



e-ISSN: 2319-8753 | p-ISSN: 2320-6710

IJRSET

International Journal of Innovative Research in
SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

Volume 9, Issue 11, November 2020

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.512

9940 572 462

6381 907 438

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Socio-Economic Condition of Street Vendors in Darbhanga Town

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ABSTRACT: A ‘Street Vendor’ is broadly defined ‘as a person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure from which to sell’. Street as a public space is contested as it changes and takes various forms for many marginalized groups. Street vendors occupy one of the largest and most visible occupational groups in the informal economy which is found in the public space i.e. ‘street’. However, street vending is a global phenomenon and it is most visible aspect of casual division in any types of sector inside our country. Therefore, the street vending is characterized by low level of income, easy of entry, unskilled knowledge, self-employed that’s why it’s includes large number of people. In developing country like India as well as the states Bihar stated millions of people; earn money and living their livelihood by selling wide range of goods and service on the street. Apart from serving the urban residents with cheap and fresh vegetables and other commodities they save time, money, physical harassment of the customers by being easy accessible in every nook and corner of the city. Despite their utility, they are often regarded as public nuisance and deprive pedestrians of their space causing traffic jams and having link with antisocial activities. Further, unfriendly regulations and controls that govern their livelihoods make them vulnerable to extortions and harassment. Poor social protection and working conditions on the streets expose them to a variety of safety and health issues.

I.INTRODUCTION

A ‘Street Vendor’ is broadly defined ‘as a person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure from which to sell’. Street as a public space is contested as it changes and takes various forms for many marginalized groups. Street vendors occupy one of the largest and most visible occupational groups in the informal economy which is found in the public space i.e. ‘street’. However, street vending is a global phenomenon and it is most visible aspect of casual division in any types of sector inside our country. Therefore, the street vending is characterized by low level of income, easy of entry, unskilled knowledge, self-employed that’s why it’s includes large number of people. In developing country like India as well as the states Bihar stated millions of people; earn money and living their livelihood by selling wide range of goods and service on the street. Apart from serving the urban residents with cheap and fresh vegetables and other commodities they save time, money, physical harassment of the customers by being easy accessible in every nook and corner of the city. Despite their utility, they are often regarded as public nuisance and deprive pedestrians of their space causing traffic jams and having link with antisocial activities. Further, unfriendly regulations and controls that govern their livelihoods make them vulnerable to extortions and harassment. Poor social protection and working conditions on the streets expose them to a variety of safety and health issues.

One of the street vendors’ narrated his view on the socio-political scenario is not only captivating but it also shows how his or her social life and livelihood are regulated on the street through various forces. Therefore it indicates that not only uneducated people engaged in these types of occupation sometime some educated people or individual also choose this occupation also. A street vendor is broadly defined as a person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure but with a temporary static structure or mobile stall (or head load). Street vendors may be stationary by occupying space on the pavements or other public/private areas, or may be mobile in the sense that they move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts or in cycles or baskets on their heads, or may sell their wares in moving trains, bus etc. In this policy document, the term urban vendor is inclusive of both traders and service providers, stationary as well as mobile vendors and incorporates all other local/region specific terms used to describe them, such as *hawker, pheriwalla, rehri-patriwalla, footpath dukandars, sidewalk traders* etc.”

In most of the Indian cities the urban poor survive by working in the informal sector. Poverty and lack of gainful employment in the rural areas and in the smaller towns drive large numbers of people to the cities for work and livelihood. These people generally possess low skills and lack the level of education required for the better paid jobs in the organized sector. Besides, permanent protected jobs in the organized sector are shrinking. Hence even those having the requisite skills are unable to find proper employment. For these people working in the informal sector is the only means for their survival. This has led to a rapid growth of the informal sector in most of the larger cities. For the urban poor, vending is one of the means of earning a livelihood, as it requires minor financial input and the skills involved are

