

**'BEING POWERLESS' OR 'TO BE EMPOWERED':**  
**A CASE OF WOMEN STREET VENDORS AT**  
**THANJAVUR, TAMIL NADU**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Family System is the supreme social institution of the Indian Society. The traditional Indian Family System subdued the women, to execute only the household activities thereby restricting their mobility. Female members were deprived of many other facilities and opportunities enjoyed by the male members. The male family members were responsible for the economic wealth of the family and enjoyed decision making powers in the society. This biased practice denied many Indian women the much needed empowerment for effectively participating in their own self being, family up-lift and society welfare. Some of the current dynamic women folks have risen above the age old taboo and are active participants in various economic activities in the society. A section of these women today lead in many fronts like politics, business, policy development

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etc., and are important decision makers in the society. Many of these urban women have acquired higher education and are economically independent through employment in organized sector. However, there has not been much study conducted to understand the motivation of rural women in poor households to engage in an unorganized sector like Street Vending. Hence this study makes an attempt to understand this motivation and explores the professional challenges these women counter during street vending.

**KEY WORDS:** Street Vending - Women Empowerment – Working Rural Women – Poor Rural Women – Women in Street Vending

### Introduction

In most house-holds of Mother India, Father is the head of the family. Family is regarded as supreme social institution that imparts values, culture and ethics to individuals, and as a result to the society in large. Thus family becomes the source of influence for all activities in the society, be it political, economical, social or else. The Indian civilization which is regarded as the oldest has evolved over a period of time adapting to the society changes. These changes also transformed the unique Indian Family System to alter its structure and the roles of its members.

Year	Sector	Number of Households (in millions)	Number of Female Headed Households (in millions)	Percentage of Female Headed Households
1	2	3	4	5
January - June, 1984	Rural	100.53	9.70	9.65
	Urban	33.99	2.95	8.68

July 1987- June 1988	Rural	108.36	11.22	10.36
	Urban	34.28	3.40	9.92
July 93 - June 94	Rural	119.53	11.64	9.74
	Urban	43.45	4.59	10.57
July 1999- June 2000	Rural	137.41	14.33	10.43
	Urban	51.51	4.85	9.42
July 2004-June 2005	Rural	150.18	16.67	11.10
	Urban	56.97	6.21	10.9

Source: National Sample Survey Organization

The traditional family system restricted many privileges to the women society and gave differential treatment between the genders. Over a period of time, Women have empowered themselves through acquisition of resources like education, employment etc and are active participants in society today. This change due to women empowerment not only improves the status of Women but also provides additional human resource for the country's growth. There are various literatures written on Urban Women empowerment achieved through education, employment and economic independence. However an agrarian country like India, with more than two-third of its population in rural areas, it can boast of its growth only if their rural household women are also empowered to take decisions related to their well being.

Year	Literacy Rate		
	Female	Male	Total
1	2	3	4
1951	8.86	27.15	18.32
1961	15.33	40.40	28.31
1971	21.97	45.95	34.45

1981	29.76	56.38	43.56
1991	39.29	64.13	52.21
2001*	54.16	75.85	65.38
2004-05**	57.00	77.00	67.30

Source: Population Census of India, Office of Registrar General, India

Note: 1. Literacy rate for 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged 5 years and above whereas literacy rate for 1981, 1991 and 2001 relate to the population aged 7 years and above.

2. The 1981 Literacy rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted.

3. The 1991 Literacy rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir where the 1991 Census could not be conducted due to disturbed conditions.

\* Excludes Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-divisions of Senapat district of Manipur

\*\* NSS 61st Round.

In India, 92% of the work force is engaged in the Informal (Unorganized) Sector. Informal work may be defined by its characteristics of providing insecure income, job and non-existing social benefit. There are two types of informal activities 1) directly linked to Industry or Service sector in the formal settings and 2) activities engaged for survival by individual household. Survival strategies which represent harsh working terms are a result of low skills, no capital asset such as Street Vending (Lourdes Beneria, 2001). Though there are no exact estimates, it is expected that the number of Street Vendors in India must be approx 43 Lacs of which almost 50% are expected to be in rural areas. The statistics provided pertain to 1999-2000 and hence the numbers would have almost doubled in 2011 taking in to consideration the growth of unorganized sector in India. Recognizing the relevance of informal economy and in particular street vending, this study estimates the motivation for rural women to engage in Street Vending and also explore the realities in life of these professionals.

