

PROBLEMS FACED BY FEMALE STREET VENDORS IN SELECTIVE MARKETS OF BENGALURU

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Abstract

The lifestyle of people who are well educated, highly skilled and who have a good job is different than those who are semi-skilled or unskilled and working just to lead their life. And one such work is street vending and it is noted that about 46 percent of the population is engaged in street vending. As we can see both men and women are a part of this business, but it is observed that women tend to face more difficulties. Even though she takes all the trouble she acts as the breadwinner of the family. This paper's main purpose is to bring out the problems faced by women vendors in Bengaluru. Bengaluru being an advanced city, is a hub for these small vendors. This paper focuses on the various markets in Bengaluru and the problems faced in that particular market. The vendors' opinion were collected using interview method and results of the study shows that women face a lot of problems like seasonal losses, lack of communication skills, lack of knowledge about the

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schemes which are particularly launched for empowering women and lack of support from the family as well. This research also shows that most of the women vendors do not belong to Bengaluru and they have migrated from other states and other districts just to find some work. Suggestions have also been provided to reduce those problems.

1. Introduction

Street vendors are one of the important parts of an economy. It is very much necessary for us to understand the life lead by them. Street vendors can be defined as those who buy the goods at a wholesale price and sell the same at a retail price in streets, bus stands or any other place where there is a large crowd. They are sometimes seen selling in a fixed place or seen carrying the goods in carts (Karthikeyan R & R, January 2017). History of street vendors in Karnataka was well known in the Era of Vijayanagar Empire where people were engaged in selling metal items and spices to British traders (Channappa, 2015). Street vending does not require any educational qualification, skills and experience. A person who can converse well and who can manage people can become a successful vendor.

Street vendors are mostly self-employed, who sell the products near roadsides which include selling of vegetables, fruits, flowers or any other things of small quantity as they do not have any proper infrastructure to run their business. They mainly form the informal sector about which very little information is available (Rajagopal, 2017). They have a large share of contribution to the urban population by giving them cheaper and inexpensive goods and they also create a market for employment. Most of the street vendors are un-privileged who just want to earn their day to day living. There are both male and female vendors who earn their living. Though both are physically and mentally strong in selling, it is most likely observed that women tend to face more problems like discrimination, inequality, lack of security and social norms, family problems, lack of education, necessities to lead the life and lack of support from the government.

It is also seen that women are engaged in street vending mainly because men fail to act as breadwinners to their family (Kambara & Bairagya, 2017). It is observed that as the economy grows there will be an increase in demand as well as increase in the number of street vendors.

The paper focuses on the problems faced by women street vendors in Bengaluru. Many researchers have done research on problems faced by vendors, but this research is particularly conducted in Bengaluru since it is one of the most populated city and people come to Bengaluru for trading and business purpose.

This study is based on primary data and data was collected using the interview method with the women vendors in Bengaluru.

About Bengaluru and its markets

Bengaluru is well known for its diversified living and lifestyle of people. The population of Bengaluru in its urban region is 10.1 million (Bangalore population, 2017) with its different culture and languages, Bengaluru people are employed in different sectors of the job. And most of the people are employed in the informal or the unorganized sector and street vending is one among the categories of unorganized sector.

Street vending in Bengaluru is very common and they have become part and parcel of our everyday life. Street vending can be in the form of selling vegetables, greens, eatables, selling carpets etc. But most of the women vendors in Bengaluru earn their livelihood through selling greens and vegetables. They do not just stick to one place, they keep selling in different areas according to the customer response and their convenience. As Bengaluru is a widespread area, they have the opportunity to sell in different areas and sometimes they sell in a fixed place like the KR market or any other main market and at times takes their cart and sells across different areas. As Bengaluru is a diversified city and there are different people who speak different languages, the sellers are able to manage and sell to them. It is also seen that there are many migrants who have moved to Bengaluru just to earn their livelihood. They view Bengaluru as the city where they can earn a decent living.

The life of women vendors is not easy in Bengaluru and they do not readily or easily get the vegetables or greens. They have to visit the main market that is the KR Market to purchase them and at least once in two days they visit the market in order to get fresh stock as people these days prefer fresh, healthy and hygienic items.

