



A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE FLOWER VENDORS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MADURAI CITY

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Abstract

The Informal Sector ultimately supports the economy of a country which is increasing day by day. The major contributors of the Informal Sector are Hawkers, Vendors, and Small Scale Business and so on. But the Informal Sector is considered as illegal at some times and faces challenges to earn and their livelihood. Traditions and Customs of the different religions, nativity and the population have created an uncontrollable demand for the essential products like Vegetables, Fruits, and Flowers. Traditional, Political, Institutional and Family functions in a whole year has increased a stable demand for all such essential products. Status of Flower Vendors in India has changed greatly over the past years. Flower Street Vendors sell the products nearby according to needs and enter into street vending to generate a high income. The aim and purpose of study is to find out the problems faced by the Flower Vendors. With convenient sampling technique, 55 Flower Vendors are met from the areas of Simmakal, Meenakshi Amman Temple (East and West), Park Town, Anna Nagar and Kalavasal. Simple percentage analysis was made to identify the problems faced by Flower vendors. The study concluded that a significant percentage of flower vendors faced problems such as insufficient space and facilities for business and in certain cases they had to sell the unsold flowers at low cost without margin of profit, so they are in socio and economic stress to borrow money for their business.

Key words: Flower Vendors, Informal Sector, Problems, Street vendors, Socio Economic Conditions.

I.INTRODUCTION:

The unorganized sector of the economy refers to the house-hold based manufacturing activity, tiny sector of industry and small scale. An unorganized sector is one in which there is no stability in profits so it is marked by low incomes, unstable and irregular employment, and lack of protection either from legislation or trade unions. Street vending has become a necessary survival weapon and is fundamentally changing the micro business levels worldwide. As the population of the country is rising to its peak, it also brings poverty and increases the

survival fitness among the people. Both Female and Male gender are struggling to lift up themselves and their family from poverty. Street vendors can be in different forms called Hawkers, Peddlers who sell Vegetables, Fruits, Ready-Made Garments, and everyday Items, and Toys, Utensils on a Mobile Structure or on the streets. The study identifies that many persons enter into street vending as entry into street vending is easy with less capital and it depends upon the individual human capacity to come out of poverty. Street vendors belong to the unorganized sector of the society. Through the National Policy of street vendors, the Government forms to facilitate the empowerment of street vendors. Government has created participatory mechanisms with representation by Urban Vendor's Organizations, Voluntary Organizations, Local Authorities, the Police, Residents Welfare Association and others for orderly conduct of Urban Vending Activities. The policies of the Government had been framed to Facilitate, Promote Social Security [Pension, Insurance and so on] and access to credit for street vendors through promotion of Self Health Groups, Co-Operative, Federations, and Micro Finance Institution. The urban authorities issue valid vending licenses with identity cards by identifying the vending zones near the public areas. The Town Vending Committees in the local authority have started identifying the street vendors in order to support in the areas of welfare, savings and credit and reduce the financial problems faced by the street vendors. The local authorities informed the regulatory measure that applied by the Government for the inclusion of street vending in the urban planning and integrated street vendors into their overall planning and management of street vendors. Therefore, street vending is characterized by Low Level of Income, Easy of Entry, Unskilled Knowledge, Self-Employed that's why it includes a large number of people.

Basically, hawkers are of three types:

