

A STUDY ON SOCIOECONOMIC AND WORKING CONDITION OF STREET FOOD VENDORS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MADURAI

¹Mrs. PARIMALA M, Associate Professor (SF), Dept. of Commerce, Lady Doak College, Madurai,

²PRIYADHARSINI M, II M.Com., Dept. of Commerce, Lady Doak College, Madurai, India.

³ASHMITHA V, III B.COM CS, Dept. of Commerce, Lady Doak College, Madurai, India.

⁴RUBASREE J, III B.COM CS, Dept. of Commerce, Lady Doak College, Madurai, India.

ABSTRACT

The study portrays the working conditions of street food vendors in Madurai and their quality of life. In a diverse country like India, where there exist people of various classes, street food plays a very crucial role. Like the other places, Madurai also has many street food stalls. Street food is a ready to eat food or drink sold in a street by a hawker or vendor. Street food shops such as Fast Food like Momos, Pizza, Snack Shops and North Indian foods like Pani Puri, Pav Bhaji, Soup Stalls and Noodles Shops are also covered for study. The study mainly focused on Socio Economic Conditions and Working Conditions which has an impact on food vendor's quality of life. The Working Conditions Life of Vendors, analyzed in terms of their access to finance, the amount of bribes the vendors have to pay in order to sustain themselves in the Market, their working hours, the issues related to Facilities available at vending places, public space utilization and the Legal aspect of their activity. With sample size of 52, the study area covered are Kalavasal Bypass road, Theppakulam, B.B.kulam, Amman Sanathi by convenient sampling technique with percentage analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Likert Scaling Techniques and Correlations are applied to analysis the collected data and appropriate findings and conclusion was made by the researcher.

Keywords: *Quality of life, Socioeconomic Conditions, Street Food Stalls, Street Food Vendors, Working Condition.*

INTRODUCTION

Street vendors and market traders are an integral part of Urban Economies around the world, offering easy access to a wide range of affordable goods and services in public spaces. They sell everything from fresh vegetables to prepared foods, from building materials to garments and crafts, and from consumer electronics to auto repairs to haircuts. A street vendor is broadly defined as a person who offers goods for sale to the public at large without having a 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 move from place to place by carrying their wares on push carts or in baskets on their heads. The street vendors can be protected under the Street Vendors Act 2014 is a pioneering initiative to protect the livelihood rights and social security of urban street vendors in the

country and thereby aid poverty alleviation efforts of the Government. The Act aims at fostering a congenial environment for the urban street vendors to carry out their activities without harassment from any quarter. It also provides for regulation of urban street vending and is uniformly and mandatorily applicable to all the States and Union Territories.

TYPES OF STREET VENDORS

The street vendors can be categorized into two mainly Mobile Street Vendor or Standard Street Vendor in the street or road side

- **Mobile Street** means a person who Peddles, Vends, Sells, Displays or Offers For Sale Goods, Wares or Merchandise Out of A Motor Vehicle, Cart, Trailer, Tent, Table, or other temporary structure that is capable of being set up and taken down in one day and is readily moveable.
- **Standard Street Vendors** have one permanent place in the street or on the road side with authorization from the government for their selling namely Vegetable Seller, Fruit Seller, Plastic Items Seller, Earthen pots Sellers, Flower Sellers, Food sellers.

NEED FOR STREET FOOD VENDORS

The Need for street food vending lies on the fact that besides offering business opportunities for Developing Entrepreneurs, the sale of street foods can make a sizeable contribution to the economies of developing countries like India.

- Nothing represents the rich tapestry of India’s multi-cultural fabric better than street food. The cuisine of a place speaks volumes about the Weather, Culture, Lifestyle and Habits of the people.
- Hundreds of street foods with their diverse ingredients and aromas across different states and regions open a window into the world of people and give a perspective of the peoples and mores..
- The street food vendors are valuable because it is a large significant area supporting the livelihoods of millions of the urban poor.
- The convenience and low prices make street food the most favored choice.
- The concept of traditional street food has acquired new dimensions in developed countries, with food streets/ food centers emerging as new tourist attractions. Major tourist destinations abroad invariably have food streets offering exotic local foods.