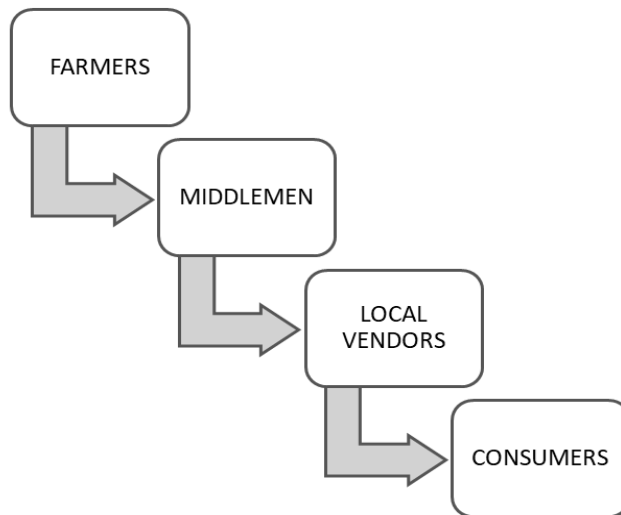


Figure 1.1: Distribution Channel (Researcher's Work)

Figure 1.1 discusses about the distribution Channel of how the local vendors get fresh stocks. The stocks in KR market arrive from various towns and districts in and around Bengaluru like Mandya, Channapatna, and Tumkur. The stocks are supplied by the middleman and not the farmers directly and then later gets distributed it to the vendors in Bengaluru who purchase in wholesale and later sells in different areas.

About various markets:

Chandapura

Chandapura is a town in Bangalore, has population of 4562 (Census, 2011) it is 17.4kms away from Madivala market. Chandapura is the nearest town for almost 20 villages. Saturday markets in Chandapura is very famous where people get fresh vegetables, fruits, clothes, vessels and many other needy products. On Saturdays, people get all the products at a comparatively cheaper price because of competition. Sellers who come to sell their products in the market are mostly local people and many traders are also from Tamil Nadu. The population of women vendors in this market is almost equal to male population. Even though vendors have a large place to sell

their products they face many issues in the market like competition from others, a large amount of money collected from municipal authorities and lack of proper infrastructure.\



(Source: Googlemaps)

Attibele

Attibele is 7.8kms away from Chandapura, it is a commercial place for people who stay near to this place. Population in Attibele is 20,532, (Census, 2011) since it is a border area most of the Tamilians are also engaged in trading. There is no weekly market here as such even though there is a lot of place for many vendors to trade. The vendors engaged in trading are mostly local and few from other nearby cities and districts like Tamil Nadu. Problems faced by them are climate changes as it affects their business in larger extent since there is no proper infrastructure, and at times authorities ask them to vacate the place, competition from others and family problems also affect their business.

SadduguntePalya

SadduguntePalya is 10kms away from Kempegowda Bus Station. The main target of the traders are students and working people. Women vendors face more problems in this place like no proper infrastructure, and they trade near roadsides and they also face a lot of traffic jam and due to that sometimes they have to vacate the place. Hygiene of the products also is very less here,

and they also face huge competition from Supermarkets. Women vendors who trade here are not local people, they are from different places who come here only for the trading purpose.

JP Nagar

JP Nagar is one of the busiest areas in Bengaluru and it is 8Km from KR Market. And the population in JP Nagar is 28508 (BBMP, 2017). The population here is very much diversified and there is all kind of people from rich to the middle class and their needs vary accordingly. The main market in JP Nagar is Sarraki Market where there is a variety of products available for people to choose from. If we go early in the morning we get to see fresh flowers which are sold at relatively cheap price than other time of the day. A sarraki market is very near to areas like Banashankari and Jayanagar. People can purchase all their necessary items in one go if they come to this market. It is seen that no much problem is faced by the vendors regarding place and police. But at times the vendors face competition as Banashankari market is also near-by. But they get to witness good sales during any functions or festivals as all the items related to the event is available at a wholesale price.

Madivala

There are 700 to 750 shops around Madivala market. Farmers sell vegetables and fruits to vendors through brokers. Till 10:30 in the morning market will function as wholesale market after that it will function as a retail market. This market is the main source of Grocery for all the malls, hotels and retail shops.





