

COMPLIANCE OF FOOD VENDORS TO FOOD VENDING REGULATIONS IN TANZANIA - A CASE OF DODOMA MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract

The paper is on Compliance of food vendors to food vending regulations. The study was carried in Dodoma Municipality because of a lot of urban livelihood activities including food vending. Specifically the study aimed at identification of food vending regulations and identifies factors hindering effective enforcement of food vending regulations. The study used a cross-sectional study design. From a sampling frame of street food vendors a sample of 200 respondents was picked. Both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered. Triangulation of data collection methods was employed to collect adequate and accurate data. Documentary review was used in collecting secondary data, field visits and interviews were used in collecting primary data. The findings indicate weak compliance of food vendors regulations such as 25% of food vendors washed hands with soap prior to food preparation and serving, only 13% put on apron, 68% covered their food and served hot food while only 20% conducted their activities in clean vending places and 17% of food vendors use water from unprotected wells and tap. Also the

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study revealed factors hindering the enforcement of food vendors regulation including shortage of food storage facilities, lack knowledge on food vending regulations, attitudes of customers and shortage of funds and informality of food vendors.

The study recommends the Dodoma Municipality and other actors including Community Based Organizations to raise awareness through training on requirements for conducting food vending activities and public health officers to penalize food vendors who do not adhere to food vending regulations.

Key words: Compliance, Food vendor's regulations, Dodoma Municipality.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Food vendors in urban areas woke up early in the morning normally at 4.30 am. They first visit the local markets where they buy foodstuffs such as vegetables, tomatoes, rice, flour and onions. Secondly, they go to their work place to prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner (McGee and Yeung, 1977; Ray, 2014; Saha, 2011).

Some food vendors do prepare breakfast only. There are food vendors who provide lunch and some do provide dinner. The fourth category of food vendors are vendors who provide breakfast, lunch and dinner. Many factors are related to the three categories. Capital, labour availability, location, and type of customers ((Mensah, *et al.* 2002). Social relations determine type of service, time the service is provided and who is providing food

Food vending plays an imperative role in the cities of many developing countries. It attempts to meeting the food demands of the urban dwellers (Asiedu, and Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Lorenco-Lindell, 2002; Mensah, *et al.*, 2002).. Frequently, Food vendors feed urban dwellers daily by providing them with a cheap and easily accessible variety of foods. Despite the fact that it plays an important role, food vending operates in a wobbly situation. Attitude of urban authorities towards food vendors are root causes of precarious state of food vending (Mramba, 2015). However, as a sector that provides self-employment, there have been noticeable increases of

food vendors in cities of developing countries. Currently, food vendors sell both raw and cooked foodstuffs (Kinabo, 2003).

Categorically, there is regulated and unregulated food vending. Unregulated food vending operates haphazardly without any monitoring mechanisms on what they prepare and sell and how they prepare and sell and how they do adhere to public health regulations.

In some cities, food vendors lack knowledge on food preparation. Currently, food vendors acquired knowledge on proper food vending through informal systems (Mramba, 2015; Lyons and Snoxell, 2005). Utensils used for the preparation of raw foods are not properly and regularly washed. Already cooked foods in cupboards, plastic bowls, jugs and buckets are always uncovered thus increasing possibility of contamination (Muinde and Kuria, 2005; Mwangi, 2002; Onyango *et al.*, 2012; Riet, 2002; Muhonja and Kimathi 2014; Tillerman, 2012).

Majority of food vendors do not have garbage and waste closer to their food stalls. Some food vendors do not neither cover their heads nor wear aprons and lastly some street food vendors do not examine their health regularly.

Street food vendors are not aware of hygienic and sanitary practice. Attitude, shortage of resources, and lack of good relations between food vendors and urban authorities hinders effective enforcement of food vending regulations (Mramba, 2015).

