empowerment with specific attention on female vendors. It is important to develop elaborate theories as to why people are engaging in street vending activities and build a new theory which enhances the empowerment of women.

Evaluative research was used to examine the contribution of street vending to women empowerment issues. Weiss (1998) define evaluation as the systematic assessment of the operation or outcomes. Evaluative approach will be adopted to examine the outcomes of street vending to women's empowerment. For instance, evaluation done highlighted the extent to which income can improve on self-reliance, women freedoms and decision making capacity. Therefore, evaluative research gave in-depth analysis of the outcomes thus avoiding biases.

### 1.7.3 Research Sampling and Population

Population sample is a smaller group which is a true representation of a true characteristic of the population Catherine (2002). Information was collected from women street vendors in Gweru Urban District. To get that information the research used the following sampling techniques simple random sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling. The

populations sampled included women street vendors, stakeholders from government institutions and officials of the Gweru city council. The researcher collected information from female vendors at 2<sup>nd</sup> street to 7<sup>th</sup> street Robert Mugabe way. The researcher chose these areas because that is where most female vendors are located. Furthermore data was collected from street Vendors associations, Gweru city Council, and government line ministries in Midlands' province.

Simple random sampling was used in such a way that every participant had an equal chance to be selected or chosen. The sampling technique was used with other sampling techniques to get feedback from a wider selection of the population as each person had an equal opportunity to be selected during research.

Purposive sampling is one of the most common sampling strategies. Purposive sampling selected group participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. This sampling technique was adopted in order to get insights from female vendors, government officials and Gweru city council officials. According to Calisto (2009) sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. Purposive sample sizes are often determined on the basis of theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research questions). The researcher chose this sampling technique because it proved instrumental in identifying female vendors in selected areas who operate at entry and exit points of supermarkets.

Convenience sampling was also a necessary technique to selecting nearest female vendors. This type of sampling involved choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents. This

Sampling technique was used in areas where women vendors dominate especially outside supermarkets where there are a lot of women vendors operating. The researcher interviewed each female vendor he came across in order to get a full depiction of their live experiences.

#### 1.7.4 Data Collection Methods

Due to the scale of the research this study used a multiplicity of data collection tools and instruments which include interviews, observation, visual records and data sampling. Denscombe (1998) defines an interview as a method of inquiry, which involves the interviewee and interviewer. He also notes that interviews are widely used in the field of social science and it has been proven that they are effective and reliable as they have the potential to uncover secrets, lies and personal realities. Despite that interviews have got their limits too, that is, they are not immune to lies, exaggerations, omissions, and silence by the interviewee, and they have been used as a way of obtaining more accurate conclusions. The researcher used interviews as questions to the interviewee on a face to face basis enabled the collection of first-hand information, quick response enabling the researcher to probe for clarifications. In addition interviews were flexible, as they enabled one to express views freely and accommodate those that are illiterate so that they give informed responses to the questions asked. Interviews were limited to simple questions so as to ensure that they were easy to comprehend. This technique, however, was time consuming given the limited time of the investigation. In this research open ended and closed interviews were used to obtain data from female vendors. The interviews carried out were interpreted and analyzed qualitatively.

The researcher gathered information through observation. This method enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth information about live experiences of female vendors, challenges encountered and women empowerment issues.

Photographs and other visual instruments assisted the researcher to document the situation and circumstances that are difficult to describe or that are better described through these tools. For example, in order to see the type of goods and products offered by female vendors, photographs of the goods and street markets were important. Visual records were key to this research because they showed the present condition of female street vendors markets.

Focus Groups discussions are excellent research tools. Focus groups are forms of group ‘interviews’ – but there are differences. Focus groups discussions consisted of 3-6 female vendors. Most female vendors selling same items and products work close to each other, therefore it was easier for the researcher to conduct a group discussion. In these group discussions the researcher acted as a facilitator rather than an interviewer. The researcher chose focus group discussions because they generated many ideas from female vendors.

With technological advancements, the internet proved to be a one-stop source of diverse and informative data. The internet provides a rich store of information. The researcher, through using the internet facility, found a variety of data related to the research topic on the internet.

A significant amount of information in the literature review of the project was extracted from published and unpublished articles e.g. newspapers etc. journals, and textbooks These were utilized because of the associated advantages including simplicity and ease of understanding given the fact that they were presented in simple English. More importantly, journals and textbooks provided valuable information on the research subject with reference to practical examples and previous scholarly arguments in significant instances. Journals and textbooks

were a reliable source of information and gave room for comparison since there were numerous writers on the issue.

### 1.8 Data Analysis

The goal of qualitative analysis is to make sense of the collected data in ways that capitalize on continuing refinement and ensuring maximum understanding of the concepts and relationships being studied. Qualitative analysis is conducted with data that are not easily represented by numbers. For example for the purposes of this study experiences stories of female vendors, observational data, and ethnographic data to mention a few were analyzed and presented in textual form, rather than attempting to reduce the observations to numerical data and subjecting them to statistical analysis. Although there is no one right way to analyze qualitative data, the researcher followed some of the steps which are necessary when analysing qualitative data. In this regard, the researcher developed codes that assisted the researcher to organize and analyze collected data. The researcher checked and reviewed collected data to identify patterns consistent with the codes.

### 1.9 Ethical Considerations

The information or data collected was solely for the purpose of this study. In cases where data was obtained from scholarly work, citations were made to avoid plagiarism. Research principles such as freedom to withdraw data collected by the researcher if the participant decides were followed. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were maintained as no information should was revealed concerning the identity of the participants.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature on street vending and women's empowerment can be categorised into various groups. One set of literature looks into the economy of street vending, examining how street vending is an important source of income for urban poor households (McGee, 1977; Iyenda,



2005); how it provides efficient services for the urban poor (Yasmin, 1996; Tinker, 1997; Suriansyah, 2005); and how such income contributes to women's economic autonomy (Salway, et al. 2005; Mitra 2005). The other one looks at the political economy perspective through an examination of the meaning of street vending, and an analysis of vending as an expression of motherhood (Babb, 1989; Seligman, 2001; Horn, 1994). This brings in the different ways in which women operate their businesses. Thus the literature is relevant in looking at women empowerment issues at all angles. Brenner (1998) described how women vendors are seen as a threat to men and are socially punished for going out of their homes where they traditionally belong.

Case studies by Winnie Mutulah (2003) shows that women dominate street vending. This is due to the limited economic opportunities for women in both rural and urban areas, gender bias in education, and augmenting husband's income. Besides these facts, street vending has a special appeal for women due to its flexibility. Women can easily combine street vending with other household duties, including taking care of children. The Uganda case study points out that woman participate in street vending as a way out of a predicament. Women have moved from being subsistence and commercial farmers to engaging in trade and informal employment. In most cases they engage in vending when their husbands cannot sustain the family or to supplement the husband's income. The Kenya case study argues that the formation of women's groups gives women some form of recognition and freedom in an otherwise male dominated society. The studies of Winnie Mutulah will help the researcher to identify the reasons why women favour street vending as a solution to their economic independence. In Zimbabwe scholars tend to assume the reasons why women force themselves in the informal sector instead of formal sector. This research clarified the push and pull factors which make women to engage in street vending. To add on this research used

the above reasons as a justification for the need of women empowerment. Therefore, this study assumed that women who are resorting to street vending are being taken as an escape route to women emancipation and empowerment.

Contrary to the above literature by Winnie Mutullah, the present study also assumes that women are street vendors because the formal sector is bankrupt and closure of processing factories. In addition women became street vendors, as they do not have skills to work in formal sector. It is also seen that young newly graduated women are going into street vending. This is because of the lack of opportunity in other jobs. Women also in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century do not want to be dependent on others. They want to earn money and decide on their lives.

In addition, there are relatively more women-headed households among street vendors. Various studies showed that 30-40 percent of their street vendor respondents live in women-headed families. Most of the street vendors under various studies contribute to half or more of their household income. However, their income is low and they need to support many dependents. Angelo and Muller's (2004) study showed that street vendors earn on average USD25.70 per day, and spend USD24.20, leaving a profit of USD1.48. With an average USD1.50 income from street vending per day, their per capita income falls below the poverty line. The present study agrees with previous researchers who note that street vending contributes to household income. The researcher assumes that female vendors are contributing so much to their household income in Gweru Urban District. Although some researchers argue that street vendors could be grouped among the poorest people in the urban population, female vendors have the still have confidence. They consider themselves successful not because they can earn much money, but because they are able to support their family and bring up their children. However, some researchers concluded that for very small

vendors, their income is not enough to support the household, and they need to depend on their husbands' income as well. This decreases their sense of autonomy in the household.

As in Thailand and Cambodia, vendors in Mongolia work long hours 12-15 hours a day. Some vendors who sell fruits and nuts are seasonal vendors. Street vendors would need USD50-100 as starting capital while vendors in small shops or selling corners in the big market and shops need at least USD1000-2000. Only 39.3 percent of the respondents had access to loans, and half of them had borrowed from individuals. While 80 percent of the vendors of containers obtained loans, only 22.2 percent of the street vendors received loans. The findings in Mongolia will be essential in locating the contribution of financial institutions in promoting women's empowerment programs. This study will identify financial institution which provides loans to female vendors in Gweru Urban District. As highlighted in Sara Longwe empowerment framework, women access to capital will enhance women empowerment. Thus this research will assess the availability of capital (loans) in promoting the businesses of female street vendors. Thus highlighting the benefits of giving women capital to promote their own lives. However the present studies believe that many micro-vendors do not have access to credit since they are seen to be unreliable.

Women predominate in street food business representing 53 percent of the vendors in Senegal (Winarno and Allain, 1991) and 75 percent of the vendors in Burkina Faso (WHO (World Health Organization), 2006). Studies in Burkina Faso and Senegal were much focused on looking on looking on gender differences in street vending by looking at whether females or males dominate street business. The present study verified if the above sentiment also applies in Zimbabwe and Gweru specifically. There are is a general assumption which says that women dominate street vending in Zimbabwe. If it is correct, this study will look at

the reasons women are dominating in street vending, gender dynamics and the possible effects of street vending to women's lives.

Street food vending is a prevailing and distinctive component of a broad informal sector. Street food trade is a growing urban phenomenon in Zimbabwe. It is commonly viewed in public spaces particularly in the cities and towns. (Tinker, 1997) defines street food as any minimally processed food sold on the street for immediate consumption. Street food is defined as ready-to-eat food or drink sold on a street or other public places, such as a market or fair by a hawker or vendor often from a portable stall (Artemis and Bhat, 2000). (Dardano, 2003) defines street food as food prepared on the streets and ready-to-eat, or prepared at home and consumed on the streets without further preparation. Street foods include snacks, main meals, or beverages. The above literature will be essential in identifying women engaging in street food vending. The literature will assist the research in outlining the reasons why women are women interested in selling food on the streets. However the above literature did not discuss the benefits of food Street vending on women lives. Therefore this research strived to close the gap from previous scholars by assessing how food street vending has affected women's income and their contribution to the national economy.

In addition (Winarno and Allain, 1991) pointed out that but there are some street foods that have spread beyond their place of origin. Street foods are usually sold from pushcarts, kiosks and temporary stalls and cost less than a restaurant meal. Street food businesses are usually owned and operated by individuals or families. Street food enterprises are generally small in size; require relatively simple skills, basic facilities and small amounts of capital. Marketing success of the street food vendors depends exclusively on location and word-of-mouth

promotion (Winarno and Allain, 1991). The above scholars were clear on street food vending on issues like type of business conducted, families involved on street vending, skills required and marketing ability of street food vendors. This issue will be looked at in this study in assessing the role of women street vendors in supporting their families. To add on issues of skills, marketing strategies mention by the above scholars will key in the study since they key components to women's empowerment. However this research was slightly different from Willarno and Allain views because this study looked not only on Food Street vending but street vending in general with special attention on empowering women.

Furthermore previous researchers discovered that there is increasing recognition that street food vending plays an important socio- economic development. Food street vending provides of employment, special income particularly for women and provision of food at affordable costs to mainly the lower income groups in the cities (Chukuezi, 2010). Street food vending employs on average 37.8 percent of the labor force, and contributes about 38 percent to total gross domestic product in Africa (Charmes, 1998). The present study concurred with Chukuezi views by examining the contribution of street vending to women's income and employment creation. However, earlier studies by Chikuezi tend to generalize everything on the impact of Food Street vending on women's income. Chikuezi was not clear on decision making over that income. For example after women get income through street vending, do they decide themselves on how to spend or to use the income. Therefore the present study proposed to know whether women are deciding on the income for their personal matters and family matters or they surrender to their male (counterpart's husband relatives). Also the research aimed to locate the importance of Women Street vending to the gross domestic product and national economy.

An assessment of some street foods widely consumed in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso showed that vendors did not respect hygienic practices (WHO, 2006). In Accra, Ghana, a study to evaluate the role of street food vendors in the transmission of diarrheal pathogens showed that in 35 percent of the vending sites food was exposed to flies while 17.1 percent of the vendors handled food at ground level (WHO, 2006). In the United Kingdom, the Food Standards Agency provides comprehensive rule of food safety for the vendors, traders and retailers of the street food sector. In Mumbai, India, the Food safety Act, 2011 requires hawkers, food vendors including vegetable and fruit vendors to follow basic hygiene rules such as wearing an apron and gloves and using clean utensils and potable water. Other effective ways of enhancing the safety of street foods are through mystery shopping programmes, through training and rewarding programmes to vendors, through regulatory governing and membership management programmes, or through technical testing programs.

Earlier studies by WHO were more focused on hygiene practices by food street vendors. In addition in the UK and India policies and programs has been set aside to promote hygiene on street foods offered by vendors. The present study will apply this literature in assessing the level of awareness of female street vendors in maintaining hygiene and considering health factors in their business. Awareness is a key aspect in women's empowerment. This research also looked at training, policies and programs put in place by the Zimbabwe government to educate female vendors in their business. Training and policy framework are essential to women empowerment.

According to Gisele Yasmee many of the studies on street vending in Thailand are focused on food vending. The ratio of monthly food expenditures allocated to food prepared at home in Thailand decreased from 76 percent to 50 percent in 1990 to 1998, while that of prepared

food taken home and food eaten away from home increased (Nirathron, 2006). Nirathron's study showed that over half of the buyers interviewed bought street food at least once per day, and dinner was the most frequently purchased meal. Seventy percent of the buyers cited convenience and time-saving as the advantages of buying street food. The above studies will be used to examine the success stories of female street vendors engaging in selling street food. The success stories will be useful to know the skills and income obtained thus enabled the present research to locate the women empowerment issues.

Half of the street vendors in Nirathron's study were in business for less than five years, while 26 percent have worked for five to 10 years. Only 14 percent were in the business for more than 20 years. Eighty-five percent of them received less than six years of formal education. Most of the fixed vendor respondents in Nirathron's study came from Bangkok. Their education level is slightly higher than that of mobile vendors but still generally low, as over 70 percent of the vendors had only completed primary education. Most of the fixed vendors operate as a family enterprise. The above researcher managed to point out issues like number of years in business and the education of street vendors. These aspects will be considered seriously in this research. The number of years of female Street vendors in business will enable this research to gather the life experiences of women who have been in the business for so long. Thus the researcher will be able to highlight the empowerment aspects like decision making and skills obtained. The issue of education was taken into consideration as the research assumed that more educated women are likely to achieve a lot and be empowerment than the less educated ones.

Nirathron's respondents cited quick cash turnover as the main reason for vending food, rather than the requirement for low capital. What is interesting to note is that in Bangkok, those who

have little capital work as commission sellers in addition to selling packaged food. They become disguised wage workers. This shows the advanced stage of street vending in Bangkok. Given that the minimum wage of Bangkok was 169 baht in 2004, the income from street vending is relatively high. Rupakande et al. (2005:41) noted that street vending is not only a choice for the urban poor but is also becoming an attractive occupation for the educated middle class. They see street vending as a way to become independent and they like to take up the challenge of being an entrepreneur. Rupakande et al. concluded that “street vending is no longer an economic activity among the urban poor but serves as an ‘economic choice’ for other classes as well” (2005:45). They also noted that many vendors are full-time vendors who have places to sell in many areas (2005:49). Over 85 percent of the respondents in Nirathron’s study said that they were satisfied with their occupation because of the earning opportunities and autonomy that vending offers. Given this background which highlights the benefits of street vending, the present study believes that street vending in Gweru has become an economic choice for women who have failed to get employment in the informal sector. In addition, the researcher agrees with previous researchers that street vending is providing quick cash and a lot of income to women. Therefore this study analysed the contribution of the income to economic independence and women emancipation. It is believed that female vendors in Gweru they have made their choices in street vending and they even suggest for trainings in marketing strategies and financial management.

Opponents of street vending component of the informal sector argue that the informal sector is incapable of playing any developmental role and that the people in this sector are destined to remain marginal to the rest of the economy (Sethuraman, 1981; Manning, 1993). They note that these businesses have owners with limited skill training, little capital investment which oftentimes translates into limited opportunities for growth into a viable business. The



views of opponents of informal sector entrepreneurship are based on misguided assumptions and not empirical data (Tinker, 1997). This means that the above scholars not only downplay the significance of women's entrepreneurship in the informal sector but poses a problem in quantifying with any precision the economic contribution of these activities to the economy of developing countries, particularly in Africa (Tinker, 1997). The present study believes that Tinker views are correct because some studies have ignored women contribution in the informal sector to family, societal and national concerns. Women empowerment has seen as a mere a waste time yet women are contributing so much in the informal economy which is dominating in terms of output and employment". The present seeks to address issues of women empowerment in the informal economy looking at street vending as a solution to women emancipation.

In addition several literatures on street vending highlights the rights of street vendors and the harassment they face, as well as their lack of organization (Bhowmik, 2005). Street vendors are important members of Self Employed Women's Association Policy Issues on Street Vending: An Overview of Studies in Thailand, Cambodia and Mongolia (SEWA), and their achievements through their organization have impressed many in other countries. These studies will be a guideline to this research when looking at the rights of female street vendors and these studies shall be used to assess how harassment has affected women empowerment. It is important to note that this research will not only look at the rights of female vendors and their harassment but it will add on to the existing literature by looking on the effect of street vending in enhancing the decision making capacity of women, their participation and involvement in economic programs.

Kusakabe et al.'s (2001) study showed that street vending association's members displayed a higher sense of reciprocity, cooperation and mutual help and hope for the future as compared to non-members. They also had a higher sense of trust in the state and social system, and showed more engagement in improving their and their fellow vendors' livelihoods. The present study suggests that one of the ways to foster self-governance in street vending is to strengthen such associations. In addition this study assumes that street vendors associations will enable women to cooperate and identify issues affecting their lives.

The legal operational nature has always been covered in a lot of controversy and uncertainty in most countries across the globe. The weak legislature that surrounds the practice of street vending has created great conflict between the local authorities and the street vendors (Kyoko Kusakabe 2006). This research traces and examines the policy framework and legal matters on street vending with special attention on female street vendors. Policies that are meant to address the legal status of vendors, their social security, and allocation of urban space is very important in understanding women's empowerment issues in Gweru Urban District. In addition to the above, (Bhowmik, 2005) noted that although street vending is seen as an option for the poor, their legal and social status and business prospects differ from one country to another both in the domestic context and regional context. Furthermore policies concerning the legality of street vending have various impacts on street vendors. In Zimbabwe for example, street vending has been regarded as illegal and street vendors has been harassed by council police and punished heavily in form of paying fines. Although street vending is illegal in Zimbabwe this study explored the good stories of street vending as an economic initiative which will empower women economically. Unlike previous researchers this study proposes better policies and legal framework which accommodate

vendors. Thus promoting women participation and their livelihoods since there are the majority in the informal sector in Gweru Urban District.

In addition to the above many experts on poverty talk about empowerment when they define poverty. McHugh Kathleen (2006) of the Save the children states that poverty should be defined by an individual inability to effect change in their lives socially, economically and politically. Empowerment refers to the ability of an individual to make choices regarding their life. Often, the poor are not empowered, they are forced to work on certain jobs or do certain things due to their poverty. Scholars argue that when people are disempowered, they are in poverty. In developing countries, women are unequal to men in legal and economic rights. There are wide spread gender gaps in access to and control of resources, in power, voice and economic opportunities. Women bear the largest and direct cost of inequalities. The 1995 Beijing platform for action revealed that countless women are deprived of flowering into adult hood because of early marriage, countless were daily oppressed and within the family, numerous others are constantly in fear of unjust divorce and the following such divorce or death of husband, it is difficult for so many of them to survive with honor.

