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Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on the informal sector livelihoods in Zimbabwe

NYABEZE, Kudzai and CHIKOKO, Witness

ABSTRACT

The paper interrogates the socio-economic impact of lockdown measures on street vendors' livelihoods in Zimbabwe. The study draws literature from a global, regional and national perspective with the utility of the capabilities approach in conceptualising the problem. The utility of the African renaissance theory was important in revealing how colonial structural systems can create stumbling blocks for the operation of the informal sector in an African context. The study reveals documentary analysis in conceptualising the socio-economic impact of coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) on the informal sector. This paper identified the following socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal sector such as disempowerment, exposure to poverty, increased gender-based violence and inequality. The implications of the lockdown measures have accelerated the rate of demise of the informal sector in an already crumbling socio-economic environment. The study reveals that the major economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal sector is poverty and decreased profits exposing this sector to abject poverty. This paper recommends that the government should provide social protection programmes for this sector during such socio-economic shocks based on indigenous African knowledge systems.

KEY TERMS: COVID-19, informal sector, lockdown measures, socio-economic impact, Zimbabwe

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Author/s details

Kudzai Nyabeze, Teaching Assistant, Department of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe & Witness Chikoko, Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe. He is also a Research Associate in the Department of Social Work, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses the socio-economic impact of the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown measures on street vendors. The advent of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe brought with it, lockdown measures by the government of Zimbabwe in a bid to contain the rapid spread of the virus in the country. To stop this rapid spread, the government introduced stringent lockdown measures that meant a disruption of all informal street vending in Zimbabwe. In a country whose majority of the population is working in the informal sector, these lockdown measures had debilitating effects on the informal sector livelihoods especially among street vendors who survive on hand to mouth. The implementation of the COVID-19 lockdown measures on street vendors was more than the pandemic itself according to some proponents as its effects had more devastating effects in a country that has inadequate social protection coverage that would sustain the informal sector during the COVID-19 lockdown. One is therefore left with more questions than answers in line with the livelihoods of street vendors during the COVID-19 lockdown period. It is against this backdrop, that this paper assesses the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors during the lockdown period in Zimbabwe.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International Labour Organization (ILO) (1993:5) defined the informal sector as, “broadly characterised as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned.” There are mainly two categories in the informal sector these embrace small unregistered workers and wage workers who work in insured and unprotected jobs. The informal sector is further characterised by problematic working conditions that are precarious and insecure and the employees are not protected by any labour regulations. However, despite the working conditions the informal sector has moved from being a source of employment to a reliable source of livelihoods for many Zimbabweans. According to the IMF (2018), around 6 million Zimbabweans which is approximately 34% of the population live in absolute poverty whilst at least 90% of Zimbabweans are employed in the informal sector which is however not suffice enough in times of providing sustainable livelihoods during unfortunate times. The COVID-19 pandemic is perilous to the livelihoods of those that are employed in the informal sector as their capabilities and functionalities are usurped especially when governments tend to overlook these sectors.

Zimbabwe’s economy is largely informal and most of the families in Zimbabwe rely on the informal sector for survival. Luebker (2008) argues that the informal sector existed pre-independence but was not visible due to colonial laws which suppressed African entrepreneurship. Further, in times of economic quagmire households endeavour to supplement their incomes from the informal sector as observed by Nyabeze and Chikoko (2019). In developing countries, the contribution of the informal sector is imperative due to poor economic performance, such that any unfortunate events such as wars, diseases outbreaks will result in the disruption of livelihoods. The COVID-19 pandemic started in December 2019, in Wuhan, Hubei Province of China. Following such a spontaneous outbreak, World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it debilitating socio-economic effects on the informal sector. In as much as the effects of COVID-19 have been hardly felt in the world over, many countries have resorted to lockdown measures in a bid to control the spread of the virus. This lockdown measures have exacerbated on the already struggling African economies whose economies are largely informal Mupambireyi et al. (2014:23).

Countries have taken varied measures to mitigate against the spread of the pandemic including prohibition of large gatherings, social distancing and complete country lockdowns. Zimbabwe has not been spared by this pandemic as at 30th of March 2020 the government of Zimbabwe declared COVID-19 pandemic a national disaster. This led the country to impose lockdown measures which restricted movement of people in the country in order to ameliorate the spread of the pandemic. However, the lockdown measures have had negative social and economic impacts especially on people that are employed in the informal sector.

