

A Case Study of Street Food Situation in Kumasi: Socio-Economic Aspects and Sanitary Practices

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Résumé

Amoah, D. K., Marfo, E. K., Wallace, P. A. & Osei, F. *Etude de cas de la Situation de la Nourriture Vendue dans la rue de Kumasi : Les Aspects Socio-economiques et des Pratiques Sanitaires.* Les bases de ces études étaient les caractéristiques socio-économiques des propriétaires et consommateurs ainsi que des pratiques sanitaires en rapport avec la nourriture vendue dans les rues de Kumasi, Ghana. Les résultats de ces études ont révélé que les consommateurs vont à l'encontre de la fabrique sociale de la population et étaient principalement des étudiants, des voyageurs, des enfants, des adultes, des couples, des célibataires etc. La sélection de la nourriture par les consommateurs était essentiellement basée sur les prix (32%) et l'appétibilité (28%) alors que la sélection des vendeurs était basée sur la propreté. Une analyse basée sur le chi-carré avait indiqué un lien considérable entre la situation de famille et le patronage de la nourriture de la rue ($P < 0,05$). De plus, il y avait un lien considérable entre le revenu (chaque semaine) des patrons des nourritures de la rue et le type de nourriture choisi pour la consommation ($P < 0,05$). La majorité des vendeurs avaient moins de 10 ans d'éducation formelle (50%) alors que les autres n'avaient d'exposition à n'importe quelle forme d'éducation formelle. Ironiquement, malgré le fait que le commerce était dominé par des femmes, les hommes constituent la majorité des patrons. (68%). De plus la majorité de gens dans ce commerce étaient mariés (76%) alors que les patrons principaux étaient les célibataires (84%). Le phénomène de ré-utiliser les restes de la nourriture (56%) sans le processus adéquat de réchauffage (64%) était une pratique habituelle. Il n'y avait aucun lien entre le traitement des restes de la nourriture par les vendeurs et leur situation éducationnelle ($P > 0,05$). Il y avait en plus une révélation d'un lien considérable entre les profits (chaque semaine) réalisés par les vendeurs et les raisons qui étaient les bases de leur engagement dans cet entreprise ($P < 0,05$). Grosso modo, le commerce de la nourriture de la rue était considéré comme une entreprise intégrale et bien acceptée à Kumasi. Il est donc, envisagé que sa modification, facilitation ainsi que l'incorporation dans les plans développementaux de la cité serait vraiment de bénéfice non seulement aux administrateurs de la cité mais plus importante à l'ensemble des habitants ordinaires.

Mots clés : Caractéristiques socio-économiques, conditions sanitaires, nourriture de la rue, vendeurs, consommateurs.

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Abstract

The socio-economic characteristics of proprietors and consumers and some sanitary practices in relation to street-vended foods in Kumasi, Ghana, were used as the basis of this study. The study revealed that consumers of street foods cut across the social fabric of the populace and were mainly students, travellers, children, adults, couples, singles, etc. Selection of food by consumers was primarily based on price (32%) and palatability (28%) while vendor selection was solely based on neatness. Analysis using chi-square indicated a significant relationship between marital status and patronage of street-vended foods ($P < 0.05$). Furthermore, there was a significant connection between the income (weekly) of patrons of street foods and the type of foods selected for consumption ($P < 0.05$). Majority of the vendors had less than 10 years of formal education (80%) while the rest had no exposure to any form of formal education. Ironically, while women dominated the street food business (90%), the majority of the patrons were males (68%). Moreover, while majority of the street food vending enterprise were married (76%), the main patrons were singles (84%). The phenomenon of re-using leftover food (56%) without adequate re-heating process (64%) was a familiar practice. There was no significant relationship between treatment of leftover by vendors and the educational status of vendors ($P > 0.05$). There was further revelation of a significant linkage between profits (weekly) made by vendors and the reason (s) that formed the basis for their engagement in the street food vending business ($P < 0.05$). The study also showed that there was no significant relationship between the state of facilities used by vendors and the type of assistance required or the frequency of visits by sanitary/health officials ($P > 0.05$). On the whole, street food vending was found to be an integral and well-accepted entrepreneurial venture in Kumasi. Therefore, it is envisaged that re-structuring, facilitating and incorporating it into the developmental plans of the city would be of tremendous benefit not only to the city's administrators but more importantly the ordinary citizenry.