Kandiyoti (1998) support the advantage and empowerment of women as he suggests that economic development programs could automatically increase the economic status of women a thereby their overall status in the community and family. Kandiyoti believes that there is obviously some debate surrounding the specific impact of the economic development programs on the level empowerment of women. For a multitude of underlying social, cultural and institutional views there are often varying degrees of choices for women and varying degrees of ability or empowerment to exercise their choices. In regard to the above literature the scholar managed to point out the economic development programs empower women as

they gain skill and knowledge. However what is not clear is that after women become technically skilled will they be able to take control their own lives, identify their needs and set their own agendas. Thus the literatures only shows how economic initiatives improve the technical ability of women but does not show the impact of economic activities in the informal sector on women ability to take control of their own lives, be it socially and economically. Therefore the present study adapted to existing literature by not only focusing on street vending improvement on women technical ability, but by providing further research on how street vending enable women to take control of their own lives, controlling and ownership of resources such as land, income and assets leading to their economic independence.

In support of the above Suguna B (2005) stated that economic empowerment is the initial aspect of women's development. Economic empowerment means greater access to financial resources inside and outside the household. It is also linked with reducing vulnerability of poor women in crisis like famines, food crisis, death and accidents in the family. Economic empowerment gives women the power to attain income and use it at their own discretion. Sunita Roy (1999) reported that empowerment should focus on the aspects like effective collaboration with community organizations, direct involvement of women in programming and management, organizing and strengthening of self-help groups, sensitization and advocacy for gender justice in society, identifying women needs and priorities.

The above scholar's shows that engaging women in street vending programs improves their status economically, empowering them with better income, skill, confidence, employment and better participation. However the above scholars tend to assume that generation of income through street vending or economic empowerment will automatically increase

women's bargain power and overall status in the family or community. According to Mc Coraccks, the bargaining power of women coming from poor households does not change because the woman may now be earning higher income. The present study joined the debate by examining the extent to which street vending have improved women's income, employment, food, diet, bargaining power and decision making. It elaborates on whether women's bargaining power and decision making power improved because of their engagement in street vending. The research traced changes for women in the society after engaging in the informal economy activities like street vending.

Although the above literature shows that women income can improve after engaging in street vending they did not explain fully how it benefit women basing on financial sustainability. This literature lacks statistics on the average income earned by an individual after engaged in street vending activities. The scholars also left out issues of financial sustainability and the issues of male domination (are women using the income at their will without husband's intervention). This study proposes to look at how street vending enhances financial sustainability and economic independence of women.

## **2.1 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**CHAPTER 1: THE RISE OF STREET VENDING PHENOMENON IN ZIMBABWE**

**CHAPTER 2: STREET VENDING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN GWERU**

**CHAPTER 3: IMPROVING THE EMPOWERMENT STATUS OF THE FEMALE  
VENDOR IN GWERU URBAN**

### **CONCLUSION**

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE RISE OF THE STREET VENDING PHENOMENON IN ZIMBABWE

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section introduces some definitions and concepts to street vending. The Second section uncovers the events that contributed to the collapse of the Zimbabwean formal economy and the rise of informal economy in Zimbabwe. The rise of street vending phenomenon in Zimbabwe is highly linked Zimbabwean crisis. The post 2000 crisis cannot be understood without tracing the historical context. The focus is on the 1990s, but the genesis of the crisis has deeper roots in the 1980s. The section examines the economic and political crisis during the 1990s, looking in particular at the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), Compensation of war veterans and the DRC intervention. These events crippled the economy which negated on the urban livelihoods. In this section the researcher discussed the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) from the year 2000 and Operation Restore Order (2000-2006) and its implications on the formal and informal sectors. The purpose of this section is not to adopt a particular position on the crisis but it outlines the various components of the crisis which are linked to the rise of informal sector activities such as street vending. The third section will discuss on the general situation of vendors in Zimbabwe and Gweru in particular. For the purposes of this research topic the last section provides an in depth analyses of the participation of women in street vending activities. It gives a clear picture on the reasons behind women involvement in street vending in Gweru Urban district and it highlights various activities undertaken by female vendors in Gweru.

## **1.1 Understanding Street Vending**

Street vending is one of the most visible activities in the informal economy and is found everywhere in the world, both in developed and developing countries. It has been defined in many different ways by various authors. However, a common theme among definitions is the location of trade. It may include trading without a permit, trading outside formally designated trading locations and non-payment of municipal/national taxes or self-allocation of shelter for trading (Lyons, M. and S. Snoxell 2005: 1304). Bhowmik identified street vendors as self-employed workers in the informal economy who are either stationary or mobile, he defined a street vendor as a person trading from the street —who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built-up structure from which to sell (Bhowmik 2005 :).

Bromley (2000), identifies the location of trade as streets and other related public axes such as alleyways, avenues and boulevards; and Mitullah (2004: 5) describes street trade as an activity which takes place —outside enclosed premises or covered workspace on street pavements, sidewalks, bus stops and in other public places. This study will use Bhowmik’s definition of street vending because it best describes how street vending is carried out in Zimbabwe. Street vendors are known to play a very important role in the urban economy by providing employment, income and other items to the public. They sell different kinds of goods such as second hand clothes, vegetables, fruits, food stuffs, plastic goods, and various household necessities, which are manufactured in small scale or home based industries. In many countries the urban poor prefer to buy clothes and accessories from street vendors because the goods that they sell are usually cheaper and affordable than those found in formal retail shops (Saha 2009: 231).



Street vendors can be categorised as survivalists entrepreneurs with very few growth oriented. According to Berner et al. (2008:1), survival entrepreneurs do not start their business by choice but because they cannot find wage employment; they attempt to increase security and smoothen consumption rather than maximizing profits; for this purpose they diversify their activities instead of specializing, they consider profits as part of their household income. Similarly, Gomez (2008) argues that the majority of survivalist micro-enterprises in developing countries do not pursue expansion in their business rather they are necessity driven entrepreneurs that are forced into selling due to joblessness or other economic shocks. She further adds that most poor entrepreneurs started selling as a means of surviving and that the products of the survival entrepreneurs are generally of low-quality mainly supplying the survival needs of low income consumers whose purchasing power is limited to the lowest priced products or cheap imports (Gomez 2008). On the other hand there are growth oriented entrepreneurs, mainly men, who specialize on a single firm, may use hired labour and seek external sources of capital (Gomez 2008). In Zimbabwe most street vendors sell in the streets for survival and because they have failed to find employment in the formal economy they get involved in street vending as their only option. The street vendors also sell different types of goods; they do not specialize, thus confirming Berner et al statement of diversification of activities.

Table 1.1 shows the characteristics of survival (ists) and growth oriented enterprises. This characterization will help to analyze the kind of businesses found among female vendors in Gweru urban District.

**Figure 1: Characteristics of Enterprises**

<b>Survival(ist)</b>	<b>Growth(-oriented)</b>
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(Street businesses, Community of the poor, [Microenterprise,] Necessity-driven, Informal own-account proletariat, Sub-subsistence	(Small-scale family enterprise, Intermediate sector, [Microenterprise,] Opportunity-driven, Petty bourgeoisie, Micro-accumulation)
Ease of entry, low capital requirements, skills and technology	Barrier to entry
Involuntary entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs by choice, often with background in regular employment
Female majority	Male majority
Maximizing security, smoothing consumption	Willingness to take risks
Part of diversification strategy, often run by idle labour, with interruptions, and/or part-time	Specialization
Embeddness in social relations, obligation to share	Disembeddness, ability to accumulate

Source: (Berner et al 2008)

## 1.2 The Genesis of Street Vending In Zimbabwe

The genesis of street vending in Zimbabwe can be traced back from 1990s. It is a result of the collapse of the formal economy after the adoption of Economic Structural Adjustment Programs Compensation of War veterans. The DRC intervention, Fast Trek land reform program and adoption of inconsistency policies like the STEP and Indigenization policies. All these factors contributed to economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. These events led to closure of industries retrenchments and high inflation. This had negative implications on people

livelihoods in urban areas as it created poverty high unemployment and down, high inflation, poverty and unemployment. This gave birth to the informal economy in Zimbabwe as people resorted to the informal activities particularly street vending as survival strategy to address problems affecting them. Some of the well-documented problems included urban household income shortfalls, rural and urban poverty, and unemployment. For one to understand the rise of street vending in Zimbabwe there is need to give an account of the Zimbabwean crisis which led to the downfall of the formal economy and the rise of informal economy. Street vending is deep rooted in the informal activities which emerged after the adoption of ESAP. Today street vending remained the dominant activity in the informal economy undertaken in urban cities like Gweru. The post dollarization era has failed to create jobs in the informal economy and the crisis continued hence the majority particularly women remained in the streets.

### **1.2.1 The Death of Formal Economy and the Rise of Informal Economy in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe's economy performed reasonably well in the 1990s and the country registered some progress in health, education, agriculture and public infrastructure. Zimbabwe was among the top industrialized countries in sub-Saharan Africa; it possessed a more diversified economy than most countries; and it had a better human resource base than most; and it had a middle-income status" (Sachikonye 2002:130). By the late 1980s however the country's economy began to contract. For instance, by 1989, huge budget deficits were already being experienced and balance of payment challenges were adding to the woes. It was at that time that the wind of neo-liberalism was sweeping across Africa, and soon Zimbabwe joined the league of liberalizing economies in order to rescue the contracting economy. A Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), known as ESAP locally, was agreed upon with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Among the key elements of the restructuring package

was the need to cut government spending along with privatization, deregulation and liberalization (Makina 2010:104, Bond 1998:381). Adopting neo-liberal policies meant that government would “shift from the highly interventionist approach towards a more market-driven economy” (Kanyenze 2004:277).

Among the ESAP projections to stimulate economic growth were an increase in the Gross Domestic Product at an annual rate of 5%, reduction in the budget deficit to 5% by the year 1995, lowering of inflation by 10%, and growth in exports at 5,4% annually (OPEV 1997, Bond 2007:167). Internationally, the negative terms of trade would be reversed and increasing foreign investment would facilitate revitalization of the mining and manufacturing sectors thereby integrating Zimbabwe more fully into the global economy (Bond and Manyanya 2003:32). The outcomes for such projections were dismal. Bond (1998:331) states: The GDP only reached 5% during 1994 and averaged only 1.2% from 1991-1995. The inflation averaged 30% and never reduced to the proposed 10%. The budget deficit was more than the 10% during the period of ESAP. Overall, the economy experienced a diminution and all the anticipated targets were missed by a large margin. In addition, the civil service budget was cut drastically and 18,000 civil service positions were abolished, price controls of essential commodities were abandoned, labour markets were de-regulated and health care declined (Bond and Manyanya 2003:37). This led to the suffering of people who searched for non-formal activities in the informal sector. Thus, marking the beginning of the informal economy in Zimbabwe.

Simultaneously, the Zimbabwean government was, at least formally, pursuing a land reform programme, with the aim of redistributing five million hectares of land to about 110,000 families (Jawah 2009). An estimated number of 5,700 white farmers owned half of the fertile

land in Zimbabwe and the rural black majority peasants were confined to communal areas (Moyo 1990:202). Despite the radical land rhetoric of the ruling ZANU-PF party (Moyo 1998:202), the government implemented market-led land reform based on the 'willing-buyer, willing-seller' model, as agreed to at the Lancaster House negotiations. Even this was toned down during the 1990s, with only minimal land redistributed, in a manner consistent with the ESAP agenda.

In addition the relaxation of capital markets led to a large number of closures of local industries (Chipika et al. 2000:107), and a process of deindustrialization was accompanied by massive retrenchments, reduction of incomes and increasing urban poverty. A study by Tichagwa and Maramba (1998) therefore reveals that, due to ESAP, prices of commodities increased while disposable income and consumption declined. As well, a 1995 poverty assessment study concluded that 62% of the populace could not meet basic needs and 46% were unable to access sufficient food. Because of this, the 1990s were characterized by growing labour discontent, involving strikes and mass stay-away. Tamukamoyo (1999:102) thus reports that "the 1997 strike of private employees came on the heels of the 1996 public workers strike as the working class sought to voice their discontent with the impact of structural adjustment, not only on their lives but on their future prospects".

Overall, abject poverty was evidenced by "increasing number of children, beggars on the street and petty trading dominated by women" (OPEV 1997:22). Indeed, there was significant growth in the diversification of livelihood strategies and the informal sector during the 1990s, notably amongst women (Chirisa 2004). The informal economy came during this period, and backyard industries and petty trading sprouted up everywhere. (Tamukamoyo 2009:97) In 1980 the informal sector was small, approximating less than 10% of all employment (IDMC

2009). In 1986 and 1987 there was a significant rise (of 20%) in the labour force participating in the informal sector. By the year 2004, 40% of the labour force was said to be in informal economic activities (IDMC 2009). It is evident that the informal sector became central to the livelihoods of the majority responding to the effects of the economic restructuring. Mupedziswa and Gumbo (2001:12) assert that as far back as 1984, the informal sector in Zimbabwe has accounted for over 64% of job creation compared to the 25% of the formal sector. By the year 1996 the sector employed 1.56 million people compared to 1.26 million in the formal sector.

The informal economy became central as a response to retrenchments and falling real wages. Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1998) rightfully claim that marginalized urban people in Zimbabwe resorted to informal economic activities (including petty trading in vegetables and fruits) as a way of dealing with the economic crisis unleashed by ESAP. Brand (1986), identifies significant informal activities such as street trading in food and clothes, and home-based industries such as shoe-repairing. To supplement household incomes, women also began more vigorously to engage in cross border trading (Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo 1995) to supply scarce goods in the growing informal sector. A study by Mhone (1995), conducted in three major cities of Zimbabwe (Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru), argues that informal sector work under ESAP helped to cushion poverty on the one hand, but on the other hand the increasing number of participants in the informal economy increased competition and reduced profit margins.

In an attempt to rescue the economy from collapse, the government of Zimbabwe in 1998 embarked on an economic recovery plan known as the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) which was unofficially named 'ESAP II'. The

programme was based on the macroeconomic policies set under ESAP, but most importantly it emphasized on black economic empowerment, indigenization of the economy and land reform (Dhliwayo 2001:2). Nonetheless, ZIMPREST was unable to address the high budget deficit, increasing inflation, low foreign currency growth and weak balance of payments (Makina 2010:105, Chipanhura and Makwavarara 2000:16).

Another important event that deepened the crisis is ‘Black Friday’ dated 14 November 1997. On that day, the Zimbabwe dollar plunged from \$14 against the United States dollar to \$26. This led to a massive devaluation of stock market shares and to a stock market crash. Zimbabwe became an unfavorable country in which to invest and this triggered a further shortage of foreign currency. This crash was exacerbated payment of generous gratuities to more than 50,000 war veterans (or ex-liberation soldiers), an action which affected most of by urban workers. Out of unbudgeted funds, the government paid the war veterans a large sum of \$50 000 each, plus monthly pensions of \$2 000 (Munda 2007). Black Friday destabilized the formal economy and it was costly on the livelihoods of black urban Zimbabweans.

The crisis was worsened by the involvement of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) civil war. As Qobo (2009:11) notes, “Zimbabwe in 1998 committed an initial contingent of 6 000 soldiers to the war, the number increasing eventually to about 13 000 ... costing an estimated US\$ 1 million a day”. It is estimated that, between 1998 and 2000, the government spent \$200 million dollars (US). This was particularly unpopular because it was not agreed upon by parliament (Bond and Manyanya 2003) and, in the meantime, the economy was in “free fall” (Maclean 2002:522). The growth

in Gross Domestic Product fell from 7, 3% in 1996 to -1% in 1999, and inflation skyrocketed from 58% to 80% by mid-2000 (Rotberg 2000:52).

Fast Track Land Reform and Operation Restore Order (2000-2006) The land question, in terms of land redistribution, had remained unresolved for twenty years after independence in 1980 (Mlambo 2005). In the context of nation-wide land occupations which begin in early 2000, the government initiated in July 2000 the fast-track land reform under the code name of 'Third Chimurenga' (or war of liberation). Under the fast track land programme, resettlement took place in two forms. First of all, there are A1 farms with small plots for subsistence farmers designed with the specific aim of addressing the needs of landless and land-short households through the decongestion of communal areas (Moyo 2004:22). Secondly, there are A2 commercial farms aimed at increasing the number of black indigenous commercial farmers, with many of these farms going to beneficiaries linked to the ruling party (Marongwe 2003a, Bernstein 2005, Sachikonye 2005). The government has provided agricultural support under fast track, this has gone primarily to A2 farmers. In this regard, Raftopoulos (2001:426) noted early on that massive financial, infrastructural and extension support was required by the new [A1] settlers to transform the settlements into sustainable productive resources but this support was not forthcoming.

As a result overall, national production declined compared to levels before fast track (Mitlin and Chitekwe 2001:86). Tobacco, maize, beans, wheat and soya beans were some of the major crops which were affected and there was a sheer decline from 70% of production in major crops to 20% of production in major crops (Richardson 2007:471). This has seriously impacted on the national economy, including both downstream and upstream industries in the agro-industrial complex, but also mining, tourism and banking. This served to deepen the



economic crisis. There were significant closures and downsizing of manufacturing industries, in part because of serious foreign currency shortages for purchasing necessary imported inputs. For instance, agriculture which generated much of the foreign currency earnings decreased in its total exports from 39% in 2000 to 21% in 2006 (FAO/WFP 2007:8). Retrenchments and a spiraling unemployment rate in urban centers followed. A knock-on effect was a shortage of basic food and other commodities in shops, and rising levels of urban poverty and hunger. A poverty assessment study in 2003 concluded that “an estimated 72% of the population was living below the Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) as compared to the 55% in 1995” (UNDP 2008:17). Food riots were recorded across the country triggered by the shortage of commodities such as bread, cooking oil and sugar, which are all direct outputs of farming. The inflation rate skyrocketed such that prices of commodities, when available, changed almost daily. This had serious implications for livelihood strategies. The informal economy increasingly became the provider of employment and income as urban residents took refuge in informal activities. In this sense, the informal sector became an “employment haven” (Mupedziswa and Gumbo 2001:12, Tekere 2001). This was spurred on by the scarcity of basic food commodities in supermarkets but the availability of these, at a price, ‘on the street’ (as sold by informal traders). In addition, there is evidence to suggest (Moyo 2010) that there were a number of urban-based beneficiaries of fast track land reform who used their plots near urban centers as a basis for engaging in informal trading of agricultural produce. Increasingly, informal trading and other informal economic activities took the form of bartering rather than the exchange of cash for commodities.

Despite the increasing significance of the informal economy in the first five years after fast track (from 2000 to 2005), the government of Zimbabwe did not intervene in a supportive fashion. This is evidenced from the failure of a number of macro-economic initiatives of the

state to engage with the informal sector, including the 2003 National Economic Revival Plan, the 2004 Macroeconomic Policy Framework and the 2006 National Economic Development Priority Programme. The state did quite the opposite in acting against the informal economy (and in a draconian fashion), notably through Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order or Operation Clear Away the Trash) in 2005 (Vambe 2008, Tibaijuka 2005). This operation is of particular significance because of the direct effects it had on informal economic activities. Nevertheless, the government's intent and intention was made clear by way of a state commission report of May 2005. The report outlined the need to enforce by-laws to stop all forms of illegal activities in areas of vending, illegal structures, illegal cultivation, among others have led to the deterioration of standards thus negatively affecting the image of urban cities. The government also claimed that the informal sector was facilitating criminality which robbed the state of revenue and foreign currency which was already scarce.

With limited or no warning, the government proceeded to literally demolish the physical, economic and social resources of the urban poor in Harare and beyond (Bracking 2005:341), thereby engaging in the sheer destruction of livelihoods and homes (including backyard shacks and industries) (Bratton and Masunungure 2006:24). In doing so, the government was as good, or rather as bad, as its word" (Potts 2006:275). The United Nations (UN) Habitat, under the special envoy Anna Tibaijuka, estimated in July 2005 that about 650,000 to 700,000 people lost their livelihoods or homes, or both, and that 2.4 million were either directly or indirectly affected. She added that the urban poor are now deeper in poverty, deprivation and destitution, and have been rendered more vulnerable (Tibaijuka 2005:7). The people who were displaced moved in with their urban kin or to the rural areas.

During the operation, arrests were made and nearly 20,000 vendors found themselves behind bars, with their wares either demolished or stolen by the police. Many of the traders affected had valid municipal licenses and therefore were not operating illegally. A number of well-established markets were targeted, including Unity Village and Fourth Street Market in Bulawayo, Green Market in Mutare, the popular Harare markets and Gweru markets (the last being the focus of this study). In total, approximately US\$700 million worth of income was lost as a result of Operation Restore Order (ZHRF 2005). Municipal authorities' also lost considerable revenue, because of license fees collected from informal sector activities (Tibaijuka 2005:7).