COMMON PROBLEMS FACED BY THE STREET FOOD VENDORS

- Harassment
- Meager wages
- Eviction or confiscation of goods
- Brutal action by police/ hostile environment:
- No legal recognition and improper regulation of vending
- Lack of awareness about their rights
- Inability to access government schemes or facilities
- Lack of basic facilities/ poor working conditions

- Low level of unionization

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of Street Food Vendors leading to an increase in the number of workers in the informal sector. Usually workers in the informal sector are paid less and face the failure to enforce social security measures whereas the organized sector enjoys the benefits of the organization's like Job security, Leave pays, Pension schemes and Moderate salary. Many of the unorganized workers have become unseen victims. The difficulty begins with the unorganized industry itself being defined. During the pandemic Unorganized can't sell in streets, which makes them meet their difficulties in affording their daily basic needs. Unorganized workers try to live their life with dignity and self-respect by their hard work. But the basic problem of street food vendors is the absence of their right to exist because the profession which the unorganized works undergo is considered as an Informal work. Street food vendors are affected by many factors in Working Places and Living Places like Physical Harassment, Climatic Conditions and so on. Therefore, the focus of the study is to assess the working and living conditions of street food vendors and to make aware of the Street Vendors Act 2014 and other schemes available to them.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study is to explore the Working and Living Conditions of the Street Food Vendors, who are neither protected by Government, NGOs, and Labor Union nor by any Labor Laws. Countries like Thailand and Japan provide separate Food Courts and basic preventive measures for Street Food Vendors which is questioned in case of Indian hawkers where Street Food Vendors don't even get the basic facilities in their selling areas. As the study relies on the locality of Madurai areas like Bypass and Theppakulam are well known for Street Food and so the study helps to know if the Street Food Vendors in these areas are satisfied with the facilities they are being provided with or if they want additional facilities to be provided like Thailand and Japan. Therefore the wholesome purpose of the study is to identify the factors that affect the Street Food Vendors in their Working places and how it influences their standard of living as well.

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 the Street Food Vendors are estimated approximately to be around one crore in amount. The scope of the study is limited to the Street Food Vendors of Madurai city. The study focuses on street food vendors located at Kalavasal Bypass, Theppakulam, Amman Sanathi (areas around Meenakshi Amman Temple) and B.B kulam which are well-known and a very preferred area by most of the street food vendors in Madurai.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the Socio-Economic conditions of the Street Food Vendors
- To know their Business Conditions.
- To know their Works and Needs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Helen R. Sekhar (2018)¹** conducted a survey on **Vulnerabilities and Insecurities of Informal sector workers** to 518 street vendors in Noida .Majority of the vendors are illiterates, about 70 percent of vendors have the income range of Rs 5000 to Rs 7000. About 73 percent live in rented houses. About 97 percent vendors are migrants migrated due to poverty and unemployment. Most of the vendors spent more than 8 hours on vending. Majority of the vendors faced problems from police and Noida Municipal authority.
- **Sharit K. Bhowmik (2019)²** conducted a survey on **Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy** in seven cities. This study reveals that there are some common features of street vendors in all the seven cities covered. There are similarities in income levels in all the cities. Their incomes range from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 for males and Rs. 35 to Rs. 40 for females. In all the cities vendors are prosecuted by the municipal authorities and the police. Vendors adopted the behaviour of Bribing municipal and police officials for their very survival in the business. They work for more than ten hours a day to earn their meager income. Corruption, in the form of bribery and extortion, eats into the earnings of these people and reduces their income.
- **Narumol Nirathron (2020)³** conducted a survey on **Street Vending Management in Bangkok** to elucidated that the street vendors in Bangkok are known for sale of nutritious food at cheaper rates. Poor people buy in smaller quantities from them, because they have no time to prepare food of their choice. Government demarcated and officially allotted some of the areas for street vending, but street vending can be seen in unofficial areas also. Street vending is the main occupation for slum dwellers in Bangkok. Street vending is the main source of employment for those people who lost their employment in the formal sector during the monetary crisis. The unauthorized street vendors are being harassed by different authorities because of no strong unionization of street vendors.
- **Ruma Ghosh (2020)⁴** studied **Insecurities And Vulnerabilities of Street Vendors** to 600 street vendors in Delhi. The poor sanitary and living conditions of the households had an adverse effect on the health outcome of the households residing in slums/resettlement colonies. Of the total 506 households, 89 per cent reported that at least one family member suffered from some illness during the last one year and about 51 per cent of the respondents perceived that their work had an adverse effect on their health. With regard to health benefits, except for 17 per cent respondents who received partial assistance for their health problems, the remaining 83 per cent did not

¹ Helen R.sekar' study vulnerabilities and insecurities of informal sector workers published in 2018 , by Giri National Labour Institute in 2018 .

² Sharit K. Bhowmik's book Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy published in 2019 , imprinted by Routledge India .

³ Nirathron N and Yasmeen G book Street Vending Management in Bangkok :the need to adapt to a changing environment published in 2020 .

