

# Gender Issue and Urban Renewal Development: An Examination of Challenges of Evicted Market Women in Lagos State, Nigeria

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**Abstract** Literature has revealed that in any urban renewal programmes, women's interest are not usually incorporated as many women were usually left in horrendous position and face lots of challenges. This paper therefore examines challenges faced by the women traders that were forcefully evicted from market stalls by urban renewal programmes in the study area. The paper adopted qualitative method of data collection. Key Informant Interviewing (KII) and In Depth Interviewing (IDI) methods were used to collect information from eighty respondents that purposively chosen through snowball method. The paper adopted social exclusion theory to discuss the problem. The information gathered revealed that, the programme was impacting negatively on market women and in turn has profound effect in their capacity to take care of households' economy. Major challenges face by the women respondents include inability to pay for new market shops, securing another start-up, transferring some of their children to live with relatives and constant harassments by local government officials in an attempt to dissuade them from reorganization.. Information revealed that women respondents were strategizing in order to overcome the present challenges by devising various coping methods. However, those survival methods may impact negatively on their health and serious implications for the future of their children. The paper proposes that government and policy makers should adequately address this matter of backlash that results from its interventions in mega-city development by providing alternative market spaces at a subsidized rate to the affected women. This would in turn enable the evicted market women traders subsidize household economy and provide motherly care to their children.

**Keywords:** *urban renewal, women, markets, trade, eviction, Lagos State, Nigeria*

## 1. Introduction

The paper examines the relationship between gender and urban development programmes with particular reference to the multiple challenges faced by women traders recently affected by urban renewal programmes carried by the Lagos State, Nigeria. According to [1] and [2], gender is socially constructed experience, not a biological imperative. Sociologists distinguish between the terms sex and gender to emphasize this point. Sex refers to the biological identity as male or female. Gender refers to the social identities attributed to women and men. Gender is rooted in social institutions and results in the patterns within society that structure the relationships between women and men and that give them differing positions of advantages and disadvantages within institutions [1]. Thus, there is relationship development programmes and gender issue. Gender based urban development is about promoting cities that respond equally to men and women. However, because women experience cities differently, meeting women's needs become critical to promoting sustainable and equitable urban development [3]. Gender is however, not a 'core competence' among urban local institutions or managers,

who remain largely concerned with the provisioning of basic services. Besides, gender expertise is mostly seen to be within the domain of conventional women's programmes/agencies such as Women and Child Development. Building gender friendly cities will require the intertwining of gender knowledge within local government institutions so that these can better respond to gender needs, in particular address requirements of women, especially those living in slums and low resource communities [4]. The Urban development programme is generally assumed to be gender neutral, that is, providing equal access to men and women, but the idea is however misplaced. The physical infrastructure projects that seemingly respond to diverse standards for men and women may actually have dissimilar impacts on the two groups, particularly on women's group [5]. For instance, [6] opined that when housing programme and upgrading schemes present opportunities for the improvement of human settlement, women are often excluded. Projects are designed without references to women 'economic, domestic or community responsibilities. Policymakers only focused on providing for the needs of presumed male head of the family especially in developing countries, virtually, ignoring the large number of women who head, or maintain households.

Now, in recent times, Lagos state government in south-western Nigeria embarked on urban renewal development programme with the aim of making the state one of the mega cities in the world. The process of urban renewal witnessed the demolition of market stalls, illegal spaces, and structures all around the city. Some group of people selling on the streets, sidewalk had been forcefully evicted from their selling points. Women were mostly affected by the recent demolitions and destructions of market spaces in the city. The paper argues that those affected are likely to be vulnerable many challenges as they are confronted with this new development.