Though thousands of backyard shacks and informal economic activities were pervasive in urban centers, this was a manifestation of the failure of urban planning in Zimbabwe. Shacks themselves were a source of livelihoods, as they were rented out or used for backyard industries (Tevera and Chimhowu 1998). Informal activities became stark and continuous reminder of the decline of the formal economy and the failure to secure stable employment. In fact, many of the recent entrants into the informal sector were skilled and semi-skilled workers from the formal economy who had lost employment or were seeking to supplement their income. Ignatius Chombo the Minister of Local Government seemed to acknowledge the existence of a problem, but instead used it as justification for the operation: "The government insists that all the sweeps and demolitions have been to rid the country of the chaotic nature of an unregulated market and to clear up the blurred distinctions between informal and formal sectors of business. An economy cannot be run on an informal sector" (quoted in Frank 2009:5). This is contrary to Maroleng (2005:4) who posit that 40% to 50% of the Gross Domestic Product was at the time being generated by the informal economy and about 60% of the formally unemployed population was employed in this sector. Makaye and

Munhande (2008:31) state that an estimated 4 million Zimbabweans were earning their livelihoods through the informal sector by 2005". The informal economy was labeled as the "unofficial backbone of the economy and in a nation with no free health, housing or education, to remove the informal sector is to reduce Zimbabwe's poorest to a state of abject poverty." (Sokwanele 2005:1).

Thousands of victims of the operation did not however become passive, and livelihood strategies in the informal economy did not wither away. Informal operators became adaptable and resilient, and despite the attack on their livelihoods, the self-reliant occupants of this sector quickly tried to recover. (Bratton and Masunugure 2006:38). The discussion of female vendors later in this chapter is a testimony which supports the views of the above literature.

The economy seemed nearly crippled with all economic sectors showing severe signs of the crisis. The annual inflation rate rose to millions of percentage points, while the country's domestic currency reached quadrillions and quintillions, it subsequently became a worthless national currency (Mlambo and Raftopoulous 2010:3). The government resorted to printing money and the inflation rate by June 2008 reached 231,000,000 percent and an unimaginable 89.7 sextillion percent in November 2008 (the second highest rate recorded historically anywhere).

During the peak of the crisis, in 2007 and 2008 (before dollarization), the informal sector through street vending activities continued to provide essential and scarce basic commodities (such as mealie-meal, sugar, cooking oil and soap). These commodities often entered the country via South Africa and Botswana by cross border traders. Teachers and other professionals became highly active in informal trading after the government of Zimbabwe negotiated with the South African Home Affairs Department to allow Zimbabwean civil

servants to cross into South Africa without visas as one of their fringe benefits. In this sense, informal economic activities remained vibrant, at least compared to the collapsing formal sector. In fact, people stored and hoarded commodities and resold them at exorbitant prices; cash at that time was continuously eroded by inflation on a daily basis and therefore was not a wise investment (Chagonda 2010:11).

The GNU was confronted with the massive task of turning around the Zimbabwean economy. However, the problems to be solved by STERP II are far more daunting than those which earlier macro-economic programmes such as ESAP and ZIMPREST had to face (Kamidza 2009). There have however been some successes. These include economic stabilisation with an economic growth rate of 8%, the erosion of hyper-inflation, increases in exports and improvements in the balance of payments. However, the unemployment rate is said to be at 90 percent. And the general populace are still experiencing inadequate social services and infrastructure, power cuts, retrenchments and shortages of safe and clean water supplies (Raftopoulos and Mlambo 2010:4). Therefore the GNU did not revive the formal sector. In the meantime, as Luebker (2008: v) notes, urban Zimbabweans continue to create jobs for themselves including carpentry, street vending and cross border trade. Recently informal activities especially street vending remained critical as sources of employment, income and food security in urban areas in Zimbabwe.

### **1.3 General situation of street vending in Zimbabwe**

The previous sections have provided a chronological overview of the informal sector and the rise of street vending in post-colonial Zimbabwe, in the context of economic crisis. This current section disaggregates the informal sector by identifying and discussing general situation of street vending activities in Zimbabwe in contemporary Zimbabwe's informal

economy. By and large street vending constitutes a considerable share of the urban informal sector in Zimbabwe and street vendors are an important part of the system of commodity distribution in urban areas (Manganga 2007). This is based on the fact that vendors provide convenient goods in quantities and at prices that are affordable especially for poor urbanites. The existence of street vendors trading in food enabled many households in urban Zimbabwe to make ends meet under difficult circumstances, notably where and when supermarkets were either empty or charging inflated prices in 2008.

This kind of vending constitutes a great number of informal traders who engage in survivalist operations, and they are normally self-employed (as both owner and operator). The harsh economic conditions have resulted in the burgeoning of many vendors along the streets in Harare; they enter vending out of necessity rather than voluntary choice. Vending entails selling a diverse range of products and services, as detailed below. At times, street vending in Zimbabwe has been deemed illegal or, when permits are required, vendors may refuse to apply for them. As a result, as a livelihood strategy, it often is characterized by playing hide and-seek with law enforcement agents, who often seize the goods of vendors.

Hlohla (2008) observed that in the central district business (CBD) in Harare, there were over 1,014 vendors (male and female) of different ages. Products sold varied from one vendor to another. A majority of women were selling second hand clothes, sim cards for mobile phones, perfumes for men and women, pesticides for cockroaches and many other products. Men engaged in foreign currency dealings, selling leather belts, sunglasses, mobile phones and wrist watches. These products were mainly sourced from Gulf Complex and Zimex Mall in Harare and vendors would resale the products at different points within the CBD.

Another study in Mutare (the capital of Manicaland Province) by Manyanhaire et al. (2007:179) identifies selling of vegetables and fruits as the main vending activities, including tomatoes, mangoes, bananas, apples and plums, potatoes, spinach, cabbages, butternuts and maize. Most of these products are supplied by nearby farms, rather than grown (as part of urban agriculture) by the vendors themselves. A variety of other goods are also sold, such as tobacco, pots and tins made from scrap metal, building material, plumbing material, woven goods as well as groceries such as sugar, cooking oil and flour which are also found on the scarce on the forma. As well, hawkers sell cooked and uncooked mealies, freezits (flavored ice sticks) and juice cards (cellular phone airtime) (Makaye and Munhande 2008:320). At times goods sold are produced by the vendors themselves, and hence there is a productive component to their activities in the form of home industries (Kamete 2004). The commodities on offer are open to temporal variation, depending in part on the availability and prices of goods in the formal economy (Mupedziswa and Gumbo 2001).

According to Manyanhaire et al. (2007), men who find themselves without formal employment often resort to vending to ensure the economic survival of their families. This is eroding the historical predominance of women vendors. But women still predominate, and engage in vending in the context of eroding wages of male breadwinners and the death of husbands from HIV/AIDs-related diseases. In addition, street vending appeals to women due to its flexibility, as women can merge street vending with domestic duties, including taking care of children. This is in line with Marxist feminist thinking which states that women are overburdened by offering labour outside the home and caring out domestic duties at home. At times, due to the gendered dimension of vending, women have earned names like *vakadzivemadomasi* (tomato women) and *vakadzivemusika* (market women). With respect to specifically home industries, men are involved in construction, carpentry, repairs and metal

work. Women dominate in for example knitting, sewing and crotchet work. Gemini (1991) notes that men claim to contribute well over 50% of household income from their activities, while women argue that they merely supplement this income.

In the case of Masvingo, food vending has been a major livelihood strategy among female headed-household. In terms of number of households, it was more important than formal work, and it contributed not only to household income but was also used for investment purposes (Muzvidziwa 2000). The involvement of women in the sex trade is noticeable, as Masvingo is located between Harare and the South African border and is a major stop for long-distance male truckers.

For both men and women, street trading has taken place not only under difficult socioeconomic conditions but in the face of intransigent – and sometimes downright repressive – local authorities. Operation Restore Order saw many flea markets being demolished and this resulted in the loss of an important livelihood given the employment and income being generated through these markets. Some flea markets totally collapsed while the resilient ones re-appeared after the operation. These challenges have arisen not only during Operation Restore Order but at times both before and after this nation-wide state operation. Quite often, street traders are not licensed by the local council and hence they exist illegally and unregulated by trading legislation and by-laws (Chirisa 2008, Hlohla 2008). Studies by Chirisa also gave a general picture on the operations of street vendors. He highlighted that, street vendors alter and refine their trading activities by for instance: starting operations early in the morning before municipal police officers commence duties and remaining on the streets when they knock off (‘an early rise and late departure’ strategy); using signals and cues to alert one another (the ‘antagonist communicative’ strategy); and displaying books in



stock while hiding the stock nearby or in pockets to minimize confiscation (the ‘deceptive commodity and merchant hiding’ strategy) (Chirisa 2009:274).

Street vendors also engage in cross in cross border trading in Zimbabwe. One of the outcomes of the Zimbabwean crisis was a pronounced upsurge in cross border trading. Women, who historically have been unable to be sufficiently absorbed into formal labour markets, became particularly suitable for this activity and there is a marked rise in their involvement during festive seasons (Tevera, and Zinyama 2002). Many people, as noted mainly women, moved across the borders (notably the South African border at Beitbridge) in a bid to supplement income through hoarding products which they sell on street pavements in urban cities.

Irrespective of the origin of the imported goods, cross border trading fed into existing local vending activities, including street trading and flea markets. A local ‘black market’ in basic foodstuffs arose at the time of severe shortages and this increased food security at household level. Though cross border trading has fed street vending which has created informal employment, it has simultaneously led to the closure of local shops, notably clothing shops, resulting in retrenchments.

In a study by Chagonda (2012), nine teachers were interviewed concerning their cross border trading activities, in which it was apparent that this trading became pivotal for the survival of households. One respondent quoted in Changonda’s study illustrates the desperation of many urban Zimbabwean households in seeking to enter informal vending activities. The responded said she started engaging in cross-border trading in 2006 and it helped her family because the salary she earns as teacher was not enough to do anything with.

Lastly, in brief there is need to understand the general situation of women in street vending activities in Zimbabwe. Informal livelihood activities by women are particularly important in this regard. In fact, for a number of reasons which include issues of patriarchy at sites of economic production and social reproduction, women are over-represented in the informal sector in Zimbabwe (UN 2000). The majority of women, and specifically women-headed households in Zimbabwe, continue to pursue livelihoods through low-return informal economic activities like street Vending. Just like in Ibadan in Nigeria, for instance, women dominate petty trading in formal markets and street vending, including selling snacks, air time, clothes and shoes. (Jaiyebo 2003). However there is no statically evidence to substantiate the view that females are dominating in street vending activities.

### **1.3.1 The Legality of Street Vending in Zimbabwe**

Street vending is illegal in Zimbabwe. Street vendors operate unlawfully as the laws of the land do not have a specific policy to formalize Street Vending Business. Policy Street vending policy is a tool for setting standards in the provision of public goods and services. Policies protect consumers, investors and the general public, while by-laws set controls that ensure that urban areas are safe and clean (Mittulah, 2003). In most of the African cities there is no specific policy for SVB, they are governed by either trade policy or SME policy, while their business environments are quite different. The Zimbabwe policy on street vending is silent and not clear on business location, license, taxation, skills development, and inclusion of SVB in urban planning, and harassment from the local government authorities, public and formal business owners.

### **1.4 Street Vending in Gweru Urban**

Street vending in Gweru just like other urban cities mentioned above emerged as a result of the death of the formal sector in Zimbabwe. Although it is believed that in Gweru street

vending was not popular as it is now. The rise of vending activities in Gweru emerged in the 1990s after the adoption of ESAP. During this period it was termed as Black market. The post 2000 era witnessed a continuation of the economic crisis, thus inevitably it resulted in continuous retrenchments from companies like Zimbabwe alloys, ZIMGLASS among others. Most people in the city were left without option other than joining the informal sector. Today street vending activities have taken center stage in areas such as Senga- Nehosho, Mkoba, Ascot, Kudzanai bus terminus and Gweru CBD. On the gender perspective street vending is being undertaken by both men and women in Gweru however there is general belief that women are the dominant figure in street vending activities but there is lack of statistical evidence to prove that.

#### **1.4.1 Gender Composition of Vendors**

The study found out that there are more male vendors than female vendors operating in Gweru. This is contrary to previous beliefs and assumptions that the sector was dominated by women. One reason for the dominance of male vendors can be attributed to the increased retrenchments that have occurred over the years in the formal sector. Another reason is that the nature of jobs done by most of these men such as being security guards and industrial labourers were not well paying so they found vending as a better alternative. However, despite male dominance in street vending for the past few years the researcher witnessed a gradual rise in the number of female vendors operating in Gweru CBD. Through observations made by the researcher female vendors are dominating in Gweru CBD. This can be attributed to the collapse of the formal economy especially the clothes manufacturing sector which used to employ the majority of women formal workers. Another reason can be that males are now supporting their wives to join the vending trade than before because in cases it will bring some form of income.

#### **1.4.2 Understanding the nature of street vending activities in Gweru**

Street vending in Gweru consists of unemployed men, youths, women and children who are in business of selling to the urban population the services and products they need. In Gweru Street vendors are found at the street pavements, supermarkets, at main business centers like Mkoba six shopping centers, Ascot shopping center among other business centers. Vendors are also found at Bus-stops. For the purposes of this study most of the street vendors in Gweru are found in the Gweru CBD. The patterns show that street vendors station themselves in pavements, supermarkets near banks and business premises. The vendors also station themselves close to the sources where they obtain the goods they sell. Other vendors were found to change selling sites while others sell different products in different sites. This means that vendors respond to the patterns of demand for their products and services by taking sites that make net maximum sales.

In addition for the purposes of this study there is also need to understand the street vending situation in Gweru CBD. Most street vending activities are concentrated in the CBD as opposed to urban outskirts. There are various factors which determine the location of street vendors in the CBD. In Gweru most street vendors favor the CBD because of its attractiveness, accessibility and number of customers. Pavements in CBD attracts high pedestrian flows there is more attractive than other locations in Gweru Street vendors sell food, personal items, household equipment, household supplies, hardware items clothes. They also sell fresh fruits and vegetables, Shoes are mostly in 2nd, 7<sup>th</sup> streets and Robert Mugabe way.

To support the above the above Anyang et al (2012) states that the locations of street vendors are usually influenced by attractiveness, accessibility, number of customers and competitors.

A study by (Ndhlovu, 2010) has established that, street vendor's accessibility to customers is a key consideration and they strategically located on the streets to avoid formalization costs such as rent, taxes and licenses. The prices of services and products sold by street vendors are priced lower than supermarkets and other formal businesses. This makes vendors to attract large number of customers to buy their goods and services. Capital investments for street vending businesses are comparatively lower than investments in other formal businesses in Gweru urban. This makes it easier for people with little capital to engage in street vending. Street vendors in Gweru have customers from all income groups as their services attract the majority of people walking on the street pavements. Street vendors in Gweru do not pay license fees and tax to Gweru city council though there have been increasing calls to collect revenue from the informal sector by ZIMRA.

The temporal patterns of street vending in Gweru CBD indicate that Saturday and Sunday are the days when most street vendors make heavy use of urban spaces compared other days of the week. The vending activities are mostly at their peak between 10.00 am to 1.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. Street vendors providing services are found at work from 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. and vegetable vendors come up by 4.00 p.m. till 8.00 p.m. Those who sell processed food take positions of selling from 12.00 up to 3.00 p.m. This means on the same urban space cooked food can be sold from 12.00 noon to 3.00 p.m. as there is great demand for cooked food during these hours. After vendors who sell cooked food knock off, vegetable vendors start using the place from 4.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. This shows that street vending in Gweru is very flexible in its practice as different sets of vendors are able to conduct their business without much interference of each other. The manner in which street vending is organized in Gweru make it attractive to both men and women to operate in the urban center,

as women can do their domestic roles and report to work at peak time while the men who missed to find jobs in the formal sector can still vend in the streets.

Street vendors are operating illegally in Gweru because the laws in the country do not permit the practice of street vending. The majority of street vendors in Gweru undertake business with fear of eviction, harassment, and fines since the law does not recognize their operations. The researcher also observed that street vendors in Gweru operate under difficult situations. They are faced with challenges like confrontations from city council, formal business owners who do not like street vendors because they cause unfair competition. In many cases street vendors across the globe pay a part of their daily sales as a bribe in order to continue do business (Bhowmik, 2005). Street vending is illegal in most countries in Asia and Africa with exception of some parts of India. In countries where street vending is illegal, street vendors are sometimes treated as criminals. Urban authorities in Sub Saharan Africa except South Africa, operate with outdated restrictive policies and regulations that lay emphasis on the illegality of street trade (Mitullah, 2003). Besides this, many vendors are not aware of these policies and regulations.

#### **1.4.3 Street Vending Associations in Gweru**

In Gweru Street Vendors Associations have been established to improve the working environment of the street vendors. The street vendors' organizations/associations are supposed to enable vendors to defend their rights, secure access to the basic services, influence public policy, and increase their bargaining power (Muiruri, 2010). However street vendors associations in Gweru they are not vibrant and very little is known about them. In Sub-Saharan Africa, except South Africa, vending associations address largely welfare issues, with very few focusing on business issues affecting their operations such as services,

site of operation, licensing, policy and advocacy (Chen, 2001) Other associations in African cities are weak and cannot effectively advocate for their right to trade, they happen to arise only when there is a need thereafter disappear. For example just like in Dar Salam (Tanzania) group of vendors in Gweru referred themselves as association based on contributions they made per day/week/month however they do not have clear organizational goals, policy and regulations.

To shed more light to the above one of the best street vending associations in the world is National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). NASVI has more than 540 member organizations, involving over 350,000 individuals (Ray, 2014). It is a coalition of trade unions, community based organizations (CBOs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and professionals. It is responsible for ensuring livelihood and social security of street vendors through policy interventions and changes in political, legal environment, building capacity of street vendor organizations, evidence gathering and dissemination of evidences and issues concerning street vendors and undertaking schemes and programs enabling vendors to get access to financial services, such as Credit & Thrift Cooperatives, Self Help Groups, formal banking institutions and insurance companies (NASVI, 2014). In Gweru Street vending associations are very weak and unofficial, hence impossible to defend the needs, and rights of the street vendors. The Zimbabwean government, NGOs, CBOS, need to assist street vendors to establish a competitive association like NASVI. Strong Street vending association could be used to organize street vendors, responsible for the unethical and misconduct of the vendors, organize for the skills development of the vendors, arrange and coordinate the finance of the vendors and act as a bridge between street vendors and government.

### **1.5 The Participation of Women in Street Vending Activities**

In Gweru women have been engaged in street vending for many years. Most women resorted to street vending as avenues of solving the problems affecting them. Female vendors include married women, divorced, single mother and unemployed women from colleges and universities. Women are engaged in street vending because of various reasons which can be classified into pull and push factors which shall be discussed in detail below. In general street vending activities in Gweru are now dominated by women who are mainly found outside supermarkets banks, hospital and pavements among other sites/ areas. Their operations are well recognized and familiar in Gweru.

The majority of women traders interviewed in Gweru 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> streets Robert Mugabe way were between the ages of 20-45 years and only a few were above 45 years and above. In terms of educational levels, the majority of respondents had completed secondary school and only a few attained a tertiary qualification. Also some few female respondents attained primary education only and only a few are illiterate Married women constituted the highest proportion of traders at 49.0%. Single women (28.6%) ranked second highest while the respective figures for never married, divorced and widowed were 8.2%, 8.2% and 6.1%. The number of household members (and hence the number of dependents) for the surveyed women traders varies considerably, with household sizes ranging from one to seven people. The largest number of selected female vendor households (65.3%) has between three to five persons, and households of either one person or two people amounted to 4.1% each. A significant number of households (26.6%) have large households of either six or seven people.



### **1.5.1 Commencement of Street Vending Activities by Female Vendors**

There are a number of factors that made the interviewees turn to street vending as their only recourse for earning an income. These include displacement, their lack of education, entrepreneurship, and economic crisis, retrenchments lack of support from husband's child support and poor source of income. In addition, some women highlighted that they had just opted for street vending to assist their male counterparts during this period of economic hardships. The majority of the sampled Gweru women undertook informal sector activities on a fulltime basis, with the exception of some women who are committed elsewhere and they do vending on part time basis. The majority of sampled women in Gweru urban entered into their informal vending activities in the years 2008 to 2010, with only a limited number becoming involved subsequent to 2010. A significant minority entered vending before 2008, starting in the year 2004. Hence, some female vendors have persisted in this livelihood activity for nearly a decade.

