

STREET FOODS: AN OPPORTUNITY, A PROBLEM AND A CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE OF NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The paper highlighted some of the diverse opportunities street foods provide the people. Many people are gainfully employed, some are self-employed, or have become employers of labour. It gives the people the opportunity of getting readily, available foods, snacks and drinks. So problems posed by street foods in the society include: serving as vehicle of infection to consumers due to improper packaging and some times, complete exposure of those foods to dust, flies and other contaminants, environmental pollutions, and child labour due to poverty. If properly managed the Government could benefit by being in complete control of the sector, issuing licenses and collecting revenue. Through this the state will be developed by the facilities, the consumer will be protected and the economic standard of the vendor uplifted.

Introduction

Anambra state is one of the 36 states that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is situated in the Eastern part of the country and is made up of the ethnic group known as Igbo. Administratively, Anambra State comprises of 23 Local Government Areas with the State capital at Akwa. About 70 — 80% of the populace reside and secure their livelihoods in the rural and semi-urban areas.

The Informal Sector and its Opportunities.

The rapid urbanization of the state has led to the development of many informal sectors of which, the street food sector is one. These street foods constitute the food base for a great number of the population. FAO (1995) defined street food as ready to eat foods and beverages prepared and or sold by vendors and hawkers especially in streets, and other similar public places. Usually these foods are found around working places, schools, markets, hospitals, motor parks or anywhere people congregate. When compared to home-cooked food or food from the formal sector, they are inexpensive.

FAO (1995) observed that, street foods have significant nutritional implications for consumers, particularly for middle and low-income sectors of the population who depend heavily on them. Also the eating of a combination of street foods did provide the consumer adequate opportunity to meet his or her daily nutritional requirements at an affordable price.

Oguntona and Kanye (1995) from their study showed that street foods contribute to about 50% of the daily intake of protein, liquid, calcium, iron, vitamin A and 25% of daily energy intake of Nigerian adolescents. FAO (1997) stated that poverty is often at the root of micronutrient, malnutrition and is also linked to adequate access of food.

The availability of street foods, at affordable prices will help in alleviating this problem. The street food sector, is one of the informal sectors that is central to the economic development of the state, since it has a great potential for creating employment. FAO (1995) at its meeting observed that the setting up as a street food vendor involved a low-cost investment. It required no special training other than the domestic experience of preparing food and provided employment. Street food operation often involves entire families in the procurement of raw materials, preparation and cooking of meals and their sale. The role of women in the street food sector and the potential for their employment in this sector was most significant. FAO; Federal Ministry of Education Report (1997) showed that women dominated that sector. On the whole, street food vending gives a measure of economic independence to women, which has many significant positive social implications. The

FAO; Federal Ministry of Education Report (1997), showed that 22 to 30% is the estimated average profit of the vendors across the states.

Problems of Street Foods

FAO (1995) in their meeting pointed out that an important aspect of street foods that deserved particular attention is related to their safety. It was recognized that street foods raise concern with respect to their potential for serious food poisoning outbreak due to microbiological contamination, improper use of additives (in particular the use of unapproved colouring), and the presence of other adulterants and environmental contaminants. From their observations, surveys in Africa, Asia, and Latin America suggested that this concern was real and needed to be addressed to protect consumers. FAO and Department of Human Nutrition, University of Ibadan (1987) also agree with the fact that improper food handling practices could be a serious cause of contamination. There were also problems with potable water supply, the quality of raw material used (example: rotten vegetables or spoilt meat) and unsuitable environments for street food operation (such as proximity to sewers and garbage dumps). Inadequate facilities for garbage disposal posed hazards.

The FAO; Federal Ministry of Education reports (1997) showed that one of the main problems of street food vending is the lack of clean potable water, particularly in poor public and rural schools. Lack of training for most of the vendors is another problem coupled with lack of control of the vendors due to the lack of resources of the bodies in charge of that aspect at local government level. Other potential negative factors of street food include traffic congestion, encroachment on and blocking of pavements, accumulation of filth and garbage and the illicit use of water and electricity (FAO, 1995).