Keywords: Socio-economic characteristics, sanitary conditions, street foods, vendors, consumers.

Introduction

Vending of food on the street and other places of interest for a variety of reasons is increasingly becoming an integral part of the lifestyle and entrepreneurial attributes of the Ghanaian society and for that matter, most third world countries. A number of cogent reasons have been advanced for the current situation. The present precarious economic environment has given cause for people leaving home early and

returning late, travelling long distances to and from business concerns, schools or work, the inability of the youth to settle down to married life among others have given the street food business a big boost.

The introduction and upsurge of small-scale restaurants (popularly referred to among ordinary Ghanaians as chop bars), fast food joints, etc, as a matter of fact has served as a welcome stopgap to

ameliorate the potential risk of the upsurge of malnutrition as well as hunger. Some of the beneficial services rendered by the street food business are the fact that they provide customer-friendly, quick and prompt service, comparatively cheaper and ready-to-eat foods. Among others, they also cushion the Ghanaian economy by serving as a welcome platform for employment, provision of livelihood for a reasonable percentage of the populace as well as support the tourism industry by offering a variety of tasty local dishes (Moy *et al.*, 1997).

In the light of these ever-increasing popularity and beneficial services rendered by the street food vending industry, the potential for it to impact negatively on the health of the patrons of the business and for that matter the economic situation of the country if attention is not paid to it, should give ample room for concern. For instance, studies so far conducted report of a high potential for serious health problems that relates to the preparation and handling of street foods (FAO, 1990; FAO/FIDC, 1984). The outbreak of food-borne diseases and the transmission of communicable diseases as a result of patronage of street food have also been reported (Moy *et al.*, 1997). According to FAO/FIDC (1986) vendors in most developing countries do not operate with licence as well as health certificates and that one of the serious socio-economic influences of the street

food enterprise is the fact that majority of vendors usually get exposed to less than eight years of formal education.

To ascertain the impact of street food business on the Ghanaian society in terms of the characteristics of both vendors and consumers and the potential effect of their practices, Kumasi, the second largest and most populated city in Ghana and also the commercial livewire of the country was chosen for this study. Another key reason for its selection was the fact that it lies in the middle belt of the country and as such attracts all shades and kind of the citizenry from all parts of the country as they travel from one part of the country to the other. This study was conducted to determine the socio-economic characteristics of vendors and consumers of street-vended foods as well as some potential sanitary practices common among the practitioners of the business.

Materials and methods

Experimental design

The study entailed a survey that was conducted in Kumasi, the second largest and most populated city in Ghana. In all, 32 location sites within the Kumasi metropolis was selected including markets, lorry terminals, suburbs, recreational parks, commercial centers, educational institutions, residential areas, work places among others. On the whole, content-validated questionnaires were randomly administered to 480 vendors and 1,200 consumers of street

foods. The questionnaires were administered after a pilot testing for clarity of questions and logical sequence had been established. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting the vendors and consumers. The questionnaires were administered at the specified places earmarked in the study outline. Approximately 95% of the questionnaires were retrieved for analysis.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistical values (largely percentages) were used to determine the differences between the various parameters used as indices of the characteristics of proprietors as well as patrons of street foods in Kumasi. In order to determine the relationship between the various characteristics (of both vendors and consumers of street-vended foods) used as the indices of the study, chi-square test of independence (cross-tabulation) was applied (Hatcher, 2003). The chi-square values were obtained according to this format at 95% level of significance:

$$\chi^2 (df, N=N) = \text{value} \dots \dots (1)$$

where

$df \Rightarrow$ the degree of freedom for the chi-square analysis

$N \Rightarrow$ the sample size

Value \Rightarrow obtained chi-square statistic

Results

Characteristics of consumers

The study revealed that consumers of

street-vended foods in Kumasi were varied and cut across the social structure of the populace comprising workers, students, travellers, children, adults, couples, singles, etc. Table 1 depicts a picture that seems to portray the notion that the majority of consumers (patrons) of street-vended foods were within the youthful and pre-menopausal age group (96%). It was also clear that 56% of the consumers were aged between 16 and 30 years of age, 24% were aged between 7 and 15 years, 2% were aged less than 6 years while the rest (18%) were beyond 45 years of age. Data collected on the marital status and gender of consumers (Table 1) of street foods indicated that majority were not married (84%) while the rest were married. Statistical analysis of the result using chi-square showed that there was significant relationship between marital status of consumers of street foods and the reason (s) that informed the patronage of it ($P < 0.05$). The males constituted the largest proportion (68%) in terms of patronage of street foods while the females accounted for 32%.