This paper therefore poses the following research questions in order to find out the impact of this project on groups of women that are recently evicted by the urban renewal programme. What are the challenges the women traders evicted from markets stalls faced? What are the survival strategies/coping strategies adopted in responses to their evictions? Fundamentally, given the pivotal roles of women in their households, what has been the impact on the welfare of members of their households? The broad objective of this paper is the examination of the challenges faced by women traders evicted from their market stalls as the result of recent urban renewal development programmes in Lagos state, Nigeria. There is a need to fill the gap in literature by accumulating knowledge about the state of evicted market women traders as the sustainability of any urban development programmes depend on serious conviction by the state government in cooperating women's interest in such programmes.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The Concept of Urban Renewal

According to [7] Urban renewal is to 'regenerate, make new again, restore, and recover'. Renewal focuses on the restoration of vigour, strength and activity within a Community and encompasses the dual potential of redevelopment. It has a scope for the demolishing of and the rebuilding of communities and/or the physical environment. Reference [8] defines urban renewal as '... the physical change, or change in the use or intensity of use of land and buildings, that is the inevitable outcome of the action of economic and social forces upon urban areas'.

In sum, urban renewal is a comprehensive scheme aim to redress a complex of urban problems, including unsanitary, deficient or obsolete housing; inadequate transportation, sanitation, and other services and facilities; haphazard land use; traffic congestion; and the sociological correlates of urban decay, such as crime. Early efforts usually focused on housing reform and sanitary and public-health measures, followed by growing emphasis on slum clearance and the relocation of population and industry from congested areas to less-crowded cities, as in the garden-city and new-towns movements in Great Britain [9,10]. Late 20th-century criticisms of urban sprawl prompted new interest in the efficiencies of urban centralization [9].

Reference [11] stated that urban renewal is happening in countries across the World including the UK, USA, New Zealand, Belgium and Australia. There are a number of commonalities between urban renewal programs in the

USA, UK and Australia. According to [11], recent urban renewal programmes in the UK are primarily (but not solely) intended to arrest the decline of inner city neighbourhoods in areas with a high density of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and high unemployment rate, it is also the inevitable outcome of 'political' forces, as governments play an instrumental role in defining areas for development as well as funding and setting policy targets for renewal areas.

Reference [12] however, explains that each country approaches urban renewal according to its means and its political and administrative systems. One of the chief activities of urban renewal is redevelopment, which is achieved through the clearance and rebuilding of structures that are deteriorated or obsolete or are laid out in an unsatisfactory way. Other aspects of urban renewal involve the reuse of the land for new purposes, rehabilitation of structurally sound buildings that have deteriorated or lost their original functions, and conservation-a protective process designed to maintain the function and quality of an area, for instance, by requiring or assisting adequate maintenance while preventing inappropriate development or uncharacteristic changes in the use of land and building. In sum, the purpose of urban renewal is to improve specific areas of a city that are poorly developed or underdeveloped. These areas can have old deteriorated buildings and bad streets and utilities or the areas can lack streets and utilities altogether. It involves the demolition of and destruction of business premises priceless historical structures and relocation of people.

The extant literature reveals that the urban renewal programme is a two faced projects. It has both negative and positive sides. On the positive side, [13] stated that, urban renewal may have economic benefits and improve the global economic competitiveness of the city centre. It may also improve cultural and social amenity, opportunities for safety and surveillance. Likewise, it may increase tax revenue for the government which may lead to the creation or renovation of housing stocks, educational and cultural opportunities. However, despite the huge benefits that may accrue from urban renewal development programmes, the negative side also abound to some categories of people, especially, women, the poor and the disadvantaged in the society. On the negative side, [13] was of the opinion that the urban renewal programme is a regressive mechanism for enriching the wealthy at the expenses of taxpayers and the poor. It carries a high cost to the existing communities and in many cases resulted in the destruction of vibrant neighbourhood. Reference [4] has also argued against urban development programme that though the urban renewal process through renovated of a neighbourhood generally increases its value, it rarely improves the living standard of its current, low income residents who are usually forced to move out. In addition, globally, during any development programmes, women's interests are not usually taken into considerations

Reference [14] argues that the urban renewal programme involves eviction mechanism and trends that must be analysed with reference to the global context and the persistent imbalance between demand and the supply of land for housing, the scarcity of prime urban land for development, Increases in the market value of urban land and increasing comodification of informal land markets.