Challenges for Development

For proper development of this aspect of the economy, the FAO (1985) has suggested the control of the sector in two forms. The first is the issue of licenses to operators and this may include restriction on the type of food to be sold and the location where they maybe sold. The second concerns enforcement of specific measures to protect the consumer against health hazard and commercial fraud.

Concerning food safety, many countries still did not have specific regulations on street foods. The FAO (1985) meeting recommended a scientific approach in the development of such regulations, keeping in mind the special characteristics of street foods such as traditional technologies, low level of investment and restricted access to municipal facilities such as water and waste disposal. Relocating or concentrating street food vending into specially designed centres with all the necessary service such as potable water and electricity supply adequate waste disposal services and toilet facilities. Heating and freezing facilities, under the supervision of heath authorities can be provided for use with high — risk foods.

The education and training of food handlers, vendor and consumers of street foods is a fundamental and most urgent need. The purpose of such programmes will be to make them aware of hygienic, sanitary and technological aspects of street food vending and consumption.

Banks can also be persuaded to make loans available for vendors to help them purchase goods in bulk, acquire better facilities and make better profits.

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the situation of street food in Anambra State.

Specific Objectives

- (1) To evaluate the general food habit at family and street food levels in terms of frequency of meals and types of food eaten.
- (2) To assess the socio-economic, educational and food training levels of food vendors.
- (3) To estimate some aspects of food safety and hygienic conditions or preparation and sale.
- (4) To determine the opinion of food vendors on the ways to improve their profit and the quality of food sold.

Research questions

- (1) How often do people eat at home and at work?
- (2) Are food vendors trained in the area of food preparation and services?
- (3) Are the foods sold to consumers prepared and served in a hygienic environment?
- (4) How can the quality of foods sold and the profit of the vendors be improved?

Methodology

To achieve the general and specific objective of the study, the questionnaire method was selected.

Location

The study was carried out in the main towns of five Local Government Areas of the state. The towns are Onitsha, Awka, Ihiala and Ekwulobia.

Populations

The population of the vendors in this study are the people at various motor parks, local government areas and schools in towns investigated. While the populations of consumers are the road transport workers, drivers, passengers at the various motor parks, workers in various local government offices, teachers and workers in schools.

Sample Size

Thirty two consumers and vendors each were chosen from each town, given a total of two hundred and fifty six.

Choice of Food Vendors

The food vendors under study were selected randomly from the streets and motor parks. These included those with fixed stalls, roadside stand, Push-cart and hawkers with head-loads. Thirty-two questionnaires were administered in each town among the vendors.

Choice of Consumers

The individuals interviewed were selected randomly from motor parks, offices and business premises. On the whole, thirty-two questionnaires were administered in each town among the working

Consumers.

Sample Design

Development and pre-test of the questionnaires

The questionnaire was written in English Language based on the list of major characteristics of both vendors and consumers, which were to be studied. The questionnaire was field tested in Ekwulobia town and it was found that the majority of the people could respond in English, only a small percentage did not understand English. It was thus decided that the study would be conducted in the English Language but the vernacular (Igbo) would be used to explain the questions for persons who did not speak English. The questionnaire was designed to meet the objectives of the study.

Administration of the Instrument

Questionnaires were administered by the researcher using the interview method in the five towns of the state according to the planned methodology. Administration of questionnaires started in the second week of February to the end of April 2001.

Data Collection

Interview of Consumers

In each town, the numbers of people surveyed were selected by the researcher. Eight people each were selected from the following areas randomly: Motor parks, local government offices, schools and business premises. The questionnaire number used for the consumers were the same one used by the researcher from town to town. The people were given the forms to fill, only those who can not read and write properly were aided. These were mainly people at the motor parks and some

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business premises. On the spot checks were carried out on the completed questionnaires to ensure that no information was missed out. The edited questionnaires were classified in a file with the name of town, date and total number of questionnaires included.

