

SACHET WATER HAWKING AND ENVIROMENTAL EFFECTS IN IKEJA, LAGOS

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Abstract: *The study examines the environmental effects posed by sachet water hawkers and its associated problems in Ikeja, Lagos. The specific objectives are: to examine the socio-economic characteristics of sachet water hawkers, their mode of operation, methods of water sachet disposal, management practice and associated problems. The study utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through questionnaire administration and direct observation in the study area. 150 questionnaires were administered purposively to 150 sachet water hawkers while the secondary sources were obtained from review of related literature on the subject matter. Data collected were analysed through descriptive statistics. Results revealed that 41% of the hawkers engaged in activity due to unemployment. Also, water sachet materials constitute 42% of the waste generation problems in the area which is a major environmental problem. The study therefore suggested that government should enact laws to effect easy collection of tax from the hawkers as their contribution towards economic growth and development. Effective solid waste management practices should be encouraged coupled with public enlightenment on the disposal methods. Government should make adequate provision for waste disposal facilities and training of more sanitary agents in the area.*

Key words: *Economic, Water, Hawking, Waste and Management*

1.0 Introduction

The growth and development of towns and cities have always been associated with the changes in pattern of social and economic behaviour. An important element of these behavioural changes is the pattern of distribution and consumption of the essential commodities in the rapidly changing urban environment (Aduwo 1995). The increased rate of urbanization in Nigeria is a feature of 19th century. Consequently, many of urban centres have become metropolitan with more physical problems associated with them. The associated planning problems have resulted in falling standard of living in the country. This is largely due to increased unemployment for the teeming population (Oyesiku, 1999).

Hawking is a common phenomenon in third world countries. Despite numerous transformations that have emanated through civilization engendered by education, the age long practice is still sustained. Hawking, which is influenced by several factors, involves the sale of diverse commodities and moving from door-to-door of the customers. Therefore, sachet water hawking constitutes a particular job through which a sizeable number of people living in urban cities are earning a living. However, studies have shown that hawking of sachet water is a major generator of solid waste/refuse in urban centers. This waste appears not to be properly disposed, resulting in hygiene and sanitation problems. Most importantly, the city image which is the major concern for planners is distorted and given bad aesthetic views (McGee, 1979).

Scholars have identified street commercial activities as part of man's reaction to catch up with the minimum standard of living (Chothia, 1994 and Inge, 2000). Street commercial activities are issues of urgent consideration in the third world nations. These commercial activities, dominated by informal sectors *International Journal of Physical and Human Geography*

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do generate economic values; employment and income for the hawkers, which contribute not in small measure to growth of the economy, but are often overlooked by policy makers as a panacea to unemployment in developing countries (Chothia, 1994 and Cross, 2000).

Life in urban centers is so ethnic that consumers often times have no opportunity to visit stalls/shops to purchase what they desire. They therefore find solace in hawkers who bring the needed service to them. Hawkers could therefore be referred to as mobile service providers and they majorly render service to gypsies. Urban transportation routes are now swarmed with hawkers transacting with travelers. They are found along all hierarchy of roads and on every side. Hawkers now compete with the transport modes for rights of way (Aduwo 1995).

The hustling and bustling in most parts of Ikeja generate a high level of thirst and there is high level of demand for sachet water. Sachet water is therefore sold to consumers in motor parks, along streets, travellers in busses, cars, trailers and this helps to reduce wide spread of water borne diseases. This study therefore seeks to examine the environmental effects of sachet water hawking in Ikeja Lagos. This is with a view to making some suggestions towards good environmental management in the study area. The specific objectives are to examine socio-economic characteristics of the sachet water hawkers, their mode of operations, identify the methods of water sachet disposal, the form of management practices and some associated problems in the area. This study made some suggestions towards proper solid waste management in general and water sachet inclusive in the study area.

