

# **SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF STREET VENDORS IN KERALA: A CASE STUDY OF VENDORS IN EASTFORT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Vending is an important source of employment for a large number of urban poor as it requires only very less skill, low finance and low educational qualification. We can define a street vendor as a person who offers goods or services for sale to the public without having a permanent build-up structure or mobile stall. Street vendors could be stationary and occupy space on the pavements or other public or private areas or could be mobile and move from place to place carrying their ware in on push carts or in cycles or baskets on their heads or could sell their wares in moving buses.

***Key words: Educational, Vendor, Financial, Poor People and Challnages.***

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

As per the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors 2009, there are three basic Categories of Street Vendors.

- a) Stationary : Vending on a regular basis at a specific location
- b) Peripatetic: Vending on foot and sell their goods and services and includes those who carry baskets on their head or slung on their shoulders and those who sell their good on pushcarts.

- c) Mobile: Those who moves from place to place vending their goods and services on bicycle, bus trains and mobile unit wheels.

Most of the common people mainly middle class and the low class people depend on street vendors for their purchase satisfaction. This is because people are getting necessary things from these informal sectors in a reasonable price which is affordable to them than the formal sector. So the street vendors are the inevitable contributors to the society. Street vendors, on a day to day basis, face so many problems in order to survive. The majority of this group of workers struggles daily with challenges such as lack of any social or financial security, difficult and often unsafe working conditions, exploitation at the hands of contractors and absence of basic amenities. In the face of such challenges, there is massive underemployment and productivity loss for these workers. India's leap into economic and social prosperity can only occur if it can enable these workers to live and work to their full potential and improve their livelihoods. Social security and work security are both important to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the unorganized sector. Both these are essentially two sides of the coin for the uplift of informal sector workers.

### **Significance of the study**

The study gains its importance in identifying various issues faced by the street vendors. Being a group of workers who are mostly avoided in the society, street vendors need more attention and legal protection. In case of Kerala there are a large number of migrants from other districts are also a topic to be considered. The study aims to give importance to the issues such as health issues, legal issues and social backgrounds of the street vendors.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study plans to analyze the Socio- Economic Profile Street vendors in Kerala in general and Thiruvananthapuram in Particular. Street vending is the best form of livelihood opportunity in urban areas because it requires less skill and least financial input. Many of the urban poor have taken up street vending because of these factors. Street vending is gradually becoming the most visible informal sector in Kerala.

An initial observation of the characteristics of the vending workforce in informal sector suggests that their living conditions are poor compared to the organized sector. Apart from their poor working environment they are harassed by police, local rowdies and politicians whom they bribe from their low income. They face a threat from the MNCs in the name of globalization.

Many retail outlets are coming to compete with this poor helpless workforce. Studying the livelihood strategies, socio – economic status and suggesting measures to improve their status is so important and the researcher see this as the most important research problem.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To analyse socio economic problems faced by the street vendors.
2. To identify the occupational pattern and health issues of street vendors.
3. To suggest certain policy measures.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

### **a) Research Design**

The Research design adopted in the study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. The main characteristic of the methods is to describe the state of affairs or variables as they exist in the present

### **b) Data Source**

The study includes both primary and secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from publication of various institutions, economic review and previous studies related to this topic. The primary data collection is done by conducting a survey among the street vendors of East fort, Thiruvananthapuram in order to gather relevant information. Data is collected from 50 street vendors by survey using schedule designed for the purpose.

### **c) Sampling Plan**

The sampling plan method used in the study was simple random sampling. It is also known as probability sampling because each and every item in the population has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample.

### **d) Data analysis and Interpretation**

The collected data were recorded, tabulated analyzed, and presented with help of appropriate tools. The study has employed simple statistical tool like percentage.

#### IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of previous studies is made for the purpose of studying the socio economic profile of street vendors on the basis the view of different scholars and writers. Thus obtained knowledge has a very useful role in the gathering of knowledge from the unexplored areas. Here an attempt is made to review various studies on this topic in various books, write-ups and journals. The earlier studies based on the socio economic conditions of street vendors are briefly reviewed here.