1. **Static hawkers** have permanent stalls either in the market places, commercial areas, bus stops or under the foot over bridges in busy public places. These shops are rented out by the municipal organization. Their daily average income ranges from Rs.300 – Rs.500.
2. **Semi static hawkers** change their locations depending on the availability of customers and climatic and security factors. These hawkers usually operate their business in the same location and bring their merchandise with them and at the end of the day they move out with their belongings. As they have no cover over their head during hot days and in rain they protect themselves either with an umbrella or a plastic cover. They conduct their business for 10 to 12 hours a day starting from early morning to late evening. The overhead cost is low, as they have no permanent establishment. Their daily average income ranges from Rs. 150 – Rs. 300 but those who operate in busy public places have a higher income.
3. **Mobile Hawker** carries their goods as head loads and others use some sort of carrying carts. The head load hawkers sell fruits, vegetables, fish and household goods like floor and wall cleaning accessories, rugs. Shoulder- load hawkers sell pottery goods, aluminum-cooking pots and plastic wares and sometimes fruits. Young hawkers usually put their goods in a tray and hang it round their neck. These hawkers sell peanuts, hair accessories, imitation jewelry and some other goods in public places. Those hawkers who use carts for carrying their goods usually sell large and heavy seasonal fruits like jackfruit, melon, cooked foods and a variety of vegetables and plastic wares. These hawkers operate mainly in the office areas and also around schools. The customers usually buy from them while going home after office or

after collecting the children from school. Average daily income of these hawkers varies from Rs. 100 – Rs. 150.

II.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Flower vendors are often persecuted, to lead a normal life is uncertain, working conditions are poor because the Flower vendors can have limited access to infrastructure facilities, manual workforce is the core for the business. Flower vendors face difficulties to save their earnings because their expenses meet all of their income. Flower sellers are usually associated with encroachment of public spaces, causing traffic congestion, inadequate hygiene, and poor waste disposal. Flower sellers always suffer competition with other flower sellers because of fluctuation in market prices, insecure and irregular employment. The Incomes are often minimal and their sales fluctuate. To run the business, the flower vendors need to go to market purchase the flowers and then only the vendors can sell it in their area, but due to lockdown they are not Permitted to go market, so their business and life are much affected and they also face some common problems like lack of social security, lack of Entrepreneurship incompetence to access various government facilities, lack of Facilities such as toilets, lighting and so on. So the study focuses on how flower vendors overcome these problems and what are the solutions they came up with to meet their daily expenses.

III.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Flower vendors who are often called unorganized workers play an important role in the informal sector but have not gained proper recognition. They also faced a lot of problems with other Workers. Many of them are not even able to afford food in their daily life and can't meet daily expenses. The study is significant because the identification of socio economic Status of flower vendors will assist the decision makers to formulate appropriate policies for them.

IV.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the socio-economic status of flower vendors.
- To study the challenges faced by the flower vendors.

V.SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

In India, over 90% of the total workforce is from the unorganized sector which is about 41.85 crore people and among them one crore people are flower vendors. The scope of the study is limited to the flower vendors of Madurai city. The study focuses on flower vendors located at Kalavasal, Meenakshi Amman Temple, Simmakal, Anna Nagar and Park Town which are well-known and a very preferred area by most of the flower vendors in Madurai. Samples are drawn from the vendors moving and static.

VI.RESEARCH DESIGN:

Method of Data Collection:

- **Sample Size:** 55
- **Sampling Technique:** Convenience Sampling
- **Primary Data:** Primary data was collected through a well-designed and structured questionnaire. The data will be collected by direct communication with the respondent and by asking them the questions with the help of the questionnaire. Its responses are recorded in the Google form platform.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data is the information which has been collected from the Publications, websites, books, journal articles, internal records , Data will be collected by the researchers, by referring to

websites.

- **Tool for Data Collection:** Direct Personal Interview is the key tool for the data collection. In this method, the interviewer personally meets the informants and asks necessary questions directly to them regarding the subject of enquiry.

- **Tools for Analysis:** The Percentage method is a tool used for analysis.

VII.ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

Particulars		Frequencies	%
AGE	20-35	5	9
	36-50	29	53
	51-65	18	33
	66-80	3	5
GENDER	MALE	13	24
	FEMALE	42	76
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	1 st – 5 th	12	22
	6 th – 12 th	26	47
	ILLITERATE	17	31
INCOME (per day)	UPTO Rs.500	36	65
	UPTO Rs.1000	9	16
	ABOVE Rs.1000	10	18
JOB TYPE	PART TIME	10	18
	FULL TIME	45	82
NUMBER OF EXPERIENCES	1 - 5 YEARS	7	13
	5 - 10 YEARS	9	16
	ABOVE 10 YEARS	39	71
WORKING HOURS	3-5 HOURS	7	13
	6-8 HOURS	24	44
	ABOVE 8 HOURS	24	44