In Tanzania, urban setting settlements there have been booming of local eateries where significant number of people eats daily, these food vendors is known as Mama Ntilie in Swahili and they are the main food suppliers at this setting. However they are poorly regulated, operated, poor sanitary environment and hygiene practices raise serious questions about health of the food consumers. A number of outbreaks have been reported in Tanzania. For example cholera outbreak have claimed 280 lives and sickening of around 17496 citizen's country wide since august 2015 up to march 2016 (URT; 2016). The vending sites usually lacks basic sanitation facilities such as toilets, handing washing facilities, potable water, good drainage and waste disposal systems (Onesmus *et al* 2005, Comfort, 2010 and Isaac *et al* 2013). With the booming of

street food vendors as a growing informal sector in urban setting especially in the poor urban settlements there is an urgent need to ensure food vendors operates their food business in hygienic environment and good hygienic practices so as to protect public health in poor urban dwellers. Nevertheless, in cities of Tanzania, the literature on compliance of food vendors to food vending regulations is inadequate. The deficit in literature is mainly on understanding of the public on organization of food vending, process of food vending and factors hindering effect enforcement of food vending regulations.

2.0 RESEARCH METHODS

The study on compliance of food vendors to food vending regulations was carried out in Dodoma Municipality because food vending plays a big role in supplying affordable foods and drinks to urban inhabitants. The cross-sectional study design was employed, whereby primary and secondary data were gathered.

Data collection methods

Different methods were used for data collection. The methods included interviews and field visit. The objective of using various methods was to triangulate the information so as to increase data reliability and validity. The details for each method are described below.

Food vendor's questionnaire survey

Questionnaires were administered to food vendors who were picked using snow ball sampling. Snow ball sampling it is a very good technique for conducting exploratory research and/or qualitative research with a specific and relatively small population that is hard to identify or locate. For case of this study snow ball sampling technique was used because no available records or data base for the total population of the street food vendors in Dodoma Municipality. A sample of 200 food vendors was selected. Out of 200 respondents, 50 respondents were picked from Jamatini where urban commuters access town buses, 50 respondents were picked from Dodoma bus terminal where trips originate to all regions of Tanzania, 50 respondents were picked from Sabasaba market, where traders sell all merchandise, and lastly 50 respondents were picked from Jamhuri stadium where owners of trucks sell sand to builders.

Interviews

Two hundreds street food vendors conducting their activities in four selected zones in Dodoma Municipality including Dodoma Bus Terminal, Jamatinicommuters bus stop, areas around Jamhuri stadium and Sabasaba market were interviewed. Also street leaders and health officer were interviewed as they were responsible for day to day activities taking place in their areas of supervision.

Field visits

Site visits were undertaken in each street to assess the situation on the ground regarding compliance of food vendors to food vending regulations. Also information related to the water sources and locations of food vending activities used by food vendors were also assessed.

3.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Food vending regulations practices

3.1.1 Vendors Putting on Aprons

On putting on aprons as one of directives of the public health regulations, the study found that only 13% of respondents interviewed put on aprons figure 1. Generally the findings disclosed that food vendors do not put on aprons. This implies there was weak enforcement of food vendor's regulations in the Municipality. The study concur with the study conducted by (Calopez et al; 2017) in Iloilo City in Philippine which revealed that street food vendors were not regularly practiced food sanitation when preparing and serving food, especially by using proper clothing and wearing some shields like gloves, hairnet and aprons when serving food.