### **Role of Women in Indian Family**

India, tracing through a long civilization has evolved to be currently a fast developing nation. India by tradition is an agrarian economy with most of the population engaged in agriculture. As a result, the Joint Family System was well established and the members of the same family had common occupation to attend. The multi-generation house hold system brought in a sort of security to each member of the family. However the status of the family members was divided by the practices of Patriarchal, Patrilineal and Patrilocal. As physical labor for family well-being was the order of the day, men were heading the families and there was low status given to women. Because of the low status, women were restricted to household activities only. However women gained status through old age or giving birth to sons. Also due to the practices of Dowry, birth of a boy baby was considered an asset while girl was a liability. This differentiating attitude resulted in poor investment on daughters for their physical and psychic developments. The women in Indian families hence were deprived of education, mobility and any decision making, even for their own welfare.

### **Globalization and Urban Women Empowerment**

India after Independence in 1947, had initiated various policy measures for the development of its people and country. Industries which were established to produce products and services for public consumption were generating employment opportunities. As these developments were concentrated in certain spatial urban areas, the effect of push-pull created migration from rural to urban areas. The male population migrated to acquire better remunerating jobs leaving behind their families with the hope of taking them later. Men with reasonable skill and education were able to clinch to jobs that could enhance their economic status and had their family members along. However the migrants without any skill rather lived a precarious life in the urban regions,

managing only a menial job. As a result, they were able to hardly provide economic support to their families back in the villages. The creation of one family – two household resulted in women members taking the role of family heads and performing the functions meant to be done by men in their absence.

Batliwala (1995) defined empowerment as “the process, and the outcome of the process, by which woman gain greater control over material and intellectual resources, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of the society”. The effects of globalization and the economic liberalization policies since 1991, has created burgeoning job opportunities. The middle and upper class women, who had acquired certain level of education, were able to secure jobs in these new opportunities (Lina Kashyap, 2004). The educated men of these families encouraged working women, as the additional income would support their fast growing living expense and new capital needs of the family. Due to the additional money flow, these families could afford to employ women servants for taking care of the domestic work. Many of these working women, due to their growth in the career, created visible economic flow to command good respect in society and family. The change in their status empowered the women to participate in the decisions of family and society welfare (Smitha Radhakrishnan, 2009). This change in status will engrain the future generations not to make gender discrimination, as mothers are the primary means by which social norms are transmitted to their children (Kamala Gupta and P.Princy Yesudian, 2006).

### Poor Rural Women and Empowerment

The ideals of the traditional Indian family system in gender discrimination still finds route in the rural areas of the country. The presence of dowry, sati, child marriage etc., is evidence for poor status of the rural women. Moreover the freedom for women to engage in remunerating work is influenced by the cooperation of family members, especially the husband. Studies reveal that a family with a male bread winner having a regular income source is more likely to encourage women's work than a casual labor. This attitude of men towards women is due to their feeling of being threatened by the wives' income and hence they either discourage or control the women's income (Rie Makita, 2008). The rural women for long had been also contributing by engaging in domestic economic activities like cattle rearing, milking, cooking and agriculture labor. However since these activities have not provided any visible economic remuneration, the efforts have not been highlighted much.