The governments across the globe have been grappling to combat the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on their economies which have collapsed. Beyond the virus aetiology, prevention and treatment, the virus has resulted negatively in the world with visible socio-economic effects such as high death rates, poverty, mass unemployment, depression and anxiety. International Monetary Fund (2018) contends that the devastating effects of the pandemic in the developing world whose economies are highly informal, the impact of the pandemic in the developing world have greater implications thus spearheaded by lack of investment in the Public health sector. Zimbabwe has the second largest informal sector which scored about 60.2% second to Bolivia’s 62.3. This suggests a huge blow to the Zimbabwe’s informal sector which has mushroomed for the past two decades. Zimbabwe Labour Force and Child Labour Survey (ZLFCLS) (2019), indicated that employment in the informal sector sky-rocketed from 859, 060 in 2014 to 975,880 in 2019 representing a 14% increase. Therefore (ZLFCLS, 2019) projected a 76% informal rate of unemployment which could now have been increased by de-industrialisation of formal economies aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe as many industries have failed to cope economically.

In Zimbabwe, the desire to eradicate poverty and cope up with high cost of living drove many urban individuals to join informal sector trading to realise their capabilities as means to survive harsh economic conditions Chidoko et al. (2011b). With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, their dreams have been shattered leaving those in the informal sector employment uncertain of what tomorrow holds for them as the reality of when lockdown measures will be uplifted still remains a riddle wrapped in mystery. African countries that have imposed stringent lockdown measures include; Zimbabwe, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Lesotho, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda, Gambia, Burkina Faso, DR Congo, Chad, Gambia, Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya and Nigeria World Bank Development Indicators (2018). These countries experienced reduced GDP per capita due to decreased spending that was caused by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The informal economy in Zimbabwe has expanded as the formal sector shrinks which has compelled the need for social protection for this uncovered group. If the informal sector traders are fused in the mainstream social protection schemes it results in improved fiscal space for the government and also warranty social protection for everyone. Although the informal economy has subjugated the economy over the formal sector precarious issues are on the kind of social security it offers to its people given the contingencies that informal traders face. Given the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe and in Zimbabwe at large, one is left to wonder how these groups are making ends meet as their sources of livelihoods have been severely thwarted. (According to the International Labour Organization, 2005:23), “a society that provides insurance for its citizens protects them not only from war and disease, but also from the socio-economic insecurities related to making a living through work”. Therefore, COVID-19 has exposed the informal sector as the most neglected sector by the government as evidenced by lack of consideration to resuscitate this sector as characterised by demolitions of prohibited cites which was conducted by the Local authorities showing non-tolerance of the informal sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the International Economics Consulting (IEC) (2020) survey of operating informal sector businesses operating in the 54 African countries reveal the followings shortcomings; drop in demand for products, lack of operational cash flow, reduction of opportunities to meet new customers, Business closed, decline in workers production, many workers cannot return to work, challenges in logistics and shipping of products and difficulties in terms obtaining raw materials as reported by the Economic Commission for Africa; IEC (2020).

The implications of lockdown measures on the informal sector have devastating effects on the survival of the informal sector. IEC (2020) indicates challenges that are unbearable to the informal sector not forgetting the underground operations being done by this sector. Most informal sector businesses in Zimbabwe have been operating underground without being registered.

The objective of this paper is to explore the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on the informal sector in Zimbabwe. The paper infuses the capabilities approach, which was propounded by Amartya Sen in the 1980's as an alternative to the welfare economics. Therefore, this paper contends that, lockdown measures have caused excruciating pain felt by the informal sector as can be viewed within the socio-economic milieu.

