

WOMEN WORKERS IN INFORMAL SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN STREET VENDERS OF MANGALURU CITY OF KARNATAKA

Alwyn Stephen Misquith

Assistant Professor

Department of Economics

St Aloysius College (Autonomous), Mangaluru-3

ABSTRACT:

Women are an important part of the society. As a mother, wife and daughter they play a prime role in the family. Women constitute half of the world's population. In India, as per 2011 census, women constitute around 586.46 million which is 48.46 percent (census 2011).¹ Women work in different sectors like agriculture, industries, business houses and service sector. A large number of women workers also work as street vendors. Street vendors are identified as an important category of urban economies around the world, offering easy access to a wide range of goods and services in public spaces. They cater to the needs of a large number of customers from middle and lower income class and contribute significantly to the economic growth. According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, there are 10 million street vendors in India, with Mumbai accounting for 2,50,000, Delhi has 4,50,000, Kolkata more than 1,50,000. Karnataka is one of the four states in the country that collectively contributes to 51.9 per cent women-owned businesses. At the same time, it should be noted that street vendors face a lot of hurdles in their day today life activities. With this introduction this paper is based on the primary data which is collected from 60 women street vendors of Mangaluru city, through direct interview with the help of structured questionnaire. The study is based on the objectives, that is to study the socio-economic conditions, issues and challenges of women street vendors and to suggest innovative policy intervention for the empowerment of women street vendors.

Keywords: Informal sector, Women workers, Street vendors.

INTRODUCTION:

Street vendors are identified as an important category of urban economies around the world, offering easy access to a wide range of goods and services in public spaces. Street Vendor means a person who offers goods for sale to the public at large without having any permanent built-up structure from which to sell. Street vendors may be stationary in the sense that they occupy space on the pavements or other public/private spaces or, they may be mobile in the sense that they move from place to place by carrying their wares on push carts or in baskets on their heads. Street vendors are those who are unable to get regular jobs in the remunerative formal sector on account of the low level of education and skills. Various studies have already confirmed the fact that street vendors comprise one of the most marginalised sections of the urban poor. They play a very dynamic role in the urban economy, providing

necessary items, which are largely both durable and cost-effective, to average income-earning households at cheap and affordable rates. They cater to the needs of a large number of customers from middle and lower income class and contribute significantly to the economy. At the same time, it should be noted that street vending survives not merely because it is an important source of employment but also because of the services it provides to the urban population with inexpensive and varied indigenous goods. As distributors of affordable goods and services, street vendors provide consumers with convenient and accessible retail options and form a vital part of the social and economic life of a city. Street vendors in Mangaluru are among the most deprived sections of the self employed workers with specific issues and challenges.

Street vendors are a large and very visible workforce in cities. Street Vending is one of the most visible occupations in the informal economy and has been an integral part of both rural and urban culture. In the fast growing city of Mangaluru, large number of urban poor live on by working in informal sector. These people in general possess low skills, basic education and lack qualification for the better paid jobs in organised sector. For such population street vending is one of the important means/source of earning livelihood, as it requires low skills and small financial input. Street vendors provide a low cost, decentralized and highly efficient system of distribution of a wide variety of goods of daily needs such as fruits, vegetables, clothes, footwear, stationery, and all kinds of household goods at the doorstep of consumers. They reach the consumers at convenient locations, without whom people would have to travel large distances to procure these goods. The middle and lower income groups buy a large proportion of daily goods from these vendors at reasonable rates often lower than the formal stores. As in many developing countries, Street vendors constitute a substantial proportion of the informal sector, providing affordable goods to the urban poor and filling a valuable economic and social role in the urban cityscape.

In Mangaluru out of total population, 4,38,285 are engaged in work activities. 92.3% of workers describe their work as main work while 7.7% were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 33,582 workers engaged in Marginal work, 18,543 were male workers and 15,039 were female workers. Urbanisation leads to economic growth. The development of a large number of urban areas is a sign of economic progress. Street vending as a profession has been in existence in India since time immemorial. However, their number has increased rapidly in the recent years. In most Indian cities, the majority of the urban poor survive by working in the informal sector. This has led to a rapid growth of the informal sector in most of the larger cities. Informal sector reduces the unemployment. In India, the 93% of employment force engaged into informal sector and only 7% of employment force into formal sector. Informal sector came into use in the early 1970's when the International Labour Organisation (ILO) first coined the term informal sector. As a large part of the informal economy, street vendors also play an essential role in the Indian economy. The informal sector represents an important part of the economy and the labour market in many countries, especially in developing countries. It plays a major role in employment creation, production, and income generation. Within this informal sector of workforce, street vendors play an important role in employing migrated people. Vending in urban area is characterized by ease of entry, small scale of operation carried out in temporary structure in a variable location without a fixed place or store. Vendors sell their products in unregulated and competitive market environment without observing any fixed