**Table: Labor Force Participation Rate (2005-06)**

	Male	Female
Rural	56.1%	31.4%
Urban	56.6%	15.2%

India, the growing economic power is still hindered by its poverty level. It is estimated that about 45.5 crore Indian's are live on less than \$1.25 per day as per the poverty line devised by World Bank. Even the other recognized methodologies of Lakdawala and Tendulkar Committee also projects sizeable poverty stricken people in this country. Three-fourth of these Below Poverty Line (BPL) population live in the rural areas where the main livelihood source is agriculture. The dependence of agriculture to eliminate poverty is going to take inordinate time (Madhusudan Ghosh,2010). It has been argued that the effective way to reduce poverty is by creating



remunerative jobs in non-farm sectors (Bhalla,2007).The national growth is only meaningful, when all citizens of a country are to benefit from it. In order to improve the livelihood of these people, it has to be centered on creating employment. In India, more than 92% of the workforce is employed in the unorganized sector. Even the liberalization policies of the government have stimulated in creating more jobs in the unorganized sector than the organized. Statistics between 1999-00 and 2004-05 suggest that hardly any jobs were created for the formal workers while there was a growth of 16% in the employment of informal workers. It has been argued that with the capitalist development, the unorganized sector has seen faster growth than the formal economy (ILO,2002). However the quality of work in the unorganized sector in terms of minimum wages, place of work, safety measures, working hours etc. are of deep concern.

Street Vending profession representing the unorganized sector has seen burgeoning growth in developing countries (Fara Azmat, Ramanie Samaratunge, 2009). In India, even though there is no official census, it is estimated that approximately 2% of the population in cities and towns are engaged in Street Vending. When the working poor finds difficulty to secure wage employment, they tend to create employment on their own by engaging in professions like street vending (NCEUS,2009). In Rural India, agriculture is the main stay occupation and there is very limited occupation distribution (ILO,2008). Also majority of the population constitute the vulnerable section of the society (Anjani Kumar, Shinoj, Joshi, 2010). This creates further challenge for poor people to counter with their poverty. One common strategy is to migrate to urban regions which is why the urban poverty is substantiate higher in Tamil Nadu (Narayanamoorthy, Muni A Hanjra, 2010). Women contribution to work force is relatively more in rural India (35.72%) than urban India (21.03%). In spite, the Indian rural women remain the most vulnerable and least



developed people. (Hirway, Indira Roy, AnilKumar,1999). It is more surprising and worrisome when an estimated 90 percent of all women in India are self employed (Rekha Datta, 2003).

### **Study Location – Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu**

The state of Tamil Nadu is estimated to be the home for 7.2 crore Indians (Census, 2011 draft report). Thanjavur District is popularly referred to as the ‘Granary of South India’ as the main occupation is agriculture and little more than 50% of the district population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Because of low industrialization there is very low opportunity for alternate non farm jobs (Kalirajan, Shand,2007). Thanjavur, the district headquarters has 0.3 million population with unestimated number of street vendors. This empirical study makes an attempt to study the Women Street Vendors in Thanjavur.

### **Research Methodology**

Using a questionnaire, a survey was conducted for collecting the primary data. Data has been collected from 68 women street vendors in Thanjavur, of which 42 were living with their husband while 26 were separated due to divorce or death of the husband. Following are the objectives of the study

1. To study the motivation of Women in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu to engage in Street Vending.
2. Understand the occupation difficulties and expected support of the Women Street Vendors.

The motivation and professional challenges would be different for women living with and without their husband. Hence separate analysis has been done for either group. A correlation and regression analysis is performed on the data provided by women with and without husband

support to understand their motivation towards street vending, occupational difficulties and expected support.

**Table: Demographic profile of Women Street Vendors at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu (N=68)**

Age	Frequency	%	No of Children	Frequency	%	Education Status	Frequency	%	Type of Shop	Frequency	%
16 – 30	3	4.4	0	1	1.5	Less than 8th Std	62	91.2	Fixed	39	57.4
31 – 45	22	32.4	1	11	16.2	Less than 12th Std	6	8.8	Push Vehicle	21	30.9
46 – 60	29	42.6	2	22	32.4	UG	0	0	Head Load	8	11.8
61 – 75	13	19.1	3	11	16.2	PG	0	0			
75 >	1	1.5	4	12	17.6						
			5	7	10.3						
			6	4	5.9						