⁴ Ruma Gosh 's book Health Insecurities of Workers in Informal Employment published in 2020.

receive any kind of health benefits and had to pay fully for health services. The findings show that government health facilities which are meant to be used by the lower income group and therefore subsidized do not facilitate the urban poor. The fact that households had to pay for the medicines/tests and also lost their income due to the long waiting hours, dissuaded the poor informal workers from availing government facilities. As a result, households resorted to coping strategies which ranged from selling added resorted ranged assets, borrowing, to cost prevention strategies like ignoring illness/non-treatment.

- **Bhanu Baba Saheb (2021)⁵** conducted a study on **Women Vendors in the urban informal sector** of 360 women street vendors who sell vegetables and fish in Visakhapatnam. The average monthly income of the sample women vendor households' Per capita income is Rs 1007 only. All the vendors are living below poverty. These wide variations in profit in accordance with profits. The average daily profits are Rs. 106 only. These profits are more for literates than illiterates, because the working capital of the former is more.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** Descriptive and Analytical Research Design.
- **Determination of Sample Size**
 - **Sample Size:** 52
 - **Sampling Technique:** Convenient Sampling Technique
- **Primary Source:** Questionnaire was used to collect the data.
- **Method of Data Collection:** Personal Interview
- **Secondary Data:** Internet sources.
- **Sample areas covered in Madurai are**
 - Kalavasal Bypass road
 - Theppakulam
 - BB kulam
 - Amman Sanathi
- **Framework of Analysis:** Tools like Simple Percentage Method, Mean, Standard Deviation Correlation and Cross tabulation were adopted to measure the responses according to the objectives of the study.

⁵ Bhanu Baba Saheb's book Women Vendors in urban informal sector published in 2021 and published by Akansha publishing house .

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Particulars		Frequencies	Percentage	Mean	Std.deviation
AGE	15-25	4	8	10.4	4.75
	26 -35	12	23		
	36-45	11	21		
	46-55	18	35		
	Above 55	7	13		
GENDER	Male	21	40	26	5
	Female	31	60		
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	Illiterate	12	23	13	4.5
	Below 10 th Std.	18	35		
	11 th to 12 th Std.	16	30		
	Graduate	6	12		
LOCALITY	Urban	44	85	11.5	18
	Rural	8	15		
NUMBER OF WORKING HOURS	Less than 8 hrs	13	25	13	3.93
	8 to 10 hrs	12	23		
	11 to 13 hrs	19	37		
	More than 13 hrs.	8	15		
YEARS OF EXPERIENCES	Within 1 year	5	10	13	8.03
	1 to 3 years	13	25		
	4 to 6 years	8	15		
	Above 6 years	26	50		

NATURE OF THE BUSINESS	Seasonal	16	30	26	10
	Regular	36	70		
FULFILLMENT OF BASIC WANTS	Sometimes	16	31	17.33	11.46
	Always	32	61		
	Never	4	8		
SHIFT THE BUSINESS LOCATION	Yes	12	23	26	14
	No	40	77		
HAVE CO-WORKERS FOR BUSINESS	Yes	13	25	26	13
	No	39	75		
WAGES TO CO-WORKERS IN A DAY	Rs100 - Rs.300	9	69	6.5	2.5
	Above Rs.300	4	31		
HAVE INSURANCE POLICY	Yes	6	11	26	20
	No	46	89		
ALTERNATE BUSINESS	Yes	7	13	26	19
	No	45	87		
HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED	Respiratory infection	1	2	13	10.60
	Gastrointestinal problem	4	8		
	Hypertension	25	48		

	Diabetes	22	42		
RENT PAY FOR VENDING CART	Yes	18	35	26	8
	No	34	65		
PHYSICAL HARASSMENT FACED BY VENDORS	Yes	9	17	26	17
	No	43	83		
AVAILABILITY OF SANITARY FACILITIES IN WORKING PLACE	Sometimes	4	8	13	7.17
	Often	9	17		
	Always	16	31		
	Never	23	44		
AWARENESS ABOUT GOVERNMENT SCHEMES	Yes	11	21	26	15
	No	41	79		

Source: Primary data

ABLE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS AND WANTS

S.NO	FACTORS	HS	S	N	DS	HDS	TOTAL	AVERAGE
1	Basic Needs and Wants	1	24	45	88	10	168	3.23

Source: Computed data

INTERPRETATION: The average of the above features comes to 3.23. That is closer to 3 i.e., Neutral.