Majority of the consumers (78%) of street-vended foods regularly and consistently patronised while the others (22%) occasionally made use of the services provided by street food vendors. The choice of food by consumers as presented in Table 2, was usually informed by the price (32%), palatability (28%), nourishment (14%), bulkiness (16%) and a combination of

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of consumers of street food (N = 1,200).

	<i>% Respondent</i>
Age class (years)	
< 6	2
7 - 15	24
16 - 20	56
21 - 45	16
> 45	2
Sex	
Female	32
Male	68
Marital status	
Single	84
Married	16
Level of education	
No formal schooling	20
Elementary	32
Secondary/Vocational/Technical	34
Tertiary	14
Frequency of patronage	
Often	78
Occasional	22
Reason for vendor selection	
Neatness	54
Prompt Service	32
Price of Food	6
Others	8

N = => Total Sample Number

all these factors (10%). The study further revealed that distance and time constraint was the pre-dominant reason for the respondents patronising street-vended foods (44%) even though the cheapness of the food (19%) and lack of

Table 2. Socio-economic characteristics of consumers of street food (N = 1,200).

	<i>% Respondent</i>
Reasons for food selection	
Taste	28
Low Price	32
How Nutritious	14
Filling/Bulkiness	16
Others	10
Reasons for consuming street food	
Distance/Time Constraint	44
Cheapness of Food	19
No House-Help/Spouse	19
Convenience	10
Others	8.0
Food eaten from vendors	
Cereal-based Foods	65.8
Fufu and Soup	14.5
Gari and Beans	6.6
Snack	5.3
Beverage and Porridge	1.3
Others	6.5
Income per week[■]	
Less than ₵1,074.00	30
₵1,074.00 - 5,370.00	40
₵5,370.00 - 10,741.00	17
More than ₵10,741.00	13

■ 1999 : 1 US \$ = ₵2,000.00

house help or spouse (19%) were appreciably compelling factors. Ten per cent of the respondents consumed street-vended foods for the sake of convenience while only 8% had reasons other than those outlined above. Reasons for food selection and the income (weekly) of consumers of street foods were subjected to chi-square test

of independence and it came out that the relationship was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$).

Characteristics of vendors

Table 3 shows that 80% of the vendors operated their trade in fixed stalls while the rest hawked their food. The major incentive that seemed to have apparently urged vendors into this street food business was monetary consideration rather than any other reason. This was buttressed by the fact that 64% of the respondents fell within this category while 20% of the respondents inherited the business from relatives and the 16% depending on other concerns. Majority of the vendors who participated in this study earned just about or more than ₵3,222.00 profit a week while 18% earned about ₵1,289.00 every week. Analyzing for the possible relationship between profits (weekly) made from the business and the reason(s) that informed on the decision to enter the enterprise revealed a statistically significant linkage between the two independent variables ($P < 0.05$).

The study further revealed that majority of the vendors were women (90%). The males formed 10% of the total vendor population emphasising the fact that this was women's business. Seventy-six per cent of the vendors were aged between 17 and 40 years, 16% were beyond 40 years while 8% were below 16 years (Table 3). It was further shown that a large number of the vendors were

Table 3. Socio-economic characteristics of vendors of street food (N = 480).

	% Respondent	
Age class (years)		
<16		8
17 - 31		42
32 - 40		34
> 40		16
Sex		
Female		90
Male		10
Marital status		
Single		24
Married		76
Level of education		
No formal schooling		20
< 10 years of formal education		60
10 years of formal education		14
> 10 years of formal education		6
Days of operation		
1-2		8
3-5		40
6-7		52
Reason for entering street food business		
Financial Gain		64
Inheritance		20
Others		16
Type of vendors		
Fixed (stationary) stall	80	88 ■■
Hawking (Mobile cart)	20	75 ■■
Improved centers	--	44 ■■

N = => Total Sample Number
 ■■ *WHO Food Survey (Moy et al., 1997)*

illiterates and school dropouts (80%). Only 20% attained varying levels of formal education (Table 3). Quite a substantial number of vendors began the trade with financial support from relations (59.2%). Another 22.4% self-financed the business while the rest (18.4%) depended on other sources for funding the trade (Table 4).