This paper problematises the underdevelopment of Africa due to the adopted colonial mentality which is premised on modernisation and the dependency syndrome which has trapped Africa in particularly Zimbabwe into poverty. The African renaissance theory rejects the notion that for African societies to develop or enhance their capabilities, they should rely on donors or western funded social protection models which promotes individualism or modernisation ideology which assumes that for African countries to develop they have to follow the western innovations or their foot prints of development. According to Matunhu (2011:71) “to think of an African life is to think of unity, communalism and shared purpose, therefore development and poverty reduction strategies for Africa must be informed and embroiled in the African values like Ubuntu” The African values of communism and Ubuntu has been eroded due to the ideologies adopted by the social planners whose values and ideologies indicates colonial structures (Matunhu, 2011). For instance, the concept of individualism is visible as evidenced by the non-inclusion of the informal sector inclusion in the mainstream social protection schemes such as the National Social Security Association (NSSA) which was established in 1994. Therefore, due to the advent of the novel COVID-19 indigenous entrepreneurs were left to fend after themselves ironically in a crippled economy with nothing to offer. The advent of the COVID-19 saw the government demolition and further decongestion of illegal vending sites for the street vendors in Zimbabwe. Such actions, values and ideologies are against the promotion of indigenous entrepreneurship and atypically uphold colonial structural systems of the slave and master relationship. Therefore, this paper contends that, for African countries to develop, they have to create or base their economic planning based on the prevalent economic values that are consistent with the African beliefs and values of communism, Ubuntu and utility of indigenous knowledge systems to generate own social protection systems that are culturally defined.

According to Toriro (2019:22), “For many planners in the developing world, the negative treatment of informal traders has been motivated by modernist values held by planners and the elites” of this sector as shown through its resilience to vacate their illegal operating spaces in the urban areas. According to Toriro (2019) the planners of African governments have modelled their city planning on the western city planners which they envied due to

colonial training and aspirations from the world class cities such as Dubai and Britain. However contrary to our values, cultural context and experiences these planners in developing country seem to forget that developing countries are characterised by high unemployment, poverty and informality. Therefore, adopting such a western model of planning that envies the ideal cities of the west is far from reality for African countries. Therefore, such an ideology has created a rift between government and local authorities who oversee informality activities in Zimbabwe. Therefore, macro-economic policies created by the government has offered nothing but sustained raids and attacks for these groups of informal traders leading to struggle for survival. Lack of policies that support informality and guarantees its protection during socio-economic crises is vehemently visible in the western ideology of welfare during the colonial period which denied Africans pensions with the belief that upon retirement they will be taken care off by their rural folks Kanyenze et al (2011). Therefore, macro-economic policies do not guarantee any form of protection for the informal sector as it is premised on the principle of individualism.

METHODOLOGY

This research relied on mixed qualitative research method and documentary analysis. It will rely mostly on primary data. By adopting these methods, the researcher hopes to overcome the biases and the problem that comes with using single method. The information was gathered through documents and records. This includes information from official reports like short term recovery programme, budget statements on the contribution of the informal sector to the economy and World Health Organisation (WHO) reports. This research also draws from the work of other scholars and organizations that have done an attempt to fill in the gaps and contribute to both academic knowledge and to help proffer solutions for policy makers. The study reviewed documents from the Internet of government publications, research articles and academic books and journals. E-learning resources were utilised due to the mobility of the research to conduct interviews as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings from documentary analysis will be corroborated by qualitative findings from interviews and buttressed by statistical reviews from documentary analysis. This paper also used pseudo-names as the names portrayed in this study do not portray real names of people, this was done in order to maintain the principle of confidentiality.

FINDINGS

The results of the impacts of lockdown measures on the livelihoods of those employed in the informal sector vary from socio to economic impacts. The findings include loss of social capital and safety nets, exposure to absolute poverty and disempowerment. These have been presented below with quotations of various people employed in the informal sector.

Table 1: Main sectors of operation by geographical location (five major cities in Zimbabwe)

CITY	ACTIVITY
Harare	Vending Selling second hand clothing Construction of materials Cross border trading
Bulawayo	Second hand clothes and new clothes Selling cosmetics and new clothes Cross border trading
Mutare	Crosser boarder trading Market gardening Timber selling Selling second hand clothing and new clothes Selling of drinks and mineral water
Gweru	Vending Cross boarder trading Selling new and second hand clothing Selling cosmetics and hair dressing
Masvingo	Cross boarder trading Selling groceries <i>Mushikashika</i> , taxi driving Selling new and second hand clothing Vending

Source: ILO (2019)

Loss of social capital and safety nets

Sen (1990) in his capabilities approach argues that individuals have the ability to work and feed themselves however individuals are at one point in time vulnerable to unfortunate events and will not be able to take care of their livelihoods COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus and spreads through human to human contact and to deal with that people need to deal with social distancing and this means the closure of many business including those in the informal sector. However, the closure of the informal In Zimbabwe and enforcement of social distance laws has led to disruption of livelihoods for many who are employed in the informal sector. One vendor in the informal sector interviewed by Thomas Reuter's Foundation (2019) noted that:

Because I've been deprived of income, I have to live in one room at my in-laws' with my two children and my property. We have no money for food and no one is helping us. And If I don't settle the loan soon, they will come and take my goods.