hours for vending. The entrepreneurs are in informal sector for their livelihood, not for making profit. But some entrepreneurs in the informal sector like vegetable vendors, agents, brokers, footpath traders, refreshments, repairing and service shops earn more than the formal employees. Majority of the informal sector activities are traditional, local and community based. The informal sector activities became major source of income to the majority of population in India. It provides the basic financial support to the family for their children education, family commitments etc. Informal sector plays a significant role in the economy in terms of employment opportunities and poverty alleviation. This sector generates income earning opportunities to large number of people.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sharit Bhowmik (1999) in his revealing survey on Urban Responses to Street Trading: India conducted on seven cities in India, namely Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Imphal, Patna and Bhubaneswar explores that except in Kolkata, all other municipalities have provisions for providing licenses for street vending. In cities that have provisions for issuing licenses, municipal authorities were most reluctant to issue them, or the provisions were such that it makes it almost impossible for most vendors to avail licenses. Most of the female street vendors in these cities were subjected to all forms of harassment by the police and the municipal authorities as they do not possess licenses. Their incomes were more or less the same in all the cities. It ranged from Rs.50 and Rs.100 for males and Rs.35 to Rs.40 for females. Corruption in the form of bribery and extortion prevailed.

Sharit Bhowmik (2001) in his another interesting study on Hawkers and the Urban Informal Sector: A Study of Street Vendors in Seven Cities, which was based on street vendors from Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Imphal, Patna, Bhubaneswar, and Bangalore studied the problems of street vendors in urban areas. It found common features in all the seven cities. The income of the street vendors ranged from Rs.50 to Rs.100 for males and Rs.35 to Rs.40 for females. They were persecuted by the municipal authorities and the police. The situation of Patna was worst where bribery was high. The working condition of the hawkers was very poor and most lead a very hard life. They worked for more than 10 hours a day to earn a minimum income.

Nidan (2002) in his article on National Alliance of Street Vendors explores that there is constant fear of eviction, exploitation by police officials, municipal authorities and extortionists in the face and the eyes of street vendors. Hawkers were more or less the same as in other streets. Amritsar, a mixture of old and new architecture has many old alleys where it is impossible for anyone to stand, but vendors use that little space for their livelihood. The strength of street vendors is near about 2000 and only 1500 are organised. They face harassment from police and Municipal authorities. In Gurdaspur they are harassed by administration and also by burglars. The national alliances of street vendor's activists help these vendors and brief them on their objectives and activities. It is an association to help them.

Karthikeyan and Mangaleswaran (2013) in their joint and revealing study on Quality of Life among Street Vendors in Tiruchirappalli City, Tamil Nadu, India, explored the quality of life of street vendors based on 56 respondents. The study was based on 4 dimensions of quality of life namely 'physical health', 'psychological health', 'social relations' and 'environment factor'. The results revealed that 55.4% of the respondents had low level of 'physical health', 51.8% had low level of 'psychological health', 73.2% had low level 'social relationship' and 55.4% of the respondents had low level of quality of life in terms of 'environmental factor'. Overall quality of life of street vendors denoted that 50% of them had low level and another 50% had high level of quality of life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the socio-economic condition of women street vendors in Mangaluru city.
2. To understand the problems faced by women street vendors in Mangaluru city
3. To analyse the existing legal measures and to suggest innovative policy measures for the empowerment of women street vendors.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

- A. Primary data:** primary data has been collected from 60 women street vendors of Mangaluru city who are selected through random sampling. As it is pre-decided that all the respondents are not able to read and write, the data is collected through direct personal interview method with the help of well-structured questionnaire.
- B. Secondary data:** the secondary data has been collected from various research papers, books, district statistics, magazines, newspapers, journal articles, thesis, and reports published by government of Karnataka, government of India and from website of different government agencies.