Table 4. Socio-economic characteristics of vendors of street food (N = 480).

	<i>% Respondent</i>
<i>Source of finance</i>	
Relations	59.2
Self	22.4
Others	18.4
<i>Profit made each week</i>	
¢1,289.00	18
¢1,289.00 - 3,222.00	50
> ¢3,222.00	32
<i>Number of hands employed</i>	
2	77
3-4	19
> 5	4
<i>Ages of employees (years)</i>	
1-10	2
11-18	52
>19	46
<i>Condition of facilities</i>	
Good	16
Fairly Good	47
Poor	37
<i>Type of assistance required</i>	
Loan	50
Housing	16
No Governmental support	22
Others	12

Seventy-seven per cent of the vendors employed two additional hands to assist in the business, 19% employed between 3 and 4 assistants while only 4% took on more than 5 employees. Sixteen per cent of the respondents used good and well conditioned facilities, 47% used fairly good facilities while the other 37% used poorly conditioned facilities. As a result of the poor capital base of most of the vendors, 78% requested the desire for some assistance. On the other hand, 22% showed no interest in any form of governmental or non-governmental aid (Table 4). Statistical analysis of the results showed a non-significant relationship between the state of facilities used by the vendors and the type of assistance required ($P > 0.05$).

More than half of the respondents were not able to sell out their wares most of the time (Table 5). Almost 50% of the vendors re-used the leftover food while approximately 44% disposed of such foods. Usually the leftover foods were not adequately re-heated before being sold to the public and about 64% were found to fall within this category while 36% sufficiently re-heated such foods before serving out to customers. Subjecting the level of education of the vendors and the treatment of leftover foods to statistical analysis using chi-square indicated that there was no significant relationship between the two independent variables ($P > 0.05$).

As evidenced in Table 5, 53% of the

respondents stated that they had up to five official visits from health and sanitary officials within a period of a year. The other 47% indicated they never had any contact with these officials. Analyzing for any statistical connection between the conditions of facilities used by the vendors and visits by sanitary/health officials revealed that there was no significant relation between the two independent variables ($P>0.05$).

Discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of consumers

Consumers of street foods in Kumasi were found to cut across all the age groups, gender as well as marital status as depicted in the survey. However, majority of the people who patronised street food were the youth, students, the unmarried likewise the married. This behavioural pattern could well be attributed in part to the fact that Kumasi is an urban metropolis and as such people leave early for work and return home late hence their inability to prepare food for consumption at home or as packed-lunches for the place of work or school. Most people also travel long distances to and from work or place of studies and so out of necessity they have to eat outside the home. Furthermore, the fact that street foods are generally inexpensive and also readily convenient makes it seem the ideal food to contain this pressing need. It is, therefore, no wonder that street-

Table 5. Treatment of leftover food and contact of vendors with health/sanitation officials (N=480).

	<i>% Respondent</i>
<i>Re-use of leftover foods</i>	
Re-use	56
Dispose off	44
<i>Treatment of leftover foods before sales</i>	
Adequate re-heating	36
Inadequate re-heating	64
<i>Inspection by Sanitation/health officials</i>	
Not at all	47
1-5 times a year	25
> 6 times a year	28
<i>Source of water</i>	
Pipe-borne	100
Bore Hole/Well	0
Others	0
<i>Storage of water</i>	
Metal container	75
Plastic container	14
Refrigeration	7 43 ■■
Others	4

N = => Total Sample Number

■■WHO survey (Moy et al., 1997)

vended foods have been described by Moy et al. (1997) as low-cost, ready-to-eat foods that form an essential part of the food supply line especially for the low-income persons in the urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Most people consider the art of cooking a tedious chore and so prefer to patronise an

already cooked food. Many also do not have the know-how, the necessary accoutrements or the time to prepare a balanced, nutritious and tasty meal and it comes as no surprise that majority of the consumers of street-vended foods were found to be unmarried. Evaluation of the relationship between marital status and reason(s) for patronising street foods using chi-square showed that there was significant connection between these two independent variables. It, therefore, seems that marital status in the present Ghanaian society has a lot to do with an individual's disposition or otherwise to patronise street-vended foods.