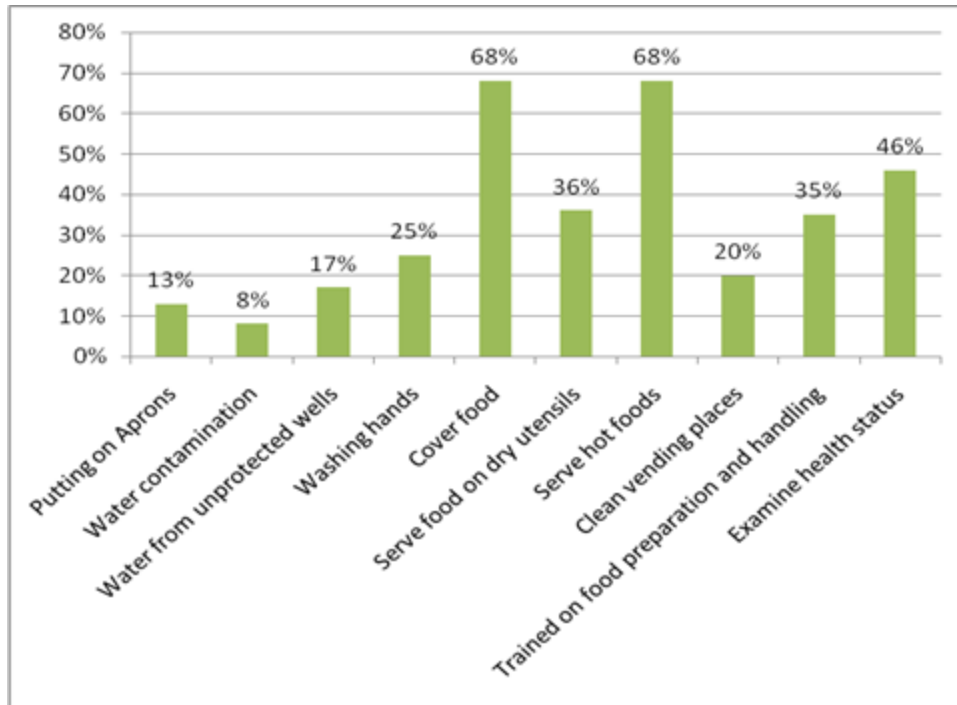


Figure 1: Practices of regulations by Food Venders

3.1.2 Covering of Food

The study revealed that 68% of the respondents cover their food during preparation figure 1. The behavior of covering of food by food vendors was attributed by food safety demanded by their customers and adhering of regulations for making food vending activities. This implies covering of food is essential because reduces possibilities of flies, dusts and other insects to contaminate foods and drinks.

3.1.3 Food Serving

The public health regulations require food vendors to serve hot food as a strategy to reduce chances of typhoid, cholera and other food related diseases cases in the community. The study revealed 68% of food vendors served hot food figure 1. This implies that majority of the respondents adhered to the Municipal food vending regulations.

3.1.4 Examination of health status of food vendors

The public health regulations require food vendors to examine their health status regularly. Findings pointed out that 46% of the respondents examined health status recurrently and 54% do not know their health status. Inadequate examination of health status increases possibilities of allowing sick people to participate in food vending thus transmit diseases Figure 1.

3.1.5 Washing hands with soap

Pertaining to what respondents use when washing hands, it was noted that 25% of the respondents washed their hands with soap before preparing food and serving their customers figure 1. Moreover, the study exposed that food vendors and their clients wash their hands on basin instead of bucket with running water. Therefore it shows that 75% of food vendors did not wash their hand before preparing food and serving food to their customers. This implies that people who eat food from food vendors in Dodoma Municipality they are at high risks of eating contaminated food.

3.1.6 Covering of Food

Covering of Food is essential because reduces possibilities of flies and other insects to contaminate foods and drinks. During the study it was noted that 68% of the respondents cover their food during preparation figure 1.

3.1.7 Food Serving

The public health regulations require food vendors to serve food on dry utensils as a strategy to reduce chances of typhoid cases in the community. It was found that 36% of the respondents serve food on dry utensils while 64% of the respondents serve food on wet utensils figure 1.

3.1.8 Knowledge of food vendors on Food Handling

Both formal and informal training on food preparation and handling are essential for food vendors. Findings indicated that 35% of the respondents were trained on food preparation and handling. This implies that the majority 65% of food vendors in Dodoma Municipality had no knowledge on food preparation and handling as a result they committed mistakes related to

food preparation and food handling including not washing their hands before food preparation and serving and not wearing apron to mention a few.

3.3 Water sources used by food vendors

The sources of water used by food vendors also investigated. The findings indicated 36% respondents interviewed got their water from water vendors, 43% of respondents interviewed fetch water from tap water, 11% fetch water from unprotected traditional water wells, 76% of respondents wash hands with un-boiled water, and 64% of respondents drink un-boiled water (Figure 2). Poor hygienic status of the use of safe and clean water and the sources of water for food vending activities was attributed by the facts that majority of food vendors operates in informal areas with poor water infrastructure's including tap water and protected water wells. This implies that food consumed by people in Dodoma Municipality from food vendors were not safety.

The study is similar with that of Njaya (2014) on Operations of Street Food Vendors and their Impact on Sustainable Urban Life in High Density Suburbs of Harare which found that about 99% of the street foods vending sites were lacked potable water and proper facilities for cleaning dishes and waste disposal.