Informal sector:

A major part of the workforce in India as well as in most of the developing countries works at informal sector. Informal sector has become an increasingly popular subject of study, not just in economics, but also in sociology and anthropology. Keith Hart was the first person to introduce the term 'Informal Sector' in September 1971. Soon after this, International Labour Organisation (ILO) employment mission to Kenya came with its report 'Employment Incomes and Equality' (ILO, 1972). There were formal and informal income opportunities on the basis of whether the activity entailed wage or self-employment. The concept of informal sector was limited to small self-employed individual workers, although the concept of informal sector had its limitations (Hart 1973).

As maximum population of India is working for informal sector, the Indian constitution assures right to equality to everyone without discrimination of any kind between men and women. But it is found that female section of society is deprived in compared to male section. They are not given priority in social and economic

decisions in their family. According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report. Women are involved in doing 67 percent work of the world, but still, they are socially and economically deprived. They receive just 10 percent of the universal income and have 1 percent part in global assets. This description also persists in their work place in unorganized sector. In informal sector women workers don't get good wages. They work equal to men. They are exploited at workplace. Therefore, the Government of India has introduced the unorganized worker social security act 2008 and domestic workers welfare and social security act of 2010 etc. But due to improper implementation women workers are forced to work and live in miserable conditions in unorganized sector. In 1981, the sector accounted for 91.1 percent of the total national employment and 65.66 percent of income generated the economy during the period of 1960-61 to 1981-82. While the organised sector grew at an average annual rate of 12.57 percent, the unorganized sector recorded a growth rate of 9.37 percent of the economy as a whole, recorded a higher growth rate of 11.36 percent indicating slight declining trend of the organised sector. While the aggregate of above trend is clear, the urban informal sector has been growing during the period. The share of the urban informal sector in the total income of the unorganized sector increased from 29.35 percent to 43.56 percent during the period of 1960-61 to 1981-82. The average earning per employee in the rural informal sector and urban informal sector was both less than those of the unorganized sector employee.

Women workers:

Informal sector constitutes a pivotal part of the Indian economy and its contribution to national product is accounted about 50 percent (Government of India, 2012). Unorganized workers in India have increased many folds post-independence. India's workforce comprises nearly 93 per cent in the unorganised International segment and 91 per cent of it are women workers. As per the survey carried out by the National Sample Survey Organization (2009-10), the total employment in the country was of the order of 46.5 crore comprising of around 2.8 crore that is 6 percent in the organized sector and the remaining 43.7 crore that is 94 percent workers in the unorganised sector. Majority of the unorganized workers engaged in farm activities, construction work and manufacturing sectors. In the unorganised sector, beedi manufacturing industry is among the major one. The industry has been classified as unorganised, falling under the small scale and cottage industries sector. Beedi rolling activity is largely carried out at home, which employs a large number of women.

An important aspect of quality of employment in India is the predominance of the informal sector. The size of the organised sector, characterised by higher earnings and job security is small, it accounted for less than 6% of the total employment in 2004-05. Around two-thirds of the total organised sector employment is in the public sector. Over the years, organised sector employment has grown more slowly than the total employment, reflecting the faster growth of employment in the unorganised sector. As a result, there has been increasing informalisation of employment over the years. This informalisation has been more pronounced in the case of female workers. As a whole, about 96% of female employment is in the unorganised sector as against about 91% of males. In urban areas, the percentage of unorganised sector workers is close to 65-70%. Not all of them are poor but crude estimates suggest that close to half of this number is in dire need of occupational up-scaling.

Women Street vendors in Mangaluru city:

In Mangaluru out of total population, 4,38,285 were engaged in work activities. 92.3% of workers describe their work as main work (employment or earning more than 6 months) while 7.7% were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 33,582 workers engaged in Marginal work, 18,543 were male workers and 15,039 were female workers. Urbanisation leads to economic growth. The development of a large number of urban areas is a sign of economic progress.

Women comprise one third of the total labour force in Karnataka. As per 2014-15 data from the director of employment and training in the labour department, of the 23.85 lakh employed citizens in the state, only 7.72 lakh are women. Predictably, among the districts, Bengaluru tops the list, with 3.16 lakh women in the workforce. The data further categorizes employment into private and public sectors. Going by this classification, Bengaluru has 2.59 lakh women working in the private sector and 56,478 in government services. While Mysore district has the highest number of women employed in the public sector (21,056), Dakshina Kannada has 1.26 lakh women employed in private jobs. This also reflects the higher literacy levels in these districts. However, the difference is more visible between rural and urban areas.