low. The meager income, expensive city life and high dependency ratio leaves little room for savings. The survey shows their negligible savings. Most of them keep their savings with themselves, while few have accounts in post-office. Interestingly, though the income of the vendors of Darbhanga is more, their savings is least due to high dependency ratio. Economic crisis has a profound impact on the family budget of street vendors. Though they avoid debt, sometimes they have to take loan. Food is the basic need of the human being and for keeping good health it is, the primary requirement. Affordability of Food and Nutrition depends on the income level. Street vendors of Darbhanga are mostly from poor background. Even then, with long stretch of working hours, they try to provide their families at least two square meals a day leave aside nutrition. Proper nutrition is must to keep oneself healthy and active. Decent housing has become a great problem for majority of the city dwellers. For city vendors, majority of who are from lower strata of the society, housing has become a great problem. Availability of toilet within premises is one such facility that has impact on the overall social environment of the household. Use of common and filthy toilet not only brings various diseases but also have a profound impact on the quality of life of the households. The facility of sanitation is unevenly distributed in Darbhanga municipal area.

Conceptually, street vendors are one of the important components of the urban informal economy. Street vendors occupy a significant proportion of the total employment in the informal sector. Despite that street vendors face a lot of challenges and biases from local government representatives and also in urban policies and regulations. However, the street vendors came from outside of the Darbhanga town while most of the street vendors are vegetable vendors and they try to live their life with dignity and self-respect through hard work. Hence, Darbhanga is a developing town and proper opportunity, many rural areas worker came in here and as per convention of a developing town indicates heavy man power like labour.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of related literature makes the investigator fully aware with the previous work that has been done. It also provides an opportunity of gaining insight into the method, measures, subject and approaches employed.

Bhowmik, Sharit (2005) in his study “Street Vendors in Asia: A Review” examined that the street vendors in Asian countries namely Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bangkok (Thailand), Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Hanoi, Cambodia, Seoul and India. The study analyzed the magnitude of street vending in different countries. The assessment found that the number of street vendors in the countries was on an increase.

Jonathan, Shapiro, Anjaria (2006) in his paper “Street Hawkers and Public Space in Mumbai” studied the life of street vendors in Mumbai. It was revealed that in the central districts of Mumbai, many former mill workers and their families have been compelled to take up hawking.

Nidan (2010) in his paper “Study on Street Vendors at Patna (Bihar)” was based on 600 street vendors in 72 wards in Patna. It found that most of the respondents chose vending as a profession because there were no other jobs available, entry was easier and investment was low. In also found the problems faced by female street vendors and revealed that lack of protection and lack of basic facilities such as toilets and crèches for their children were the major constraints faced by them.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted on a street near Darbhanga railway station, Darbhanga where majority of the vendors sitting on street for selling their goods and most of the street vendors are selling vegetables. Therefore, the present study is selected in street vendors who are selling various types of goods near Darbhanga railway station. The present study is descriptive by nature. The sampling is selected by using convenient sampling and the sample size is confined as 100 individuals who selling goods on the street. For the collection of data some anthropological methods like observation method, interview with the structure and unstructured questionnaire, group discussion, case history method were adopted to know some of the issues that were not incorporated in the schedule.



IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table:1
“Age Distribution, Marital Status and Educational Status”

Variables	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Age Distribution						
20-30	17	17.00	9	9.00	26	26.00
31-50	37	37.00	17	17.00	54	54.00
51 and above	12	12.00	8	8.00	20	20.00
Marital Status						
Married	43	43.00	19	19.00	62	62.00
Unmarried	15	15.00	3	3.00	18	18.00
Widow	3	3.00	5	5.00	8	8.00
Separated	5	5.00	7	7.00	12	12.00
Educational Status						
Non-literate	11	11.00	8	8.00	19	19.00
Ability to sign	38	38.00	17	17.00	55	55.00
Under Middle	12	12.00	8	8.00	20	20.00
Under H.S	5	5.00	1	1.00	6	6.00