The bulk of the women vendors borrowed money from their husband, relatives or friends to start their informal business. Others used their own capital to commence their operations and some used household money to start their business. None of the respondents took out a formal loan to start their business because they feared indebtedness and confiscation of goods after failing to repay. But start-up funds were normally insufficient, and this posed a serious challenge to Gweru women traders in trying to establish their enterprise on a solid financial basis with a fluid cash flow. In commencing their activities, women did not seek authority from Gweru municipal Council hence they operate illegally. As a result, these vendors operate unofficially and from an observation made by the researcher they experience periodic police action including confiscation of goods, harassment and clearing of illegal tents. Vendors pay 'routine offerings' more often to avoid confiscation of their goods.

### Push factors

One of the major reason which forced women into street vending is the economic meltdown. The year 2008 marked the peak of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, with the second highest rate of inflation ever recorded internationally, massive employment and heightened political antagonism during the parliamentary and presidential elections. Thus, the official figure for inflation was one million percent at the end of May 2008 and this ballooned to 21 million by the end of July; as of the end of 2008, it is argued that only 6% of the workforce was formally employed (MDTF 2008:6). A similar figure entered vending in 2010 soon after the dollarization of the economy; hence many urban women (22.4%) ventured into informal activities in pursuit of the 'scarce dollar'.

Droughts and the land conflict (2000) had displaced many people including women and their children to migrate to urban areas. Zimbabwean has been experiencing series of droughts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to climate change. The droughts have forced many people including women to migrate from rural areas to urban areas in search of greener pastures. The urban areas had very limited opportunities mostly grabbed by man. Therefore rural women have engaged in street vending activities to supplement their rural homes with income and food. Furthermore the land reform program in Zimbabwe also displaced many people. After the land grabbing in nearby farms surrounding Gweru farms workers were left homeless and they migrate to the city. Both men and women became street vendors since it was only the easy job to do for them. One female vendor highlighted that they were displaced after the land reform program and they had nowhere to go. She explained that after the land reform they migrate to Gweru to look for work. She states that his husband was a farm worker who does

not have any other skills to find a job in this city. Displaced women said she did not have a choice rather than working as a street Vendors.

Lack of Education is one of the factors which forced women to be street vendors for the past years. With little and no formal education, women felt they had very few opportunities to get other jobs besides street vending. According to some female vendors they said that there were not educated to get a proper formal job. One woman said that she did not have an education or any technical skills. Therefore, street vending is my only choice to generate income. Therefore the study found that women are in street business they have no formal educational or vocational training that would enable them to find jobs in the formal sector.

Women join street vending because they became consciousness of her situation. In a country based on patriarchy, it is not surprising that there is no public system of male support for women without a husband. One woman said that no one is supporting her for her needs and children after the death of her husband. So she became involved in street vending business to support her children. Other women talked about having no reliable sources of income and street vending as their only recourse. They narrated that they used to depend on husband incomes but due to economic crisis they is it necessary stood to support the family together with their male counterparts. They use street vending as a source of income to supplement the household incomes. Lack of alternative sources of economic support in the public system reinforces private patriarchy.

Unemployment, is also the major reason which has forced many young women into street vending business in Gweru. Unemployment levels in the formal sector are said to be above 90% in Zimbabwe. As a result most female graduates from Universities and Colleges are left

with no option but to engage into street vending. A significant number of respondents indicated that they previously worked in the formal sector before they got involved in street vending. Most of the Gweru women who had worked prior to vending left their previous place of employment because of retrenchments. A more or less equal number resigned due to manifestation of the dwindling purchasing power of wages earned within the formal economy in crisis-ridden Zimbabwe.

Poverty is also another factor which has driven most women to engage in street vending. Most married women highlighted that they were forced to engage in street vending after their husbands who were formally employed and were retrenched. Therefore they decided to join the street vending to help their spouses to take care of their families. In addition, in the event that their husbands were still at work the married female vendors indicated that vending was often a way of supplementing the income of their husbands (given that formal wages, in the context of skyrocketing inflation, could no longer sustain families for the whole month before the next pay day). Urban living standards had deteriorated dramatically such that some households were relocating to rural areas. Vending became critical therefore for household survival. One married respondent aged thirty five highlighted that:

*“These days it is very difficult to live on one salary because you would need to pay school fees, rentals, and electricity and water bills, there are a lot of things that need money and with salaries that people are getting...it is just a dollar but it's not enough (In-depth interview, March 2016).*

Another respondent aged forty declared poverty had forced her to look for other means of increasing income levels. She noted that:

*“In the past I used to know the husband’s salary will be enough to cover all expenses... now not even half way through [the month] sometimes we have to skip meals so that we get food for supper”* (In-depth Interview, March 2016).

Though married respondents talk about being ‘forced’ into the informal economy, this move does entail a deliberate choice based on the recognition that the formal economy is no longer, in itself, a sufficient basis for urban livelihoods in contemporary Zimbabwe. For single, divorced and widowed women, vending is their main source of income (which would also be the case for married women without a male breadwinner). Given the absence of a male breadwinner, these women assumed full financial responsibility for the households. One of the unmarried respondents reported the following:

*“I do not have a husband...everyone in the house looks upon me for everything so I have to work hard to make ends meet with my family...if only I had a husband things could have been better”* (In-depth interview, March 2016).

### 'Pull' Factors

There are several features of street vending that women in the present study found compatible with their family-based needs and interests. The women mentioned the following characteristics of street vending as contributing to their constrained choice of street vending to earn an income, flexible working hours, the low cost of entering this line of work, having and requisite skills. Ten of the interviewees mentioned that they entered into street vending because having some choice in working hours gave them the flexibility to do housework, along with rearing their children. Female vendors said that street vending gave them the opportunity to check on their children on a regular basis.

Women are in into street vending because of Entrepreneurial motivations. Women highlighted that they are very committed to learning more about street business practices. Female participation in street vending is highly influenced by interest in running the business and make investments in order expand the enterprise. They assume that such individual effort can overcome the social and economic barriers that women face.

Another reason that divorced women go into this particular type of business is the low start-up costs involved. Another vendor mentioned that low start-up costs were is another reason which attracts them to join street vending. One woman stated that she had no opportunities for a loan that might have enabled her to engage in another type of business such as a restaurant or clothes shop.

Having other female relatives, such as a mother or sister, already engaged in vending is instrumental in women getting into street vending. For one participant, her sister who was involved in street vending encouraged her to start a business. After divorce her sister who was already in the street vending business advised her to start selling recharge cards and vegetables. As Pefia (1999) found in his study of street vending in Bolivia, family can serve as an important source of economic and social support. Several interviewees mentioned that they were able to borrow money from a family member to start up a business.

### **1.5.2 Daily Activities of Female Vendors**

Most women are engaged in various vending types. The first type is one in which the predominant activity is selling vegetables, tomatoes, fruits and sack bags The second-most frequent type of service involves the selling clothes and shoes on pavements. The third group of female vendors provides entire food stuffs and air time. In short female vendors sell

Fruits, vegetables, fast food-boiled eggs, herbs, chips, sweets, cooked cobs, biscuits, sadza, freezits, cool drinks clothes, kitchen utensils, plastic wares, cosmetics, electronics, books, cell phone lines + handset, among others. In an interview one female vendor who sells vegetables highlighted that:

*“For nine years I have been getting up at 5:00 a.m. to go to kombai market to hoard tomatoes and vegetables.”*

Other women also mentioned that they have been going to surrounding farms to collect potatoes, cabbages, onions and vegetables which they trade in streets. The working hours for most interviewees who sell vegetables are more than added up to more than 10 hours a day. Female vendors in Gweru sell airtime for cellular phones. This is popular as a vending activity because urban Zimbabweans are highly dependent upon mobile phones as a means of communication. Female vendors reported selling second-hand clothes (commonly known as mazitye) and this activity has prospered because retail clothing stores are very expensive given the fall in real wages. As a result, many urban poor have resorted to buying second-hand clothes and shoes. The decline of the Zimbabwean clothing industry has also contributed to the rise in the importance of second-hand clothes. Foreign currency trading is also another popular activity in Gweru Urban. This is mainly because a large number of vendors frequently travelled across the borders of Zimbabwe (for example, to South Africa) to source different commodities.

The study indicates that there are clear linkages between the informal and formal sectors of the Zimbabwean economy, including in relation to the source of goods sold through informal vending. The majority of female vendors in Gweru get their products mainly from the formal sector in Zimbabwe in Harare. Some get their products from other informal traders for instance, those selling human hair (braids) sourced this from a nearby supplier at a wholesale.

A considerable number of women reported travelling across the Zimbabwean border to purchase goods in another country and then reselling these goods in streets. There were various reasons for sourcing goods from outside Zimbabwe. Firstly, the charging of exorbitant prices by retail shops and companies in Zimbabwe which produced the same products sourced outside Zimbabwe. Secondly, traders sometimes sought to acquire brand name goods which customers preferred over the many Chinese products sold in Zimbabwe which are of low quality. Lastly, the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe has not yet regained its productive capacity such that certain products remain scarce on the local market. South Africa was the main country from which durable goods were sourced, but other countries included Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana. Products from other countries are sold by female vendors who sell clothes and shoes. Goods that are sourced from these countries included new clothes, shoes and electrical gadgets.

### **1.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided the historical events which led to rise of street vending phenomenon in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean crisis which was under discussed in various phases is the reason behind the death of formal economy and the rise of informal economy in Zimbabwe. ESAP led to serious retrenchments which created unemployment and left urban population without any choices than joining the informal economy. The DRC Intervention, Compensation of war veterans, land reform program, operation Murambatsvina and the 2008 Zimbabwean crisis worsened the livelihoods of urban population especially children and women. The majority resorted to street vending in urban cities such as Harare, Mutare, Masvingo Bulawayo and Gweru. Street vending is illegal in Zimbabwe however, because of current economic hardships the majorities are in the streets for survival. With inflation rising,



retrenchments, unemployment and poverty, the majority of Gweru residents had to survive through street vending in the informal sector. This chapter also looked at the participation of female vendors in vending business. Their involvement in street vending is characterized by a number of factors pull and push factors. Women joined street vending due economic crisis, poverty, displacements, poor source of income among other factors discussed. The nature and patterns of street vending in Gweru was discussed. Furthermore the commencement and daily street vending activities by female vendors were highlighted. In short female vendors are found at supermarkets, on pavements and banks selling items such as air time vegetables and fruits, clothes and shoes among other products.

## CHAPTER TWO

### STREET VENDING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN GWERU

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research findings about the contribution of street vending to women's empowerment in Gweru Urban. The findings of this study were elicited through in-depth interviews, direct observation and Focus Group Discussions. The findings of this study base on Sara Longwe women Empowerment Framework. The Framework provides five hierarchical levels which better explain women empowerment indicators. In line with Longwe empowerment measures street vending improved women welfare, access to basic needs, awareness on the gender roles. It has positively improved the participation of women and control of resources. Street vending has increase women's income, food, health care and their decision making capacity on personal and family matters. However, there were some interesting findings which undermine or weakened the contribution of street vending to women empowerment in Gweru urban. For example the income obtained by female vendors is very little and not enough to change their lives. There are challenges which are affecting the participation of female vendors like competition for markets, harassment by municipal police and seasonality among others. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will look at empowerment concepts and women empowerment indicators or measures. The second section analyses the findings on street vending and women empowerment. The third and last section gives a detailed account on the challenges affecting female vendors (Daily struggles of female vendors).

#### **2.1 Empowerment Concept, Measures and Indicators**

Empowerment is a multi- dimensional concept that comes from an array of disciplines in the scholarly and practical fields. The root of empowerment comes the word power which is

highly contested in the social and political theory (Sardenberg 2008) the different category of power are explained in the four dimensions. Power over, power to, power with and power within. Rowlands (1997) empowerment as a process and includes personal development and requires action to change.

Figure 2: Dimensions of power and its implications towards empowerment

<b>Type of power</b>	<b>Implications towards empowerment</b>
<b>Power over:</b> Capability to influence and coerce	Changes in necessary resources and power to contest constraints
<b>Power to:</b> Acquire changes of existing hierarchies	Allowing access to opportunities and increasing one's capabilities
<b>Power with:</b> Increased power by collective action	Mobilized unification to opportunities and increasing one capacity
<b>Power within:</b> increased sense of awareness	Increased awareness and mobilized to change

Source: Rowlands 1997

Similarly to Rowlands views other scholars and practitioners empowerment definitions have related elements such as change, increase in resources, access and awareness. A majority of feminist scholars agree that collective grassroots activism is necessary to empower women in a community in order to change. Considering the definitions of empowerment explained above, the study will add on by adopting the Sara Longwe views on women empowerment aspects. The framework discusses women empowerment issues in hierarchical levels as discussed below

Sara Longwe Women Empowerment Framework

To analyse the major findings of the research the study will base on women empowerment framework developed by Sara Longwe and Robert Clarke (1994) in Zambia. The framework was developed for development practitioners, institutions and organization to address issues and concerns affecting women in developing countries. Longwe argues that if development is to be achieved there is need to empower women and involve women in the development process. For Longwe, empowerment means enabling people to take charge of their own lives, and escape from poverty. The framework identifies five hierarchical levels in the empowering process. These levels will be used as measures and indicators of women empowerment. The levels are interrelated highlighting that the empowerment is found in the movement from one level to another, which is from the stage of welfare, access, concietisation, participation to control/empowerment. (See Conceptual Framework).

Sara Longwe women empowerment views are discussed in brief in this chapter because detailed discussions are clear in the Conceptual framework. The indicators pointed by Longwe will be linked to the findings of this study to if women empowerment is achieved.

Welfare is the lowest level and looks at women “material welfare to men. At this level, Longwe believes that it is the least measure or indicator of women empowerment determined by whether women have access to resources like food, income, medical care. Access level described women empowerment as having access to factors of production on an equal footing with male counterparts, equal access to land, labour, credit, training, marketing, facilities, public service and benefits. For Longwe, equality of access can be obtained by applying the principle of opportunity which calls for reforms in the laws and administrative practices to eradicate all form of discrimination.

Awareness is the third indicator of women empowerment as suggested by Longwe. At his level women are empowered if they become conscious in understanding difference between sex and gender and awareness that gender differences are cultural and can be changed. Empowerment means sensitizing people against the traditional division of labor as God given and recognizing that women s subordination is not part of a natural order of the things but is imposed.

Longwe defines the participation level as women’s equal participation in decision making process and capacity, policy making, planning, administration and participation in economic development initiatives. Finally the empowerment level calls for women control over decision making process through concientisation and mobilization to achieve equality of control over the factors of production and distribution of benefits. Equality of control means a balance of control between women and men so that neither side dominates. Sara Longwe empowerment framework is simplified in the table below.

Figure 3: Sara Longwe women empowerment framework

LEVELS OF EMPOWERMENT	DESCRIPTION
<b>Control</b>	Women and men have equal control over factors of production and distribution of benefits, without dominance and subordination
<b>Participation</b>	Women have equal participation in decision making in all policies and programs
<b>Concientisation</b>	Women believe that gender roles can be changed and gender equality is possible
<b>Access</b>	Women gain access to resources such as labour, credit, land, marketing facilities, public services and benefits on equal basis

	with men. Reforms of law and practice may be pre-request for such access
<b>Welfare</b>	Women's material needs such as food, income and medical care are met.

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Source: Sara Longwe Women Empowerment Framework 1994

The above table shows the indicators of women empowerment which are mainly better welfare, increased welfare, awareness, women participation and control of resources welfare.

The above measures are useful in identifying the gaps between rhetoric and reality of female vendors. The extent to which street vending is empowering is analysed basing on the following findings

A total of 100 vendors were interviewed. Most of the female vendors are 18-40 age group (60%) and the over 35% are in 40-65 age group and only 5% above 65 years. Most (66%) had attained secondary school education, but a significant number (19%) had some form of tertiary training. The average time that vendors had been employed in this activity is between five and seven years

## **2.2 Street Vending and the Empowerment of Female Vendors**

### **2.2.1 Street vending, Utilization and skills**

The participants indicated that they were just housewives before engaging in street vending. They were involved in small projects like poultry projects and sewing. The respondents interviewed noted that they joined street vending without receiving training in areas like business management, financial management, marketing strategies. Some female vendors said that street vending does not require one to be trained as long as one is aware of the goods and products needed on the markets. One female vendor said she was advised by her mother to go to South Africa to hoard clothes and shoes as these items were on demand. Some said they went as far as Tanzania and Zambia for cheap goods and products which gave them

better profits. On the issue of training one female vendor said nobody trained her to do street vending business. She said

*“izvi zvekutengesa hazvina kana basa netraining kana kudzidziswa unonongoudzawo nevamwe zvinhu zvirikunyanya kutengwa wotohodha”.*

The majority noted that there is no proper training to manage street business as women only advised each other on capital required to start business and what are the products on demand on the market. In this regard it was found out that women capacity to manage business is undermined by lack of training. However the researcher found that women empowerment is noticed through female vendor groups which advise each other on how starts vending business, to account for their monies, to invest on the profits and spend on surplus capital. One female vendor reiterated that there is no training received on street vending business but they organized groups like *mukando* groups where they discuss business and how to manage profits. For example the *mukando* group is a platform where women can buy property for each other through savings. It was found that women are buying small properties like beds, fridges among others. The researcher also found that female vendors have small books as record books. For example most female vendors have small books which consists number of products in stock, items sold, date and total amount. This shows women ability to manage their business through financial accounting despite the fact of not being trained. Although training is important in improving the skills of women are empowered as they are now conscious on some other things compared in the past. Through street vending women gain a lot of skills that are important in doing their business such as record keeping, financial accounting and marketing strategies. Female groups like *mukando* are also influencing women capacities to do things like savings which is important in purchasing property.

In addition it was also realized that women did not receive any loans and facilities to do start business. In an interview the women said they had not received the loans from the organizations to start business. With no training women find it difficult to get loans from financial institutions. In an interview with some micro financial institutions officials in Gweru like FBC -micro plan- manager said they are not in position to fund small business like street vending. He said that they fear to fund the social group because there are not trained to run proper business and they fear that there will fail to repay the loans. Also lack of collateral security has also denied female vendors access to loans. However officials from the Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprise official in Midlands Province said that they are programs put in place by the ministry to fund small businesses. However, they did not deny the fact that the fund mechanism is very limited as they operated under small budget allocated by the government. Ministry of Youth and Indigenization officials also said that youth funds and women funds are given to women and youth to start projects. Women empowerment funds have not been permitted to fund small businesses like those being practiced in street vending said Mrs Masuka the Midlands Province Women Empowerment Officer.

In addition, female vendors also confirmed that they had not received any funding from these ministries. Unavailability of capital loans, however did not stop women from looking for other alternatives to start and boost/expand their businesses. In a focus group discussion the majority of female vendors said they received capital from their male counterparts and relatives to start own business. In this regard the study colluded that the role played by female vendors is being recognized by their families as an important economic initiatives. Female vendors also borrow each other money to start business and to boost their business in case one has been affected. In an interview one woman said I quote:



*“tinokweretesana mari kana mumwe wedu asangana nematambudziko anenge adzorera basa rake kumasure”.*

In addition some referred to it as ‘*kumutsana*’ meaning that they assist each other to return to business in times of crisis. It was found that female vendors work together in issues affecting them in business like experiencing losses. In this regard women are empowered as compared to their previous life experiences of doing unpaid household chores or duties. However, not all female vendors are willing to cooperate to assist each other. One woman said they cannot support each other because they gain very little profits through street vending. Street vending has improved women with skills and knowledge to run small businesses in streets though the extent of their skills and knowledge is not known. Although some female vendors said that having skill alone is not enough to empower women this issue of skill and knowledge is in line with Longwe welfare and access level which believes that women can enjoy the same benefits as their male counterparts. Knowledge and skill is power as suggested by Sara Longwe. Therefore, female vendors in Gweru gained marketing skills, entrepreneurship skills than before where they had skills for domestic works only such as looking after children, cleaning and cooking. Street vending has Longwe views are correct as women realize that they can reverse the gender roles by working outside. Thus they change their welfare and enhance their capabilities through street vending.

