

## A STUDY ON LIVING CONDITIONS AND WORKING PATTERNS OF STREET VENDORS IN TENKASI

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Street vendors in Tenkasi city are among the most deprived sections of the informal sector or self employed workers. This paper tries to portray the working conditions of street vendors in Tenkasi and their quality of life. The study is descriptive in nature and the situations have been explained with the help of quantitative paradigm. The findings of the study cover socioeconomic conditions, as well as working conditions and its impact on an average street vendor's quality of life. Further, the findings also cover the working life of vendors, which is explained in terms of their access to finance and the type of vending they carry out, the amount of bribes they 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. The implications of the findings have also been discussed in this paper.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Street vendors, Economic conditions, working conditions.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Street vendors are the people those who are selling the goods in an informal way. The areas of their marketing places are street, plat forms, bus stand and other common places like front gates of Temples, Churches, Mosques, etc. So the street vending is an informal trade market and punishable according to the law.

However, street vendors are an integral part of the urban economy in and around the world. They are mainly visible section of the informal market. This street vending as an occupation in India is from the time immemorial. In the major cities of Tamil Nadu, the large numbers of urban poor supposed to live their life on by working in the informal sector. Poverty and lack of profitable employment in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu and in the small towns drive large number of people to the capital city for work and for their livelihood. These people are unskilled and uneducated. Such as, they are not given better paid jobs in the organized sector. So that, the last resort for these people is only the hawking or street vending. By earning from street vending they run their life. It requires smaller financial input to start a street vending. Minimum skill is involved in this process and there are no entry level obstacles in this job.

In general socio economic conditions of the street vendors are pitiable, even though the law is against them; they acquaint and adjust the laws according to their way of life. A Street is meant only for pedestrian to walk and to avoid traffic congestion and accidents. But the street vendors are illegally occupying the streets and plat-forms for the purpose of selling goods and the buyers also involve purchasing for the cheap rate from the vendors who sell on the street. This is one the main causes for the steady increase of street vendors.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of street vendors leading to an increase in the number of workers in the informal sector in Tenkasi. They try to live their life with dignity and self-respect by their hard work. But the basic problem of street vendors is the absence of their right to exist because this profession is considered as an informal work. Also the street vendors are not aware of Street Vendors Act 2014. Street vendors are affected by many factors in working places and living places. In terms of the working patterns, climate change and pollution, police harassment, stress, problems with neighbor vendors have been analyzed. In terms of living conditions, street vendors' residence, usage of electricity, water facilities, bathroom / toilet facilities and floor facilities have been analyzed.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The scope of the study is to explore further knowledge in this area.
- The present study aims to highlight the understanding of the current policies, experiences, and perceptions of their current life situations among their living conditions and working patterns.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-economic status of the street vendors.
- To study about the living conditions of the street vendors.
- To know about the working conditions of the street vendors.
- To analyze the problems faced by the street vendors in the working area.
- To analyze the respondents perception of the street vendors' policies and Street Vendors Act.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Hans F. Lily, (2015)** in his study on "Regulation and evasion: Street-vendors in Manila" revealed the regulation and evasion of street vendors in Manila. The street vendors in manila advocates a more positive approach towards street vendors combining minimal regulations with measures of encouragement and public assistance. According to the study, the compliance of the regulatory measures of Street vending is minimized if they ignore the harsh socio-economic realities of a particular cultural environment. In that situations, the regulations remain not only purely symbolic and ineffective but also allow a climate of harassment and extortion.

**The HINDU (2014)** newspaper explained on "Street Vendors stress on enumeration survey". V. Maheswaran, the federation's State general secretary addressed to media persons on 6th June, 2014 regarding the street vendors. A street vendor Syed Mohammed in T. Nagar, said, "We have not been able to carry out our business for the past one month. Our livelihood had been badly affected. Only 200 vendors have been allotted space in the hawkers' complex. The Chennai Corporation must take steps to earmark vending zones for all of us." Members of the federation said the government must initiate action to protect the rights of street vendors across the city, including in Koyambedu and Broadway.

**Karthikeyan R and R.Mangaleswaran.(2014)** conducted a study on "A Study on Working Patterns of Unorganised Sector with Particular Reference to Street Vendors in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu". The study covered the working patterns of street vendors. The researchers

collected 56 respondents and used the cross tabulation data analysis and t-test between the gender and daily earnings. The results showed that the male vendors' daily earnings are from Rs.200 to Rs.250 and for the female vendors from Rs.150 to Rs.200. The study found that the male vendors were working for long hours than female vendors.

**Rodrigo Meneses Reyes (2013)** in his paper on "Crime, Street Vendors and the Historical Downtown in Post-Giuliani Mexico City" gathered and analyzed the street vendors in Post-Giuliani Mexico City. Data was collected during the course of a three year from 2007 to 2009. The study found that the relation between urban order and delinquency must not be seen as a unidirectional process; rather, it must be understood as a complex process in which a variety of social actors and factors can play an influential role.

**Cyprian Y. Lapah (2013)**. The study was based on a survey of two hundred and eight immigrant vendors from African countries in five suburbs of Cape Town. The results of the analysis showed that nationality underpinned by social networks was a major factor in the socio-economic trajectories of immigrants in urban South Africa. Further change of residence is mainly as a result of other factors such as location of activity and property managerial issues like the sale of residential property or expiration of the lease.