Administration of Questionnaires to Vendors

Some of the food vendors, who could read and write, filled the questionnaires. Others felt they were very busy. So on the whole, most of the food vendors, both literate, semi-literate and illiterate preferred that the researcher read out the questions, to which answers were given.

Analysis of Data

For the purpose of this survey, simple percentage scale was used for data analysis.

$$\frac{\text{Number of responses for each question } x}{\text{Total responses}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Table 1

Food Habits of Consumers

| <i>Characteristics.</i> | <i>Awka</i> | <i>Ekwlobia</i> | <i>Ihiala</i> | <i>Nnewi</i> | <i>Onitsha</i> | <i>Total</i> | |
|---|-------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------|
| 1 Having break fast at home: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 28 | 25 | 29 | 22 | 21 | 125 | 81.7 |
| No | 4 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 18 | 18.3 |
| Total | 32 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 29 | 153 | 100.0 |
| 2 Frequency of break fast at home: (per week): | | | | | | | |
| Less than four times. | 6 | 5 | 2 | 12 | 13 | 41 | 26.3 |
| Four or mour times | 24 | 26 | 27 | 19 | 19 | 115 | 73.3 |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 32 | 156 | 100.0 |
| 3 Lunch every day: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 29 | 30 | 19 | 30 | 29 | 147 | 94.8 |
| No | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 5.2 |
| Total | 32 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 155 | 100.0 |
| 4 Place of lunch: | | | | | | | |
| At home. | 18 | 20 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 82 | 54.0 |
| At work place | 10 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 12 | 52 | 34.2 |
| Both at home and work place | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 18 | 11.8 |
| Total | 32 | 30 | 27 | 32 | 31 | 152 | 100.0 |
| 5 Snacks between lunch and dinner: | | | | | | | |
| Less than four times per week. | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 21 | 109 | 70.3 |
| Four or more times per week | 10 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 46 | 29.7 |
| Total | 32 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 30 | 155 | 100.0 |
| 6 Bring food to work place from home: | | | | | | | |
| Less than tree times per week | 25 | 24 | 25 | 29 | 28 | 131 | 84.5 |
| Tree or more times per week | 5 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 24 | 15.5 |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 155 | 100.0 |
| 7 Break fast at work place: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 10 | 13 | 9 | 14 | 16 | 62 | 89.7 |
| No | 21 | 17 | 22 | 18 | 16 | 94 | 60.3 |
| Total | 31 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 156 | 100.0 |
| 8 Choice of food: | | | | | | | |
| Always buy the same type of food/drink. | 8 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 25 | 59.5 |
| Change the type of food every Day. | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 17 | 4.5 |
| Total | 13 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 42 | 1000 |
| 9 Buying from the same vendor every day: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 5 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 24 | 60.0 |
| No | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 40.0 |
| Total | 12 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 40 | 100.0 |

The result of the general food habits of the people indicates that the majority of the people had their breakfast, lunch and dinner at home (82%, 54% and 85% respectively). More people had their breakfast at home as they usually had it four or more times per week. At least 95% of the people

take their lunch, out of these, 54% have their lunch at home while 34% usually have theirs outside. People take snacks but more emphasis is on the main meals.

Few people take food to their work places, as shown by the responses. 85% bring food less than 3 times per week while 16% brings food three or more times. About 40% of the people take their breakfast at the work place, 59% of the people buy the same food everyday and from the same vendor (60%).