(Source : google.com)

Review of Literature

Street vendors belong to the category of informal or the unorganized sector who are not granted any license from the government. Street vendors are present in all the countries, but their status is dependent on each country's economic stability, policies, regulations etc., and poverty and lack of opportunities in rural areas influence the vendors to move to urban areas to earn their livelihood. (Bhowmik, 2005) This study focused on many countries in the world and according to a study done in Bombay, only 40000 licenses were issued. Street vendor can be classified into two vendors who change places every day and those who do not change the place and have fixed place for their trading. (Dimas, Harlan, 2008) In terms of street vendors, a street is called the public place where the number of activities is taken place and one of the main activity is the street vending which occupy the largest area. "A street vendor's story depicts the political or the social condition which is not only important but shows how these factors affect their everyday life". However, Street vendors are considered important to the growing economy. The role and recognition of women have been neglected in many cases as they constitute the minority and the informal sector. Due to this, they do not get any security and proper working condition. (Sharma & Konwar, 2014) Highlights the feature of street vendors as "Space, Work, and Urban". Though they are suffering and struggling they never lose hope. Though women do not have any training, they showcase marketing skills and the skill to manage an interactive communication with the customers. Some of the research shows that the age group that is mainly engaged in such business are around 16-35 years.

(Sonawane, 2017) This study tells that vendors purchase the required amount of good from the wholesale market and loads them in their cart and sells it in the areas where there is more chance of sales.

(Diwakar et al, 2014) In their study it tells that the women are not provided with any maternity benefits and child care. So, when such situation arises, and they do not have any help they have to leave the job which reduces their productivity.

Though the government has many acts passed for them, it is observed that none of them is working in favor of them. As street vending is considered one of the important aspect in the economy it cannot be neglected.

(Mishra & Puja, 2018) The study shows the problems faced by women street vendors in Ranchi district and it also studies the socioeconomic status of women affect them the most in business.

(Channappa, 2015) Conducted a research on issues and concerns faced by women street vendors in Karnataka. This study found that even though there are a lot of provisions for them there is still difficulty in respect to the time, toilet facilities etc., it concluded that most of the women are illiterate and choose this job to support their family. Street vending is contributing a large share to the economy and according to one of the research conducted in Bombay, street vendors earn more money than Hindustan Lever Company. But in contrast to all these, it is said that street vendors cause a major problem to the side walkers and it also leads to congestion on the road (Dimas, Harlan, 2008).

However in contrast to all the authors, a study undertaken in Bengaluru refers street vendors as street entrepreneurs and it becomes necessary for government and public to take a stand for them so they have access to basic necessities (Williams & Gurtoo, 2012).

Objectives of the Study

- To know the lifestyle of women street vendors
- To find out the problems faced by women street vendors
- To provide suggestions for the problems faced by women street vendors

2. Research Method

The study is mainly based on primary data, personal interview method was used to collect information from women street vendors, secondary information is used for literature review and to know about Bangalore markets. Meta-analysis is used to explain the information collected from sample size.

Simple Random sampling technique was adopted to select a sample size of 50 women street vendors across JP Nagar, Saddugunte Palya, Attibele, Madiwala, and Chandapura.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Problems faced by Women Street Vendors

Women vendors face many problems in everyday life. They are as follows:

1. Seasonal loss

Mother Nature is unpredictable and so is the case for street vendors regarding this. The women vendors often face seasonal loss which means that their earnings depend on the seasons and the weather conditions that would be prevailing. Though she is selling vegetables or eateries, weather could act as a major disaster for them. If we look in the view of greens and vegetable vendors, they suffer a major loss especially during the rainy season where the vegetables are spoilt. The vendors make major or sufficient profits mainly during the festive seasons.

2. Working conditions

The women vendors often face poor working conditions and protection on the roads. Many of them also face health issues due to the unhygienic conditions and lack of toilet facilities. Due to this, women face urinary infections and other kidney related problems. And at the time of emergency health problems they face a lot of hardship and tension as a lot of money is spent and sometimes it is also seen that they do not get proper medical attention from the hospitals or they themselves ignore it and later leads to an incurable disease. It is also seen that many of them face harassment during the work and they are vulnerable.

3. Competition

Another problem faced by them is the competition they have to face with the shop vendors. It is usually observed that people visit shops than street vendors. The reasons could be many like the

unhygienic conditions in which they are selling, dirt roads or the poor quality. The competition may also be due to the market price fluctuations and irregular employment.

As there is an increased shopping through online source many of the customers tend to shop groceries or vegetables also through this medium. This could be a major competition for the street vendors.

4. Harassment

It has become a regular news about the harassment of women street vendors and we get to witness many such articles regarding this. When asked for a reason or justification regarding this they include reasons like problem due to traffic, illegal selling and at times the reason quoted is not clear. And at times the police even harass those who sell legally.

If vendors do not adhere to what officials say they use unparliamentary and slang language. At least 15-20 percent of their daily wages or income goes as the bribe. The government is also careless about the life of vendors and is of no support to them. Even if they seek any help from the government they do not get any immediate help. The government in few states have announced tenders but none of them is interested to participate. Though the government has made labor union provisions, the women vendors are not getting any benefit out of it. And mainly the informal sector deals with economic activities that are not licensed and they hardly get permission from officials.