### **2.2.2 Effects of Street Vending on Women’s Income**

In this section the earnings of women from street vending are discussed and analyzed in detail. This was done to find out the average income per week and month and analyse how it has impacted on women lives. Before the participation of women in street vending activities most women did not earn anything as they only depend on husband incomes. 80 % of selected female vendors said that they could not afford to earn a dollar per day because they

were not working but just focused on doing household chores. In an interview one female vender said that she could not earn anything from doing household duties as it is her mandate to fulfill duties or roles in marriage. Therefore she said she had to rely on husband income which was only used to meet the daily needed of the family. In this regard it was found out that before joining street vending business women could not earn anything whereas after engaging in street vending activities they began to earn some income. 80% of female vendors said they earn at least 2 dollars a day and 20% earn at least a dollar per day. 57% of the interviewees said they earn at least 25 dollars a week or 100 dollars per month. The other 20% said they earn up to 150 dollars a month. Some even (23%) went on to say that street vending is giving them up to 200 dollars a day a month.

One female vendor said through selling valuable products like clothes, weaves, shoes and kitchen utensils they are getting a lot of profits from street vending. However it is important to note that income obtained is only depend on the type of business and items/ (products) sold in the streets. Those selling items like sweets, jiggies, tomatoes, vegetables, sweets are found to be getting low profits hence they earn less income. One woman said they she earning at least 56 dollars a month from selling sweets, air time tomatoes and jiggies. This clearly shows that those selling valuable goods are earning less than those selling valuable commodities. Although some female vendors earn less it is a positive improvement compared to the days where they were just sitting at home. The researcher also noted that female vendors are earning the poverty datum line which is pegged at 560 dollars a month. Overall the study found out that the participation of women in street vending activities has brought more opportunities and it has increased their income. In line with the views of Sara Longwe, the empowerment of women is achieved through women access to income, street vending is an economic initiative which has led to rise of level of income for female vendors in Gweru

Urban District. Therefore in line with Sara Longwe definition of women empowerment which stipulates that empowerment is a process which involves women access to income. These study findings clearly shows the women are empowered through street vending as they have access to their own women income despite the result that some are earning very little.

However on the negative side, female vendors failed to provide their average daily income. They added that daily sales had diminished as a result of an increase in the number of people who have become vendors. Another contributory factor to the general decline in sales was consumers having less spending power than in previous years. The majority of them said they did not have enough capital to buy stock of high value which in turn gives higher profit.

Some were selling small items which give them a profit of less than USD \$2, and, in order to make meaningful profit, they have to sell large quantities. A middle-aged lady confirmed this:

*“If you look at my stock, I have mostly small items like Jiggies and sweets and from these items I only make 1 profit, imagine how long it will take me to sell and make a dollar and accumulate enough money that I will be able to use for my household. It is very difficult.”*

In the current economic situation, some female vendors said they are unable to sell enough to cover their living expenses. Therefore they get small profits which are very little to cover for their needs. An elderly woman seems to lost hope when asked on how she was coping and whether she was happy with her current income earnings through street vending.

*“I am a grandmother taking care of my orphaned grandchildren and I am struggling to make, ends meet. Look at what I am selling, I get very little income. ,”* she said.

The vendors elaborated that the money they make supports on average six people; dependents include members of their immediate and extended families. Most vendors emphasized that this monthly income was not sufficient enough to cover their monthly needs.

Income earned on a particular day (even earnings derived from sales of durables) is mainly used to meet immediate consumption needs, rather than for building an asset base for future economic prosperity. Given the rising cost of living in urban areas in Zimbabwe, the income earned by the vendors per month is not even adequate to meet basic household needs. This is reflected by the following comment from one female vendor aged thirty five who specialized in perishables:

*I will tell you this, vending is just making money for consumption of one day and tomorrow I have to come and do the same thing...normally I get US\$8-15...it's too little but I have no option where would I get money for water, electricity, school fees and all other things that require cash (In-depth interview, April 2016).*

Though women are not satisfied about the little earnings, this is a stepping stone towards their empowerment in income terms. Longwe suggests that women access to income is part of the process to women empowerment. Therefore in the Longwe framework most female vendors are on the welfare and access level. The income which they earn they use it to access health facilities, buying food and other basic needs among others discussed below. Hence street vending is putting women in a better empowerment position.

Although previous studies indicate that women's income is generally regarded as being supplementary to men's household income contribution, my study shows that women are playing an increasingly crucial role in household income generation, though still secondary income earners in the main. Many female vendors claimed that selling durable goods has

high returns compared to selling perishable goods. This was because the sheer amount of profit from durable products is more than the comparable amount for perishables. Furthermore some female vendors assert that durables do not lose value or deteriorate, such that they can stock them until the demand is high (especially at the end of the month). One divorced respondent aged twenty eight reported the following:

*“It’s different when you are selling profitable goods, I get more dollars when I sell aluminum pots, clothes and shoes. I can get more than US\$20 per day compared to selling biscuits for US\$1 for two packets which is money for transport only, you can just sell biscuits at home”*

(In-depth interview, April 2016).

On the other hand, some female vendors argued that quick cash through selling perishables such as like tomatoes, and vegetables was viable as compared to durables. The main argument was that Gweru public, which is generally living in poverty, cannot afford to buy expensive perishables from supermarkets like Pick Pay and OK. Women access to income is highly applauded by Longwe as the determination factor to women’s empowerment. Although some studies believed that access to income only is not empowerment, it is important not that female vendors are managing their own lives through the little income obtained from street vending business.

### Stories of Change

One female Vendor identified as Mrs. Ndlovu who has been a vendor for more than five years said that she went into street business to supplement the income of her husband. She highlighted that before joining street vending it was very difficult to meet her needs and other requirements of the family properly as his husband earn a little from Bata Shoe Company. She commenced street vending in 2008 at the peak of the economic crisis, after which she

started to earn some money from street vending. She was involved in selling of vegetables and tomatoes and other items. The income she obtained was used to pay water bills and electricity bills, pay school fees and buy stationery for children. She even went on to say that she managed to build a hut and a 2 roomed house in the rural areas. She also said that she managed to buy 3 goats, and kitchen utensils to use in the rural home. Unidentified female vendors also said that they bought items like beds, kitchen units, and blankets, among others through street vending. In this way her time in house work is reduced and she can utilize the time in productive tasks. The above story complements Marxism feminist thinking which says that women emancipation is only achieved by abandoning household chores and by engaging in more productive works.

Women ability to generate income is also confirming Sara Longwe view of women empowerment that women capacity to carry out in initiatives is key to enhance women self-reliance. Street vending by improving women income has largely influence women and gave them the confidence that they can manage their lives without any interference from their male counterparts. The study also found that women are also the backbone in the informal economy because of their ability to generate income. Here economic empowerment is noticed thus women can economically depend on themselves through street vending.

### **2.2.3 Street vending, Income, and Empowerment.**

The above discussion explored the issue of income and its contribution to women lives after the participation of female vendors in street vending activities. In this section the study analyzed the relationship between street vending, income and empowerment. Street vending has been a survival weapon for poor women in urban areas for whom a little increase in income means a significant contribution to the personal and family causes. As witnessed by

the rise in the level of women, there are increasing concerns about control over these incomes and earnings.

### Decision Making on Income

Women decision making on income was studied both at personal and household level. It was discovered through interviews that the more involvement of women in street vending business has improved their chances to make decisions. The participation of women in decision making over income is analyzed basing on the following areas which include decision making on personal and family level. On personal level the following areas are explored: buying personal items, visiting places like markets and institutions, arranging recreational facilities and meeting with people. To analyse decision making at family level, involvement in taking decision regarding a child education, marriage, making big or small purchases are inspected. These areas largely correspond with Sara Longwe thinking on women decision making ability in enhancing women empowerment. The following concerns will be looked at:

- Buying personal items: how much a woman can decide to buy her commodity she wants or needs
- Visiting places: whether she can decide herself about going difference places or family influences her.
- Visiting market or institutions: in visiting market places and institutions, whether she decides herself or family has control
- Arrangement of child education and health, who decides about education the children get. Who bears about their health expenses for their education and health

- Purchase: who decides in making small and big purchases in the family? Small purchases refer to cooking oil, soap, clothes etc. and big purchases refer to assets like furniture, land etc.

Decision on Utilization of Women Income

Table 1: Who decide on utilisation of women income?

<b>Decision on Involvement in street vending activities</b>	<b>Participation in%</b>	<b>Decide on income</b>	<b>Participants in %</b>
YES	80%	Decide own	70%
NO	20%	Decide jointly with husband or father	25%
		Husband or family members decide	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Work 2016

Due to economic hardships, this research found out that the majority of women interviewed said they decide on their own to start street vending business. Street vending was a respond to economic crisis and moving away from male dependence according to them. Only a few said they were encouraged by family members and their husbands to engage in street vending activities. For spending their monies the women mostly decide on their own, while 20% said they decide on together with their husband and their family members- heads of family. Only 4% said that their husband or other family decide on how to spend the money. The income enabled women to spend their money for family purposes, particularly for children. It was found out that few female vendors still need to negotiate or seek permission from their



husbands or other male heads in a family on how they should spend their money. Most female vendors said that their husband do not worry much about deciding on the income obtained from street vending. They said their male counterparts were only concerned about the progress being made. Some female vendors said they spend the monies in line the family budget, needs and priorities.

#### 2.2.4 Effects of Street Vending on Women’s Decision Making Capacity

Table 2: Decision making capacity of women before and after involvement in Street vending

<b>Extent of Decision making</b>		<b>Personal matters in %</b>	<b>Family matters in %</b>
Before	Low	80	80
	High	20	20
Total		100	100
After	Low	4	4
	High	96	96
Total		100	100

Source Field Work 2016

The researcher found out that before the participation of women in Street vending activities, 80% of them had low decision making capacity in personal matters. Personal matters covers areas like: buying personal items, visiting places, visiting markets or institutions, arranging recreational facilities and meeting with people. 20% of them have high influence on decision making. After women took part in street vending, their decision making capacities in personal matters raised to 96% high. Therefore it shows involvement of women in Street vending business enhances their decision making capacity in personal matters to a greater extent than

before. Through street vending female vendors are now able to make decisions in family matters like: child's education, child's marriage and making big/small purchases. To shed more light to the above, female vendors are also contributing to the family expenses, they start enjoying respect in the family. This change suggests that the status and respect of the women has improved since they share more family responsibility, they command a relationship of trust in the family and their family members give more value to her time and work outside.

#### Effects of street vending on women's decision in visiting markets or institutions

Before street vending, the outside works were carried out by the male members of the family, and even when the women need to go outside, they are found to be accompanied by male members or they seek permission of their husbands. Following their involvement in income earning through street vending business the women are usually linked with different groups and institutions for their works and orders. For example they now participate in street vending groups/ associations. Female vendors are also linked with large business companies where they hoard their products. For instance female vendors they are well connected to manufacturing companies in Johannesburg South Africa where they get clothes and shoes at cheap prices. It was found out that female vendors are also linked with financial micro plan institutions like Get bucks and FBC micro plan among others. However it is important to note that they very few women has access to financial loans from this institutions as most the female vendors do not have bank accounts and they don't have bankable assets required by most financial institutions and banks. Female vendors said they also visit the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprise and the Ministry of Local Governance among other government ministries to discuss their grievances and seek for

financial assistance. This is in line with the Marxist thinking which believes that women access to the labor markets enhances their capabilities.

#### Effects of Street Vending on Women's Decision to Meet People

From an observation in Gweru's 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> streets Robert Mugabe way, the researcher noticed women's involvement in the market places and thus interaction with the people. Female vendors market places are include pavements areas outside supermarkets and banks. Following their involvement in street vending women said they have more exposure and more interactions with outsiders when they are at these market places. They meet people in their vending groups and mukando associations.

#### Priority of Women's View on Children Education, Thanks to Street Vending

The financial condition of family matters in the case of children's education is that the general picture shows that the greater the family earns, the higher the level of education of the children. A woman who earns some money caters for the expenses of the children and assists them to pursue education to their level best. The majority of women said they decide on their children's education both with their spouses and other family members. Some female vendors said they have the responsibility of looking for places for grade zero, grade 1 and form 1 pupil. One female vendor said she is responsible for buying stationery school uniform and pocket money for her children who are doing grade 1, 6 and form 2

#### Priority of Women View on Child Marriage

In many African areas, women are found to be coming up side by side with the male family heads. Woman with their own income, however little, have increased roles in family matters, but in case of children's marriage, they women still have little say. One reason for this is marriage remains a matter of social connection. In social affairs, women have less

involvement compared to the male counterparts. This has been the case in many female vendors' households in Gweru Urban. During a focus group discussion female vendor said the decision about the future spouse for the children is never made without the formal approval from household head. What is notable here is even if a wife does not take a final decision about the future daughter or son in law; she had a noteworthy influence on the outcome of the decision making process (Kaspar 2005).

#### Priority of Women View on Family Purchase, Thanks to Street Vending

Whatever the amount the women earn from street vending work, their contribution in the family is accepted. Since they contribute to the households needs, the family heads now pay more attention to the women choices regarding purchase of lands, properties or other family necessities. If the decision making is participatory, better and more acceptable decisions can be made. The researcher found out that income earning opportunities for the women have pushed women ahead as decision makers in the family. However, female vendors said besides there is a trend for woman to work outside, the society remains male dominated. Even in the families, male remains the influential persons traditionally.

One female vendor in Gweru 2<sup>nd</sup> street applauded the involvement of women in economic activities like street vending. She said that women are in present days coming up, and the male members of the family and society are also supporting that women can equally work and earn for houses. She claims, in making family or societal decisions both male and female play equal roles. Through street vending they are now aware of their roles in making decisions for their families, particularly for children. Awareness is on the rise that for family happiness and peace, decision making by both male and female is important. Using Sara Longwe awareness level street vending has enabled female vendors to be aware of their roles, families and matters affecting them, hence they are empowered.

Table 3: Decision making capacity in personal affairs depending on years in street vending activities

Decision Making		Gap in number of years		Total
		1-4 yrs. in %	5-8 yrs. in %	
Before	Low	59	90	70
	High	41	10	30
Total		100		100
After	Low	6	0	4
	High	94	100	96
Total		100	100	100

**Source: Field Work 2016**

In the above table, it is seen that with respect to respondents who have been in street vending before four years, 59% of them have low decision making capacity in personal affairs and 41% of them have high decision making capacity in personal affairs before they participate in vending activities. Similarly, 90% of the women who have been in street vending before 5-8 years have low and only 10% of them have high decision making capacity in personal affairs before street vending. After their involvement in street vending business, from the group who has joined the training before 5-8 years, all have high decision making capacity. Taking the difference in percentage between low and high decision making, it shows more the duration of training taken, more the decision making capacity of the women. Therefore the study realizes that street vending has brought the participation of female vendors in decision making process both at personal and family matters. As suggested by Longwe, women participation in decision making is a key stage or mature stage to women empowerment

#### 2.2.4 How Societies Look at Female Vendors

Through interviews with Gweru city councilors mostly males, an outlook towards women involvement in some income earning works is noticed. The society is convinced even as she maintains household work; the women can work outside for extra income. Their income can help them to meet family expenses, and save some money for future investments. One Councilor commented that for decades, women are backward in each and every sector. Women are victims of different types of violence. So they need to be empowered to secure and get their rights. He observes some changes in the participating women following their involvement in Street Vending. The society appreciates that the women are now more open in speaking and sharing, more aware of their rights and duties, more caring for their family matters, and at the same time, more convinced they can earn and raise their status. He claims that the society has a positive outlook towards women as the women can work and contribute to families and also more aware of their problems and how they can be solved through street vending.

### **2.2.5 Decision Making and Empowerment Factors**

The study investigated into the decision making capacity of the women before and after involvement in street vending, in which family background remains influencing factor. One aspects of family background is considered here-family size and family education. The study found how family backgrounds influence the decision making capacity of the women. In the study the family size is measured with 2 scales-families having up to 5 members are considered as small and families having more than 5 members are considered as large. According to the concept the members in a smaller family can have more mobility, better choices, better options for living, and have a say in decision making areas.

The respondents belonging to small family size i.e. of 1-5 persons, 67% of them had less capacity in taking personal decision before the involvement in street vending, while the rest

33%, had high capacity. Of the total respondents who are from a family size of 6-10 persons, 83% of the respondents had less decision making capacity before street vending business, and 17% have high decision making capacity. The respondents who have small family size i.e. 1-5 persons, 96% have high decision making capacity and only 4% had low decision making capacity after their involvement in street vending activities and those who are from family size 6-10 persons 17% have less decision making capacity and 83% have high decision making capacity in family matters after their involvement in street vending business. This shows that with a smaller the number of family members, the women enjoy more freedom in decision making about their personal matters. This is because when the family size is big, the women have to be more involved in household work. So, family size itself matters in decision making capacity.

Table 4: The relationship between family sizes and decision making in family matters.

Decision Making		Family Size	
		1-5 persons	6-10 persons
Before	Low	86	67
	High	14	33
Total		100	100
After	Low	62	17
	High	38	83
Total		100	100

Source: field work 2016

### 2.2.6 Other Benefits of Street Vending

Through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with street vendors, the researcher found out that women are benefiting from street vending business socially and economically. They cited that after they engaged in Street vending they now have self-confidence and exposure to run

businesses without husbands' help. Through involvement in street vending women gain new skills, learn to socialize within the community, have additional capital to start other small businesses and support the welfare of the family. They said that they help the sick and orphans (neighbors) with food and vegetables thus it has improved their status within the community. To add to the above, street vending has improved on household food security. A female vendor (widow) at OK supermarket said for several years street vending has helped her to pay rentals, electricity bills, and most important food for her children and other needs like soap etc. She also said street vending encourages team work and enabled them to socialize at market places.

### **2.3 The Daily Struggles of Female Vendors**

This section discussed the challenges encountered by female vendors in Gweru urban district. The interviewees struggled to accommodate their families and children along with their responsibilities in running the business, dealing with harassment by the local authority, being in competition with other women street vendors; suffering from exposure to the weather, weak regulatory framework on street vending and lack of support on part of the government. The challenges have affected the empowerment of female vendors as discussed below.

Obtaining ingredients for their food and drink at competitive prices is a challenge for these women vendors. Two women mentioned that they did not have enough money to buy ingredients in bulk at wholesale prices and thus, were forced to buy them at retail prices. The result was, as one female vendor noted,

*"[buying]... ingredients from the shop on a daily basis... cost me more than buying in bulk."*

Constant raids by municipal police are a major barrier to the empowerment of female street vendors in Gweru. The Gweru municipal police conduct raids on vendors almost every day



around Gweru Central Business District. The municipal police conduct their raids in municipal trucks, on foot and they sometimes come in private vehicles to ambush unsuspecting vendors. The street vendors therefore are always on the lookout for municipal police during the operations of their business. One female vendor highlighted that:

*“Street vending is a risky business, since municipal police always come and raid us most of the times..... If the municipal police catch you they will arrest you and confiscate all your goods”*

After confiscations of goods the vendors are asked to pay a fine of USD 20 and they are never returned their confiscated goods most vendors accused the city council officials of taking their goods for personal use. Most female vendors’ indicated that whenever their goods were confiscated they had to buy a new stock of goods’. This was a major setback in empowering women as each and every time they had to buy new stock. Therefore there was no development in their business. Some female vendors indicated that some vendors had quit vending and were staying home because they could not afford to constantly buy new stock which did not yield any tangible profits. The following vendor narrated the behavior of municipal police and how it is affecting her as follows,

*“They took my clothes, shoes and bags and impose fines on me of around \$20.00 then they return my kits without sending me to court: I think this kind of game is illegal. What is the alternative for working in peace? Why do the local authorities chase me all the time? I do not have money to feed my children and to pay school fees I am bored of the cat and mouse game that I am playing with municipal police.”*

In addition most women in this study have gone through municipal raids. Eleven participants spoke about their experience of having their business raided by local police. In the following case, the interviewee lost all their goods. She said:

*“The local police came and took all my products. They took my vegetables and tomatoes”*

In addition to having their goods seized or destroyed, since their business is not licensed, these women vendors are subject to paying a large fine. Sometimes the police demand bribes in order to drop charges. Interviewees responded in anger and frustration at the way they are treated by the municipal police; they express their sense of powerlessness and victimization in a system that is set against their efforts to run their business:

A significant challenge for the women traders is the question of competition. Female vendors in Gweru expressed on the emergence of market saturation which has contributed to the lowering of profits and profit margins. Competition by vegetable vendors outside Pick and Pay supermarket was marked by constant fluctuation as, during my field work, I noticed changes to the number of female vendors on-site on a daily basis; and this also leads to significant irregularity and variation in daily sales. One interviewee said there are so many people coming here as you can find everything here, but if you are selling similar goods you hardly get cash. (In-depth Interview April 2016).