Mrs. Meenu Agrawal in her book “Rural women workers in India’s unorganized sector” makes a brief account on the issues of the women who are engaged in unorganized jobs such as street vending. She makes the study with background of Buladshahar district where most women are engaged in vending. The artisan women produces and make sale of their products. She opinioned that poor women who are mostly belonging to scheduled and backward caste, due to the reason that street vending has no barriers with respect to access because the street produces open space for the sellers and it requires only very small capital.

Grace P. Perdigon (1986) in his study "Street Vendors of Ready to Eat Food: As a Source of Income and Food for Low Income Groups", mentioned that the daily net income of the food vendors ranged from a low P.10 per day to as higher than P.500 per day. Street vending was found to be a source of family meals. Majority of the vendors were married. They were income earners and food provider. The vending places were congested and pothered. The vending operation was assisted by their kin or some hired workers. The vendors sold food every day of the week, putting in 12 or more hours of work per day. The working capital was taken from the operator's personal savings or sari ling skip.

Working Life of Street Vendors in Mumbai by DebdulalSaha (2011) portrayed the working life of street vendors in Mumbai. It brought to light that 57.20% depended upon money lenders“ for their source of capital to start their economic activity. For 26.04%, the amount of borrowing ranged from 15000 to 30000. About 41.3% paid 20 to 50 as bribes to local authorities on a daily basis. Exactly 54.5% worked for long hours from 8 to 12 hours with no safety and security conditions in their workplace.

The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 defines street vendor as a person engaged in vending of articles, goods,

wares, food items or merchandise of everyday use or offering services to the general public, in a street lane, side walk, foot path, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area or by moving from place to place and includes hawker, peddler, squatter and all other synonymous terms which may be local or region specific”. Street vendors constitute a subset of those engaged in retail trade, even a subset of those who are self-employed in retail trade. These self-employed vendors can be considered as micro-entrepreneurs.

Street Vending in Ten Cities in India a study by SharitBhowmik and DebdulalSaha (2012) was based on 200 street vendors each from Bhubaneshwar, Delhi, Imphal, Indore, Lucknow, Mumbai, Patna, Jaipur, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. The study found that street vendors did not stay at the place of vending. Over 88% of them in all ten cities stayed within 5 kilometers from their workplace. The most common modes of travel used by the vendors to reach their workplace were being on foot, by bus or by bicycle. Majority of the vendors used their home as storage spaces. About 74.5% of the vendors in Bhubaneshwar, 65% in Delhi, 92% in Hyderabad, 62% in Indore (62%) and 65.7% in Mumbai (65.7%) used their savings for business. A large section of the vendors lived in one room tenements. Around 60% to 70% of the vendors in all cities paid bribes to the authorities on a regular basis. Their bribes ranged from 2 to 100 per day.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS

East fort is one of the main cities in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala. East fort got its name from the eastern entrance to the fort built by the king of Travancore. The old city was all inside the fort on four sides with the Sri Padmanabha Swami temple at the center. It is said that there were huge metal gates on this entrance to the Fort which was decorated with the symbol of a conch, which was the insignia of the Royal Family of Travancore. Number of people from different parts comes to East Fort to visit the Sri Padmanabha Swami temple; thousands of pilgrims came to visit the temple every day. After the calculation of the assets of the temple, it has become one of the richest temples in India. To see the traditional designs and architecture of the temple many people comes to the city from different parts of the world. Depending on these pilgrims and tourists there is a number of street vendors along both the sides of the road in front of the temple. They used to vend different kinds of goods such as fruits, clothes, vegetables, ornaments, nuts etc...

The major objective of the study is to examine the socio economic problems of the street vendors in East Fort. The study is based on the primary and secondary data and to find the socio economic profile of the people in the area. The primary survey was conducted among the street vendors who were vending in front of the street of SreePadmanabha Swami Temple, a sample size of 50 street vendors are randomly selected and interviewed with the help of a well-structured questionnaire.

The comprehensive analyses of the socio economic profile of the street vendors in East fort are as follows.

#### **GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STREET VENDORS**

Category	Numbers	Percentage
Male	34	68
Female	16	32
Total	50	100

The gender wise distribution of the street vendors shows that 68 per cent of the interviewed street vendors are males and only 32 per cent are female. This indicates that the numbers of female street vendors are lower than that of male vendors in East Fort. Here we can see the dominance of the male street vendors in the vending process. When comparing to the number of male vendors the number of the female vendors are far less. The insecurity faced by the women and the male dominance may be the reason behind the less number of females in this sector. As compared to male it is less than female, but there is participation of the female.