Eviction usually takes place where there are dual or conflicting property rights on the land. Evictions of each country have its own specific characteristics. In Kenya for instance, [14,15] in their studies found out that public authorities recover land that had been allocated to occupants under a temporary "Permit to occupy" regime in order to carry out a development project. Occupants of this land were exposed to forced evictions without compensation. Likewise in Zimbabwe, [16] report that the largest scale and possibly the most violent eviction of street traders in the continent was carried in the year 2000. The UN Habitat mission to Zimbabwe estimated that about 700,000 people who were displaced across the country. These evicted people lost their homes and their source of livelihoods or both [17]. Urban renewal usually tends women more to poverty than reducing it [18]. Poverty reduction in developing countries is possible only by addressing the disproportionate burden of poverty and increases women access to strategic resources.

### 2.1.1. Urban Renewal Programmes and Gender Issue in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the land remains the exclusive property of the state. The right to use, develop and occupy the land is granted by the government under the Land Use Decree 1978. The state retains the eminent ownership of the land and is entitled to take it all at any time. However, due compensation is usually paid to title holders. Those who could not provide sufficient evidences on their rights to the land are exposed to evictions, and are not necessarily entitled in strictly legal terms to be paid the compensations corresponding to the replacement cost of the dwelling unit in case of eviction. In such cases, everything depends on the balance of play of power at the local level and ultimately on political divisions/inclinations. In patriarchal economies like Nigeria, women's interests have conventionally been underrepresented in policy and planned development. Women's interests are not taken into consideration during development programmes despite the fact that they constitute more than 50% of the populace [19]. Women were mostly affected by the process of restructuring because they represent a disproportionate share of the world's poor [20].

Reference [21] report indicated that poverty has a woman's face. Of the 1.3 billion people in poverty worldwide, 70 percent are women. In a political economy discourse, it has been found that the major problem confronting most women in Nigeria today is poverty. Poverty compounds their lack of access to strategic resources such as economic and political decisions making. In 1980s, when the structural adjustment programme was introduced to Nigeria, in concert with the policies that liberalize the economy, there were mass retrenchments in the public sectors, cutbacks in social sectors, such as health, and education that was of extreme importance to women.

Furthermore, globalization and trade liberalization inspite of their benefits to some African countries have had negative effects on many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The female gender is further depressed down the ladder of development by entrenched socio-cultural and economic practices that view the female as subordinate to males and therefore reward the females

disproportionately [22]. In short women bear the brunt of poverty in Nigeria [23]. Poverty according to [24] is 'gendered' because women and men experience poverty differently and unequally and become poor through different, though related processes. Gender inequality makes the effect of poverty worse for women. Poverty reduction is possible only by addressing the disproportionate burden of poverty, including access to education, health and financial services, the lack of productive opportunities that women face. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without progress towards gender equality.

In Nigeria, the available information reveals that over 75% of women are in poverty, more so with the increasing existence of female headed –households, (the de-facto and de-jure) who have the responsibilities of taking care of the families [25]. Therefore, to reduce the brunt of poverty, most of these poor women concentrate at the informal sector of the economy where they operate on streets, sidewalks, and in other public spaces selling every commodity from perishables to non –perishables. The low cost of entry and flexible hours make informal sector an attractive option for market women. In most homes, especially in polygynous families, women are expected to provide economy of care for their household members. In order to fulfil these roles, that is, to put food on the tables for their children and educate them, they are forced into the informal economy to earn income for family sustenance.