The study further revealed that cheapness, palatability (taste) and bulkiness of food formed the general basis of choice of food selected by consumers of street foods in the Kumasi metropolis while little attention was accorded other considerations. This observation thus confirms WHO report on street-vended food situation in the world which indicated that consumers of street foods usually place much emphasis on aesthetic aspects instead of the more important factors which protect against food-borne diseases and that they are often oblivious of the relationship between contaminated food and food-borne disease (Moy *et al.*, 1997). It was also evident from the study that more than two-thirds of the consumers preferred cereal-based meal to the others. Cereal-based foods are comparatively cheaper and filling. Therefore, the consumption of foods high in cereals results in quick satiation and less expenditure on food. The

relationship between the income (weekly) of consumers and the reason(s) that informed on choice of food was statistically determined to be significant ($P < 0.05$). It, therefore, seemed that the lower the income, the higher the probability for a consumer to select foods that were relatively cheaper but easily filling and so incur less expenditure.

Socio-economic characteristics of vendors

The study showed that females formed the majority of vendors as observed earlier by Moy *et al.*, (1997) to the effect that street-vending of food is a source of livelihood for most people particularly women. The dominance of females in the street-vending business is not surprising as in the typical traditional Ghanaian family set-up, the art of cooking is usually the special preserve of the females. The basis for this gender imbalance could also be ascribed to the old cultural practice of educating the male child at the expense of their female counterparts. These females are, therefore, deprived of the opportunity of gaining employment in the formal sector of the economy by way of their exposure to new and higher knowledge through higher education and thus resort to the informal sector for employment. This observation is similar to the findings contained in the FAO report on street food situation in Nigeria and other developing countries (FAO, 1989). The study further revealed a relatively high youth population (76 % < 40 years) in the

street food trade. The most plausible reason for this comparatively youthful influx into the street food business could be attributed to varied reasons notably the tedious process of preparing large quantities of varied dishes for customers with all shades of background and preferences and this invariably requiring stable strength, diligence as well as the ability to work at a fast pace.

Naturally, the aged as well as the under-aged are not favoured for this work. It is no wonder that street food vending is believed to be a veritable ground, which offer business opportunities to budding entrepreneurs (Moy *et al.*, 1997). From the study, it was clear that a relatively significant number of the vendors had had less than 10 years of formal education. In actuality, 20% had had no formal education at all while 60% had had less than 10 years of formal education. According to the study conducted by Moy and others, vendors of street foods are often poor, uneducated and lack appreciation of safe food handling (Moy *et al.*, (1997). There is, therefore, the need for the institution of a systematic programme of training and re-training for all those who in one way or the other have something to do with the street food business. This according to WHO is the most cost effective intervention measure on food safety (WHO, 1996, 1994, 1992). It was also clear that no governmental laws, regulatory mechanisms as well as code of practice had been promulgated to

govern the operations of the street food trade in Kumasi. It was as if all that one needed to get engaged in the enterprise was the will and the means to acquire the few relevant accoutrements. Apparently, the over-riding force that seems to have been the strong attraction for the potential proprietors of this business was financial gain as 64% of the respondents entered the street food vending business with the sole aim of making money. Vending of food on mobile cart or hawking of food on the street was found to be an unpopular phenomenon in Kumasi. This picture closely matches that reported in the WHO study on worldwide street-vended food situation where 88% of responding countries that participated indicated the street food business was generally transacted using stationary stalls. It is an unfamiliar sight in Kumasi and for that matter Ghana, to see people walking while eating. Culturally, people prefer to be comfortably seated while enjoying their meals regardless of the type of meal being consumed.

Sanitary practices as exercised by vendors

The study showed that supervision and provision of guidance that was supposed to be exercised by the health and sanitary inspectors was woefully inadequate (Table 5). The obvious lack of supervision in a field as vital and essential as the street food vending business though disappointing was to be expected as WHO worldwide food

survey confirmed this to be a global problem (Moy *et al.*, 1997). Their report revealed that in most countries the ratio of vendors to health inspectors was very big. The apparent reason for this unhealthy situation might be ascribed to the fact that these regulatory agencies tasked with this oversight responsibility of ensuring as well as enforcing the implementation of food laws, code of practice likewise inspection programmes are, however, not adequately resourced.