5. Storage facilities

Many of the vendors keep moving from one place to another every day so they do not have a proper storage facility for their goods like the cold storage etc., so when they face unforeseen climate changes they will not be able to cope up as they do not have any safety equipment like umbrella etc., because of the lack of such facilities they often face losses which affects their earning capacity and living conditions

6. Family look after

One of the main reason why women get to this job is to look after her family for meeting the basic need like food. Many of the vendors stay in rented houses and they have to pay the rent which becomes an extra burden to them.

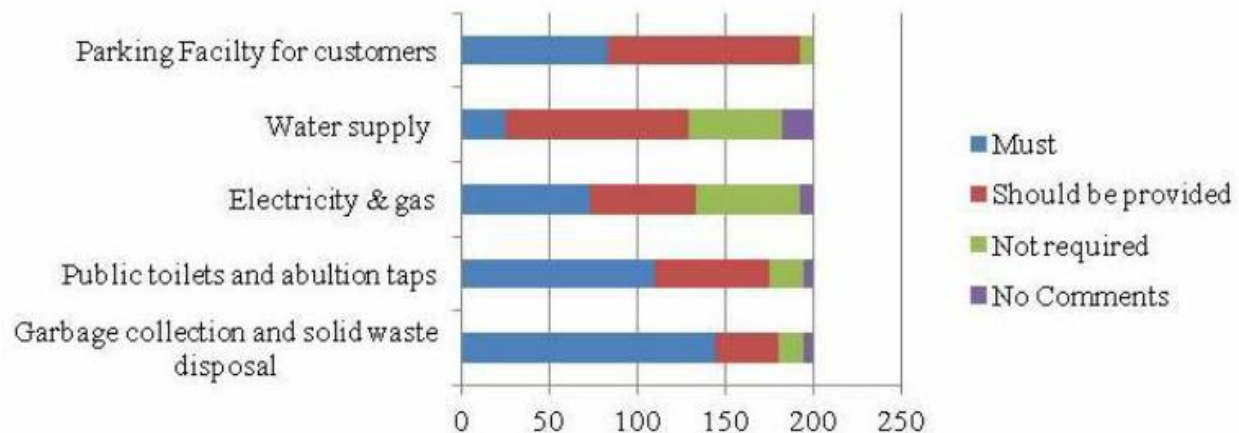
She is burdened with this work even when she cannot or does not have the strength to do it. At times she even gets her child to work where she finds very difficult to manage the child with the cart.

7. Commutation problem

One of the main problem faced by the women vendors is related to the traveling. Every day they have to get new stocks for which they will have to travel to the main market and get the load. Bringing back that load to the place they sell is where they face the problem. They do not have sufficient money to travel in auto, for which they have to depend on buses. Due to the big bulk, many of the bus drivers do not even let them climb the bus.

3.2 Requirements near vending place

There is lack of many basic facilities near vending places, (Manoj, 2015) suggested some of the facilities needed near place. Which can help for the betterment of customers as well as vendors.



3.21 Source: (Manoj, 2015)

The below pictures depicts the problems faced by women vendors in different markets of Bengaluru. The highest font size relates to the major or the main problem faced by them and as the font size decreases with each word so does their problem in the particular market.

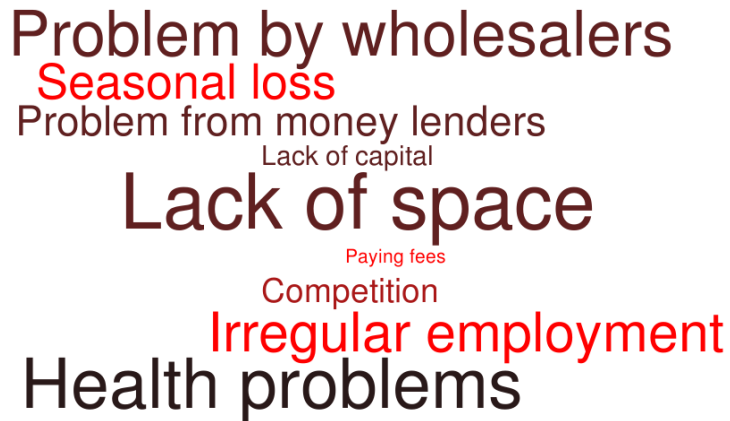


Figure 3.22

The picture (3.22) here depicts the problems faced by women vendors in SadduguntePalya. The word with the highest font size depicts the major problem faced by them and that is the lack of space as the roads in this area is congested which also leads to irregular employment.