## 2.2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.2.1. Social Exclusion Theory

**Social exclusion** is a theory used in many parts of the world to characterize contemporary forms of social disadvantage and relegation to the fringe of society [26]. Social exclusion refers to processes in which individuals or entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources (e.g. Housing, employment, health care, civic engagement, democratic participation and due process) that are normally available to members of society and which are key to social integration. Social exclusion at the individual level results in an individual's exclusion from meaningful participation in society. The concept of social exclusion is considered to facilitate a broader understanding of the multiple dimensions of poverty. While poverty and social exclusion are closely entwined, social exclusion has been described as the existence of barriers which make it difficult or impossible for people to participate fully in society or obtain a decent standard of living.

Social Exclusion is used to describe the absence of complementarities approach that seeks to bring about system level institutional reform and policy change to remove inequalities in the external environment. Social Exclusion involves a situation where there is no shift from a social environment that gives women more opportunities to realize their potential [27]. The theory of social exclusion focuses on the processes surrounding marginalisation. It recognizes that for any number of interrelated reasons associated with housing (location, standard, and tenure), poverty, welfare dependency, poor health or substance use that people may be disadvantaged in ways that prevent them from participating within and

enjoying the opportunities experienced by mainstream society. It does not seek causal links but rather it extends beyond previous notions about cycles of disadvantage to account for the complexity and interconnectedness of social, economic cultural and political factors which impact on the 'life chances, prospects and networks' of individuals, families and communities in contemporary societies.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

The study area for this research work is Lagos state. Lagos state is the former capital of Nigeria. The state accommodates all ethnic groups in Nigeria, but the Yoruba ethnic group predominates. The state is known for its vast commercial activities. In fact, the state is usually referred to as the commercial nerve centre of the country. Lagos state is divided into fifty-seven local government, but the federal government approves twenty local government areas, while the remaining thirty –seven local government operate as LCDAs. The state has been delineated into two rural, six semi-urban, and twelve urban areas.

Lagos is the fastest growing city in Nigeria and it is the second most populous and fastest growing city in Africa next to Cairo in Egypt. It has been ranked as the seventh fastest growing city in the World. The 1991 provisional census result gave Lagos a population of 5.8 million or 93 percent of the total population of Lagos State. By 1997, the metropolis were estimated to have a population of 11.58 million. According to [28], Lagos attained the mega-city status in 1995 when the population reached the 10 million mark.

There are various notable markets where a group of women concentrates to conduct micro enterprises trading. These market women are of diverse groups, the elderly, the working women, the single parents, and the female headed households which studies indicated are on tremendous increase. Most of these women have the sole responsibilities of maintaining the households' needs over a long period of time. The demolition of market stalls, illegal spaces, and structures embarked upon by the present administration had resulted in forceful evictions of these groups of women traders. The destruction of illegal structures does not only mean the demolition of only physical structures, but also informal enterprises, the livelihoods which poor women engage in are also destroyed which invariably increases rather than reduce the burden of poverty that women set out to solve. Their evictions from their market stalls were without compensations or re-settlements as they do not have any titled documents to the spaces they occupied.

Evictions from market places may result in deterioration of physical and economic well-being as they no longer have the economic power to cater for themselves and other members of their households. Economic losses usually result in economic impoverishment, social dependence, humiliation and psychological harm. The ability to withstand or cope with the sudden loss of economic activities depend on numbers of factors such as; individual or household levels of human or physical assets, income and consumption, and more importantly, the ability of individuals or household level to diversify their sources of income and consumption

to effectively reduce the effect of the loss of job at any given time. Finding solutions to this sudden happening particularly to the affected group, remains a challenge to meeting the millennium development goal of achieving women empowerment and gender equality.

In achieving the objective of the study, qualitative method of data collection was adopted. This is because there is no database on informal economic actors. Qualitative methods of data collection were therefore found appropriate for this type of work. The qualitative method allows us to gain valuable insights through the subjective narratives of the respondents, that is, it gave us understanding of participant perspectives. This also allows us to present data that is rich in normative and expression. In line with this is [28] opinion that the primary value of qualitative method is that it will allow deep insight in norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and influential socio-cultural ethos that could be probed and teased out, in as much depth as possible against what is achievable in quantitative techniques.