Findings and Analysis:

The 60 respondents whose opinion was taken for the study belong to different age groups as shown in the following table

Age Group	Number of respondents
18- 24	12
25-30	16
31-40	20
41 and above	12
Total	60

It is clear that most of the Women street vendors belong to the middle age group and it also learnt that most of them are the head of their families and taken over the responsibility of educating their children. It is another interesting fact that all the respondents are educated but their educational qualification differs as shown in the following table.

Educational Qualification	Percentage
Primary	26%
High school	46%
SSLC	56%
PUC and above	72%

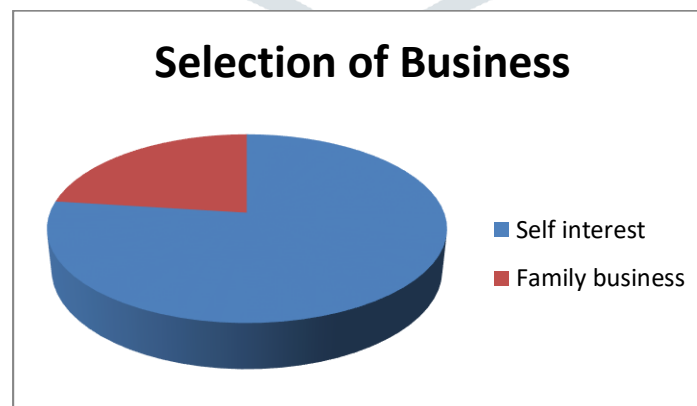
All the respondents are married and they have taken up this employment to support their family. Among the respondents 28 of them were not living with their husband and supporting their family by their own. The majority comprising 46% of the vendors have 2 to 4 children. When it comes to the family type it is found that, a majority representing 57% of the street vendors have nuclear family. The study with regard to the nature of house can be shown in the following table.

Type of House	No. of Respondents
Own house	32
Rented room / house	16
Slum	2
Relatives / Friends house	10

This shows the poor economic status of the street vendors as shelter being one of the essential needs for dignified living. It was also found that Almost 40% of the street vendors had 3-4 dependents in their family. The average monthly income earned by most of the women street vendors is shown the following table.

Average monthly income	Percentage
Above 1000 & bellow 3000	6%
Above 3000 & bellow 5000	23%
Above 5000 & bellow 7000	26%
7,000 & Above	45%

It is clear that 45% of women are able to earn income of 7,000 and above which is just enough to look after their families. Among the 60 Women street vendors 46 of them from Karnataka and 14 from other States. Among the 46 respondents, 36 of them belong to Dakshina Kannada district, whereas 10 of them from other districts of Karnataka. Among the 46 respondents of Karnataka all of them had voter Id and Aadhar card, bank pass book, ration card. By the study it was also noticed that 60% of the vendors had more than 10 years of experience and were well established and famous in their locality for vending quality vegetables and fruit at a reasonable price. The main reason, given by 77% of the respondents for choosing vending as a profession was self- interest while 23% of them chose this profession because of their parents who used to do in the same work.



Among the respondents all 23 respondents who are from Karnataka are BPL card holders and beneficiaries of PDS facility given by the Government of Karnataka. The saving pattern reveals that, a maximum of 54% of the women save a part of their income in post offices and Banks. The study regarding licenses or permits shows that a maximum of 44 of the respondents are registered and having a valid vending license. It was also learnt

from the respondents that the police and the authorities often collect taxes from them without any receipts and criteria. The study regarding working hours reveals that the majority 56.6% that is 34 of the respondents usually work for more than 9 hours a day to earn their livelihood, others work between 6-8 hours per day. The analysis regarding the credit facility reveals that, 73.3% of the street vendors purchase the articles on credit basis. As regards the mode of repayment, among the 44 respondents who borrow on credit 28 of the respondents repay daily while 16 of them are given credit on a repayment period of one week. This shows that the street vendors have no access to institutional finance, and they largely depend on their own savings, and receive finance from friends and relatives. 16 of the women street vendors fund their business from their profit. With regard to the monthly health expenditure of the vendors it is observed that 60% of the respondents spend between 1000-3000 per month.