Table 2
General and Socio-Economic Description of Vendor

| | Awka | Ekwlobia | Ihiala | Nnewi | Onitsha | Total | % |
|----------------------------------|------|----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| Characteristics | | | | | | | |
| 1 Sex of Vendors | | | | | | | |
| Male | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 26 | 16.9 |
| Female | 25 | 28 | 25 | 25 | 24 | 128 | 83.1 |
| Total | 31 | 32 | 30 | 31 | 30 | 125 | 100.0 |
| 2 Age of vendors: | | | | | | | |
| Less than 15 years | 5 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 29 | 18.8 |
| 15-19 years | 9 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 41 | 26.6 |
| 20-39 years | 10 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 52 | 33.8 |
| 40-59 years | 5 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 26 | 16.9 |
| more than 60 years | 1 | - | - | 3 | 2 | 6 | 3.9 |
| Total | 30 | 29 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 3 Educational level: | | | | | | | |
| No schooling | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 7.1 |
| Primary uncompleted | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 24 | 15.86 |
| Secondary/higher education. | 18 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 74 | 48.1 |
| Total | 7 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 45 | 29.2 |
| | 31 | 31 | 29 | 32 | 32 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 4 Socio-economic classification: | | | | | | | |
| Rich | 5 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 32 | 20.8 |
| Middle | 21 | 23 | 22 | 21 | 22 | 108 | 70.1 |
| Poor | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 14 | 9.1 |
| Total | 31 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 5 Head of family: | | | | | | | |
| Male | 21 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 27 | 129 | 83.8 |
| Female | 9 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 25 | 16.2 |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 30 | 154 | 100.0 |
| Yes | 28 | 25 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 136 | 88.3 |
| No | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 18 | 11.7 |
| Total | 32 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |

A total of 154 vendors were interviewed this fell short of the expected 160 vendors (32 from each town), this is because others did not answer the questions well. From the findings, there were more women vending food than men (83% to 17%) this confirmed the fact that women dominate the food-vending business in Nigeria.

Many of the vendors (34%) were found to be between the ages of 20-39 years, with 27% in the age range of 15-19 years. These are mostly the group with head load.

With respect to their education level, 47% completed their primary education 28 percentage had secondary and higher education, 15% did not complete their primary education, while 7% had no schooling at all. 70% of the vendors belong to the middle socio-economic class while the rich and poor socio-economic class had 21% and 9% respectively; The finding show that the vendors had male-headed families 84%, and majority of them live in the district (88%).

Table 3
Operational Description of Food Vendors

| | Awka | Ekwulobia | Ihiala | Nnewi | Onitsha | Total | % |
|--|------|-----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| Characteristics | | | | | | | |
| 1 Mode of operation | | | | | | | |
| Ambulatory | 8 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 40 | 256 |
| Sedentary | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 114 | 70 |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 2 Type of employment: | | | | | | | |
| For Yourself | 20 | 22 | 18 | 21 | 22 | 103 | 66.9 |
| For some body | 10 | 8 | 14 | 10 | 9 | 51 | 33.1 |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 32 | 51 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 3 If for some body; who? | | | | | | | |
| Family | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 26 | 53.1 |
| Somebody else | 4 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 22 | 46.9 |
| Total | 10 | 7 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 49 | 100.0 |
| 4 Do you receive salary? | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 2 | 1 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 26 | 54.2 |
| No | 7 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 22 | 45.8 |
| Total | 9 | 7 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 48 | 100.0 |
| 5 Days of operation per week: | | | | | | | |
| Less than days | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 7.8 |
| Four days or more | 28 | 29 | 27 | 28 | 30 | 142 | 92.2 |
| Total | 31 | 31 | 30 | 30 | 32 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 6 Have you other place were food is sold | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 5 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 22 | 14.3 |
| No | 25 | 28 | 27 | 26 | 26 | 132 | 85.7 |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |

While 74% of food vendors were sedentary 28% were ambulatory. Most of the vendors were self employed (67%) while the rest were working for somebody (33%). 53% of those working for somebody were working for their families, while 47% were employed. The fact that 50% received salary confirmed the fact that almost half of those working for somebody were employed. 92% of the vendors worked for more than four days per week. Only 14% of the vendors have other places where they sell foods.