Working Hours	Frequency	%	Alcoholic Husband	Frequency	%	Distance from Residence	Frequency	%	Type of Product	Frequency	%
0 – 4	5	7.4	Yes	30	44.1	0 – 5	51	75	Fruits and Vegetables	44	64.7
5 – 8	16	23.5	No	38	55.9	6 – 10	9	13.2	Meat	1	1.5
9 - 12	29	42.6				11 – 15	2	2.9	Other Food Items	3	4.4
13 - 16	10	14.7				Above 15	6	8.8	Household Items	5	7.4
17 - 20	8	11.8							Others	15	22.1

**(Source: Primary Data)**

From the above table we can understand that 75% of the women street vendors are between 30 and 60 years of age, 50% of these women have more than two children, 91.2% the vendors have not even acquired primary education, 57.4% of the street vendors prefer continuing their profession from a fixed place, 69.1% of the women work for more than 8 hours a day, 44.1% of the women street vendor’s husband are alcoholic, 75% of the women have their residence within 5 kilometer radius from the point of their business and 64.7% of the vendors sell fruits and vegetables.

All the women street vendors in the sample were married and three-fourth of them between 30 and 60 years. The non presence of unmarried women in this profession denotes the unwillingness

of the parents to indulge their daughters in street vending. Almost all women street vendors have not been educated even up to primary education which denotes their poor literacy level and economic status. Hardship of life, almost non-existing entertainment, low awareness of contraception methods and considering more children as more source of income could have resulted in 50% of the street vendors having more than two children. Their poor economic status may deprive the young children a healthy childhood which could lead to physically and mentally weaker adults for the future. Also with 69.1% of women working for more than 8 hours will restrict their time with their children. Spouse of many of the Women street vendors are alcoholic which is a serious source to drain the already low economic flow in their family (Shanthi Ranganathan, 2004). Also alcoholism can lead to domestic violence where the women could be physically abused (Marlene J Berg, 2010). Because of the physical weakness of women, they prefer doing their business from a fixed place relatively near their residence.

**Table: Demographic Profile of Women Street Vendors living with their Spouse (N=42)**

Age	Frequency	%	No of Children	Frequency	%	Education Status	Frequency	%	Type of Shop	Frequency	%
16 – 30	3	7.1	0	0	0	Less than 8th Std	36	85.7	Fixed	24	57.1
31 – 45	16	38.1	1	7	16.7	Less than 12th Std	6	14.3	Push Vehicle	13	31
46 – 60	17	40.5	2	15	35.7	UG	0	0	Head Load	5	11.9
61 – 75	6	14.3	3	5	11.9	PG	0	0			
75 >	0	0	4	10	23.8						
			5	4	9.5						
			6	1	2.4						

Working Hours	Frequency	%	Alcoholic Husband	Frequency	%	Distance from Residence	Frequency	%	Type of Product	Frequency	%
0 – 4	2	4.8	Yes	13	31	0 – 5	31	73.8	Fruits and Vegetables	24	57.1
5 – 8	12	28.6	No	29	69	6 – 10	7	16.7	Meat	1	2.4
9 – 12	20	47.6				11 – 15	2	4.8	Other Food Items	2	4.8
13 – 16	5	11.9				Above 15	2	4.8	Household Items	3	7.1
17 – 20	3	7.1							Others	12	28.6

(Source: Primary Data)

From the above table we can draw that 92.9% of the women are between 30 and 60 years of age, 47.6% of women street vendors have more than two children, almost all women have not even acquired primary education, 57.1% prefer a fixed place for selling their products, 70.6% work for more than 8 hours a day, 31% have their spouse addicted to alcohol, 73.8% prefer to work near their residence within a radius of five kilometers and 57.1% sell vegetables and fruits.