The data collection utilized both In-depth Interview (IDI) and (key informant). Eighty women were purposively chosen for in depth interview through snowball method. The key-informant includes the women market leaders and some community leaders. Evicted woman's consent was sought before the beginning of interviews. The information was tape –recorded with the assistant of field researchers. It is pertinent to mention that the field assistants are those that had been engaged in field works with reasonable experiences. The analysis of the data was carried out by content analysis- and ethnographic summary which was enhanced by computer analysis (Wert-QDA).

## **4. Discussion of the Findings**

### **4.1. Socio- Economic Characteristics of the Respondents**

The respondents in this study were selected by means of random route sampling and snowballing methods through the streets of Isolo/Oshodi Local Government Area of Lagos State. The choice of this area was imperative because substantial numbers of women traders were forcefully evicted through the demolition and destruction of markets stalls. The Socio- economic backgrounds of the respondents' shows that majority of the respondents were of youthful age of 30-40 years. Despite the youthfulness of the sample population, the majority of them was divorced, widowed or separated. The implication of this is that, as the head of households who have responsibilities in maintaining the households, that is, the burden of supporting family members especially children and other dependants, there are bound to be challenges as they will be forced to strategize to overcome the present challenges. This is line with the feminist theorists that women should strategize and confront any challenge they may face.

Education has important implications for the socioeconomic status and potentials of women. The educational levels of the respondents were relatively low. Most of the women interviewed had no formal training. Many had only first school leaving certificate. The

implication of this is that most of the women trading in informal sector do not have any special skill apart from trading. Trading in market places is one area that provides employment opportunities for impoverished women. Major occupation of the women interviewed indicates that these women sell consumer items that are of mainly everyday use such as; sweet, biscuits, confectioneries, clothes, drinks, pepper, bread and other items. The only assets of women in the markets were small tables, stools, small benches and sunshade materials. Most of these women had been trading in this market between 4-5 years.

## 4.2. Multiple Challenges of Evicted Market Women

### (a). Lack of Finance for Securing Lock-up Shops

Displaced women traders lack financial capabilities to secure newly constructed shops befitting the new megacity of Lagos. The information gathered that women respondents desire to secure shops to continue with their informal economic trading, but they are constrained by lack of financial capabilities. They were unanimous on how much is needed to secure a lock-up shop. Some women respondents in IDI and KII explain the cost of securing a lock-up shop in various markets around the study areas

*A shop at Bolade-Oshodi Afijalo, Mafoluku and Shogunle markets is let out for seven thousand Naira (N7000) for a standard shop. This amounts to eighty-four thousand Naira per-annum (N84, 000 = 00). While a small shop is let out for five thousand more per month. (N5000) .This amounts to sixty thousand Naira per annum. Whichever one chosen, an agreed fee of twenty-five thousand Naira will still be paid (IDI/ 40yrs/ April 2012).*

*With the newest development in this area, it is very costly to secure a shop. You know this area is for rich women now. Poor women that were displaced cannot afford to rent a shop in this area. The strategy here is that only the rich women that can afford to pay and sublet out the shop (KII/ 60yrs/ May, 2012).*

The above explanation from women respondents shows that securing a lock –up shop may prove a Herculean task for these categories of women. The majority of these women are not financially capable to secure these types of shops. This translates that the shops built by Lagos State Government is only for the elites women in the society. The poor market women are left at their own mercy. Information reveals that in addition to the cost of securing a shop, Local Government Council collects two thousand four hundred Naira per annum (N2, 400 = 00) from each trader. In addition, Lagos State Waste Management Authority, otherwise known as (LAWMA) collects another two thousand four hundred Naira (N2, 400 = 00) from each market woman. Three thousand Naira (N3000) will be paid as security fees. In all, a prospective shop seeker pays the following amount for a standard shop at any of the above mentioned markets. A two year rent for a shop amounts to one hundred and sixty- eight thousand Naira only. (168,000=00). An agreement fee of twenty five thousand Naira -(25,000=00) is paid. Local Government and LAWMA also collect two thousand four hundred (2,400=00) each.