#### **VI. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF STREET VENDORS**

The study has collected the information about the age pattern of the street vendors. The study shows that the number of vendors between the age group of 46 – 55 is more it shows 28 percent of the street vendors belong to this age group. There are only 10 per cent of vendors who belong to age group of 66 above and the number of vendors who are below 25 are 12 per cent. Which means the data says that the numbers of vendors who are above 66 and below 25 are less in number. Most of the vendors belong to the middle age. Secondly comes the age group of 36 – 45 which has 20 percent.

### EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF STREET VENDORS

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Below SSLC	15	30
SSLC	18	36
Plus two/diploma	11	22
Degree	5	10
Post-graduation	1	2
Total	50	100

The educational qualifications of the street vendors are studied over here, out of the sample study of 50 street vendors 30 percent of them are educated below SSLC. And the study shows that most of the street vendors are of educational qualification of SSLC, 36 percent of the vendors were qualified of SSLC. And the 22 percent of the vendors have got plus two qualifications. The study reveals that among the vendors only 2 percent is with post-graduation. This shows that more than half of the vendors are basically qualified.

### RELIGION OF THE STREET VENDORS

The study describes that of 50 street vendors who are interviewed majority of them were from Hindu community with 62%. On the other hand Muslims and Christians were of 26% and 12% respectively. The vendors belonging to Christian community seems to be comparatively very low.

### MARITAL STATUS OF STREET VENDORS

The figure resembles that the 76 Percent of the vendor who are interviewed where married. That means most of them were married. And to the next 14 per cent of the vendors are unmarried, 6 per cent of them were separated and only 4 per cent among them were widowed.

### EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF STREET VENDING

Experience	Number	Percentage
Below 5 years	9	18
5 – 10 years	17	34
10 – 15 years	8	16

15 – 20 years	12	24
Above 20 years	4	8
Total	50	100

The study shows that the street vendors who are working in this field between 5 – 10 years are more. The vendors who have experience in this field for 5 – 10 years are 34 per cent and the years of experience between 15 – 20 years are 24 percent. Vendors who were in the field above 20 years are very less in number that it is only 8 per cent. This shows the trend that people who choose street vending as a job may drop it and go in search of other jobs.

#### **VII. TYPE OF FAMILY OF STREET VENDORS.**

The study states that among the 50 street vendors majority belongs to the nuclear family that the figure shows, 90 per cent of the vendors are of nuclear family type and they are of the majority. There is only 10 per cent of the vendors who belongs to a joint family type.

#### **TYPE OF PRODUCT SOLD**

Category	Number	Percentage
Perishable goods	24	48
Non-perishable goods	18	36
Others	8	16
Total	50	100

Among the 50 street vendors 48 per cent use to sell perishable goods such as vegetables, fruits, food stuffs etc...though they have to face the problem of storage. And the 36 per cent deals with the sale of nonperishable goods such as clothes, ornaments, leather bags chapels etc... and others are of 16 percent.

#### **COLLECTION OF GOODS**

Category	Number	Percentage
Wholesaler	24	48
Retailer	13	26
Agents	8	16
Others	5	10
Total	50	100



The table above shows that among the surveyed 50 street vendors 48 per cent used to purchase their products from wholesalers and 26 per cent used to purchase from the retailers. Only 16 percent are purchasing from the agents. In the category others the wholesalers used take the products from their own home for the sales they are the products made by the vendors themselves it is of 10 per cent.

### **AVERAGE CUSTOMERS PER DAY**

The number of customers for a street vendor every day depends but an estimated average number of customers for the street vendors are given above 30 per cent of the street vendors get an average number 20 to 30 customer per day. Only 10 per cent of the customers get customer above 50. Among the street vendors 22 percent of them gets only an average of below 20 customers per day.