**Table: Livelihood Enhancement Factors for Women Street Vendors living with their Spouse – Correlation Analysis**

Livelihood Factors	Age			No of Children			Education Status			Type of Shop		
	r	Significance	Correlation	R	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Children Education	0.448	0.003	Positive	0.027	0.863	Positive	-0.356	0.021	Negative	-0.048	0.763	Negative
Revenue Per Month	-0.038	0.811	Negative	0.038	0.811	Positive	-0.04	0.801	Negative	-0.092	0.562	Negative
Profit Per Month	0.03	0.851	Positive	-0.038	0.809	Negative	-0.087	0.583	Negative	-0.096	0.544	Negative
Savings	-0.122	0.443	Negative	-0.355	0.021	Negative	0.139	0.381	Positive	0.002	0.992	Positive
Threat from Organized Sector	0	1		-0.193	0.221	Negative	-0.093	0.558	Negative	0.117	0.462	Positive

Livelihood Factors	Alcoholic Husband			Working Hours			Distance from Residence			Type of Product		
	r	Significance	Correlation	R	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Children Education	0.077	0.626	Positive	0.207	0.188	Positive	0.116	0.466	Positive	-0.051	0.747	Negative
Revenue Per Month	-0.111	0.484	Negative	0.196	0.213	Positive	-0.041	0.797	Negative	-0.059	0.711	Negative
Profit Per Month	-0.257	0.1	Negative	0.157	0.32	Positive	-0.073	0.644	Negative	0.101	0.523	Positive
Savings	-0.4	0.803	Negative	0.155	0.327	Positive	-0.204	0.196	Negative	0.106	0.502	Positive
Threat from Organized Sector	0.176	0.265	Positive	-0.087	0.582	Negative	0.021	0.897	Positive	0.018	0.91	Positive

(Source: Primary Data)

From the above table we can view that there is significant relationship between age of the women street vendor and their children education ( $r=0.448$ ), number of children and savings from business ( $r=-0.355$ ), education status of women and their children education ( $r=-0.356$ ). Though not significant but considerable relationship exists between number of children and threat from organized sector ( $r=-0.193$ ), alcoholic husband and threat from organized sector

( $r=0.176$ ), working hours and children education ( $r=0.207$ ), working hours and revenue per month ( $r=0.196$ ), distance from residence and savings from business ( $r=-0.204$ ).

In an Indian family, women would be the source of influence for the continuing education of her children. Children of women street vendors who put on more work hours see that their revenue per month is substantially high and manage to provide education to their children. However, children of the current generation street vendors largely seem to neglect education which could attract them to child labor and miss out an opportunity to reform their life. The trend is more severe among women who are better educated. This could be the result of dis-belief among women on education as a source of better livelihood. The savings of women with more number of children is low as there could be expenditure towards bringing up the children. However such mothers have felt less threatened by the presence of organized sector as they may engage their children for additional income source during shocks.

**Table: Professional Challenges and Support requirements of Women Street Vendors living with their spouse – Correlation Analysis**

Difficulty at work	Age			No of Children			Education Status			Type of Shop		
	R	Significance	Correlation	R	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Theft	0.073	0.646	Positive	0.138	0.384	Positive	-0.064	0.688	Negative	-0.123	0.439	Negative
Non Sales	-0.008	0.958	Negative	-0.02	0.898	Negative	-0.216	0.169	Negative	0.01	0.951	Positive
Standing Long Hours	0.152	0.338	Positive	0.166	0.293	Positive	-0.132	0.403	Negative	-0.139	0.382	Negative
Away From Family	0.052	0.753	Positive	-0.135	0.396	Negative	0.099	0.531	Positive	-0.139	0.382	Negative
Unhygienic Work Place	-0.17	0.282	Negative	-0.134	0.397	Negative	0.228	0.146	Positive	-0.015	0.924	Negative
No Permanent Location	0.092	0.566	Positive	0.103	0.523	Positive	0.057	0.725	Positive	-0.12	0.455	Negative
Sun and Rain	0.021	0.897	Positive	-0.012	0.937	Negative	0.144	0.362	Positive	0.097	0.543	Positive
<b>Govt Support Requirement</b>												
Loan	0.145	0.359	Positive	0.156	0.323	Positive	-0.322	0.038	Negative	-0.141	0.374	Negative
Shop Place	-0.145	0.359	Negative	0.293	0.06	Negative	0.149	0.348	Positive	0.141	0.374	Positive
Electricity												
Free House	0.315	0.042	Positive	0.16	0.312	Positive	-0.213	0.175	Negative	-0.161	0.31	Negative
Health Care	-0.119	0.454	Negative	-0.094	0.555	Negative	-0.064	0.688	Negative	0.101	0.523	Positive