These findings clearly show the extent to which workers in the informal have been deprived of their social capital and safety nets which further results in the affects their functioning's and capabilities.

Exposure to absolute poverty

Lockdown measures and the social distancing laws have exposed workers in the informal sector to absolute poverty as their activities have been banned. Workers in the informal sector survive on their daily income hence if they do not work, they do not eat. According to an interview (telephone call) with Taurai Chimuti stated that, "I sale gas in my home area and customers are no longer coming due to stay at home measures and this has reduced my profits I make on a daily basis" Findings from an interview with participant indicated that lockdown has affected profit margins of the informal sector traders. Chipso Marwe upon interviews also indicated the same problem when she said:

I used to make more profits during the evening as it is the time when most of our customers come and buy vegetables but due to the restricted times of operations this has made us suffer a lot and if we extend we risk losing our goods to the security officers during their raids.

Findings from Chipso Marwe indicate that informal traders profit margins have been reduced a situation thus exposing them to extreme poverty. According to the Manicapost report, findings revealed that informal traders' goods were raided and their goods were confiscated by the police. According to Rumbidzayi Zinyuke Manicapost Reporter, the following goods were taken; tomatoes, cucumbers, green vegetables, cabbages and lemons. Apart from being taken these goods were further burnt by the Local Authorities at Mutare City Council's Yeovil premises. Sakubva marketplace is situated in Mutare in the high-density area of Mutare where most informal activities take place. Demographically the place constitutes almost one quarter of the population of Mutare. It is the poorest of Mutare's suburb and its economy is heavily pinned on a large outdoor food and flea market. Sakubva is a place similar to Mbare if to be compared with Harare where different market activities take place and most informal activities do happen. As measures of stopping the spread of COVID-19 virus the Mutare City Council has seized the market operations and the marketplace has been closed leaving many informal traders without any employment as their sources of income have been thwarted. Therefore, the business area has been closed following the COVID-19 lockdown measures exposing masses to absolute poverty as evidenced the image below showing the confiscated goods by the Police of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Basing for the African renaissance theory one's income or material consumption level per household is partly a result of one's voluntary decision. Workers in the informal sector cannot stock food due to how they get their income hence they are already exposed to hunger and starvation. This is perspective is different from a formal economy whose consumption is consistent according to one's income. Therefore during the COVID-19 businesses were severely affected which crippled indigenous informal livelihoods.

Disempowerment

The informal sector empowers a lot of individuals in economies which are vastly informal. According to the (International Monetary fund, 2019) the informal sector contributes to at least 60% of the current employment and this makes the country the largest after Bolivia. Due to the lockdown measures the informal sector is not operating within their usual time which has to some extent decreased the sales of these businesses. The operating times that has been set by the government is from 08:00am to 1630pm which can be a disadvantage to some of the businesses as indicated by the following findings according to online paper. One of the informal sector traders named John Chimhanzu upon interrogation revealed disempowerment due to business limited operation regularities as stated,

It's easy to give orders that forbid people to move around if you have a spacious house and a secure job to fall on," she said. "I have not earned a single dollar in my pocket since March 31. The days are so long and the nights are unbearable on an empty stomach with thoughts of a dark future lying ahead. Where do I start from here?"

Findings from this quote clearly show how citizens employed in the informal sector have been disempowered by the COVID-19 pandemic, a situation which has left them with economic stress as they are finding it hard to survive under these harsh conditions.

Increased gender inequality

Women in the informal sector are found in low income activities which barely guarantee survival, the enforcement of the lockdown measures has further weakened the ability of women within the informal sector to sustain themselves. The weakening of these women within the informal sector has exposed them to gender inequality which can also further expose them to gender based violence.