Another woman respondent in IDI expresses her opinion on this

*Where can I get such amount to pay for the shop? Even if I have such amount, I cannot invest in those shops as the available ones are inside. Buyers prefer to buy from those along the street. I cannot make profits in those shops (IDI/ 36yrs/ March, 2012).*

The responses above show that government are not subsidising the cost of securing newly built shops for the displaced women. This is in line with the earlier argument that when development programmes are put in place, women's interests are not considered. This therefore leaves women traders vulnerable and tends more to poverty level.

### (b). Securing another Start-up Capital

The start-up capital, however, small is a fundamental variable that should help explain the ultimate success of women enterprises. This is viewed as being important given that access to financial resources is gendered within the socio-cultural context in African societies. Studies have shown that women who want to start businesses are always at a disadvantage when it comes to securing funding, especially the start-up funding [29,30]. This situation was found among women respondents that were recently evicted from market places. Majority of women respondents expressed this fear of securing another capital as another challenge they might face if they had to start another trade, that is, a new working capital. This is because they were not given a chance during demolitions of market spaces and stalls to cart away their goods. Majority of women respondents stated that their goods were destroyed during the demolition. Those who were heady and went back to their former market spaces were constantly harassed by local government officials.

A woman respondent lamented in IDI.

*Where do I get business money to start all over again after all my goods have been carted away? I do not have anyone to help me or give me money. The money lenders will not lend you money because you do not have a shop. In addition, banks cannot borrow people like us any money. So I have serious difficulty in sourcing for money (IDI/ 42yrs/ April, 2012).*

### (c). Inability to cater for household members

Another challenge faced by women respondents was their inability to pay children's school fees. According to majority of women respondents those women who had their children in fee paying primary/secondary school had to withdraw their children as they could no longer pay the school fees. In this wise, those who could not pay children school fees had to send their children back to non-paying fee schools. In this part of the world, there is generally belief that, fee paying schools offer qualitative education more than non paying schools. The majority of women respondents believes that the standard of education in public school is too low and they would not want the fate of children be like them. Women stated that they would not want their children selling petty items on the sidewalks in the markets. They were of the opinion that they will still find a way to send their children back to fee-paying school. A woman respondent says.

*We do not want our child's fate to be like our own. They have to get a good education. We have suffered a lot in the hand of the government despite the fact that we voted them into power. The present government is insensitive to our plights (IDI/ May, 2012).*

The ushering of structural adjustment programmes, globalization and economic meltdown globally left men working in industries and companies retrenched in Nigeria. This translates that only women who had opportunities to work in informal economy provides for household members. With the demolition of stalls, women traders directly and household members indirectly were affected. Majority of women respondents expressed their opinions that the situations in their homes are becoming unbearable, as it is becoming difficult feeding members of household. There is therefore food insecurity at home and Food rationing as become order of the day. Food security is described as access by all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life.

### 4.3. Coping Strategies of Evicted Market Women

Coping strategies refer to the methods put in place in response to the sudden loss of the livelihoods of women respondents through demolitions of market stalls. majority of the women evicted from the market had taken to domestic helps to survive and provide for members of households. This in contrast to what obtains in the early 90s as the study by [18] showed that women responded to economic changes by selling off their assets. Probably, those interviewed do not even have any asset to dispose of. However, these women stated that what they get as household help is not enough to feed either themselves or their children or any left for saving. The information reveals that women respondents were barely surviving.

However, others are ingenious. They devised another method of selling by hawking goods in a concealed polythene bag. The seller approaches prospective customer and announce what they have in the polythene bags to sell. The implication of this method is numerous, though, through this method the women sellers are likely to evade tax, seizure of goods and harassments by local government officials, but it will definitely tell about their health. The profit margin will also reduce as it is not possible to approach quite a number of people at the same time. In another dimension, the local and state governments are losing out on revenue collection from this group of women.