### **WORKING HOURS**

Working hours	Number	Percentage
Below 8 hours	6	12
8 to 10 hours	19	38
Above 10 hours	25	50
Total	50	100

The above table states that among the 50 street vendors 50 per cent used to work for more than 10 hours. The street vendors working for less than 8 hours are only of 12 per cent and all of them are women. The percentages of street vendors working for 8 to 10 hours are 38 per cent. This shows that the working hours of most of the street vendors are more than 8 hours.

## **VIII. SOURCES OF FINANCE**

### **Sources of Finance of Street Vendors**

Sources of finance	Number	Percentage
Self-finance	15	30
Bank loans	17	34
Money lenders	10	20
Others	8	16

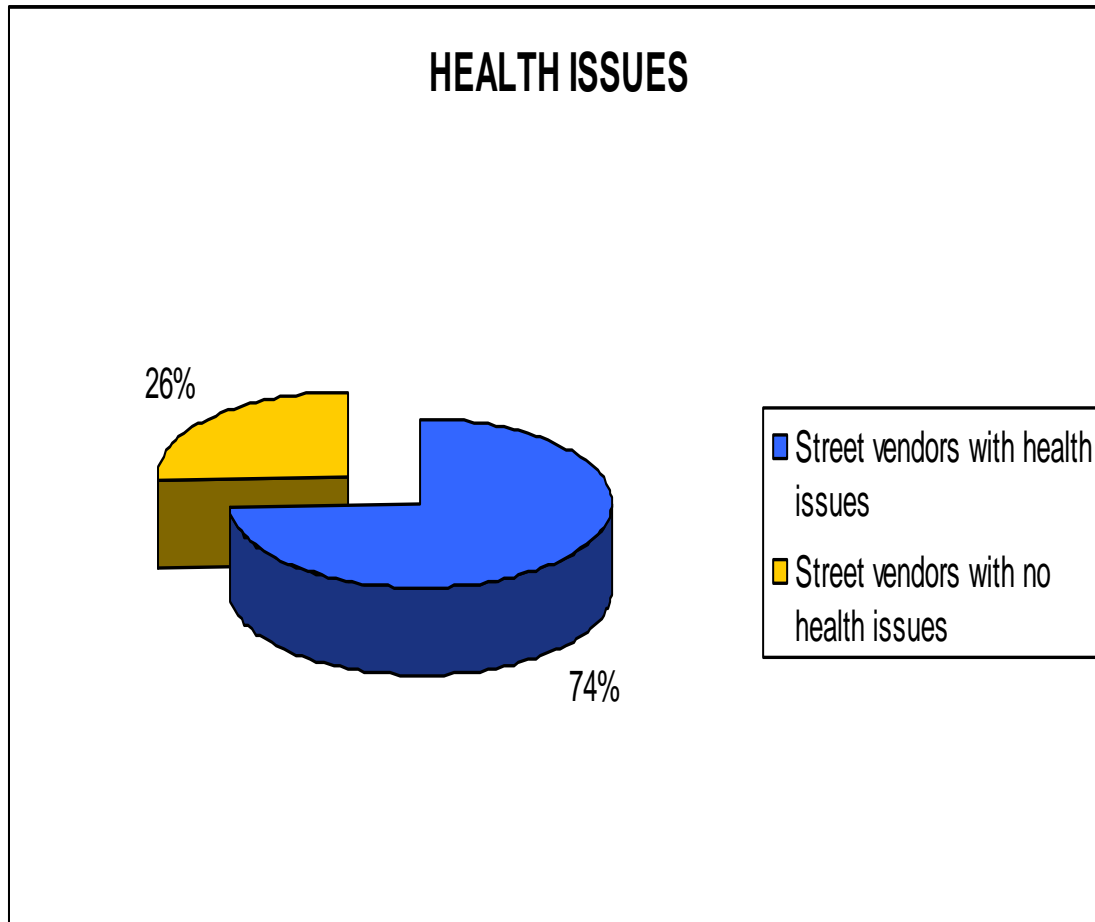
Total	50	100
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Most of the street vendors rely on bank loans for the purchase of their resources. Those vendors who rely on bank loans for the purchase of resources are of 34 per cent, and 30 per cent of the vendors use self-finance for the purpose. 20 per cent of the street vendors depend on the local money lenders for their financing.