According to a statement from the gender commission women in the informal sector have been exposed to gender inequality, she quoted below saying

The informal economy has been the most active providing income for the majority of families. Access to disposable income is a daily quest to ensure that food is available among the mostly daily-wage-earners dependent on vending and other forms. "The lockdown has largely shut down the informal economy affecting millions of Zimbabweans especially women and girls - who are the major players in the informal sector," ZGC said the government should ensure that economic recovery plans also target women who are the majority in the informal economy.

She further argues that there is need to address the gender inequality that have been necessitated by the pandemic. "The commission recognizes the gender dynamics in emergencies and ensure that respective response mechanisms are gender-responsive; Enhance respective social protection systems - through robust safety nets - with a deliberate emphasis on giving preference to the vulnerable members of the society, which includes women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities, among other group" (The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), May, 2020).

Increased gender based violence

Pandemics expose the weakness in every society and the COVID-19 pandemic has increased gender-based violence. Musasa project offering abused women shelter and counselling noted between March 30 and April 9 2020 at least 764 cases of gender-based violence were recorded from 500 to 600 cases which are normally recorded. In an interview the Musasa project director noted that economic insecurity and poverty cause gender-based violence

Media and reports by institutions such as Musasa and Padare show an unprecedented increase in GBV namely domestic violence manifesting in physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse among family members. Musasa, for example, reports that they have attended to more than 1200 reports at the end of April, more than double the usual per month. Padare, the Men's Forum on Gender Equality, reports that during the same period, they had received more than 50 reports of domestic violence on men since the lockdown started, a stark increase.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper was to explore the Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on the informal sector in Zimbabwe. The paper used the African renaissance theory to explain the impact of these of lockdown measures on the informal sector focusing on the livelihoods of those employed within the informal sector. In this theory development is seen as emanating from an African context rather than the modernisation or dependency theories that were advocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) such Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes. Academic scholars such as Himmelstrand, Kunyanyui and Mburugu (1998) argued that for African countries to develop they have to use local approaches that focuses on socialism and develop on their own slow pace constantly than to copy and paste western models of development that are inappropriate to apply in their countries. This study shows that, families are facing challenges to meet their daily food demands and have cut their consumption as a way of adjusting to the income shortages. The situation in Zimbabwe is being fuelled by the soaring inflation and people's savings have been eroded. According to Sen (1999) everyone can be deprived of such capabilities in various ways through ignorance, lack of government will and lack of financial resources. Therefore, African renaissance approach utilized brought out the implications of such economic inequalities that were brought about by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic also exposed the dependency syndrome of African governments to the extent that they even failed to create their own traditional medicines using locally available resources to contain the virus. As a result people resorted to locally traditional methods such as *zumbane* and steaming *kunatira* in order to prevent themselves from contracting the virus. However most of these traditional remedies were deemed unscientific and unreliable. This is evident of lack of confidence that has characterised African countries thus failing to produce their own medicines through utilisation of local herbs and available resources. Apart from this, the lockdown measures also exposed lack of sustainable traditional social protection methods that are premised on the values of collectivism. Due to the adoption western ideologies and values for example means tested programmes such as harmonised social cash transfer programmes and public Assistance programmes developed from a Marxist ideology failed to materialise due to lack of financial capacity by the local government of Zimbabwe to sustain its citizens with cash transfers especially those employed in the informal sector.

However scholars such as Kanyenze et al (2011) also attribute lack of sustainable social protection mechanisms by the government due to lack of political will to channel resources towards the provision of social services. Therefore African governments have to consider re-investing their wealth and resources towards the social service sector as a health people creates a healthy economy. The popular saying a health people creates a healthy economy is one of the fundamental values that undergirds the collectivist ideology which is premised on the values of economic equality and prosperity. Therefore this identifies more with the African values of collectivism in times of natural pandemics such as the COVID-19. The government was supposed to cushion its citizens through viable and sustainable social protection floors and home-grown community based social protection schemes.