Education to Children	-0.279	0.073	Negative	0.052	0.744	Negative	0.06	0.706	Positive	0.133	0.401	Positive
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Difficulty at work	Alcoholic Husband			Working Hours			Distance from Residence			Type of Product		
	R	Significance	Correlation	R	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Theft	0.105	0.51	Positive	0.188	0.234	Positive	-0.08	0.614	Negative	-0.128	0.42	Negative
Non Sales	-0.045	0.779	Negative	-0.096	0.545	Negative	0.044	0.784	Positive	0.092	0.564	Positive
Standing Long Hours	0.042	0.793	Positive	0.041	0.794	Positive	0.451	0.003	Positive	-0.086	0.589	Negative
Away From Family	-0.309	0.046	Negative	0.041	0.794	Positive	0.039	0.805	Positive	-0.086	0.589	Negative
Unhygienic Work Place	-0.334	0.031	Negative	0.149	0.347	Positive	-0.115	0.469	Negative	0.065	0.683	Positive
No Permanent Location	-0.337	0.818	Negative	0.043	0.788	Positive	-0.129	0.421	Negative	-0.346	0.027	Negative
Sun and Rain	0.364	0.018	Positive	-0.018	0.91	Negative	0.085	0.591	Positive	0.065	0.681	Positive
<b>Govt Support Requirement</b>												
Loan	0.069	0.666	Positive	0.133	0.4	Positive	0.172	0.276	Positive	-0.074	0.643	Negative
Shop Place	-0.069	0.666	Negative	0.062	0.696	Positive	-0.095	0.549	Negative	0.027	0.864	Positive
Electricity												
Free House	0.224	0.154	Positive	0.129	0.415	Positive	-0.121	0.446	Negative	-0.202	0.199	Negative
Health Care	-0.233	0.137	Negative	0.02	0.9	Positive	-0.08	0.614	Negative	-0.128	0.42	Negative
Education to Children	-0.072	0.651	Negative	0.047	0.768	Positive	-0.095	0.548	Negative	0.066	0.678	Positive

(Source: Primary Data)

The above table reveals significant positive correlation between age of women street vendor and requirement for free housing ( $r=0.315$ ), alcoholic husband and difficulty to work under the vagaries of sun and rain ( $r=0.364$ ), distance between POS from residence and difficulty of stand for long hours ( $r=0.451$ ) and significant negative correlation between education status and low cost loan ( $r=-0.322$ ), alcoholic husband and difficulty of being away from family ( $r=-0.309$ ), unhygienic work place ( $r=-0.334$ ) and type of product being sold and requirement for a permanent location ( $r=-0.346$ ).

The tough work conditions in Street Vending might deter many women in continuing or efficiently involving in this profession at an older age. Hence many aged women look for government support in providing free housing so as to have a shelter during the low economic ageing days. The burden of the alcoholic husband and the distance to be covered every day to reach from their residence to the selling point is physically exhausting the women who find



difficulty to stand for long hours under the vagaries of sun and rain. Also women with alcoholic husbands prefer being away from home which could dangerously deprive the children from mother care.