The study regarding the level of business satisfaction of the respondents shows that majority 63.3% of the respondents are happy and are fully satisfied with their business. Almost 40% of the women vendors responded that in the city of Mangaluru over the year's cost of living has increased. The analysis regarding the facilities given by the Municipality of Mangaluru shows that out of the 60 respondents, 32 of the women responded that there were provided with the facility of space to sell the goods. 76.6 % of the respondents were the opinion that protecting the left out vegetables and fruits were their major difficulty. Many a times it's a loss for them and they could not even earn the retail price at which they had borrowed the vegetables and fruits. Among the respondents 66.6% of the respondents also expressed their opinion regarding the increased cost of vegetables over the years at the mean time the profit margin of the street vendors had come down to a very minimum level.

Essentials for empowerment of Women street vendors:

1. It is observed in the study that women street vendors lack institutionalized credit facilities and have lack of regular savings habit. Hence, it is suggested that the government can assist them financially by encouraging them to save and grant them credit facilities for their business activities at the low rate of interest and also extend the subsidy to the street vendors.
2. As street vendors lack knowledge about their won rights, awareness programmes and campaigns with regard to street vendors rights, policies, social security schemes, institutional credit support and street vendor association / union should be organised
3. As street vendors face issues in storing their leftover goods, they could be provided with a common warehousing to preserve their unsold articles by the authorities.
4. As the women street vendors lack social security and health benefits, it is suggested that pension and EPF benefits can be implemented in-order to protect the aged vendors, a part of premium/ contribution can be paid by the Government.
5. It is suggested that entrepreneurial skills must be imparted to women street vendors which would upgrade their skills and help them overcome the problems arising out of stiff competition.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Women are integral part of our society. Women try to stand by their own and support their family and look after education of their children. A majority of the informal sector women work as street vendors. Though India has witnessed an increase in street vendors, the government is indifferent to specific needs of this sector. Street vendors perform an important role in providing services to the urban population especially or the middle class and the poor. Street vendors are an important part of the informal sector not only because of their numbers but because of crucial roles they play in preserving their sector. Thus, there is a need for the Government to recognize the contributions of street vendors to the economy and to come up with a national policy on vendors which would help in empowering especially women street vendors.

Bibliography:

1. Anjaria, J. S. (2006). Street Hawkers and Public Space in Mumbai. *Economic and Political Weekly* , 41 (21), 2140-2146.
2. Balasubramaniam, Srinivasan, &Vaidhyasubramaniam. (2012). Being Powerless or to be Empowered: A Case of Women Street Vendors at Thanjavur,TamilNadu, *International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences* , 1 (9), 240-263.
3. Begari, P. (2017). Education Level of Street Vendors and its Impact on Performance of the Activity: A Case Study of Hyderabad,Telangana. *International Jouranal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences* , 7 (7), 436-443.
4. Bhat, G. M., &Nengroo, A. H. (2013). Urban Informal Sector: A Case Study of Street Vendors in Kashmir. *International Journal of Management and Business Studies* , 3 (1), 112-115.
5. Bhowmik, S. K. (2001). Hawkers and the Urban Informal Sector: A Study of Street Vendors in Seven Cities .
6. Bhowmik, S. K., &Saha, D. (2013). Financial Inclusion of the Marginalised: Street Vendors in the Urban Economy (Vol. 24).
7. Bhowmik, S. K., &Saha, D. (2012). Street Vending in Ten Cities in India.
8. Jaishankar, V., & Sujatha, L. (2016). A Study on Problems Faced by the Street Vendors in Tiruchirappalli City. *SSRG International Journal of Economics and Management Studies* , 3 (5), 124-127.
9. Karthikeyan, R., & Mangaleswaran, R. Quality of Life Among Street Vendors in ThiruchirappalliCity,TamilNadu,India. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences* , 2 (12), 18-28.
10. Mutharayappa, R., & Channamma, K. (2015). A Study on Female Street Vendors in Bangalore City. Bengaluru.
11. Pais Ricard, (2016), *Society and culture in Karnataka, Mangaluru: Mangala Publications*, page no.31
12. Patrick Martin(1998), “a study of unorganized Women”, *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, July – September 1998, Vol: 41, No: 3.