Table 4
Food Handling and Preparation Practices

| Characteristics | Awka | Ekwlobia | Ihiala | Nnewi | Onitsha | Total | yo |
|--|------|----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| I Types of food sold by vendors | | | | | | | |
| Foods prepared by vendors | 24 | 21 | 24 | 26 | 25 | 120 | 777.9 |
| Foods not prepared | 6 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 34 | 22.1 |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 32 | 30 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 2 Frequency of Purchase of staples | | | | | | | |
| Daily | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 17 | |
| Weekly | 20 | 20 | 22 | 18 | 20 | 100 | |
| Monthly | 5 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 34 | |
| Others | 1 | 4 | - | - | 1 | 3 | |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 30 | 154 | |
| 3 Frequency of vegetable purchase | | | | | | | |
| Daily | 24 | 26 | 27 | 25 | 24 | 126 | 81.8 |
| Weekly | 7 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 28 | 18.2 |
| Total | 31 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 4 Food prepared by self? | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 20 | 24 | 21 | 26 | 24 | 115 | 74.7 |
| No | 8 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 28 | 18.2 |
| Not necessary | 3 | - | 3 | 2 | 3 | II | 7.1 |
| 5 Place of cooking: | | | | | | | |
| At home | 22 | 20 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 105 | 68.2 |
| On the spot | 6 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 34 | 22.1 |
| Both | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 15 | 9.7 |
| Total | 31 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 6 Paying for transportation from home. | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 20 | 18 | 22 | 24 | 23 | 107 | 69.5 |
| No | 11 | 13 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 47 | 30.5 |
| 1 | | 1 | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-------|
| | Total | 31 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 3 | Types of fuel used. | | | | | | | |
| | Wood | 20 | 22 | 24 | 20 | 17 | 103 | 66.9 |
| | Kerosene | 8 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 29 | 18.8 |
| | Others | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 22 | 14.3 |
| | Total | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 4 | Do you pay tax: | | | | | | | |
| | Yes | 8 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 38 | 24.7 |
| | No | 21 | 23 | 21 | 25 | 20 | 110 | 71.4 |
| | I don't know | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 6 | 3.9 |
| | Total | 31 | 32 | 30 | 31 | 30 | 154 | 100.0 |

The mode of handling and preparation practices of vendors was investigated. About 78% of the foods sold by vendors were prepared by them. The remaining 22% consist of fruits, biscuit and pastry products etc. Staples were purchased weekly as shown by the number of responses 65%, followed by monthly purchases which had 22%. Vegetables and other perishables were purchased daily (82%). 75% of the vendors prepared the foods by themselves, and most of the cooking was done at home (68%) while 22% of the vendors did the cooking on the spot. Most of the vendors paid for transportation of their goods, (69.5% as against 30.5%). Fire wood was found to be the main source of fuel (67%), kerosene and other sources had 19% and 14% respectively.

TAX

From the answers given most of the vendors do not pay tax. Hygiene

Practices of Food Vendors

Table 5

| Characteristics | Awka | Ekwulobia | Ihiala | Nnewi | Onitsha | Total | % |
|--|------|-----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1 Vendors outfit: | | | | | | | |
| Clean | 29 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 147 | 95.5 |
| Dirty | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Shabby | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | 7 | 4.5 |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 154 | 100 |
| 2 Covered Hair: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 21 | 21 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 105 | 68.2 |
| No | 10 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 49 | 31.8 |
| Total | 31 | 30 | 30 | 32 | 31 | 154 | 100 |
| 3.Apparent Indication of Communicable Diseases | | | | | | | |
| Yes | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| No | 31 | 30 | 30 | 32 | 31 | 154 | 100 |
| Total | 31 | 30 | 30 | 32 | 31 | 154 | 100 |
| 4 Presence of Water in the Premises: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 20 | 19 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 100 | 64.9 |
| No | 11 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 54 | 35.1 |
| Total | 31 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 154 | 100 |
| 5. Where is the water in use: | | | | | | | |
| Water tanks in the premises | 13 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 56 | 36.76 |
| Water tanks at home | 7 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 44 | 28.57 |
| Jerry cans in the premises | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 24 | 15.58 |
| Other containers at home | 6 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 30 | 19.48 |
| Total | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 154 | 100 |
| 6 Sources of water | | | | | | | |
| Tap water | 9 | - | -- | | 8 | 17 | 11.0 |
| Bore Hole | 18 | 15 | 12 | 24 | 18 | 87 | 56.5 |
| Stream | 2 | 6 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 27 | 17.5 |
| Under ground tank | 2 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 23 | 15.0 |
| Total | 31 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 154 | 100 |
| Cleanliness of Environment: | | | | | | | |
| Clean | 24 | 23 | 25 | 24 | 18 | 114 | 74.0 |
| Dirty | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 13 | 40 | 26.0 |
| Total | 32 | 30 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 154 | 100 |