Though there are a lot of customers and they earn for their living they do face other problems like competition from the supermarkets and also problems from wholesalers with respect to the price charged for the goods purchased. They are highly insecure about their job as there is lack of capital.



Figure 3.23

This picture (3.23) discusses the problems faced by women vendors in respect to Chandapura market. And the main problem that is noticed is the communication gap between vendors and the

customers as many vendors are from different cities mainly from Tamil Nadu so it becomes a difficult task to communicate in the local language. As the market is not so well maintained the physical stability of the vendors is at risk and they are more prone to diseases. The next point that is a concern for them is the harassment faced by the customers itself as they ill-treat the vendors and use un-parliamentary words.

The rest of the problems mentioned are minimal even though they are affected by it to some extent.

The major problem that is highlighted here is the uncertainty and insecurity about their job as well as sales. This is in respect with Attibele market. Another major problem is the commutation. This is almost faced by most of the women vendors because the market is close to Tamil Nadu and there are many migrants from there. Traveling every day becomes a tough job for them. There is also a lot of competition faced by them as there many of them selling same or similar goods at an almost same price. They also face seasonal loss as everyone does not buy the goods kept.



WordItOut

Figure 3.24

This picture deals with the problem faced by JP Nagar women vendors. The main problem as we can observe from this picture is the competition which they face from the supermarkets. As the area is a diversified place and people here are more health and hygiene conscious they do not prefer to buy from the street vendors.

The next problem they get face is due to online shopping. As many online websites have launched grocery shopping, the sales have been decreased for the street vendors. Lack of space, seasonal loss, lack of support from family are the problems faced by vendors in this area.

3.3 CASE STUDY

This case talks about the everyday life of one of the women vendors aged 42-years who lives in Ragigudda, Karnataka. She has 3 children who have completed their studies only to 12th standard. And her husband works in the main city market. She has started selling flowers and vegetables in JP Nagar from past 14years, and the main reason she states why she sells in JP Nagar and not in Ragigudda is that there are fewer sales and fewer customers.

She tend to follow a routine in her daily life, every day she gets ready and goes to the main market at 4 am to bring flowers and vegetables. She travels either by bus or auto every day. She also says about the struggle she faces while buying the vegetables and flowers due to a lot of competition. Some people also demand a very high price for her. By 7 she reaches the place where she sells the whole day. She always says that “sales always depend on our luck and our own karma”.

She also says about the customers or at times the authorities who purchases the goods at less price or purchases vegetables for free. But she also adds that some of them are really helpful to her and understands her problems and respects her.

She says that the sales are not always the same and it depends on the weather and other factors. She earns just Rs 500-600 per day in which she has to carry on with her daily life. Even though she earns less, without any option she has to adjust and survive for the living.

She does not think much about her food. Whatever she gets at any time she survives for the day. She usually buys food from street stalls which are near to her. She adds that life of street vending is difficult especially for women due to hygiene and other health-related problems as they do not get proper support from government related to sanitation or even any financial support.

3.4 Suggestions

Women vendors are not just facing problems in society, but they are also facing many personal problems which they do not prefer to share with anyone. There are many ways to solve their problems:

- The government should provide license to them so they are secure from any harassment.
- The government should make sure that information about any programs or schemes should reach people on time.
- Local bodies should co-operate with vendors and they should provide a proper place for trading.
- The government should take a step to provide at least basic education to them.
- Microcredit facilities should be provided to women vendors to improve their trading.
- Creative helpline contact number for small women vendors can bring a lot of changes in society as well as in vendors life.
- Refunding the losses also helps to balance business.
- The local or government authorities should also organise health check-ups for them. They can also introduce pension schemes to protect and secure their future life.

These measures can help in the betterment of life of women in society when women get right knowledge about things she wants to do, women will bring change in society as well.

4. Conclusion

Street vendors are one of the main contributors to the economy and they are an advantage to the rural and urban population. They bridge the gap between customers and the sellers. This paper mainly focused on bringing out information about selected markets in Bengaluru and day to day problems faced by women vendors in Bengaluru even one of the vendors life style is also discussed in the paper. Problems vary from place to place but the condition of women is same in all the places. Since there are many problems, the government should take a step forward to

rectify this, and in addition to this people should be educated about the importance of women and her role in society. Women are also equal to men but facilities available for her to showcase her talent is very less. If she is also given a chance she will reach great heights.

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