It was pointed out by interviewees that restrictions on the number of spaces for setting up their business have forced these women to work close to one another. The growing competition was noted by several interviewees who highlighted that, because of the considerable number of women working in the same business I have to wake up early to find a place on pavements to sell her goods. They set up stands beside each other, sometimes only

two meters apart, making the competition high. One participant mentioned that the tensions of competing for business could lead to women not talking to each other and not helping one another out especially during police raids.

Participants also spoke about how household responsibilities could affect their ability to compete against other women in same business: To be a mother and family provider is a challenge. I had to leave the business for at least an hour and half to check on my kids; that had an effect on my business, because the customers would not wait for me to come back and they would just go to another street vendor. They also reiterated that selling in the streets was their only option and not their choice; they stated that it was not safe and has negative health consequences. Some women vendors have to bring their children with them because there is no one to leave them with at home and pavements are not safe places for children. One female vendor at Ok supermarket said the responsibility as a mother affects her business.

*“Last month my son got sick and I had to stay with him. When I went back to vend at my usual spot it was taken by another woman who was serving my regular customers. I had to look for a new spot to set up business.” she said*

Unstable and unfriendly weather conditions proved to be a critical natural factor that was affecting the empowerment status of female vendors in Gweru CBD. Women proved to be at most vulnerable to the uneasy weather conditions that usually prevail in Gweru whether the weather was cold, hot or raining. Of late, Gweru has witnessed a rise in temperatures above the normal average. This has created a heat wave which has brought with it an unfamiliar and uncomfortable situation for the residents of Gweru. For the female vendors who often ply their trade in open air the situation is far worse for them. Female vendors who come with

their children to their businesses are the most affected. The research, found out that over 90% of the female vendors were operating in the open where there was not even a shade to cover their products or themselves. One female vendor noted that:

*“We are forced to operate here in the open because were not allowed by the shop owners to operate on the sidewalk where there is a shade. Furthermore we have to operate here in the open air because it is much easier to evade the municipal police from here. But operating here is difficult since it puts us in direct sunlight which affects the quality of our products and our children”*

The majority of interviewees stated that weather made it difficult for them to run their business. These women could not provide shelter from dust storms, extremely hot and cold weather or rain. The interviewees said during winter they are exposed to cold weather which hinders their participation in street vending business. Female vendors said sitting directly under the sun is unbearable. Of course, exposure to weather conditions is due to the vendors' lack of property and permanent structure to house their business.

The hot weather is a big challenge for those vendors who sell fruits and vegetables as their products quickly lose their freshness thus severely affecting their sales. The situation is further compounded by the fact that sometimes there is no water to freshen and moisturize their products. The coming of the rain and the cold weather that is usually a common characteristic for Gweru presents an even great challenge for the street vendors. The vendors highlighted that whenever it begins to rain they are assured of not much business activity on that day. Even those that have shades are forced to pack as there will be no customers buying their products. Some of the vendors noted that they have to resort to scrambling to get a

place on the pavements where there will be cover, but most of the vendors fail to get a place as almost all the vendors across the city will be scrambling for the little space in the shade.

Some female vendors who have children noted that whenever it begins to rain they are forced to rush home as they cannot risk selling with their children on the streets as they can contract a cold. These female vendors revealed that their sales in the rainy season are always at their lowest therefore this ultimately means that their empowerment from street vending is severely compromised.

In addition, female vendors lack stands on which to display their goods and to keep them safe from exposure to the vagaries of weather. Vendors and their goods therefore are continuously exposed to dust, cold weather, exposure to sunlight, and rain. The available shields they have in the form of umbrellas are only appropriate for sunny weather and not for wet weather. Weather conditions had a number of specific effects on both the women and their commodities for sale. Excessively hot days and the rainy season reduces the quality of the goods and resultantly led to the reduction of selling prices for each damaged item. In times of rains women have to run to nearby cover to avoid damage of their wares. Some female vendors have started selling their wares under cover on pavements outside nearby stores and (because of this) they are in constant conflict with shop owners. Regarding the lack of proper shelter, one of the interviewees had this to say

*'Our products get wet during the rainy season and obviously when the customers want to buy they negotiate for reduction of prices and we lose profits. Most of the times we run to over our products with tents and umbrellas because once they get wet they lose value and the price drops too'* (In-depth interview, April 2016).

The bad weather contributed to health problems especially influenza. Because of this, some traders opted to remain at their home during incremental weather, thereby reducing their daily income. Thirdly, particularly because there is no overarching shelter for the market, the weather drives potential customers away. One respondent who sells second-hand clothes stated that

*“When it is raining there is no business”.*

However, despite these challenges and setbacks most street vendors highlighted that they had to continue engaging in street vending as they had no other alternative source of income. They also noted that despite the low sales that were brought about by bad weather conditions, the income they were earning went a long way in improving their lives.

Vendors operating in Gweru CBD have over the years face the challenge of accessing clean, safe water and sanitation facilities. For female vendors operating in the CBD this has been a major obstacle in their pursuit of being empowered by street vending. The need to have access to sanitation facilities was affecting women the most. This is because most female vendors often come with their children to sell their goods and these children also required sanitation facilities. Furthermore these children risk contacting diseases because of the unavailability of proper water and sanitation facilities. One female vendor who occasionally came with her 5 year old daughter indicated that:

*“I am forced to come with my daughter almost every day to the market because she has no one to look after her at home. However here at the market we face the challenge of having access to toilets. When my daughter wants to use the toilet I just tell her to relieve herself on the side walk or mukoto”*

This presented great danger to the general cleanliness of the place they were operating as there were many children who were doing the same. The practice also posed a great risk to the hygiene of the children as there are no water facilities nearby.

On sanitation facilities, Gweru in general has about only two public working sanitation facilities. One is paid for and the other one is for free. However the conditions that prevail in these sanitation facilities are terrible to say the least. Years of neglect has led to the deplorable conditions. To worsen the situation these sanitation facilities were created without putting into consideration the huge numbers of street vendors that are now operating in the CBD. Therefore in light of this most street vendors are finding it difficult to access sanitation facilities in the CBD and in most cases it is the women and children that are affected the most. Most female vendors indicated that access to sanitation facilities was one of the greatest challenges they were encountering in their line of business. The situation that female vendors go through is made more difficult by the fact, unlike men who can quickly relieve themselves while standing at a corner women face a more difficult task to relieve themselves. Therefore the unavailability of sanitation facilities becomes a great challenge for the female vendors operating in Gweru CBD.

Both sets of female vendors that are selling their products on undesignated places and those selling at designated places noted that they had to negotiate with some shop owners to get access to sanitation facilities. However some vendors indicated that some shop owners were refusing to give them access because of the tensions that already persist between the shop owners and the vendors. Women who were on menstruation period were the ones that were facing the most difficult challenges in terms of sanitation facilities. This was because these women had to constantly use the sanitation facilities to relieve themselves. However with the

unavailability of such facilities in the CBD it meant that most female vendors had to endure difficult times. This in turn would mean that some women would scale down their hours of operation during this period. This therefore ultimately meant that the chance of improving their empowerment is greatly put at risk.

The empowerment of female vendors has been falling short because most if not all female vendors in Gweru do not have access to loans or other credit lines. Access to loans is made difficult by the fact that all financial institutions have got tough restrictions that give informal traders loans. Financial institutions in most cases prefer to give people in the formal sector loans since they offer better collateral security and have a pay slip. On the other hand giving loans to those who work in the informal sector is seen as a risky business since most of the traders in the informal sector do not have a pay slip or have very limited collateral security. Therefore in that light the street vendors have to endure selling everything that they have got in order to raise the required money to boost their businesses. For female vendors the situation is made even worse by the fact that most of these women have assets that are registered in their husbands' names. Thus, this makes it even more difficult for them to access loans from financial institutions to improve their empowerment status. One female vendor said that:

*“It is difficult for me to access a loan from the bank to improve my business since all the assets needed as collateral securities are registered in my husband’s name. My situation is even made much more difficult by the fact that my husband is reluctant to support my business saying street vending is an embarrassing thing to do”*



In light of the above revelation, it can be said that as long as female vendors do not have access to loans it is bound to be difficult to improve their empowerment status.

In addition, to the above the bulk of people in urban areas acknowledge the significance of access to credit in either cash or kind. Credit acts as a means of increasing household incomes through allowing for investments in income-generating activities and small business ventures. Despite this, the majority of poor households do not have access to credit from banks and other money lenders. Credit loan facilities are not new in Zimbabwe but, historically, most of these have been aimed at small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and not petty vendors like female vendors in Gweru Urban. Banks and NGOs have been targeting women as a social category, but specifically poor and marginalized women have not benefited from these interventions (Mupedziswa and 88 Gumbo 2001). The female vendors do not benefit because they do not meet loan requirements, such as collateral security, set by banks and other money lenders (Mhone 1993).

Further, they normally lack a guarantor with long-term and sufficient income to act as security for them, and their informal activities generate low and irregular returns deemed unacceptable to money lenders. In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe, through state and statutory bodies such as the Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO), the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Gender and Women Affairs, provide credit facilities. However, few female vendors knew anything of significance with regard to these credit opportunities, and none had in fact benefited. In any case, due to the economy performing under a necessary threshold, these bodies had exceedingly limited funds for credit disbursement. The lack of credit facilities to finance street vending contributed to the limited livelihood activities of Gweru female vendors and to their limited accumulation of assets.

Hence, this greatly impacted on the day-to-day operations of their livelihoods, particularly considering their ongoing cash flow problems. As such, female vendors sometimes ran out of cash to purchase goods for re-sale, and even some female vendors failed to pay for transport fares from their area of residence to the market where most of their business activities were carried out. As intimated by one unmarried woman who said some female vendors said they knew of the existence of informal money lenders but they were afraid of borrowing money from these lenders. Their main reason is that the interest rates on these loans are very high, and paying a loan back to these lenders becomes difficult. Vendors indicated that they were specifically afraid of confiscation of their trading goods after failing to pay back the money. One woman aged thirty four indicated the following,

*‘It’s very difficult to get cash from the people who do chimbado [informal money lending] because when you fail to repay them they come and collect everything.’*

Besides the lack of credit loans, female vendors in Gweru experience ongoing transport problems. Both formal and informal employment urbanites are affected by the public transport costs. Transport problems were identified as critical by female vendor’s traders who travelled on a daily basis from different low density areas in Gweru to the Gweru CBD (2<sup>ND</sup> - 7<sup>TH</sup> street Robert Mugabe way). Female vendors said they paid transport for their luggages. One woman said:

*“Sometimes you begin to see that you are just working for transport only ; ...”* (In-depth interview April 2016).

Lack of storage facilities is another challenge which is affecting day to day businesses of female vendors. Goods though are not stored free of charge, as a fee is charged depending on the number of days goods are stored (US\$1 was charged for a night, from sunset to sunrise).

Most of the female vendors leave their goods at their legal flea markets, friends' flea markets, and small shops near Kudzanai bus terminus where they asked to pay. Further probing into storage facilities revealed that it was associated with theft. This was mainly because no form of receipt was issued when leaving goods. Nonetheless, storing goods at these places is a risk which women are prepared to accept because of the otherwise significant transport fees for their carrier bags.

The researcher also observed and noted some of the problems faced by female vendors. The following were listed as the major problems faced in street vending business. Lack of business management skills (especially vending skills) hostile customers (especially men), some of whom seldom refuse to pay, constant fatigue caused by spending long hours in the sun, lack of public utilities like toilets , potable water sources., lack of organizational strength and voice and lack of dignity and/or right to work.

Seasonality is also big challenge to some female vendors. Beyond the many economic challenges noted already (including the fluctuations in sales within a particular month), Seasonality affects traders differently (or possibly not at all), depending on the wares in which they are trading, as the sales of certain products dropped or rose during different seasons. One young female vendor aged twenty seven who sells freezits, cold drinks and homemade ice cream reported the following:

*“You know when it is cold people do not buy freezits, or anything that is cold or liquid. This is a problem that we have and the business will be very low; at times you change to sell other things like clothes but there are already people who have established that market so you cannot expect to get much money from that”* (In-depth Interview, April 2016).

Another female vendor who sells farm produce noted: When it is summer, my business flourishes because a lot of people will be buying fruits (mangoes, apples and oranges) and also green maize cobs and round nuts etc. This is the time I get most of my profits (In-depth Interview, April 2016). Some of the vendors revealed that they are not directly affected by seasonality because they have a number of income sources. Vendors, who lack diversification, either within their vending activities in terms of commodity inflexibility, are mostly affected by seasonality. Furthermore, vendors selling durables (such as clothes and braids) expressed different opinions with regard to the existence and effects of seasonality. But most claimed that, during the festive seasons (for instance Easter and Christmas holidays); they experienced high demands while other parts of the year were off-season in this regard.

Customs imposed by ZIMRA also negated the business of female vendors. There have been efforts to control and undercut the activities of cross border traders who are a major source of goods for street vending in Gweru. The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) has been at the forefront of this endeavor through increasing duties on imported goods and at times confiscating certain goods. ZIMRA has disrupted the flow of goods into the country through these traders and has in fact made cross border trading less and less profitable thereby minimizing its extent. Beitbridge border post into South Africa is one of the busiest border posts and is well-known for strictness by customs officials as well as corruption among these officials. According to some female vendors who specialize of selling clothes, shoes and blankets said ZIMRA customs officials accept bribes from Chinese and Indian retailers importing goods while sometimes intentionally delaying or even blocking clearance by small-scale African local traders. In this light, female vendors also pay bribes to ensure that they are

not searched by officials, arguing that this lowers costs as customs duty is not paid. One of the female vendors explained the process:

*“I hate that place [the border post] because you can spend more than eight hours just waiting for clearance... I wonder what kind of system they use. Bus operators collect money while you are still far away from the border to quicken up clearance process; without that you rot at the border... We just have to do that otherwise they tighten screws and confiscate our goods”.* (In-depth Interview, April 2016).

Some female vendors indicate that they have lost their belongings at the border. ZIMRA recently introduced steep tariffs which leave no room for profit. However, the study also noted some of copying strategies adopted by female vendors to remain in business. Women vendors adopt a range of strategies in confronting the political challenges (or politicization), given that they operate outside of municipal by-laws and regulations and are subject to police harassment (Chirisa 2007, Hlohla 2008). Firstly, they utilize an ‘early rise and late night’ strategy. In this regard, Most of female vendors in Gweru said they are utilizing this strategy. For instance, vendors rise early in the morning to start operations before the municipal police officers start their operations against vendors. To further avoid arrests and harassment by the authorities, they engage in night-time vending. This simply means that vendors may at times start operating in the early evening when the municipal authorities have gone off duty. Respondents claimed that evening time is also conducive because workers will be going home and passing near the market, and they can market their wares without fear of arrest. This practice of night-time vending cut across all the vendors. The findings of this study are similar to the findings of Chirisa (2007) which uncovered that, after police officers report off-

duty, vendors lay their wares out openly along the pavements of the Central Business District in Harare.

In addition, because police operations are mainly characterized by confiscation of goods, many female vendors in Gweru have started to use a ‘deceptive commodity and merchant hiding’ strategy. Instead of displaying all the goods that are traded, female vendors have maximized the use of a hiding strategy. Female vendors reported that each item of the goods they trade in is not displayed in order to avoid losing all their goods (rather than simply the few items on display) when the municipal police arrive. For instance vendors selling clothes will just display one or two items and automatically customers will be aware that the vendor sells clothes. This strategy has enabled vendors to more easily run away when the municipal police arrive. Thirdly, female vendors have started using signals to alert each other to run for cover when the municipal police suddenly appear. Whistling has become the major signal to alert other vendors. The majority of women reported to be using this strategy.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter concludes by highlighting that to a greater extent street vending is the panacea to women’s empowerment in Gweru Urban District since it provides them with a host of opportunities, increase in ability to exercise autonomy, a capacity to define one’s goals and act upon them, enhancement in decision making, bargaining and negotiation capacity and improved income which is an essential element in household livelihoods. As suggested by Sara Longwe women empowerment framework street vending has enhanced women welfare, access, awareness and decision making capacity though it has little impacted on women control of resources. Control of resources is the final and crucial stage of women empowerment in Longwe views but street vending has not done much to improve women

position in controlling key assets like land, houses and cars. However these researchers conclude that female vendors are moving towards that stage of controlling assets as witnessed by their capacity to buy small and own small assets like beds, fridges, kitchen unit among others. The study concluded that family background, particularly family size influences women's empowerment in decision making as indicated in the above discussion. The research also revealed that street vending empowers women as it gives income generating opportunities combined with skills, access to resources and awareness among women.

Furthermore, increased income ultimately reduces the economic dependency of women in Gweru urban which is a critical base for empowerment. Although some women complained that the income is very little, access to income for women along with support of their awareness improves their self-confidence to subsequently engage in decision making in personal and family affairs. Income in the hand of a woman enables her confidence to put forward her opinion and share views in family decisions, i.e., woman's economic contribution in a family makes way for her participation, expected and accepted particularly by the family heads and they are given space within the society. This chapter also noted some of the challenges faced by female vendors which negated their empowerment status. Women experienced stiffer competition on the market, lack of capital to hoard valuable goods, municipal raids and weak legal framework among other constraints. Despite the challenges street vending is playing a pivotal role towards the women's empowerment in Gweru Urban. Although street vending is illegal and unrecognized, it significantly helped female vendors by creating unemployment, increased access to income, enhanced their decision making capacity and provided strong economic linkages in the economy. Hence, street vending brought self-reliance and women emancipation on part of women in Gweru Urban.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **IMPROVING THE EMPOWERMENT STATUS OF FEMALE VENDORS IN GWERU URBAN DISTRICT**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The status of female vendors in Gweru has been over the years facing several setbacks and challenges. Some of the challenges include unavailability of sanitation facilities, raids by municipal police, unfriendly weather conditions, patriarchal society among other challenges discussed in the previous chapter. These challenges have derailed the total empowerment of female vendors in Gweru. Therefore, against this backdrop there is need for drastic effective actions and strategies to be put in place in order to improve the empowerment status of female vendors in Gweru. Some of the strategies that can be put in place include constructing legal vending sites, constructing sanitation facilities, education women about the by-laws that govern the practice of street vending and ensuring the vendors are registered so as to ensure they have access to loans and other services that can improve their operations and empowerment status. This chapter shall highlight the that are plaguing female vendors in passing and focus much on drafting practical strategies that can be put in place to counter those challenges, thus ultimately leading to the improvement of the empowerment status of female vendors in Gweru urban district. The study will also draw lessons from other countries like Zambia and India who came up with various street vending policies to protect and empower street vendors.

#### **3.1 Working towards the empowerment of female Vendors in Gweru**

Improving the empowerment status of female vendors in Gweru requires a multi-faceted approach to achieve. This is because, there are several impediments that threaten the full achievement of women empowerment and female vendors are the most affected. Therefore,



in pursuit of achieving the empowerment of women the following strategies should be put in place and challenges overcome. Hence getting rid of these problems will enhance the total empowerment of women in areas such as women welfare, access to needs, awareness, participation and control of resources. These solutions to the problems will perfect Sara Longwe women empowerment ideas by adding new thinking and new models which are crucial in advancing the emancipation of female vendors.

To enhance the sustainability of street vending business, there is need to support female vendors with financial loans. The empowerment of female vendors has been falling short because most if not all female vendors in Gweru do not have access to loans or other credit lines the major reasons being limited collateral security and women have assets that are registered in their husbands' names. Thus, this makes it even more difficult for them to access loans from financial institutions to improve their empowerment status. Therefore, against this background there is need for the government to create a conducive environment whereby the government can support street vendors. This can be done through the legalising of street vending and allocation of legal vending sites. Once the government supports the practice of informal traders, financial institutions can come and assist thus complementing government's efforts. In light of the above noble idea, it can be said that legalising street vending can improve security on part of the female vendors and the financial sector will recognise them as important players in the economic development of the nation. By doing so the empowerment status is improving as female vendors have equal opportunities to access loans like their male counterparts and female counterparts in the formal sector.