The vendors were having clean outfits (95.4%). Only about 68% of them covered their hair.. There was no evidence of skin or communicable diseases. There was presence of water, but only about 36.8% was in the premises and in water tanks. The source of water supply was not tap water. Some said they got water from boreholes. Majority of the environment visited was clean (74%) but

some had refuse dumps and dirty gutters around them (26%). Making the environment very un conducive for eating.

Table 6
Organization and Attitudes of Food Vendors

| Characteristics | Awka | Ekeulobia | Ihiala | Nnewi | Onitsha | Total | % |
|---|------|-----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1 Is there discussion between vendors: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 29 | 30 | 28 | 29 | 27 | 43 | 92.5 |
| No | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 7.1 |
| Total | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 154 | 100.0 |
| 2 Subject of Discussion | | | | | | | |
| (a) About the environment. | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 11.0 |
| (b) About the food sold. | 4 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 20 | 13.0 |
| (c) About contributions on keeping the environment clean. | 15 | 12 | 14 | 18 | 21 | 80 | 52. |
| (d) Improvement of Nutritional value of food. | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 - |
| (e) Others. | 10 | 11 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 37 | 24.0 |
| Total | 31 | 32 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 154 | 100 |
| 3.Do you belong to any market association: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 25 | 27 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 128 | 83.1 |
| NO | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 26 | 16.9 |
| Totals | 30 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 154 | 100.0 |

There were discussion between vendors (93%) but their discussions always centred on their contribution in keeping the environment clean (52%), and other things that were personal to them. The majority of the vendors belong to one association or the other. When asked what the association were for, they indicated that the association helped them when they were in trouble.

Table 7
Access to Credit and Training Facilities

| Characteristics | Awka | Ekeulobia | Ihiala | Nnewi | Onitsha | Total | % |
|--|------|-----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1 Sources of Finance to start business | | | | | | | |
| Credit / Loan | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | 4 | 10 | 6.5 |
| Personal Savings | 25 | 22 | 26 | 22 | 23 | 118 | 76.6 |
| Others | 5 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 26 | 16.9 |
| Total | 31 | 32 | 30 | 31 | 30 | 154 | 100 |
| 2 From whom is the other sources of finance: | | | | | | | |
| Family (Husband, Father, Mother, Children etc) | 3 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 18 | 81.8 |
| Co-operative Societies. | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 9.1 |
| Official Institution (Banks) | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9.1 |
| Totals | 3 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 22 | 100.0 |
| 3 Credit after starting business: | | | | | | | |
| From Family Members | 10 | 13 | 4 | 2 | 14 | 43 | 56.6 |
| Others | 3 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 33 | 43.4 |
| Total | 13 | 23 | 9 | 11 | 20 | 76 | 100.0 |
| 4 Use of Credit if Granted from Banks: | | | | | | | |
| Buy raw material in bulk | 16 | 18 | 19 | 17 | 16 | 86 | 56.6 |
| improve the quality of food sold | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 3 | 2.0 |
| Improve hygiene. | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 15 | 9.8 |
| Diversify the food sold. | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3.3 |
| Buy more equipment. | 6 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 21 | 13.8 |
| Leave food business for another business. | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 2.0 |
| Expand the Business | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 19 | 12.5 |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 152 | 100 |
| 5 Food Hygiene Training: | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 6 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 28 | 23.9 |
| No | 20 | 16 | 15 | 21 | 17 | 89 | 76.1 |
| Total | 26 | 23 | 19 | 26 | 23 | 117 | 100 |
| 6 When Training was received: | | | | | | | |
| 1980-1984 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1985-1989 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 | 11.5 |
| 1990-1994 | - | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 19 | 73.1 |
| 1995-2000 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 4 | 15.4 |
| Total | 5 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 26 | 100 |