Majority of women respondents had to depend on extended families for survival. This shows that despite the urbanization and gradual diminishing of extended family in Africa, extended family is a force to be reckoned with in times of crisis. Others had to send their children to live with their families. We asked if they are comfortable with such arrangement. A woman respondent says:

*This is what we can do at this moment, even if we do not like it, we have no choice than to send them to live with our families (IDI/ 32yrs/ April, 2012)*

## 5. Conclusions

The foregoing discussions have provided some insight into the magnitude and nature of the challenges experienced by women traders forcefully evicted from market stalls by the Government of Lagos State, South-West, Nigeria. Using data gathered from in-depth interviews, the paper highlighted various challenges

experienced by the evicted market women traders. These include the inability to pay for a shop, getting a new working – capital, withdrawing their children from fee-paying school for non- fee paying schools, dependent on other members of the family, sending out children to live with other members of their families'. Though, women trader is devising a new method of selling goods, but this method has serious implications for the health, as majority of them walk under the scorching sun to dispose off their goods

Since women often lack education and technical skills, they tend to be predominantly in the informal economy.

They are largely employed at the bottom of the livelihood chain, in unprotected conditions in the unorganized sector. As entrepreneurs, women's economic potential is capped due to the lack of access to safe work spaces and start-up capital. Among the evicted women traders, forced evictions from illegal spaces (slums) are a major cause of insecurity. The destruction of market stalls does not mean the demolition of market stalls alone but often means that the informal enterprises/livelihoods that the women traders engage in are also destroyed. Women, children and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are most adversely affected by such evictions which invariably increases rather than reduces, the problems that they set out to 'solve'.

Government of the state should address this matter of backlash flowing from its interventions on the megacity development. The interventions are throwing up real and potential human casualties whose sources of livelihood have suddenly been erased. The agonies of these downtrodden and wretched women should be looked into so that the good administration of Lagos state government is not quickly dissipated.

The need for a well planned society and decent environment is no doubt desirable for good living and social order. However, whatever form of re-planning that has to take place must recognize the needs of the people, especially, the poor, the disadvantaged and the poor women. No doubt, the effort of the Lagos State government is highly commendable; the women traders' interest strongly deserves to be revisited. The implication of their inability to work or be gainfully employed makes their conditions very precarious. If they find it difficult to meet their domestic obligations, this is likely to compound their health problems and their social well-being. Overall, the evicted women traders are confronted with lots of challenges. This would no doubt place them at the mercy of other dependants. Since they are economically weak and now live in penury, there will be no tax payment which will invariably affect government revenue. Aside from this, where these displaced women are not engaged, they may take to anti- social vices such as prostitution and domestic violence which will invariably lead to social disorder.

## Recommendations

1. The paper therefore proposes the following recommendations; The Lagos state government should embark on massive construction and development of market stalls for low income itinerant traders. This will give a lot of poor women traders' access to stalls. In

addition to this, registration centres for the evicted women traders should be opened, so that the government will have adequate data on numbers of displaced market women. Furthermore, commencement of linkage programme between the registered women traders with micro –finance institution is desirable to further strengthen their financial base.

2. Empowerment of women traders is essential for meaningful inclusion. In the context of urban development, while empowerment is about enabling women to use the spaces and pathways created for their engagement in city planning, it must also be about building capacities among local government institutions to listen to the voices of women and monitor gender based outcomes. Only then can such engagement be meaningful. Empowerment of women comes through mobilization and organization, in particular for women traders .A critical mass of women’s Community Based Organizations (CBO), networked at the city level can help represent the interests of various groups of women in city planning. Such an organization however must be backed by capacity creation, to enable women to dialogue with and negotiate for their rights with local governments and by the provisioning of spaces and mechanisms for participatory planning.

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