PROBLEMS FACED DURING WORKING HOURS	SANITATION	16	29
	HEALTH ISSUES	17	31
	NO WATER FACILITIES	10	19
	FOOD UNAVAILABILITY	3	6
	NO TRANSPORT FACILITIES	9	15
TRANSPORT FACILITIES	BUS	12	21
	SHARE AUTO	19	34
	OWN VEHICLE	16	30
	BY WALK	8	15
PROBLEMS IN BUSINESS	BUSINESS LOSS	28	50
	PRICE FLUCTUATIONS	20	36
	COMPETITORS	8	14
NUMBER OF REGULAR CUSTOMERS IN A DAY	0-5	10	18
	6-10	20	36
	11-15	8	15
	MORE THAN 15	17	31
MODE OF STORAGE OF EXCESS FLOWERS	ICE BOX	29	54
	SPRAYING WATER	13	23
	NO STORAGE	13	23

ATTITUDE TOWARDS BARGAINED CUSTOMERS	NORMAL	20	37
	ABNORMAL	3	6
	FRIENDLY	25	46
	HARSHLY	6	11
HAVE BANK ACCOUNTS	YES	28	51
	NO	27	49
SAVINGS HABITS	YES	20	36
	NO	35	64
SUBSIDIES RECEIVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT	YES	15	27
	NO	40	73
AWARE ABOUT PM/CM/UNORGANIZED SCHEMES/BANKING SCHEMES	AWARE	23	42
	NOT AWARE	32	58

VIII. SOME OF THE COMMON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF THE UNORGANIZED WORKERS:

- Workers working in unorganized sectors get minimum wages.
- Absence of a suitable physical environment at work.
- Maximum workers do not have any perfect living areas near to their workplace.
- Overtime, paid holiday or sick leaves are not provided to them.
- No Trade Union or Labour Union knowledge.
- High level job insecurity is a common phenomenon in the unorganized sector.
- Women and child workers are vulnerable and draw very low wages.
- Maximum workers are leaving in a very deplorable condition.
- Lack of quality employment due to fraudulent acts of contractors.
- Numbers of harassment issues at the workplace for working women.
- It is largely outside the control of the government.

- Lack of bargaining power.
- Poverty and Debt.
- Insecurity from natural disasters.
- Insufficient labor laws.
- No social security.
- Bonded labour
- Child labour
- Working in extreme temperatures and UV radiation.
- Working at heights.
- Electrical hazards.
- Revenue loss resulting from the accident.
- Respiratory and fire hazards from wood dust which lead to health and occupational risks and resulting from illness.
- Shift work or extended work days.

IX. CHALLENGES FACED BY STREET VENDORS are less working capital, Inadequate financial aids, Inability for credit collection, Inadequate education, Less motivation from family and others, Less risk bearing capacity, Improper communication ability, Low confidence level taking care of self, Physical inability, Depression, diabetics, Obesity stress, Work overload, Lack of time for family, Conflict between spouses, Harassment.

X. FINDINGS

- Among the 55 respondents, about 53% are middle-aged people and 9% are youngsters.
- 77% of the respondents are female. While some of them work to support their family financially and to improve their standard of living, most of the female respondents are the solitary meal-ticker of the family and they earn for their livelihood.
- It can be observed that about 44% respondents seem to work more than 8 hours and prefer working for the betterment of their lifestyle
- The vending carts are mostly owned by the respondents. Some of them avail it from the Government.
- More demand for traditional flowers in the study area.
- They spent major income to buy flowers for the next day's business.
- Limited variety of flowers is sold.
- Flower market in the study area is not organized.
- 90% of flower sellers have small and medium size shops
- 29% respondents said Lack of proper sanitary facilities is a discomfort faced by the Flower vendors though all are women.
- Kalavasal, Park town, Anna nagar does not have sanitary facilities, so they have to either pay for private restrooms or choose to ignore their needs which in turn can cause health problems.
- 60-80% managed to survive the pandemic with their money and some others went to their native villages.