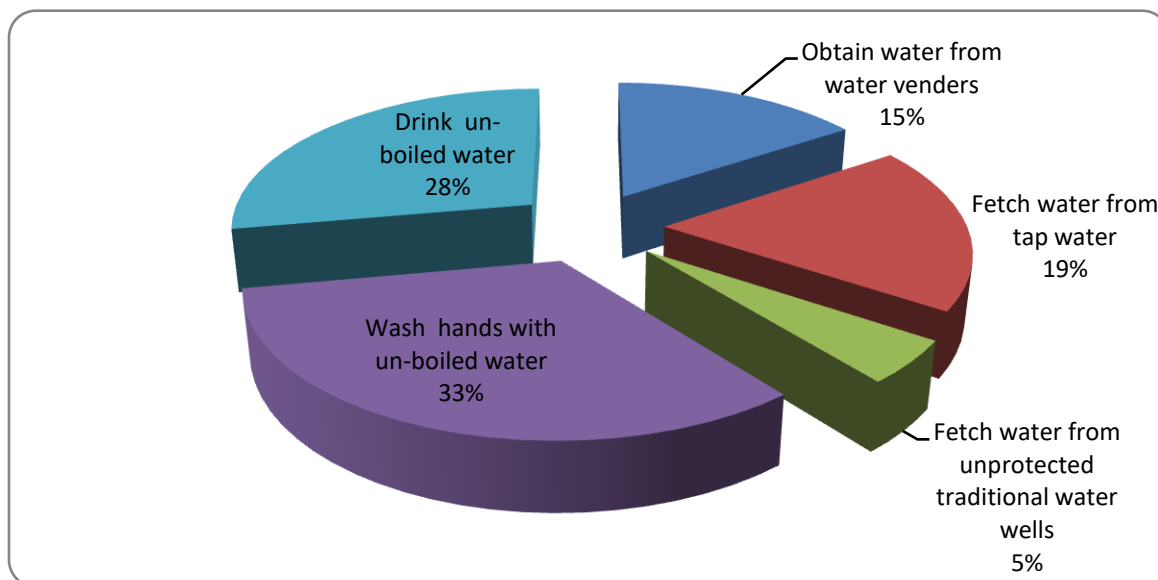
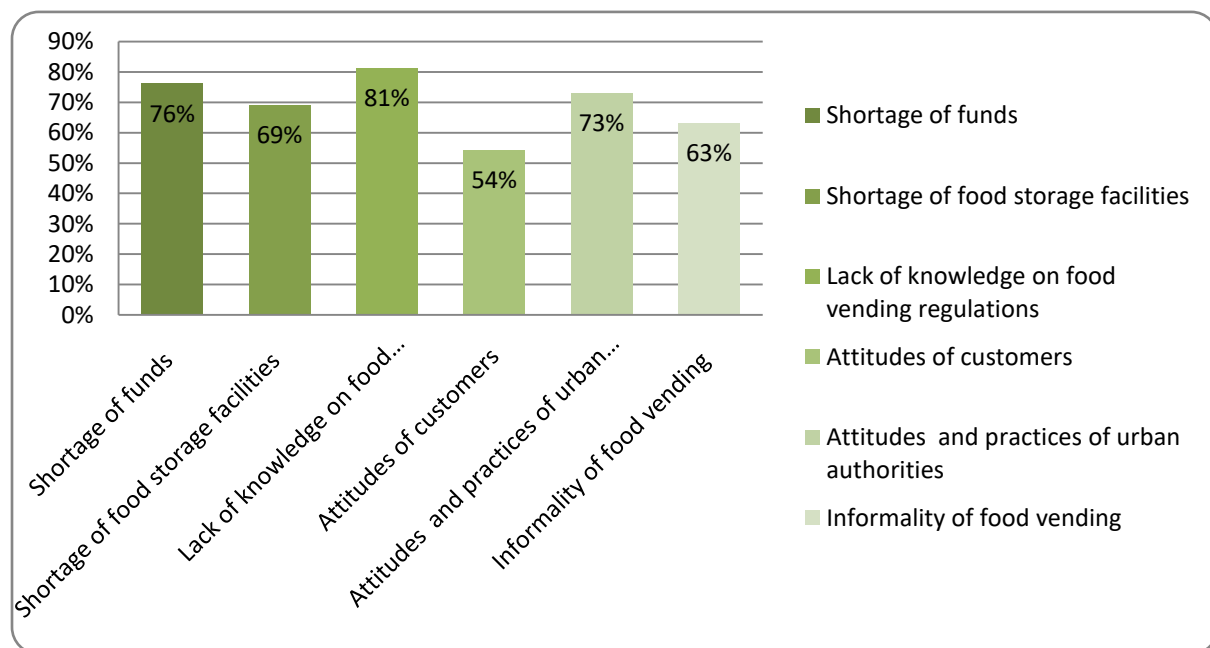


