

Bracing the Odds in the Face of Double Tragedy: The Dilemma of Street Trading in Ibadan Metropolis of Nigeria

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Street trading is widely regarded as a core component of the informal economy in Africa, accounting for sixty percent of all urban jobs and over ninety percent of all new urban jobs in the continent. However, in spite of the inhere benefits of street trading- means of livelihood and economic growth, the activities of street trading in Nigeria is bedevilled by what can be referred to as a double tragedy. The first is the tragedy of the risk factor associated with its operations on a daily bases. The second, is the tragedy of government's alienation, ostracization and abandonment. Street traders in the country are forced to operate in a high risk and unfriendly environment, in which they are constantly exposed to hazardous conditions that most often results in bodily harm, injuries and even death. The situation is even made more precarious by the indignity and inhuman treatment being meted on them by government officials. Constant harassments, arrests, detention, violent evictions, multiple taxation and levies, as well as confistication and destruction of their wares by government agents are part of the harrowing experiences witnessed by street vendors from time to time. These actions are often justified by the state on the ground that street traders aside endangering their own lives, encroaches on public space, perpetrate crimes, engender infrastructural deterioration, thus, constituting social menace. despite these measures, it is however instructive to note that, rather abate, the situation has spiralled into an enigma of monumental proportion, exacerbated by pervasive poverty and wide spread unemployment. The task of this study therefore, includes a critical examination of the extant conditions responsible for the upsurge of street trading in Nigeria generally, and Ibadan metropolis in particular; the nature and dimension of state responses and its impact on the phenomenon; explore strategies for incorporating and harnessing the benefits of street trading. Utilizing primary and secondary sources of data, this study will be geared towards the elucidation of the entire gamut street trading in the city of Ibadan, Nigeria.