

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION IN PROMOTING SMALL BUSINESSES SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN CROSS BORDER TRADERS IN ZIMBABWE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In a developing country like Zimbabwe, small scale businesses play a significant role in the economic development of the country and women cross border trading has always contributed immensely to Zimbabwe's economic development since the country gained its independence, and also during the peak of Zimbabwe's hyperinflation era. Thus, this study aims to establish the significance of the Department of Immigration in promoting women cross border trading. The study used phenomenology philosophy and case study approach. The primary data was obtained through self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussions at the borders of Chirundu and Kariba, while literature and archival data helped in soliciting for secondary data. A sample of 400 participants was systematically randomly selected from a total population of 15000 women cross border traders and 50 immigration officials respectively. The research findings show that the Immigration Department plays a role in women cross border trading if the rules and policies are favourable and simple to understand. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Zimbabwe because the immigration rules imposed on women cross border traders were found to be negatively affecting profitability and sustenance, and therefore not contributing to the growth of cross border trading sector. The Immigration Department was also found to be encouraging underhand dealings and corrupt tendencies. This includes corruption by both local and foreign immigration officials, delays in clearance of travelers at the borders and very tough restrictions on the movement of people across borders. Thus, the study recommended the implementation of immigration policies that encourage women cross border trading, ease access to immigration information as well as, training of the immigration officers in courses such as customer care among others.

**KEYWORDS:** Women Cross Borders Trading, Economic Policies, Immigration Policies, Trading Policies, Economic Development, Corruption, Small Business, Profitability