**Table: Livelihood Enhancement Factors, Professional Challenges and Support Requirements for Women Street Vendors living with their spouse – Regression Analysis**

Livelihood Factors	R Square	Age	No of Children	Education Status	Type of Shop	Alcoholic Husband	Working Hours	Distance from Residence	Type of Product
Children Education	0.278	0.365	-0.103	-0.198	0.101	0.04	0.144	0.137	-0.059
Revenue Per Month	0.081	-0.117	0.074	-0.027	-0.046	-0.113	0.238	-0.047	-0.117
Profit Per Month	0.116	0.016	0.024	-0.068	-0.138	-0.244	0.088	-0.12	0.113
Savings	0.184	-0.047	-0.332	0.103	-0.18	0.042	0.113	-0.129	0.032
Threat from Organized Sector	0.124	0.004	-0.271	-0.146	0.08	0.211	-0.116	0.091	-0.018

Difficulty at work									
Theft	0.1	-0.038	0.128	-0.012	-0.079	0.082	0.223	-0.111	-0.125
Non Sales	0.093	-0.059	-0.027	-0.281	-0.027	-0.025	-0.177	-0.001	0.15
Standing Long Hours	0.234	0.068	0.023	-0.028	0.064	0.042	0.125	0.47	-0.071
Away From Family	0.165	0.137	-0.16	0.165	-0.092	-0.298	0.059	0.044	-0.124
Unhygienic Work Place	0.206	-0.08	-0.013	0.221	-0.056	-0.315	0.183	-0.084	-0.038
No Permanent Location	0.191	0.029	0.076	0.139	0.036	-0.128	0.133	-0.16	-0.421
Sun and Rain	0.192	0.066	-0.077	0.175	0.047	0.386	0.01	0.165	0.078
Govt Support Requirement									
Loan	0.147	-0.037	0.073	-0.278	-0.025	0.063	0.135	0.134	-0.041
Shop Place	0.251	-0.169	0.468	0.13	0.248	-0.157	0.173	-0.104	-0.112
Electricity									
Free House	0.209	0.193	0.066	-0.105	-0.105	0.175	0.093	-0.192	-0.12
Health Care	0.155	-0.147	-0.036	-0.135	0.217	-0.26	0.084	-0.034	-0.299
Education to Children	0.13	-0.324	0.196	-0.051	0.124	-0.079	0.107	-0.076	-0.03

(Source: Primary Data)

Significant proportion of variance in livelihood can be explained by the livelihood factors like children education (27.8%), profit per month (11.6%), savings (18.4%) and threat from organized sector (12.4%). Also the difficulty at work is greatly influenced by standing for long hours (23.4%), being away from family for a longer period (16.5%), unhygienic work place (20.6%), no permanent place for doing their business (19.2%) and vagaries of being under sun and rain (19.2%).

**Table: Demographic Profile of Women Street Vendors living without their spouse (N=26)**



Age	Frequency	%	No of Children	Frequency	%	Education Status	Frequency	%	Type of Shop	Frequency	%
16 – 30	0	0	0	1	3.8	Less than 8th Std	26	100	Fixed	15	57.7
31 – 45	6	23.1	1	4	15.4	Less than 12th Std	0	0	Push Vehicle	8	30.8
46 – 60	12	46.2	2	7	26.9	UG	0	0	Head Load	3	11.5
61 – 75	7	26.9	3	6	23.1	PG	0	0			
75 >	1	3.8	4	2	7.7						
			5	3	11.5						
			6	3	11.5						

Working Hours	Frequency	%	Alcoholic Husband	Frequency	%	Distance from Residence	Frequency	%	Type of Product	Frequency	%
0 – 4	3	11.5	Yes	17	65.4	0 - 5	20	76.9	Fruits and Vegetables	20	76.9
5 – 8	4	15.4	No	9	34.6	6 - 10	2	7.7	Meat	1	3.8
9 – 12	9	34.6				11 - 15	4	15.4	Other Food Items	2	7.7
13 – 16	5	19.2				Above 15			Household Items	3	11.5
17 – 20	5	19.2							Others		

(Source: Primary Data)

69.3% of the women are aged between 30 and 60 years, 53.8% women have more than two children, all the women are poorly educated, 57.7% of the vendors operate from a fixed location, 73% women work for more than 8 hours a day, 65.4% of the women had alcoholic husband, 76.9% operated their business within 5 kilometer radius from their residence and 76.95% of the women sold fruits and vegetables.