Moreover, this paper presented that the informal sector in Zimbabwe is huge and in-cooperates mostly the vulnerable and has proved to be a source of livelihood for those that have not managed to get employment in the formal sector. The paper has indicated that the livelihoods of those employed in the informal sector have been affected socially and economically and the paper further argued that it is the duty of the government to provide relief for these workers. International Labour Organization (2004:23) argues that “a society that provides insurance for its citizens protects them not only from war and disease, but also from the socio-economic insecurities related to making a living through work”. The government in this respect should provide social protection to its citizens during such times of socio-economic shocks. This is evident according to Chapter 2 of the Copac 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe Act 30 which states that, “the state must take all practical measures, within the limits of resources available to it, to provide social security and social care to those who are in need” However regardless of such legal provisions by the government and the International Labour Organization, the informal sector has been neglected by the government which has highly exposed them to absolute poverty. From an African philosophy based on Ubuntu and collectivism it’s the duty of the government to create an enabling environment for people to realise their capabilities and functions just a father or mother would take care of their children in times of distress.

Metaphorically the government is an epitome of the African family thus from an African perspective, the moment parents fail to take care of their children they can be condemned to have failed based on African moral values. Hence, the informal sector has been deprived of such economic and social rights. This has been observed through government lack of consideration towards the informal sector. The creation of harsh socio-economic policies during the Lockdown period is indicative of such efforts to thwart the growth and development of the informal sector. Evident of the demolition of venting sites at Mbare and people owned shops clearly indicates how the government is disabling the operating environment of the informal sector. One of the scholars who echoes the same sentiments with Sen (1999) supports the notion of freedoms and capabilities by stating “the degree to which people are able to express and enjoy their capabilities depends on structural factors namely, the degree to which economic and social policies provide fair and equitable resources Marmot and Wilkinson (2006).

According to Kanyenze, et al. (2011) states that lack of political will to channel resources towards social welfare services have been the reason why Africa is underdeveloped. In context of this pandemic the government had promised to give people in the informal sector a stimulus package of two hundred (RTGS) to the most vulnerable group. However, a closer look at the reality shows that the funds have not been disbursed to the extent that the money was been eroded by inflation. By providing social security, it promotes social development and makes people to realise their potential to develop.

It is common knowledge that pandemics across the world expose the weakness in every society and of such is the COVID-19 pandemic that has increased gender-inequality. According to Homes and Scott (2016) states that informal workers face high levels of risks yet the majority are not covered by social insurance, women in the informal sectors face specific and delicate risks in the labour market and across the life cycle yet more women than men are excluded form insurance schemes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

The study directly impacts upon the social work profession. The majority of the population are dependent on the informal sector for survival. Therefore, the current setup of social protection floors cannot extend coverage to these vulnerable groups which expose the informal sector traders to absolute poverty during dire socio-economic crisis which is against the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal number 1 of ending poverty. Africa's most indigent persons are the most susceptible populations at risk such as the informal traders, persons with disabilities, children, sex workers and women among other populations. Lack of strong social protection policies for the vulnerable populations in Africa will cause resentment among African vulnerable population. The COVID-19 will also affect the most vulnerable population who depend on public transportation, characterised by lack of social protection, do not social insurance coverage, can not afford hygiene products such as sanitizers, live in large extended families and reside in informal sectors. Therefore this will also strain the profession of social work whose labour force has been hardly hit by brain drain as social workers are and still migrating in search for greener pastures. Lack of resources will also limit social work practitioners utilising the developmental paradigm to effectively impact socio-economic development in Zimbabwe as most of the problems affecting African countries are more developmental than individualistic. Therefore African governments need to consider adopting a developmental approach that is in line with the indigenous systems, knowledge and utilise local resources. Decolonising the profession to take a locally oriented approach to enhance local development is the way to go in order to address local problems the country is currently facing. This implies a heavy investment in social expenditure and public health systems that support home grown solutions and medicines.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research paper has attempted to explore the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on the informal sector livelihoods in Zimbabwe. This paper borrowing the ideas of Amartya Sen argued that individuals have capabilities to trade based entitlements which however seem to be eroded by this pandemic disease. This paper recommends the need to consider the already existing employment and social protection policies as well as pre-existing gender and age disparities within the informal sector. Different strategies can be implemented by the government of Zimbabwe in order to support the livelihoods of those employed within the informal sector. The government can make use of existing information on the database of those employed within the informal sector and can also take the opportunity to update its data base. Alternatively, government can provide temporary safety nets in the form of cash transfers through the mobile

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