A paper work entitled "Quality of Life among Street Vendors in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu, India" was conducted by **Karthikeyan R. (2013)**. Researchers used convenient sampling method and selected 56 respondents to study the socio-economic status and quality of life among the Street Vendors in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu. 48% respondents are living in concrete house, 54% are having own house and nearly 32% selling their goods like fruits, 38% respondents are selling their goods by their bicycle, and less than half of the respondents are selling their goods in road side.

**Turner, S. Schoenberger, L. (2012)** conducted a study on "Street Vendor Livelihoods and Everyday Politics in Hanoi, Vietnam: The Seeds of a Diverse Economy". The analysis of this study is made of in-depth interviews with itinerant and fixed-stall vendors to unravel their heterogeneous responses to such revanchist policies. In their drive to create a modern, 'civilised' capital, Vietnam's central government and Hanoi's municipal authorities have a particular image of security, orderliness and development. Despite subtle covert and overt resistance tactics, the study reveals that celebrated 'community economies' and alternative economic visions remain rare in this context.

**Srinivasan .R and Vaidhyasubramaniam .S (2012)** in their paper on 'Being powerless' or 'To be empowered': A Case of Women Street Vendors at Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu" taken a sample of 68 street vendors in Tenkasi. Correlation and regression analysis were employed on the data for the analysis. The study Street Vending profession at Tenkasi reveals the poor economic condition of Street Vending. The study suggested that there is a possibility to see some good to this community if they follow with certain regularization as suggested in the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009.

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF LIVING CONDITIONS**

Living Conditions refer to the circumstances of a person's household status like Residence, Electricity, Water Facilities, Bathroom and Toilet facilities, Floor and Carpet type, and Furniture facilities.

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF WORKING PATTERNS**

Working Patterns refer to Business Factor, Social Relationship, Psychological Factor, Health Conditions and Policy Related issues.

## **REASONS FOR AN INCREASE IN STREET VENDORS IN INDIA**

A number of factors are held responsible for the substantial increase in the number of street vendors in India. Lack of gainful employment and poverty in rural areas make people move from villages to cities. They move in search for new and better 5 opportunities for existence. These migrated masses with low education and lack of specific occupational skills fail to fit in formal economy. Also the percentage of jobs in organized sector is shrinking. It does not match the employment needs of the country. Only informal sector absorbs millions of these underprivileged.

Some are also forced into informal sector. Studies show that when people lost their jobs in formal sector due to closures, downsizing and mergers, they had no other option than to engage in low-paid work in informal sector for the sake of survival. Workers who were once in formal sector are now forced into informal sector, which can be widely seen in countries such as Phillipines, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and India.

The report submitted to National Statistical Commission by the Committee on Unorganised Sector Statistics (a sub-committee of National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector) during 2012 stated that over 90% of the country's workforce is engaged in the informal sector for its livelihood. In the era, where the focus is on job creation, self-employment becomes an important source of livelihood for the urban poor.

Self-employment solves economy's unemployment problem. The number of individuals getting involved in self-employment activities is on an increase in India. A large proportion of unemployed live below poverty line and therefore self-employment for them is possible only with very low capital or with financial assistance. Street vending alone overcomes this constraint.

Street vending activity requires low capital. It provides entrepreneurial opportunities to people who cannot afford to rent or own a shop to sell their goods. It assures them a 6 subsistence income. It helps street vendors to get out of poverty trap. It helps to improve their economic well being. Street vending combats unemployment and poverty.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- Both quantitative and qualitative finding shows that the home specialties are satisfied with the vendor's opinion.
- Majority of the respondent stated that the customers are bargaining with them on the quality of goods.
- Vendors get money from self help group to run their family and business.
- Nearly half of the vendors' daily earning amount is between Rs.201 and 300 per day.
- The mixed finding shows that the respondents are facing problems from the police personnel.
- A very few of the vendors are affected by health problems through other street vendors in business (working in the dust environmental).
- Both of the analysis clearly explains that the respondents' opinion about city, state and central government performance to the street vending policies is satisfactory.

- The vendors are daily traveling for 4 to 5 km from their home to working place.

### SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

- Further study may identify the advantages and disadvantages of street vendor policies provided by the Government.
- A research may be conducted to investigate the street vendors' psychosocial problems in the field of social work.
- A similar study can be made especially to identify the daily activities of street vendors in Municipality, District, State and Nation wise.
- A separate study can be conducted to investigate the problems of women street vendors.
- The Government should give proper ID cards to the Street vendors and should provide commercial building to Street Vendors for monthly rent and open in some eminent streets.

### CONCLUSION

Street vendors are in integral part of human society. The findings of the study on Street Vendors revealed precarious conditions of work and life, involving an extensive workload, very low sales and profit, and no guarantee as to safety and security. When such street vendors fall ill or are injured they do not have any option to depend on any other person for continuing their business. It is very important to recognize that to improve the quality of life of street vendors, their working conditions should be improved.

In order to achieve this the researchers also noticed that the street vendors should join various trade unions, associations, and also get the memberships of national and international organizations to avoid harassment from police and municipal authorities. It is also very important that they should have a basic legal knowledge and readily available legal support. Also they must get registered as street vendors as per the provisions of the street vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of street vending) Act, 2014. This in turn can lead to improvement in the quality of life and the quality of working conditions of every individual street vendor.

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