- The Government has issued identity cards for Flower vendors and has granted loans and benefits for the vendors who have the card. 90% of the respondents are aware of the card and the benefits
- The Flower vendors prefer to have their family members as their co-workers
- The highest response to the question asked about their eagerness to develop their business was to open another shop or to expand their business or to clear their debts. But some of the respondents were satisfied with the stable income they were earning. These respondents neither wanted to develop nor to regress.
- The Flower vendors are becoming more aware of the schemes available for them and have started to use them efficiently.
- 85% of the respondents have Hand and back joint pains are the common health problems that are faced by the Flower vendors.

XI.SUGGESTIONS

TO THE GOVERNMENT

- Create awareness on the importance of health and hygiene. Schemes like regular health checkup or health care and pension should also be extended to vendors.
- Vending committees shall be started to hear and solve the problems of the flower vendors.
- Provide Insurance policies and other such schemes and to spread awareness of its importance to the flower vendors.
- Provide security and formalize flower vendors by providing licenses. The Government still lacks in providing licenses as most of the respondents have reported that the license has been delayed although they have applied for it.
- Prevent corruption and harassment from authorities to the flower vendors.
- Provide them with masks and sanitizers if they expect them to follow covid restrictions as they can't afford to follow all the restrictions.
- Provide proper sanitary facilities at an accessible distance.
- More support from the government is needed.
- Infrastructure facilities should be improved.
- Transportation facilities need to be improved.

TO THE FLOWER VENDORS

- To improve the quality of flowers using technology.
- Product should be made more attractive to push up demand.
- More varieties of flowers should be supplied and popularized.

XII.CONCLUSION

Majority of the customers are occasional buyers in the study area. This represents an untapped prospective buyers base. There is a need to push up the flower demand. Most of the buyers demand only traditional flowers. Modern cut flowers need to be popularized especially for gifting purposes. Florists should focus on multiple varieties and quality. Customers in the area are satisfied with the limited types of flowers that are available in the market as the floral retailers and wholesalers rarely advise their customers while buying flowers. There is a

need to improve the communicative skills of the illiterate retail flower vendors to attract the customers. The root cause of price instability is due to the highly disorganized functioning of the flower market hence the market is insufficiently competitive and does not fulfill its true potentiality. The demand for flowers is more or less seasonal in the study area. The real challenge lies in making the non-customers start liking and buying the flowers. Majority of the flower vendors have small size shops and work hard for their livelihood. Strengthening the flower market organization will ensure employment opportunities to rural people. If due attention and care are given to overcome all these difficulties, the flower market will flourish and bring attractive income to the flower sellers. The study reveals that there is a lot of scope and bright prospects for flowers in the city of Madurai.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the common problems faced during the pandemic situation were financial problems, like due to lockdown, no flower seller can be able to sell, so obviously there was no profit and therefore without income, it is difficult for them to survive, few of them were able to survive because of their previous years savings but many of the flower sellers are not even able to save their earnings because their earnings will meet the day to day expenses. And health related problems include death of the person due to COVID-19 who is a breadwinner of the family or the spouse of the person. Other problems in the normal course of business include business loss, price fluctuations and competitors.

By analyzing the data, the majority of the respondents were selling flowers for more than 10 years and they are using some similar strategies which include giving extra flowers when purchased, being friendly with the regular customers and selling flowers at a lower rate than competitors. From the total respondents, the majority of them were earning up to Rs.500 per day. From analyzing whether the respondents have any awareness related to PM/CM/Banking/Unorganized worker Schemes, only 23 respondents are aware of the schemes and other 32 respondents are not aware of any schemes related to them. And when asking about their suggestion to the government, many of the respondents say that they need loan facilities to support their family and suggest the government to give proper awareness about schemes that are available for street vendors.

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