The provision of loans seemed to have been the main concern of most of the vendors as half of the respondents expressed such a desire while the other half covered concerns such as housing, no need for support among others. It, therefore, seems the provision of such and similar assistance like the organization of short, periodic educational and training programmes for vendors of street food on topics such as hygiene, food handling and safety, food-borne diseases, food poisoning, etc, would substantially improve the services provided by this important outlet of the food supply link. Statistical analysis of the relationship between the state of facilities at the disposal of the vendors and the type of assistance required by vendors indicated a non-significant relationship ($P > 0.05$). A relatively small fraction of the vendors used good and well-conditioned facilities for their operations while the state of facilities of the rest could best be described as fairly good or poor. The

FAO worldwide food survey also came up with a similar observation. They reported that infrastructure development was relatively limiting in some regions of the world notably Africa which had restricted access to toilet facilities, refrigeration, and waste disposal facilities. The chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the independence of the state of facilities used by the vendors and the frequency of visits by sanitary/health inspectors. The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between the two independent variables ($P > 0.05$). It, therefore, seems that the focus of these visits whenever they did occur was more related to hygienic issues other than the state of facilities at the disposal of the vendors.

Whilst the study revealed the practice of re-selling leftover foods to be popular among vendors in the Kumasi metropolis, the complementary process of adequately re-heating such foods before selling to the public was very appalling (Table 5). According to the WHO food survey conducted in 1993, which comprised all six regional offices, 72% of the corresponding countries reported inadequate re-heating of leftover foods (Moy *et al.*, 1997). Even though the fraction of vendors who did not sufficiently re-heat before selling was lower (64%) than the 72% reported in the WHO food survey, the level is quite close enough to warrant attention considering the fact that in the US improper re-heating of food was

reported to be the primary cause of the outbreak of food-borne diseases within the period between 1973-1982 (Bryan, 1988). Other workers have observed that the handling of food in such a manner only indicates the lack of general knowledge with respect to food-borne illness (USDA/FIDC, 1991; Williamson *et al.*, 1992). One of the food safety measures adopted by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in order to safeguard against the outbreak of food-borne diseases due to the improper handling of leftover foods is that all leftover foods should either be promptly refrigerated in small, shallow containers for quick cooling or discarded and that hot foods should be kept hot (USDA, 1989). It was found out that there was no statistically significant relationship between treatment of leftover foods and educational status of vendors ($P>0.05$). The implication of this is that the educational status of an individual could not wholly be depended on to guarantee the proper handling of leftover foods before re-selling to the public for consumption. This, therefore, calls for the institution of periodic training and re-training programmes for all vendors engaged in the street food vending business.

Conclusion

Street-vending business, one of the informal activities of the Ghanaian economy was found to be relatively popular among the residents of Kumasi for varied reasons. These range from

availability, accessibility, means of employment, cheapness, filling, to convenience. Students, pupils, singles, as well as the youth were found to be the main patrons of street-vended foods. Ironically, while majority of vendors were married (76%), the overwhelming majority of consumers of street foods were single (84%). Statistically, marital status of consumers was significantly related to street food patronage ($P<0.05$). Moreover, it was observed that most of the vendors were women (90%) while the main patrons of street-vended foods were males (68%). There was also no statistically significant relationship between the state of facilities used by vendors and periodic visits by the sanitary/health officials. The re-use of leftover foods without adequate reheating was comparatively high. The handling of leftover foods was found not to have any bearing on the educational status of vendors ($P>0.05$).

Street food vending business was recognized from the study to have been accepted as a legitimate and vital part of the food supply system in the Kumasi metropolis and so there is the need to have it incorporated in the developmental plans of the city and for that matter the entire country. In view of this, urgent governmental intervention in the form of the enactment and application of regulations as well as code of practice, registration of vendors, requirement of periodic medical examination and training, institution and implementation

of workable vendor to inspector ratio as well as the establishment of special agency with the sole responsibility of street food vending is required. These would go a long way in protecting consumers as well as ensuring the safety of such foods in the context of the prevailing local situation.

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