Figure 2: Water sources used by food vendors**3.2 Factors hindering effective enforcement of food vending regulations**

Respondents were asked to mention factors hindering the enforcements of food vending regulations. Answers were not limited. About 76% of the respondents reported that shortage of funds for purchasing storage facilities and transport means hinders effective enforcement of food vending regulations while 81% of the respondents mentioned inadequate knowledge on requirements of food vending regulations as one of the factors that hinders effective enforcement of food vending regulations. About 69% of the respondents reported that shortage of food storage facilities retard efforts in enforcing food vending regulations, 54% of the respondents pointed out that attitudes of customers hinder effective enforcement of food vending regulations, 73% of the respondents disclosed that attitudes and practices of urban authorities hinder effective enforcement of food vending regulations and lastly 63% of the respondents testimonies that informality of food vending is among factors that hinder effective enforcement of food vending regulations.

**Figure 3: Factors hindering effective enforcement of food vending regulations**

Lack of knowledge on food vending regulations

The finding revealed that 81% of respondent interviewed were not knowledgeable on food vending regulations. This situation was attributed by readiness of food vendors to know the regulations which guide them in their activities and failure of Municipal health officers in disseminating information to food vendors on pre-requisites for carrying out the vending activities. This implies that there is inadequate communication between Municipal health officers and food vendors in running food vending activities.

Attitudes and practices of urban authority

The respondents were asked on the factors affecting the food vending activities, the study revealed that 73% of respondents said that attitude and practices of urban authority on food vending business. *“For instance one food vendor from Jamatini bus terminal said that municipal health officer they normally do inspection of compliance of food vending regulations during the outbreak of cholera”*. This implies that food vendors comply with food vending regulations when there is cholera outbreak only. This is not a good practice of enforcing public health regulations since public health is the day to day activities and should be monitored daily.

Shortage of funds

The results indicate that 76% of the respondents said shortage of funds was among of the factors hindering effective enforcement of food vending regulations. The respondents said they had small capital that cannot afford them to buy equipment's including big hot pot for storing food, aprons, bucket with tape and liquid soap. This implies that majority of food vendors had inadequate capital that cannot meet requirements for carrying out food vending activities.

Informality of food vending activities

The study revealed 63% of the respondents do their activities under informal practices. Informality of food vending activities includes lack of business license, operates in unauthorized areas, vending sites not stationed and having no any forum for presenting their issues. *“One respondent argued that there is too much beaucrancy on looking for business licenses and food vending site, to get business license you need to pay Tsh 25000/= charges for public health and Tsh 15000/=for site visit inspection. The regulation require food vending site to have accessible*

clean and safe water supply and toilets so to be allowed to carry out food vending business. The municipal health officer should come and inspect your site if it meets the standards, the thing that is very difficult for us to follow when starting the food vending business, most of us tend to ignore it”.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Findings from the study indicate that despite of the presence of food vendors regulations including washing hands with soap prior to food preparation and serving, wearing of apron, cleaning of food utensils with clean water, covering of food with dry utensils, examination of health status to mention a few still food vendors did not comply to food vending regulations. The causes of the situation were shortage of food storage facilities, lack of knowledge on food vending regulations, attitudes of customers and informality practices of food vendors.

In order to ensure the effective and sustainable practices of food vending regulations the study recommends the Dodoma Municipality and other actors including Community Based Organizations to raise awareness through training on requirements for conducting food vending activities, establishment of food vendors federation that will help to raise capital and being a forum of representing their problems. Also the study recommends public health officers to penalize food vendors who do not adhere to food vending regulations. Lastly the study recommends regularly examination of food vendor's health status as a pre-requisite of operating food vending activities.

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