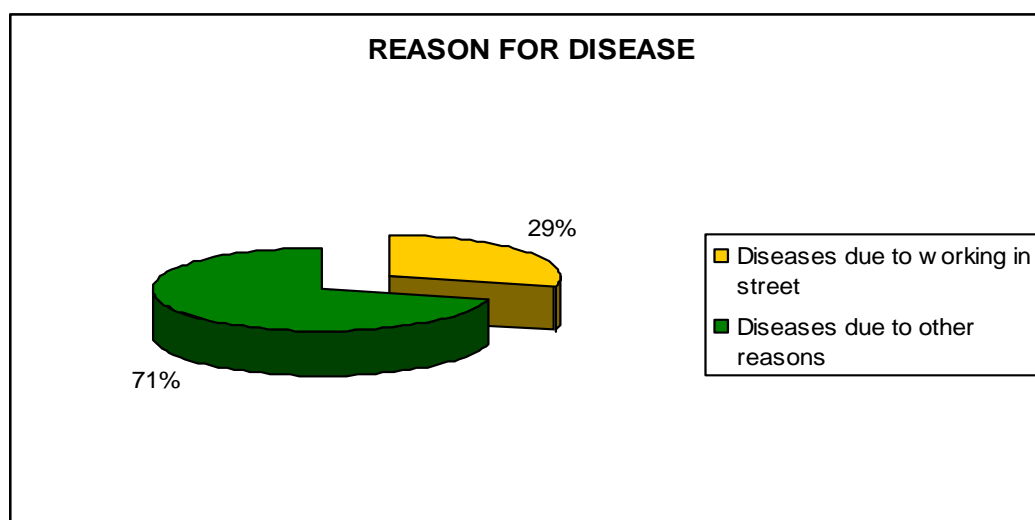
#### **SOURCES OF DEBT**

Sources	Number	Percentage
Bank loans	10	31.25
Money lenders	15	46.87
Private institutions	3	9.38
Others	4	12.5
Total	32	100

The above table states that among the 50 street vendors 32 vendors who have debts other than needs of street vending, among them most depends on the money lenders which are of 46.87 percent of the total. And secondly most of the vendors depend on the bank loan which is 31.25 percent of the total 9.38 percent of the street vendors rely on the private institutions which lend money with interest rates or other aspects. 12.5 of the vendors rely on other aspects such as chit funds etc... they mostly have to rely on such sources for their urgent needs they used to take these sources of finance mostly because of the reasons they get fund immediately or lower interest rates charged on the funds etc...



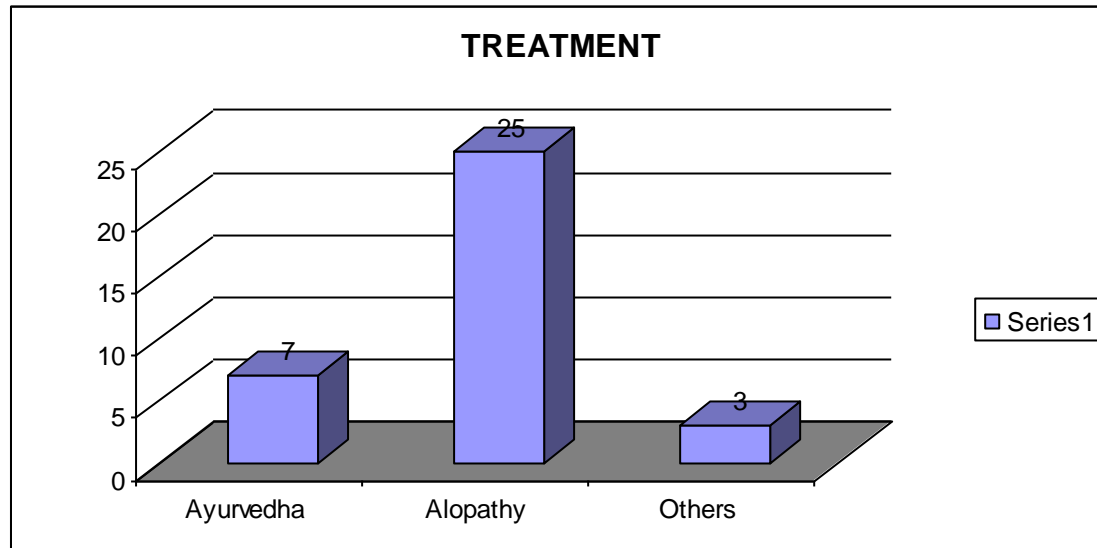
Source: Primary Survey



The above two figures shows the percentage levels of health issues faced by the street vendors. The figure 9 shows that 74 percent of the surveyed street vendors are faced by many health

issues. And the remaining 26 percent have no such health problems. Among the street vendors who are struggled by health issues 29 percent are caused diseases due to working in street.