So the respondents are neutral about the thought regarding basic needs and wants.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS

Descriptive Statistics			
Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
AGE	10.4000	5.31977	5
HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED	10.4000	12.09545	5

PARTICULARS		AGE	HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED
AGE	Pearson Correlation	1	.708
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.181
HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED	Pearson Correlation	.708	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.181	

Source: Computed data

INTERPRETATION: Since the P value is at 5% significance level, the Null hypothesis H₀ is rejected and Alternative hypothesis H₁ is accepted. Hence there is a relationship between the Age and Health Problems faced by the respondents.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The intensive study on a particular topic involves more time. The period of study was insufficient to make intensive study.
- Many of them are afraid to answer due to lack of trust.
- Fast Food like Momos, Pizza, Snack Shops and North Indian foods like Pani Puri, Pav Bhaji, Soup Stalls and Noodles Shops alone covered for study with limited areas in Madurai.

FINDINGS

- Among the 52 respondents, about 8% respondents are middle-aged people and 23% are youngsters. Regardless of their age, it can be interpreted that people are ready to get self-employed and work in any conditions to provide an income for their family.
- 60 % of the respondents are female. While some of them work to support their family financially and to improve their standard of living and earn for their livelihood.
- 3.8% respondents who are into street vending out of passion. The graduates applied their education and knowledge into business and look forward to developing their business.
- 85% of the Street Vendors reside in Urban areas which are most suitable for business.
- 13% of the respondents have an alternate business and 25% of respondents work less than 8 hours and prefer to work in the evening time.
- 50% of the respondents have more than 6 years of experience as Street Vendors.
- Home delivery services don't affect the business of street food vendors.
- 35% of the respondents rent vending carts for business either on a daily basis or on a monthly basis.
- Lack of proper sanitary facilities is a huge discomfort faced by the street vendors. 44% of the respondents have complained of not being provided with sanitary facilities, 17% of the respondents complained about it not being hygienic enough to use and 8% of the respondents have complained about the distance they have to move to use a public toilet. Only 31% of the respondents claim to have received proper sanitary facilities.

- The Government has issued identity cards for street vendors and has granted loans and benefits for the vendors who have the card. Most of the respondents are aware of the card and the benefits that follow, yet 69.2% of the respondents face difficulties to avail such benefits.
- The street food vendors prefer to have their family members as their co-workers and people who have employed as co-workers pay as wages minimum of Rs.150- to maximum of Rs.300 per day.
- 75% of the vendor's are eager to develop their business or to expand their business or to clear their debts.
- 21% street vendors are aware of the schemes and One of the respondents got the Rs.10,000 loan granted by PM SAVNIDHI scheme and used it efficiently to regenerate their business after the pandemic.
- 82.7% of the respondents have reported that they have not faced any harassment during their work hours, it is necessary to note the other 17.3% too. The harassment faced by them is not only in physical form but they are also harassed verbally and financially.
- Stress and body pain are the common health problems that are faced by the street vendors. The street food vendors are required to do both hard work and smart work
- 89% of the respondents don't have an insurance policy.

SUGGESTIONS

- Government should take initiative towards providing food courts and basic preventive measures so that the vendors can have some form of security and assurance.
- Provide proper sanitary facilities at an accessible distance.
- Inspection and regular visitations might also motivate the street vendors to keep their stall hygienic.
- Basic training can be given to street food vendors on food hygiene, food laws and financial matters.
- Creating awareness is important for health and hygiene. New Schemes can introduce for vendors regarding regular health checkup or health care and pension
- Vending committees shall be started to solve the disputes faced by the street vendors.
- A vendor needs some market amenities such as water toilets, storage or shades, and waste disposal.
- Awareness about Insurance policies and Government schemes need to be made by the Government and NGOs.
- The Government can help street vendors who are above the age of 60 with funds and concessions through new initiatives.
- Provide security and formalize street 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 street food vendors.

CONCLUSION

Street vendors are an important part of the informal sector not only because of their numbers but because of crucial roles the workers play in preserving the unorganized sector. Government provides street vending policies for street vendors however, the street vendors are not aware of such policies. The study reveals that the best way for the planners to address this issue is to formalize the street vendors by issuing licenses. In conclusion it can be said that 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 the poor. Street vending and petty trading activities form the essential core of informal economic sectors in developing nations helps to generate income with minimized investments and without large human capital.

REFERENCES:

WEBSITES:

- <https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/unorganised-sector-1/unorganized-sector-informal-sector>
- <https://labour.gov.in/unorganized-workers>
- <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/the-prospects-of-the-unorganised-sector/2291332/>
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/street-vendor-act-pm-svanidhi-scheme-explained-6911120/>
- <https://www.epw.in/journal/2021/45-46/special-articles/plight-street-vendors-india.htm>
- <https://blog.ipleaders.in/plight-street-vendors-right-livelihood/>