The table deals with demographical aspects such as “Age Distribution, Marital Status and Educational Status” of the street vendors under study area. From this table it is revealed that in case of ‘Age Group’ wise distribution of the total number of the respondents under study maximum numbers of street vendors (across both the sexes) were belongs in the age group 31-50 i.e. 54% out of the total number of respondents whereas, 26% street vendors (across both the sexes) were belongs in the age group 20-30. Similarly, in the age group 51 and above shows 20% street vendors (across both the sexes). However, the age group distribution of the street vendors also demonstrates that in the age group 20-30 have 17% male street vendors while female street vendors are 9 percentages. Whereas, in the age group 31-50 shows 37% male and 17% female street vendors out of the total number of studied population. But in the age group 51 and above displays only 12% male and 8% were female street vendors and this age group has lowest number of street vendors whereas, male and female in both the cases maximum percentages of street vendor has belongs in the age group of 31-50. It may be also indicates that percentages of street vendors in higher age group (across both the sexes) is decreasing gradually. It is further revealed from the table that in case of marital status wise distribution of the street vendors shows 62% respondents (across both the sexes) were married whereas, only 18% respondents (across both the sexes) were unmarried. Similarly, 12% respondents (across both the sexes) were separated. On the other hand, noticeable fact is that 8% respondents were widow/ widower it includes only 3% respondents were widower whereas, 5% respondents were widow. The table under marital status clearly illustrate that most of the street vendors has been married where 43% male and 19% female street vendors. Therefore, it was the evident that most of the street vendors had engaged as street vending because street vending as their main and primary occupation and moreover, approx. 60% street vendors were surviving their livelihood through street vending. The educational level among street vendors is generally low, as indicated in education status wise distribution. Out of the total, 19 percent of vendors (across both the sexes) are illiterate, whereas, 55 percent vendors (across both the sexes) can only sign their names, and 20 percent have acquired only primary level education i.e. class I-IV. Out of the total number of vendors, 6 percent comprise those who acquired only post primary level education i.e. class V-X. They had come to Jamshedpur from nearby rural areas in search of better-paid jobs in the informal sector, however they decided to street vending because it’s one of the easiest way of earning to surviving life and they had not technical education although it also encompasses small financial input and they not taken of technical knowledge of education. Therefore, these post primary level education had become street vendors. It has been observed that greater percentages of male vendors were less educated than compared to female counterparts of the street vendors under study area. However, some of women street vendors carry out this occupation to support their families because 17% female street vendors were married and those females street vendors were one of the earners of their respective families. One of the women street vendor stated that she has no opportunity



other than street vending, as it necessitates less education, unskilled knowledge and comparatively minor resources as compared to other occupations.

Table:2
Daily Income, Product-wise Distribution and Working Hours per Day

Variables	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Gender-wise daily income(in Rs.)						
≥100	5	5.00	8	8.00	13	13.00
101-200	16	16.00	14	14.00	30	30.00
201-300	21	21.00	9	9.00	30	30.00
301-400	7	7.00	2	2.00	9	9.00
401-500	10	10.00	1	1.00	11	11.00
601-700	2	2.00	-	-	2	2.00
801-900	3	3.00	-	-	3	3.00
901-1000	1	1.00	-	-	1	1.00
≤1000	1	1.00	-	-	1	1.00
Product and Gender-wise Distribution						
Vegetables	29	29.00	14	14.00	43	43.00
Fruit	15	15.00	6	6.00	21	21.00
Flower	8	8.00	9	9.00	17	17.00
Household Goods	5	5.00	-	-	5	5.00
Cooked Food	9	9.00	5	5.00	14	14.00
Working Hour per Day						
≥3	6	6.00	8	8.00	14	14.00
3-6	17	17.00	16	16.00	33	33.00
6-9	24	24.00	10	10.00	34	34.00
9-12	12	12.00	-	-	12	12.00
≤12	7	7.00	-	-	7	7.00

The table deals with “Daily Income, Product-wise Distribution and Working Hours per Day” of the street vendors under study area. In case of ‘Daily Income’ on gender wise distribution of the respondents exhibits that the daily income status of the respondents exposes important facts about their standard of living and the amount of daily income. However, 13% respondents (across both the sexes) had deprived daily income ranging from Rs. 101 to Rs. 200. While, 30% respondents (across both the sexes) had daily income reaching from Rs. 101 to Rs.200 and Rs.201 to Rs. 300 and the clearly evident that the majority of the respondents has been belong to this category with above mentioned income ranges. However, a majority of the female vendors belong to the category with an income range of Rs. 101 to Rs. 200. On the other hand, 11% respondents had daily income reaching from Rs. 401 to Rs.500 however; the income amount is slightly high range but in this range of income had only one female respondent. The daily income of a considerable portion of the sample respondents (9 percent across both the sexes) was found to be Rs. 301-400. The daily income wise distribution also displays that in the higher range income such as Rs. 601-700, Rs. 701-800, Rs. 801-900, Rs. 901-1000 and Rs. 1000 and above rupees in a day had only male respondents however, no female respondents had not in the highest income groups.