### **TREATMENTS TAKEN BY THE STREET VENDORS**



Source: Primary Survey

The above figure shows the kind of treatment taken by the street vendors. Among the 35 street vendors who are with health issues 7 street vendors take their treatments under Ayurveda. And most of the vendors rely on allopathic treatments and use to rely on government hospitals. And 3 of the vendors rely on other treatments. Most of them have to spend more money for the treatments and medicines some of them get some kinds of assistance in payment for treatments from the side of government.

### **EXPENSES ON TREATMENT**

According to this study among the 35 street vendors who face diseases, 48.57 percent need to spend 50,000 to 1 lakh rupees for their treatments. And the 40 percent of them are making treatments of rupees below 50,000 and 11.43 percent of the street vendors need above 1 lakh rupees for their treatments.

## **IX. CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS**

Street vendors are the main components of our daily life. We use to deal with them every single day. Most of the people from lower class and middle class families rely on the street vendors for most of the purchases. As compared to the purchases from the super markets they used to sell goods at lower prices and they are available everywhere also. The role played by them in the economy is something inevitable. Low educational qualifications, less skill and the increasing

number of unemployment makes the reason that to the people to select street vending as a job. It can be done on part time basis and full time basis as the vendor wishes.

Here the study is made on the topic “Socio economic Profile of Street Vendors in Kerala – A Case Study on Street Vendors in East Fort”. The study was made among the street vendors in East Fort who were vending in the streets in the front gates of Sri Padmanabha Swami temple. Fifty street vendors were sampled for the study. They used to sell different kinds of goods such as clothes, fruits, vegetables, food stuffs, ornaments, vessels etc... The sample survey was made among all these street vendors using same questionnaire. The vendors belong to different age groups, different places and different educational qualifications. And there were much uniformity in them too.

While conducting the study we were with the estimation that most of the street vendors will be male and the female participation will be less comparatively, the estimation was correct the participation of the females were comparatively less with the men. The gender wise distribution of the sampled street vendors shows that 68 percent of the interviewed street vendors are males and only 32 percent are female. . Here we can see the dominance of the male street vendors in the vending process. When comparing to the number of male vendors the number of the female vendors are far less. The insecurity faced by the women and the male dominance may the reason behind the less number of females in this sector. As compared to male it is less than female, but there is participation of the female.

Age was the other aspect considered in the study, the study showed that the participation of youngsters were less in street vending the age group below 25 is only 12 among the sampled persons. The reason for the less number of participation by the youngsters may due to the wandering of youngsters behind the white color jobs. Now a days most of the youngsters are highly qualified and they may don't want to such low grade jobs. The vendors those were of below 25 were mostly from North Indian states. The study shows that the number of vendors between the age group of 46 – 55 is more it shows 28 percent of the street vendors belong to this age group. . Most of the vendors belong to the middle age. Secondly comes the age group of 36 – 45 which has 20 percent. And the street vendors with age group above 66 were also less in number.

The educational qualifications of the surveyed street vendors were comparatively less. But the fact is that there was one among them with a post graduate degree. 30 percent of the

surveyed were only with the qualification below SSLC and 36 percent of the vendors were qualified of SSLC. This shows that most vendors were with the basic qualification of SSLC. There were 10 percent of graduates from the subjects B.com, B.A History and B.A Politics. And the 22 percent of the vendors have got plus two qualifications. The study reveals that more than half of the street vendors were basically qualified.

Then as the socio economic factor of the street vendor the enquiry of the community of the vendor was made. The study describes that of 50 street vendors who are interviewed majority of them were from Hindu community with 62%. On the other hand Muslims and Christians were of 26% and 12% respectively. The vendors belonging to Christian community seems to be comparatively very low.

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