As a coping strategy to the growing raids by the municipal police most vendors were now selling a few items which they would hold in their hands while they hid the rest of the goods somewhere else. Some were selling their products on pieces of cloth which they could easily fold and run in the event that a raid occurred. However, these strategies proved to be a difficult for those vendors who were selling pots, fragile cups and plates as it was difficult for them to quickly wrap their items and run away in the event of raid by the municipal police. Some vendors revealed that they had resorted to start selling their goods late in the evening after the municipal police had knocked off. In this regard there is need for local authorities to allow street vending activities after business hours. For example they can legalise street vending activities starting at 4pm

In addition, to avoid conflicts and raids it is important for the government and the city council to first register all the street vendors operating in the CBD. After this process the city council should find a suitable strategic site where they can relocate the vendors. This will ensure that the vendors will be operating legally and they will no longer endure the constant raids by municipal police. In addition the monthly rentals of these vending sites should be affordable so that it will not drive most vendors back to the streets where they do not pay anything. Furthermore, the allocation of legal vending sites will likely reduce the tension that persists between the shop owners and the illegal vendors. In some cases the shop owners have been the catalyst to the municipal police raids. They accuse the street vendors of stealing their customers as some sell the same merchandise as that sold in the shops. Some vendors even sell these products right at the front of the formal businesses. This has created a lot of tension between the formal businesses and the street vendors, a situation which has ultimately led to the proliferation and increase in intensity of municipal police raids across the city.

Therefore, in order to diffuse the situation it is important for the local authorities to move the street vendors to some legal vending sites where they can operate freely without the fear of municipal police and formal business owners. This strategy will likely improve the empowerment status of women if it is implemented in a just and noble manner. By establishing permanent legal vending areas will promote female vendors guaranteed markets thus improving women access to markets as also suggested by Longwe who believes that linking women markets who eventually lead to their economic emancipation. Gweru city council authorities could learn a lesson from the Lusaka city council which used to have a lot of problems with street vendors operating in the city centre. According to Ndlovu (2011), in 2005 the Lusaka city council in partnership with the European Union managed to construct a vending market called the new Soweto market near the central business district. Most of the vendors who were operating illegally in the CBD were moved to this new market which was also strategically located to attract customers. The new market could accommodate over 2500 vendors. The Lusaka city council faced some initial challenges in convincing the vendors to move to the new market as some vendors argued that they had no ownership to the market since they were paying monthly rentals thus, they could be evicted at any time. However, through the intervention of the vendors committee most vendors moved to the new site on condition that the monthly rentals were going to be slashed. Though the construction of the new Soweto market did not ultimately solve the challenge of street vending it dramatically reduced the number of street vendors that were operating in Lusaka CBD. For the vendors in Gweru, there is need for them to put in place a vibrant a vendors committee that represents the wishes of the vendors. The creation of such a committee will ensure that the interests of the vendors are respected by local authorities and shop owners. In turn, the city council should recognise the existence of such a committee and ensure that they work together to find

a lasting solution to the problem of street vending in Gweru. If peace and harmony is created between the city council and the vendors inevitably the empowerment status of women shall be drastically improved in Gweru as they will be able to operate legally a situation which can maximise their profits.

As a coping strategy to shortage of sanitation facilities, some female vendors indicated that they to go to food outlets like Chicken inn for sanitation facilities. However, they were not allowed every time as sometimes they had to produce a receipt that allowed them to use the sanitation facilities. Some indicated that they were left with no choice but to use the few public toilets that are in the city centre, which in most cases were in a deplorable state. Again women with children were the ones that were most affected. Women with babies indicated that they needed water so as to ensure that their children were always clean in the event that they changed their nappies or pumpers. In addition vendors who were selling fruits and vegetables indicated that they were in need of water which was critical in freshening up their fruits and vegetables. To cope with this challenge some vendors who lived in closed to the CBD indicated that they had bring with them at least 5 litres of water from home every day. Some indicated that they would negotiate for water at business premises around the city centre or they would fetch the water at the bus terminus in the city centre.

This study believes that the above copying strategies by female vendors are not a real solution to their sanitation and water problems. The city council and other relevant authorities need to address the issue of access to water and sanitation facilities if the empowerment status of female vendors is to be improved. Increasing female vendor access to water and sanitation facilities will automatically improve the hygiene and health of female vendors. The city council needs to construct more public toilets across the city. If space and

resources do not allow the city council can put in place mobile sanitation facilities close to where the vendors are operating. On water the city council should at least put a water browser close to where most street vendors operate so that they have access to clean water. However, most importantly the city council should ensure that those vendors who have access to the water are registered vendors who are operating legally. This would act as a deterrent factor on those vendors who are operating illegally to sort their legal operating status. Against the background of the challenges that have been mentioned earlier it is hoped that increasing access to water and sanitation facilities for women will likely motivate them to continue in the trade that has been a major source of livelihood. Access to water and sanitation facilities will ensure a good working environment for the women which in turn will motivate more women to engage in the trade of street vending. With most women interviewed highlighting that street vending had largely empowered them; the participation of more women in street vending shall therefore ensure that the empowerment status of women is improved.

Female vendors operating in Gweru CBD face the challenge of disposing their waste. There are not enough refuse bins across the city, thus this has ultimately led to people disposing their litter everywhere. The end result of this has seen a creation of a dirty working environment and an increase in health risks. To mitigate this challenge, the city council should ensure that there are enough refuse bins all over the city. In addition the city council should embark on an awareness campaign that seeks to educate people about the importance of ensuring and keeping a clean environment. This strategy will cultivate a culture of responsibility among female vendors and the general public about the importance of having a clean environment. In line with Sara Longwe thinking these awareness campaigns on environmental protection will enlighten female vendors and they will be in a position to do their business without any

harm to general environment of the city. The Council and other organisations like EMA should appoint or employ female vendors as Ambassadors of waste management. By doing so the women vendors who feel empowered since their participation is being recognised. According to Longwe women empowerment is achieved if the participation of women in decision making in all development initiatives is recognised. In this case of choosing female vendors as ambassadors of environmental management, who are involved in the decision making process, they are not left out hence improving their empowerment status.

In order to fully improve the status of female vendors there is need for relevant stakeholders like the city council and the government to come in and devise strategies that can improve the working conditions of street vendors under adverse weather conditions. One of the best strategies that can be put in place that can counter any form of weather condition is construct permanent brick vending stalls that are enclosed. These vending stalls should be many so as to cater separately the vendors who sell fruits and vegetables and those that sell other products like clothes and household gadgets. However, to make this a success the city council should ensure that these vending stalls are strategically located so that the vendors will continue having access to their customers. In addition the monthly rentals for the vending stalls should be affordable so as to ensure that the vendors do not refuse to be relocated. The city of Gweru city has over the past few years created about three such informal traders market across the city. However, most informal traders have shunned the market stalls arguing that the rentals are too high. One female vendor who sells kitchen utensils on the streets highlighted that:

*“Though weather conditions affect our business negatively especially in the rainy season, I can’t relocate to the vending stalls because the rentals there are just too high”*

Therefore for the empowerment status of women to be improved there is drastic need for the city council and other stakeholders to construct affordable and strategic vending stalls for the vendors that can protect them from adverse weather conditions. As result these will boost their commitment and boost their morale in participation in street vending business which will eventually improve their income which is important component in ensuring their empowerment status is maintained. In addition it permanent structures will allow female vendors to work with their children thus reducing double duty and work load of doing street business and taking care after the baby. It will also avoid disturbances leading to fulltime participation in street vending business.

As mentioned above high rentals being charged by the city council on the vending space is a big barrier towards the empowerment of female vendors in Gweru CBD. Vendors who occupy vending space allocated officially by the city council pay USD 80 per month that regularises their operation. For those that operate during the weekend they pay about USD 20 during the whole course of the weekend. However most vendors highlighted that these rentals were too high since it nearly matched their monthly incomes. Most vendors indicated that they were earning between USD 100 and 250 from their sales, a situation which made the monthly rentals expensive. Most vendors highlighted that most of their profits were being eroded away by monthly rentals. Therefore, against that background most vendors had resorted to risk trading illegally on the streets where they paid nothing. One female vendor highlighted that:

*“The daily and monthly rentals being charged by the city council are too high and unaffordable to many of us. Furthermore, their markets not strategically located therefore we do not attract as many customers as we attract on the streets. This automatically means that*

*our sales are low which means that it is difficult for us to pay the monthly rentals.... We are therefore left with no choice but to risk the municipal police raids and sell in the streets.....”*

Observations on the practice of street vending across the city revealed that the number of street vendors who were operating illegally was more than those that were operating on legal basis. This scenario of vendors snubbing legal vending sites due to high rentals is not unique to Gweru alone as in other cities in Zimbabwe and Africa this has been the case. In Harare for example the local authorities there created a lot of vending stalls to curb illegal vending in the CBD. Such vending sites like the one in Kumbudzi failed to alleviate the challenge of Illegal Street vending as most street vendors shunned the market arguing that the new stalls were not strategically located and the rentals there were too high. In the end only about 10% of vendors managed to relocate to the new vending stalls Madanhire (2015). The situation is almost the same as to that which happened in Lusaka. Ndlovu (2011) highlights that the opening of the new Soweto market in Lusaka to alleviate the challenge of street vending failed to solve anything as most vendors did not move to the new market citing high rentals that were being charged by the local government. The initial rental charges for the Soweto market were K60,000 (\$12.6), K150,000 (\$31.5), K600,000 (\$125.8), K800,000 (\$167.7), K2,400,000 (\$503.2), K3,000,000 (\$629.1) and K30,000,000 (\$6290.5) per month using US dollar exchange rate of \$1 equals K4769.07 (Bank of Zambia 2011). Ndlovu (2010) further notes that under these charges only about 1% of the street vendors managed to relocate to the new vending market. It had to take the intervention of the Soweto market development committee which engaged in negotiations with local government authorities to reduce the monthly rentals. This was achieved and the new monthly rentals were K30,000 (\$6.3), K75,000 (\$15.7), K300,000 (\$62.9), K400,000 (\$83.9), K1,200,000 (\$251.6), K1,500,000 (\$314.5) and K15,000,000 (\$3145.3) per month. The traders accepted the reduced prices and



agreed to move to the market. With these developments the government was confident that they had managed to solve the problem of street vending, Ndlovu (2010).

In light of the above the city of Gweru can make similar initiatives if they are serious about solving the challenge of street vending. They can engage the donor community who can come up and pay a certain percentage of the monthly rentals for the vendors. The rest would then be paid by the vendors themselves but at much lower price. This will motivate the vendors to move to the new vending markets where they can operate freely thus ultimately improving their empowerment status as they will be able to raise more income from their sales. To add on, street vending is one of the few avenues which women are earning a decent income, since the collapse of the formal industries like Bata Shoe Company which used to employ a significant number of women in Gweru.

Studies in Africa and other countries in the developing world, indicate that women constitute the principal labour force in the informal sector, particularly in such activities as food and beverages, retail trade, pottery, basket weaving and cross border trade (Murry, 1991; United Nations, 1996). Though women constitute the largest number of vendors operating in Gweru CBD, they suffer from male discrimination in a society that has got patriarchal problems. Jimu (2004) observes that the dominance of female participants in the informal sector is a factor of low education and employable skill levels among women, which preclude a majority of them from directly enjoying the benefits of a growing formal sector. However, radical feminists would argue that the trend reflects the gender imbalances (with women relegated to the informal sector) inherent in patriarchal societal arrangements that favour males to females, in education and skill training and employment. In Gweru, though women constitute a large number of street vendors very few of them have fully realised full empowerment. This

largely attributed to the conservative society which degrades women who work outside their homes, especially as street vendors.

Bhowmik (2001), highlights that the life of a female street vendor is marred by difficulties in a male dominated society. He notes that female vendors are the home makers and have the customary duty to feed their family, their day starts early in the morning with household work and then their struggle for earning the livelihood begins. In order to fulfill the responsibility of a care taker for their children they usually bring them to vending place which means diversion of attention, resulting in less sales, lesser incomes, lower standard of living and consequent lesser chances to combat these circumstances in future. In this storming life they have to face specific challenges such as difficulty related to deal with male dominated word at workplace owing to the fact that they are a socially subjugated category. This is a true reflection of what female vendors operating in Gweru encounter in their line of business almost on a daily basis. Most female vendors indicated that they have often been teased, abused or sometimes beaten by their male counterparts at the vending location, many times just to show the superiority of man over woman. They further noted that in the event that they were the first ones to occupy strategic position male vendors would often tease them by telling them that street vending was for the strong i.e. the males and women were supposed to be at home looking after children and cooking. To add on, these women highlighted that some males had a misconception that female vendors were loose women and were associated with prostitution. Therefore some of them always suffered from sexual harassment from their male counterparts.

Furthermore, a female vendor revealed that they were engaging in the practice of street vending against her husband's consent. She further indicated that her husband did not want

her to be engaged in street vending as he viewed it as a practice that was both humiliating for women and associated with women of loose morals. She noted that she had to sell something on the streets to boost their household since the husband worked as a security guard and was earning a very low income. Most female vendors highlighted that, although street vending had economically empowered them their full empowerment in other areas of life was still not being met as males continued to look down upon them. Female vendors indicated that although the attitude of municipal police was a bit softer towards them during raids women still had to fight for their rights more than what men did. For example the female vendors highlighted that if they went to the local council offices after a raid or to pay monthly rentals males were entertained in a better manner than a women vendor.

In addition research findings revealed that those women vendors were in very less number when selling the cooked food is considered, which is supposed to be a better earning opportunity in the vending profession, but, also demand a high level of capital investment. This therefore can be concluded as, that women have lesser money to invest; also, the better earning sectors within street vending are dominated by male vendors leaving them more vulnerable to the adverse conditions than a male counterpart. The earnings of a female vendor are therefore observed to be lesser than that of a male vendor. The empowerment of female vendors is further compromised by the fact that, the major part of their income is devoted to family needs. This could ultimately mean that they work harder than a male but due to the fact that they have less control over their earnings, they have lesser chances to overcome the vicious circle of debt and poverty. The end result of all this is that improving the empowerment status shall take a protracted time to achieve if a radical solution is not devised.

A strategy that can be devised to improve the empowerment status of women against men and patriarchal domination is to educate the men about the important role that women play in the informal economy. Men need to be empowered with knowledge that recognises a woman as an equal partner in the development process. If men see women as equal partners they are most likely respect their rights and do the best they can to assist them whenever their rights are infringed. In addition, there is need for women to be educated on their rights, roles and responsibility in society. In this way they will be able to stand their ground in the event that their rights are violated. For women empowerment to be achieved, women should be empowered in all spheres of life not just economic empowerment but from family level to national level. This way the improvement of the empowerment status of female vendors will be achieved.

The study also believes that NGO should directly fund the female vendors. On part of the Zimbabwean government it must create more economic opportunities for female vendors. When asked if they were satisfied with what they were doing, female vendors suggested that there is need for capital injection to increase their stock levels, while a large number wished that the government must restore the status of formal economy and provide jobs for women in the local industries. Get a steady job in the formal sector that would guarantee them a steady income. In this regard their empowerment status is guaranteed unlike in the informal economy where income generated through vending is erratic as it is highly dependent on the day, the month, the season and of course the state of the economy.

According to this view female vendors SVB must be allowed and registered and take advantage of dead formal economy. Currently the government and municipal is funding operations to remove to remove street vendors in cities, such amount of money could be used

to make SVB be meaningful for income poverty reduction. The future studies should test this model if it can be applicable.

Education and training of female vendors is very important as it can improve their marketing skills, financial management business diversification and future investments. Educating women is one of the most powerful tools for women's empowerment. Education provides women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence they need to seek out economic opportunities. Education of women vendors can be done by government line ministries and NGOs. Well-designed vocational training leads to better knowledge, and does not concentrate women in low-wage and low-skill work rather it will improve street vending business and females vendors will prefer to it as a high paying industry.

Gender responsive public policies are necessary in empowering female vendors. The status of female vendors in Gweru only depends on a country's success in implementing a multi-faceted and responsive approach to its public policy management and implementation, including its macro-economic, financial and trade policies. Public Financial Management (PFM) covers a country's entire budget cycle from strategic planning to audit oversight. To support women's economic empowerment, it is essential to incorporate a gender equality perspective into PFM systems. Gender-responsive PFM ensures that resources are efficiently allocated based on identified needs, and revenues and expenditures are structured to benefit both women and men. The Zimbabwe national gender policy must be implemented fully in these areas if women are to be empowered. In this way female vendors may benefit from funds meant to assist them.

In addition, Cash transfers can be pathway to women's empowerment. There is need to lobby the NGOs to come up with cash transfer project which assist female vendors. Zimbabwe government and Gweru council in particular must copy these lessons from Malawi where an International Bank Malawi delivered cash transfers to drought-affected rural communities through a mobile banking system. Women were registered on a computerized database which captured their fingerprints and photographs for verification purposes, and each woman was issued with a smart-card containing her bank account details. As well as delivering cash transfers efficiently and promptly, thousands of rural families received access to financial services for the first time. Evaluations revealed that the women who received identity documents and/or smart-cards felt strongly empowered by the legal recognition that these documents represented. Through this system in Malawi several women stated passionately that before the project they felt that did not exist in the eyes of the state, but now that they had their papers, they had an identity and their government could no longer ignore them. In this regard, drawing lessons from Malawi the cash transfer projects can change the lives of female vendors as they will be recognized and involved district, global development issues.

Making markets work better for women will improve the empowerment status of female vendors in Gweru. Many women entrepreneurs in developing countries face disproportionate obstacles in accessing and competing in markets. These include women's relative lack of mobility, capacity and technical skills in relation to men (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2009). The World Bank Action Plan (2006) Gender Equality as Smart Economics argues that economic empowerment is about making markets work for women and empowering women to compete in markets. Gweru municipal council and other stakeholders should plan towards the following areas in terms of promoting markets for women. Focus should be on land,

financial and product markets. By doing this it will increase access to business services and facilitates the creation of female-owned businesses).

In addition, improved co-ordination amongst donors and the government will increase the effectiveness of support for female vendors. An effective route to empowerment is through support for women's organizing at global and national level. Partners can be found in the private sector and within donor agencies. Effective implementation and scaling-up requires strong and innovative partnerships. It is important that donors work with those stakeholders that are in a strong position to advance women's economic empowerment, such as Ministries of Finance, women affairs and Labour, to ensure that appropriate strategies are put in place. Building the evidence base, through research will also help to see the realities and live experiences of female vendors. The government of Zimbabwe, Gweru municipal council, and donors can copy lessons from Ethiopia to so as to improve the status of female vendors. In Ethiopia, A partnership to strengthen the Amhara Region Women Entrepreneurs Association was put in place. The Amhara Women Entrepreneurs Association (AWEA), with over 3000 members, is the second-largest private business organization in Ethiopia. AWEA is a genuine grassroots organization run by and representing women in a country where men traditionally rule. It supports its members with business development services, consultancy services, skills training and mentoring. With the long-term objective of facilitating the sustainable development of the Ethiopian business community, SIDA provided financial assistance and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce provided mentoring and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of AWEA. One of the results of the project was the creation of the 11 000-strong National Women's Business Network, through which AWEA provides business opportunities and contacts for members seeking partners and clients outside the Amhara region.

In this regard Gweru councils, donors and line ministries should come up with such partnerships as they will improve the business, skills, and participation of female vendors as in the case of the Ethiopia. There is also need to support women's associations and collective action to support initiatives designed to strengthen women's opportunities and capacity to organize themselves, form associations and act collectively for their common interests. Women's associations and civil society groups have the potential to raise the voice and visibility of women and can provide many services and benefits to their members. Through collective action, women's associations are able to reach out to government and private sector organizations and to seek institutional support for women businesses like street vending other income generating businesses. The associations can negotiate collective loans and micro-leasing for their membership. The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a unique example of empowerment led by poor women working in the informal economy in India. SEWA works to bring poor women together at every level of activity, encouraging them to address their problems by envisioning change and putting it in practice. The common agenda is that of full employment and self-reliance. SEWA is active in the areas of microfinance, training and communication, but it is its work on labour issues – paralegal assistance, lobbying, health insurance, maternity benefits and pensions – that is at the heart of the association. SEWA lobbying in 2004 the Government approved a national policy for protecting street vendors; and, in 2008 legislation on social security for informal workers was approved. Drawing lessons from India, it is important to establish vibrant associations which will lobby for the rights of female vendors in Gweru. They will push the government to come up with national policy which protects street vendors. By doing so the empowerment of female vendors is improved as social security is guaranteed. Stakeholders in the financial



sector will be in position to fund the female vendors since it is now guaranteed by the national policy.

In light of the findings of this research, the following specific recommendations can be drawn with a view of improving the competitiveness and sustainability of street vending sector; Non-governmental organizations and vendors should start regular consultations to coordinate advocacy programmes with a view to recognition and formalization of street vending. Non-governmental organizations and academics should conduct action-oriented research to compile data to identify and profile the nature of vendors (mobile, semi-mobile, static and footpath vendors). Public awareness for vendors to understand agencies that regulate vending in Gweru and register for certificate of authority to operate as street entrepreneurs. The City of Gweru planning department should include vending spaces in Gweru town. Non-governmental organizations and Gweru city council should design on training seminars for street vendors on issues of capacity building, marketing skills, business development, hygiene and environmental management. All the recommendations will be necessary in promoting women's empowerment through street vending.