2.0 Materials and Methods

Ikeja is nerve center of Lagos state where people engage in different forms of commercial activities. Those that engage in water hawking target the business centers, markets or motor parks for their daily income. Data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. This is coupled with oral interview from opinion leaders, direct observation and questionnaire administration. These constitute the major information used for empirical analysis in this study. Questionnaire were administered to 150 respondents, using simple random sampling method to obtain information on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, their involvement in sachet water hawking in the study area, mode of their operations, identify methods of disposal and management practices as well as some associated problems.. Data obtained from the field were analysed through descriptive statistics such as: frequency count, percentages and pictures to assess the degree of the effects of waste generation and management of sachet water hawkers in the area.

3.0 Results

i. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the study area

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area which describes terms such as gender, age, marital status, educational status, payment of tax, capital required for the business and daily income of the hawkers. The table revealed that (76%) of the total respondents were females engaged in sachet water hawking while the (44%) were males. Married respondents among them were (73%), and single were (47%). Also, majority of the respondents were above 20 years of age. This category of sachet water hawkers comprises of adults who do hawk to earn a living.

It is revealed table 1 that the payment of tax is not something common among sachet water hawkers in Ikeja. Only 14% of the total number of hawkers that were sampled pay their tax to the government. This contributes to income generation problems of the local government of the area. Sachet water hawking is a small scale business because the capital required is relatively small as 72% of the respondents agreed that about ₦100-₦1000 was sufficient to start the business while 48% were of the opinion that between ₦100-₦2000 was required to start the business. With regards to return from the sachet water sales, 71% earn between ₦500 and ₦1500 daily, while 49% make between ₦1500 and ₦2500 daily.

Table 1 shows the socio economic characteristics of sachet water hawkers in Ikeja

S/N	Variables	percentage
i.	Gender of respondents	
	a. Male	44
	b. Female	76
ii.	Age of respondents	
	a.	39
	b. under 20 years	63
	c. 20-35 years	18
iii.	Marital status	
	a. Single	73
	b. Married	47
iv.	Level of education of respondents	
	a. No formal education	42
	b. Primary education	41
	c. Secondary education	25
	d. Tertiary education	12
v.	Response to payment of tax by the sachet water hawkers	
	a. Yes	34
	b. No	86
vi.	Capital required to start hawking sachet water	
	a. N100 – N1000	72
	b. N1000 – N2000	48
vii.	Daily income of the sachet water hawkers in Ikeja	
	a. N500 – N1500	71
	b. N1500– N2500	49

Source: author's field work, 2013

Plate 1: School Age Teenager Hawking Sachet Water along Simbiat Abiola way, Ikeja, Lago



Source: Author's field work (2013)

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(i) Mode of operation of sachet water hawkers

Table 2 showed that the operation of sachet water hawking in the area could be categorised into 3 major periods of the day: morning hours between 6:00am- 11:59am, afternoon between 12:00pm-4:59pm and evening period between 5:00pm-9:00pm. As indicated in the table 2, the peak period is in the afternoon between 12:00pm-4:59pm.

Majority of those that engage in the activity are single (74%). Most of them are female (76%) who are primary and secondary school leaving certificate holders. Also, the table revealed that 23.3% of sachet water hawkers sell in the morning, 52.5% hawk in the afternoon hours only, 8.4% of the hawkers carryout their activity in the evening hours of the day, while 15.8% of the respondents engage in sachet water hawking activity at every time of the day. Although the business was described as seasonal by most of the respondents as more profits were said to be made during the dry season than in the raining season.

Table 2 shows the mode of operation of sachet water hawkers in Ikeja

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
a.	Morning (6:am-11:59am)	28	23.3%
b.	Afternoon (12:pm-4:59pm)	63	52.5%
c.	Evening (5:00pm-9:00pm)	10	8.4%
d.	Morning, afternoon and evening (6:00-9:pm)	19	15.8%

Source: author's field work, 2013

ii. Methods of water sachet disposal in the study Area

Table 3 revealed that (37.3%) disposed the empty water sachets on the road and streets, (20%) discard them on the gutters, (18.2%) in buses, while 24.5% discard water sachet in food canteens bus stops, motor parks and so no. The indiscriminate waste disposal in Ikeja worsens the sanitary condition of the area. Sometimes the consumers do not exhaust all the water in the sachet and when moving vehicles, bikes or pedestrians step on them, the leftover in the sachet is splashed on the passersby. The water sachets are a nonbiodegradable material

and as a result they remain on the roads for as long as they are cleared or carried away by wind. Disposed water sachets on the roads could also make pedestrians slip and fall. Empty water sachets disposed in the gutters cause blockage of drainage which constitute to the level flood during heavy downpour. Plates 2 and 3 throw more light on the points.