The source of finance for most of the vendors was personal savings, (77%). Other sources are mainly from the family. Only about 56% had some credit facilities after starting the business, and mostly from their family members. Most of the vendors (57%), indicated they would use the credit facilities if granted to buy raw materials in bulk. Very few vendors had food hygiene training (24%) and that was as from 1990-1994 (74%).

Implications of the Findings

Food Habits of Consumers

The study showed that many adults had part of their meals outside the home. Care must be taken to make sure that the food taken at home complements that taken outside to ensure that all the nutrients required are present. The paper did not evaluate the nutrient value of the foods sold but it is observed that the choice of food depended on the cost, convenience and type available. The individual's taste also influenced the choice.

General and Socio-Economic Description of Vendors

There were more women vendors than men. This shows that this unrecognized sector of the economy offers a measure of economic independence to women, which has many significant positive social implications. The fact that women dominated the sector could be due to the belief in this part of the country that it is the woman's duty to prepare meals.

Many of the vendors were aged between 20 and 39 years. These are mostly women of childbearing age. When interviewed, a lot of them indicated they needed more money to take care of their children. Those between the ages of 15 and 19, that had 28% of the total were school dropouts. They had to find means of livelihood. Many of them are paid workers. While those under 15 years of age were house helps.

47% of the vendors completed their primary education, and 28% had their secondary and higher education. When asked why they did not continue, some said, they had to get married; others had nobody to train them. There were no significant differences between the educated and non educated in terms of cleanliness and their outfit. Socio-economic status did not affect their mode of operation with regard to whether they were sedentary or ambulatory, their ages and mode of employment. The findings shows most of the vendors had male-headed families (84%), showing they were playing supportive role for their families. Street food vending therefore offered the vendors a good opportunity of employment.

Food Handling and Preparation Practices

Many of the vendors indicated that they bought staple foods weekly and perishables daily. This is however subject to verification because from observation, some of them go for the cheapest and sometimes wilted vegetables. Many of the vendors prepared the food at home therefore the environment of food preparation cannot be ascertained. However the few that prepared theirs on the spot, kept the environment clean.

It is significant to note that majority of the people did not pay tax, which means the government is losing a lot of revenue in that area.

Hygiene Practices of Food Vendors

Personal and food hygiene are very important, if food safety and quality must be guaranteed. The outfit and general outlook of the individuals were good.

There were no visible presence of skin diseases or indication of the presence of communicable diseases. The practice of covering of hair, use of soap need to be fully incorporated into training programmes for the vendors. The problem of water needs serious attention from the government, as the issue of provision of potable water seemed to be beyond the scope of the vendors. The problem of refuse dumps and dirty gutters in Anambra State is a case to be seriously looked into by the Government.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Many people in the society patronize the street food vendors, as it fills the need of providing food at places where people work. The preparation of these foods often involved the entire families in

the procurement of raw materials, preparation and cooking. The role of women in the street food sector and the potential for their employment in this sector was very significant. Street foods have very significant nutritional implication for consumers, since a lot of them depend on them for their nourishment. The government has to find ways of collecting taxes from these group of businessmen and women.

Improper food handling practices can be a serious cause of contamination. So training sessions can be organized for these vendors in the areas of proper choice of food materials, nutrition and hygiene. This can be organized by home economics and nutrition experts in conjunction with the government. Also the government must set up monitoring teams for street foods.

The problem of potable water supply must be looked into by the government and unsuitable environments (such as proximity to sewers and garbage dumps) must be controlled.

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