The government should recognize street vending through legislation and introduction of a code of practice for street vendors. Formalization through legislation of vending on the streets will make it easier for the female vendors to thrive while working within the existing regulatory framework. The regulations would need to be designed equitably and vendor license fees charged should be sustainable so that vendors are able to stay within the regulatory framework. In addition, the interests and ideas of street vendors and relevant policy makers should be considered in order to develop a sustainable model of street vending that would secure and strengthen the livelihoods of the female vendors and vendors in

general. The local authorities should construct decent shelters which can be rented by female vendors. In addition, the city council should provide essential public utilities such as potable water, garbage collection, electricity and public toilets. This will entail creating space for vending for old suburbs and including vending space for new suburbs. Copying lessons from Hong Kong, China, Singapore and Malaysia, local authorities construct hawker centers near places where there are lot customers.

In brief, to sum up on the above practical strategies on improving the empowerment of status of female vendors, this study developed new ideas which are inclusive. The new thinking includes three main parts; needed intersections, envisaged effects on SVB, and the income poverty reduction. There is need for quick intervention in terms of policy, laws (regulations), license, skills development, association/organizations and business locations. In order to success in these agenda, there is a need to build a strong relationship with key stakeholders e.g. training institutions, urban authorities, street vendors themselves, public at large, formal business owners, and community based organizations/nongovernmental organizations responsible for trade. If these interventions will be successful, then street vendor productivity will be high, hence pay reduce confrontations with urban authorities, get more earnings, safety and security, clean environment, get appropriate skills and access to finance factors which are necessary for reducing income poverty through increase disposable incomes. The new thinking will be fundamental in addressing the challenges faced by female vendors as the call for provision of supportive laws, regulations, and clear policies. Thus adding to women welfare, access and control of resources, women participation through SVB hence female vendors will become fully empowered socially, economically and politically.

### **3.2 Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, it can therefore be said that street vending has come to become one of the key sources of income and livelihood for female vendors operating in Gweru urban district. Street vending has to a larger extent transformed and is empowering the lives of a number of female vendors. This is reflected by two key features that is, the ever growing increase in numbers of female vendors operating in the streets and the endurance they have to continue going back to the streets amidst the risks and challenges they encounter in their line of business. Improving the empowerment status of female vendors in Gweru faces a plethora of obstacles. These obstacles are patriarchy, weather, and access to loans, municipal police raids and high rentals. These challenges and other that were mentioned in the previous chapter have derailed some of the gains towards the total empowerment of women vendors. However to improve the empowerment status of female vendors the study suggested that The city council in partnership with other relevant stakeholders like the government and NGO's should play a leading role in trying to mitigate the challenges mentioned above. These institutions should realise the growing importance of the informal business as an important empowerment avenue for women. Therefore, in that context the city council should ensure that all the vendors operating in the CBD are legally registered. Furthermore the city council should construct vending stalls that are strategically located and have low monthly rentals. This will ensure that the constant battles that the city council embarks with street vendors are removed. The government and NGO'S should play a critical role of educating both men and women about gender equality. For the empowerment status of women to be improved it is important to eradicate the patriarchal nature which is dominant exist in Zimbabwean the society. In turn, the vendors themselves should setup vendor's committees that will stand for their grievances and defend their rights to the local authorities. The local authorities in turn should

recognise the existence of such committees. Mutual understanding between the local authorities is key to the improvement of the empowerment status in Gweru urban district.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The study found that street vending is a vital to women empowerment as it contributed to socio-economic issues of female vendors in Gweru Urban. The rise of street vending is better understood in terms of the Zimbabwean economic crisis. The Zimbabwean crisis is a result of combination of various causes and events discussed in chapter 1. In brief, the adoption of structural adjustment policies SAPS, Compensation of war veterans, DRC war intervention, Fast trek Land reform program, and economic sanctions lead to the death of the formal economy and gave birth to rise of the informal economy. The emergence of informal economy gave space to street vending business in Gweru and Zimbabwe in general. According this research and previous studies street vending is the dominant activity in the informal economy in Urban Zimbabwe. The rise of street vending for the past two decades was a strategy to copy with to the economic crisis, poverty, unemployment and increasing sources of income in urban areas which mostly affected by the collapse of formal industry.

This study concluded that women involvement in street vending emanate from the Zimbabwean economic crisis. Street vending was a strategy adopted by women in Gweru to supplement the incomes of their male counterparts, to reduce poverty, create employment, to support their families among other reasons highlighted in the first chapter. The study found that most street female vendors in Gweru are found outside entry and exit points of supermarkets and pavements. Women sell non valuable and valuable goods. They trade items like clothes, shoes, blankets, kitchen utensils etc. Some sell products like vegetables and fruits. Very few women specialize on hardware and electrical products. The average working day for female vendors is 8-12 hrs. Street vending patterns of female vendors depends on the type of products which they sell. For example females selling clothes, shoes and air time are found to be on the pavements since early morning to end day. They are mostly found during weekends where there a lot of customers. Female vendors selling sweets, jiggles, tomato toes

and vegetables are more after lunch times ours. However considering that street vending is now an industry in Gweru most female vendors come anytime to do business. The research found that female vendors attend to their family duties and other domestic work before they start their businesses. The study discovered that street vending is a solution to women empowerment in Gweru urban district. Sara Longwe empowerment framework suggests that women empowerment is about enhancing women capabilities in terms of access, welfare, awareness, participation and control of resources.

In line with these indicators SVB is doing so much in increasing women access to income, food and health care. Street vending has improved women marketing skills and knowledge. The awareness levels of female vendors has increased as witnessed by their involvement in savings associations like *mukando* and they are now aware that gender roles can be reversed through their capacity to engage in productive works. Before street vending, women were much focused on doing household chores only. This situation makes female to depend on husbands. Street vending has also increased women decision making capacity in personal and family matters. Women can now able to visit market places, decide on how to use their income, buy personal items and sending children to school. In addition women now have a voice in child marriages, and buying family assets and properties. This is positive improvement compared to the situation before their involvement in SBV. Before women were just housewives men were only decision makers, however street vending has been the avenues of participation of women in decision making. Although patriarchal dominance still exists and very few women control resources, street vending is the route to women emancipation in Urban district. There various hindrances to the empowerment of female vendors in Gweru. These include competition, poor water and sanitation, harsh weather

conditions, municipal raids, conflicts with formal business people and lack of social security among others.

However women have adopted various strategies like working during late hours for them to remain in SVB. The study also proposes various ways to which can improve the status of female vendors in Gweru. Partnerships between amongst the government, municipality, line ministries, and NGOs can improve on effective communication on how to improve the lives of female vendors. Financial stakeholders can give loans and credits to female vendors to boost their business. Education and training is necessary in empowering female vendors with more skills and new ideas. The government of Zimbabwe and Gweru municipal council can draw lessons from India and Zambia where certain policies and measures were put in place to improve the lives of street vendors. Although street vending is illegal, it significantly helped female vendors to create employment, increased incomes, welfare, participation and control of resources.

#### **4.1 Limitations of the Study**

Female street vendors were not licensed and feared victimization and did not want to be interviewed. Statistics on female vendors was not available as most of the existing ones were estimates and outdated. The whole sample was not covered; however, the sample size studied was small to make generalizations to the whole population of street vendors in Gweru Urban. The fact that street vending is not legal it was difficult to have a reliable sample and conveniently sampled street vendors on the group. Moreover, due to time limitations of having to complete the study in limited period the researcher conveniently chose respondents only from 2<sup>nd</sup> street to 7<sup>th</sup> street Robert Mugabe way in Gweru Urban. Financing of the research was also a limitation as there were limited funds to be used for the project.

### **4.3 Future research**

There is need for more research to describe the nature of street vending and quantify the consumption of street vending in Gweru and Zimbabwe in general. Besides women empowerment future research must focus on the economic benefits of Street vending business. Future studies should also look other factors which determine the empowerment of women. This research only highlighted on issues of family background particularly family size, how it determine the empowerment of female vendors. Future research should consider issues of education, patriarchy and regulatory framework as other factor which determines the empowerment of women. There is need for a comparative study to be carried out on female vendors business with other business in the selected malls and formal shops. Further there need for one to investigate the relevance of street vending in general in Zimbabwean economy as whole. Lastly there is need to research on the increase rise of street vending phenomenon focusing on the increase of male vendors in urban areas.



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Interviews with selected respondents April 2016

## Appendices



### FACULTY OF ARTS

### DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

### MASTERS OF ARTS DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

### STREET VENDING AS A PANACEA TO WOMEN' EMPOWERMENT IN GWERU URBAN DISTRICT

My name is Eliphas Chinyakata studying towards a Master of Arts Degree in Development Studies. I am currently conducting a research on street vending as panacea to women's empowerment in Gweru urban district. This study is only for academic purpose for the fulfillment of the requirements of the Masters of Arts Degree in Development Studies. The interviews will assist in gathering the relevant information of this study.

Please assist by spending few minutes of your time. Your participation and contribution in this research will be greatly appreciated.

## **Appendix A- Interview Guide [Female Vendors]**

### Background Information

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What is your marital status?
- What does your husband do?
- Who is the breadwinner of your household? And WHY
- Why did you join street vending?
- What did you use to do before you joined street vending?
- How many years have you been in Street Vending Business
- What Level of education did you attain?
- How Family members (How many members in Family)
- Who are the income earners in your family?
- What work did you do before joining street vending?
- What type of the household chores you usually perform daily in your family before engaging in street vending?
- What type of the household chores you perform daily in your family after engaging in street vending?
- Why did you join street vending Business?
- What business do you do on streets?
- Highlight the type of goods you sell on street?

### Support

- Where do you get your money to start business
- Do you have any other support?
- What kind of support is it?
- What other kinds of support is needed for your needs?

### Welfare

- Explain what motivated you to engage in Street vending?
- Apart from Street Vending are there any other major sources of income?
- Has the number of income sources increased and WHY?
- How much do you earn per week/ month?
- How do you spend the income you get from these activities?
- Is the money you get weekly, monthly or annually enough to cater for your needs? If No, what is it that the money is failing to meet?
- Who decides on the income obtained from street vending profits?
- Can you rate improvements so far since the time you started street vending. ?

#### Access

- Among these resources which one is the most valuable to you and WHY?
- Which one of the resources do you rely on for your daily activities?
- What sort of problems do you encounter in accessing these resources before joining street vending?
- How much did you earn before engaging in street vending weekly or monthly?
- How much are you earning from street vending weekly or monthly

#### Awareness

- Do you think that following the participation in street vending you have more awareness about personal, family or national matters ( give some examples }
- Do most of the people in the society appreciate or like you do this Street Vending

#### Participation

- Who is the predominant decision maker in your family?
- Who decide when the profits/ Savings will be used and for what
- Do you think after involvement in street vending it helped you in making personal matters?
- Do you think after involvement in Street Vending, it helped you in making family decisions?
- Do you think street vending has enabled you to contribute to local and nation development issues?

#### Control

- What kind of assets do you own (financial, natural, social, physical and human)?
- What are the means of production attain through street vending?
- Do you own equal resources as compared to you male counterparts?
- Does street vending empower you to be self-reliant?
- Does street vending enable you to be independent?
- Does street vending improve women dominance in terms of controlling benefits?.

#### Daily Challenges

- What sort of challenges do you meet as an urban trader?
- Which one is the most critical challenge? And WHY?
- To what extent are these problems affecting you as a street vendor
- What sort of strategies have you adopted to counter the challenges?
- How does the following institutions affect your activities: ZRP & Municipal Police
- How do you respond to their operations/what strategies do you adopt to counter them?
- In your opinion what can be done to overcome these problems?
- What role do you think the government of Zimbabwe should do empower female vendors

#### Other Benefits

- What are the other benefits of street vending to street vending
- Do you intend to intensify or reduce your business and WHY?
- Has street vending activities improved your livelihoods as compared to the previous years and WHY?
- Do you think it is better for you stay home and do household works?

## **Appendix B: Checklist for Focus Group Discussion {For Female Vendors}**

- Why are you engaging in street vending activities?
- How best can Street Vending empower women?
- What changes did you observe following your participation in street vending activities?
- Do you think the level of awareness and self-confidence has increased due to street vending?
- Do women have more roles in making decisions in personal and their family life?
- What are the problems affecting women involvement in small businesses like street vending

## **Appendix C: Interview Guide for Government Departments and Financial Institutions officials**

- What are your perceptions on women involvement in street vending?
- How important is street vending in empowering women?
- Why do women need to be empowerment?
- How best can women are empowered in individual and family life?
- What assistance are you giving to woman street Vendors?
- Is the regulatory framework of street vending favorable to women empowerment issues
- Do you observe any changes in behavior or activity in the participants following their involvement in street vending?
- Can street vending contribute to overall development of urban communities and National development issues?
- In case they are not satisfied with street vending, How can women be empowered from your own point of view?

**Appendix D: Photos**



Photo 1: female vendors selling perishables



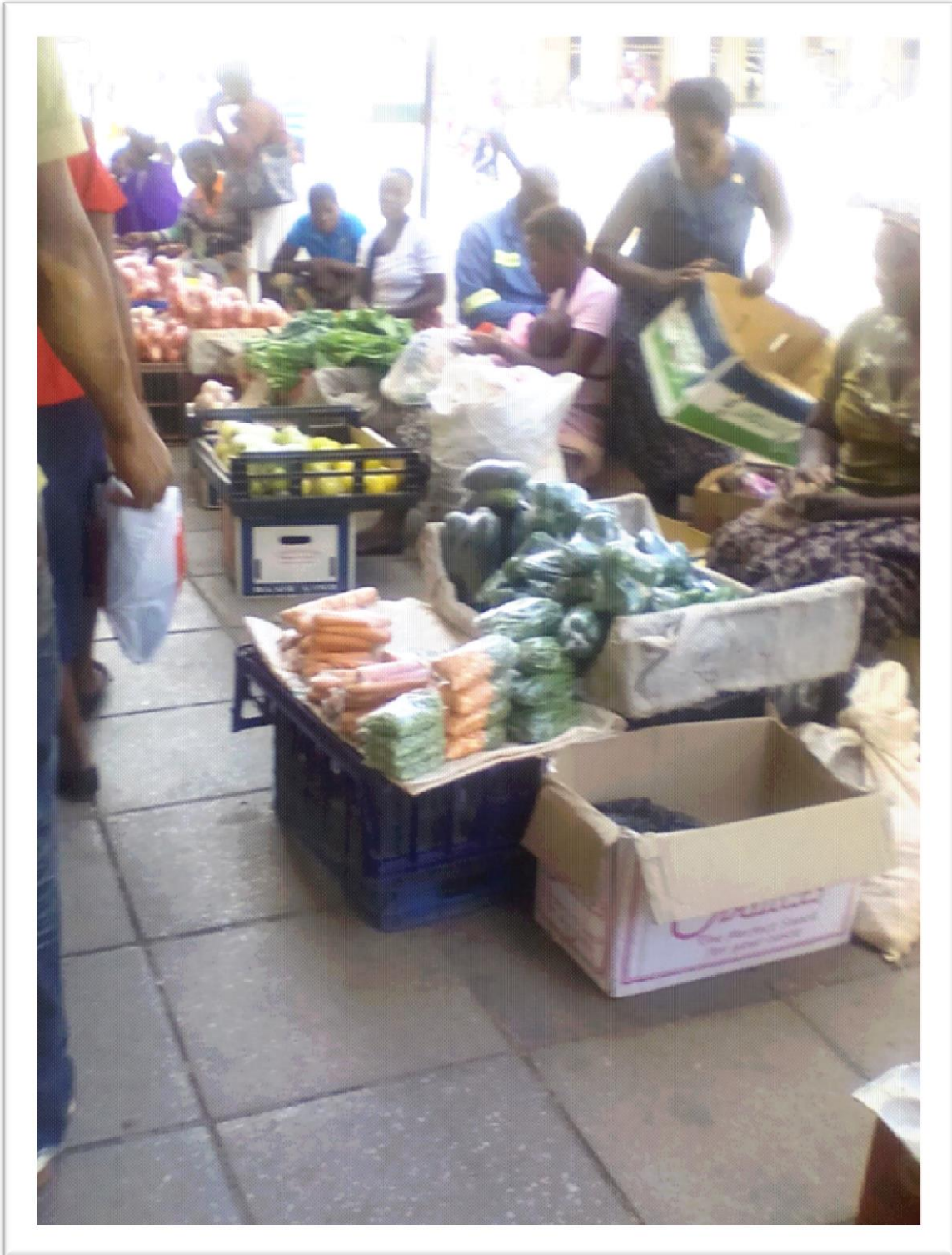


Photo 2: General situation of street vending business in Gweru Urban District



Photo 3: Street vending activities on pavements by female vendors

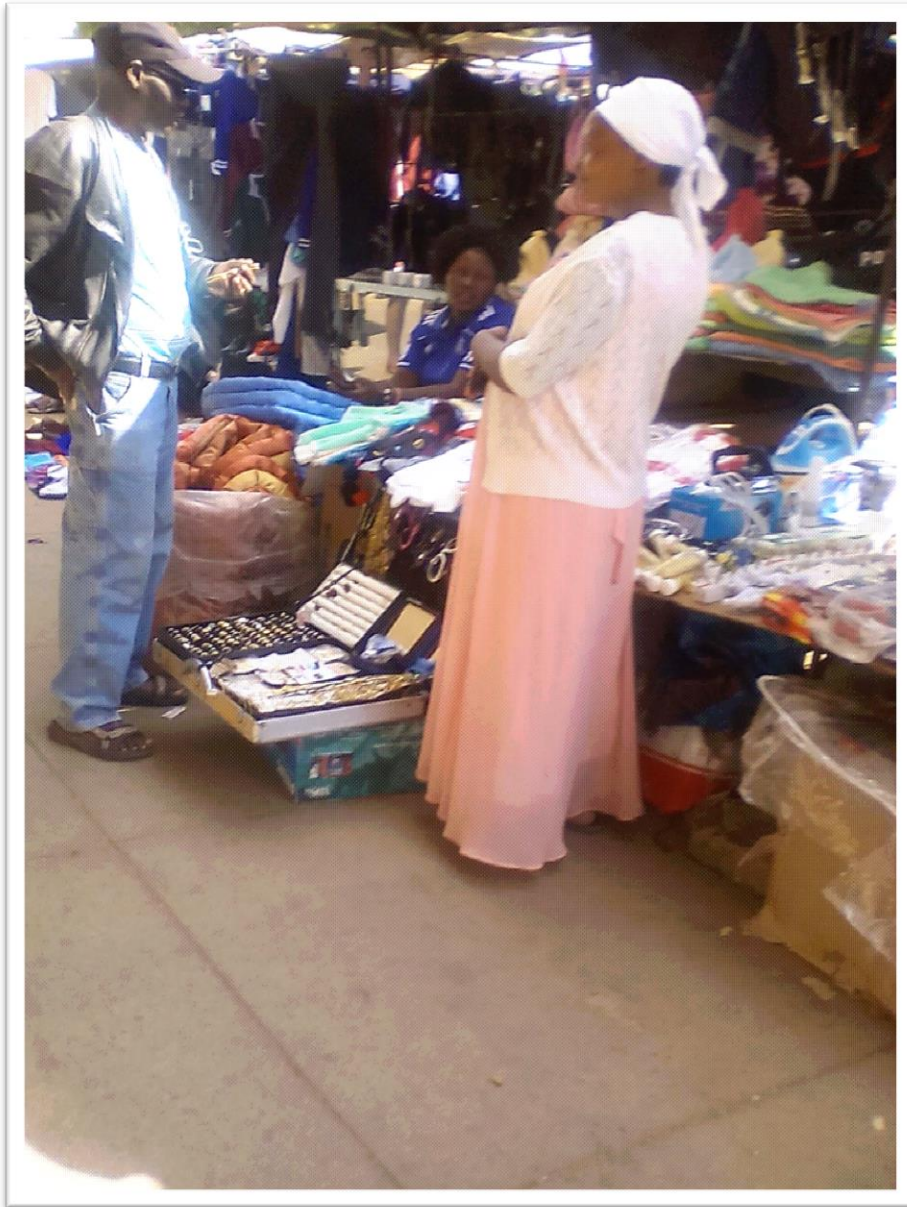


Photo 4: Female vendors marketing skills- negotiating skills