Table 3: Methods of sachet water disposal water sachets in Ikeja

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
A Discard on the road/street	41	37.3%
B Discard in gutters	22	20%
C Drop them in buses	20	18.2%
D Others	27	24.5%

Source: Author's field work

Plate 2 Disposed sachet water in gutter along Kodesho Road, Ikeja.



Source: Author's field work (2)

Plate 3 Sack bags containing waste along Obafemi Awolowo way, Ikeja, Lagos



Source: Author's field work (2013)

Source: Author's field work (2013)

(ii) Management of solid waste, “empty sachets of water” inclusive in Ikeja, Lagos

The participation of the sachet water hawkers in waste management in the study area is found to be limited to regular general public sanitation exercise. The bulk of solid wastes generated in the area, empty water sachets inclusive, is cleared by government sweepers monitored by Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA). The efforts of the state government are complemented by Ikeja local government authority by deploying sanitation officers to the area for sanitary inspections. As shown in Table 4, 47% of the solid waste compositions are empty water sachets. Moreover, 66% of solid wastes are collected and managed through the use of bins in the study area. Plate 4,5 and 6 provide more information on the solid waste management in the area.

Table 4: Composition of waste generated in Ikeja Lagos state.

S/N	Solid Waste Composition in Ikeja	% of WASTE
1	Water Sachets	47%
2	Organic	13%
3	Paper	10%
4	Glass	3%
5	Metal	7%
6	Plastic	15%
7	Other	5%

Source: Lagos State Waste Management Authority 2013

Table5: Methods of collecting and managing solid wastes “empty water sachet” inclusive in Ikeja

Methods of collecting and managing solid wastes “empty water sachet” inclusive in Ikeja		
a.	Waste bin or sack bin	66
b.	Refuse dump	07
c.	Incinerator	27
d.	Others	0

Source: Author’s field work, 2013

Plate 4: Sweepers of the LAWMA at work in Alausa Ikeja



Source: Author’s field work, 2013

Plate 5: Waste-bin along a bridge in Ikeja



Source: Author's field work (2013)

Plate 6: Parked Skipiters in LAWMA office



Source: Author's field work, 201

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(iii) Problems Associated with Sachet Water Hawking in the Area.

Oral interview with Lagos State Waste Management (LAWMA) officers and opinion leaders in the area revealed that sachet water hawkers contribute to traffic delays in Ikeja. There is need for more equipment and man power to be able to sustain the environmental cleanness of the area. This is coupled with government supports to LAWMA with enough funds and empower the body in policing the entire place with the aid of law enforcement agencies so as to maintain a good habitable environment.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are made based on findings and some associated problems of environmental implications on solid waste management with “empty water sachets” inclusively in the study area:

- (i) Government should put in place a regulatory body charged with the responsibilities of monitoring water sachet hawkers on streets to reduce the spate of accident in the area.
- (ii) Government should, as a matter of urgency, come up with empowerment schemes for the youths to reduce the number of people unemployed.
- (iii) Government should enforce environmental sanitation laws to improve on the present waste disposal and management system of the area so as to lessen the situation of environmental deterioration. (iv) More sanitary officers and facilities should be supplied in greater quantity into the area by the government to ease disposal and collection of waste in the study area.
- (v) A task force should also be charged with enforcing laws against indiscriminate disposal of empty water sachets and other solid waste materials in the area.
- (vi) Government should start buying solid waste materials, “empty water sachet” inclusive, from the public for recycling purpose. This would enhance environmental cleanness in the area.

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