A comparison of the male–female respondents of daily income that reveals lesser percentages of male vendors belong to the lowest income category compared to the female vendors. Where, a majority of the male vendors belong to the category with an income range of Rs. 201 to Rs. 300. Therefore, the daily income indicates that male vendors have a slight advantage with respect to income status compared to the female vendors. The income of street vendors depends on which types of products they sell, and it varies product to product and also in terms of the amount of product and spending time for selling of the products. The daily income of the street vendors shows that a few vendors earn quite a high income. Remarkably, the table also illustrate that the incomes of street vendors depends on the selling’s of verity of goods such as fruits, flowers, vegetables and cooked foods vendors. In case of selling of ‘Product’ wise distribution of the respondents it is revealed from the table that most of the street vendors have been selling vegetables i.e. 43% out of the total number of street vendors whereas, 29% were male vegetable street vendors and 14% were female vegetable street vendors and comparison to the other types products which selling by the street

vendors that reveals maximum percentages of vendors selling vegetables compared to the products. However, 21% street vendors were selling fruits out of the total number of street vendors whereas, 17% respondents selling flowers. Similarly, 14% street vendors were selling cooked food on the street. But noticeable fact is that only 5% respondents were selling household implements and it is clearly visible that no female vendors does not engaged here. On the other hand, the working hour's wise distribution of the street vendors revealed that 14% street vendors (across both the sexes) ≥ 3 hours selling their products on the street. However, 3-6 hours of working hours category shows 33% street vendors (across both the sexes) selling their products on the street; 6-9 hours group displays 34% street vendors (across both the sexes) selling their products on the street, however, it's also clearly illustrate that maximum percentages of male street vendors selling goods spending 6-9 hours on the street whereas, maximum percentages of female street vendors selling goods spending 3-6 hours on the street. That's why the daily income of female street vendors had lesser percentages compared to the male street vendors. However, under the working hours the categories such as 9-12 hours and 12 hours and above shows only male street vendors selling their product where no female street vendors does not spent time above 9 hours for sell her products on the street. That's why only few of the street vendors had to earn a highly daily income. Despite the hard and their sustainability of their livelihood as they unskilled as well as uneducated although, the street vending is an illegal activity and vendors were seen with contempt. As the result, the street vendors faced endless harassment from the local traffic police at their workplace. Some time in regular basis they were forced to pay payoffs.

Problems of Street Vendors:

Street Vendors faces many troubles as they are vulnerable people. They are deprived by laws through by government in respect of labour union.

- The street vendors all the time go through struggle with other street vendors because of instability in market prices and also crisis of market places.
- Decrease in income of street vendors is that they are compulsory to pay 15 to 20 percent of their daily income as inducements to local police.
- Street vendors are usually associated with infringement of public spaces, causes traffic congestion, inadequate hygiene, and poor waste disposal.
- The government does not recognize the contribution of street vendors towards economic and social wellbeing of urban population. However, government has passed "**Street Vendors Bill 2013**", which protects the rights of street vendors

V. CONCLUSION

Street vendors have proliferated in numbers and command a large proportion of the retail trade in India due to unemployment and poverty despite the development of shopping malls and giant retail outlets set-up by corporate sectors. They make up for their lack of big capital with long hours of work, innovative ways of displaying and stocking their goods and the use of family labour to provide the back-up support. They save a lot of time and energy, supply fresh vegetables to the city dwellers, supply cheap items to lower strata of the society, area source of food for students and other urban poor through street food system. The study indicates the poor working conditions of the vendors in terms of working hours in a day, in addition to unhealthy and unsafe conditions in the workplace. The occupation of street vending is distribution theatrically. The findings of the present study indicates that majority of the street vendors were earn low amount of daily that exposes about their standard of living life. The study also demonstrates that the working hours of the vendors, poor safety and security conditions at their workplaces, together with the illegal compensations they have to pay the local authorities. The street vendors should be treated as human beings. To provide social security to this segment of population group insurance schemes for them, nurture and educate their children will improve their quality of life.

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