Almost three-fourth of the women in their middle age will have growing children which could demand economical and emotional contribution for the well being of the family. Also the families with more than two children are considerably high which could further burden the women with the responsibility of earning considerable income for supporting their livelihood.

Women without husbands have similar traits like selling preference for fruits and vegetables, point of sale within 5 kilometer radius from distance, preference for a fixed place for operating the business and three fourth of the women working for more than 8 hours a day.

**Table: Livelihood Enhancement Factors for Women Street Vendors living without their Spouse – Correlation Analysis**

Livelihood Factors	Age			No of Children			Type of Shop		
	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Children Education	0.196	0.347	Positive	0.338	0.099	Positive	-0.172	0.411	Negative
Revenue Per Month	-0.039	0.851	Negative	0.006	0.976	Positive	0.411	0.037	Positive
Profit Per Month	0.029	0.887	Positive	-0.012	0.953	Negative	0.25	0.218	Positive
Savings	-0.206	0.312	Negative	-0.236	0.245	Negative	0.105	0.611	Positive
Threat from Organized Sector	-0.239	0.24	Negative	-0.099	0.629	Negative	0.107	0.602	Positive

Livelihood Factors	Type of Product			Working Hours			Distance from Residence		
	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Children Education	0.272	0.188	Positive	-0.051	0.81	Negative	0.255	0.219	Positive
Revenue Per Month	0.252	0.214	Positive	0.074	0.721	Positive	-0.249	0.22	Negative
Profit Per Month	0.441	0.024	Positive	0.267	0.187	Positive	-0.122	0.553	Negative
Savings	-0.219	0.283	Negative	0.221	0.279	Positive	-0.15	0.463	Negative
Threat from Organized Sector	0.296	0.143	Positive	-0.071	0.729	Negative	0.154	0.453	Positive

The above table reveals significant correlation between revenue per month and type of shop ( $r=0.411$ ), profit per month and type of product ( $r=0.441$ ). There is also considerable correlation between Age of street vendor and perceived threat from organized sector ( $r=-0.239$ ), no of children to street vendors and savings ( $r=-0.236$ ), type of shop and profit per month ( $r=0.25$ ), type of product and children education ( $r=0.272$ ), type of product and revenue per month ( $r=0.252$ ).

Women street vendors seem to make better revenue and profit by selling higher value products like household items rather than selling fruits and vegetables which are more common. Since the profitability is high, they also prefer to spare their income for children education. Surprisingly the perceived threat of organization is rather low as the street vendors are aging. This probably could be the result of the grown up children who also should economic responsibility for the family. Hence the women street vendor no more shelters the entire risk on her profession for family income. Though most of the women street vendors prefer to operate from a fixed location,

the street vendors who are mobile seem to generate better revenue and profit. The mobility allows them to reach to potential customers across areas and hence better prospect.

**Table: Professional Challenges and Support requirements of Women Street Vendors living without their spouse – Correlation Analysis**

Difficulty at work	Age			No of Children			Type of Shop		
	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Theft									
Non Sales	-0.23	0.259	Negative	-0.163	0.426	Negative	0.171	0.402	Positive
Standing Long Hours	-0.192	0.347	Negative	0.011	0.957	Positive	0.607	0.001	Positive
Unhygienic Work Place	0.174	0.397	Positive	0.477	0.014	Positive	-0.098	0.635	Negative
No Permanent Location	-0.061	0.765	Negative	-0.308	0.125	Negative	-0.024	0.909	Negative
Sun and Rain	0.097	0.637	Positive	0.258	0.203	Positive	0.018	0.931	Positive
<b>Govt Support Requirement</b>									
Loan	-0.377	0.057	Negative	0.151	0.462	Positive	0.426	0.03	Positive
Shop Place	0.052	0.802	Positive	-0.047	0.819	Negative	0.043	0.833	Positive
Free House	-0.061	0.765	Negative	0.201	0.326	Positive	0.284	0.159	Positive
Health Care	0.417	0.034	Positive	0.069	0.736	Positive	0.043	0.833	Positive
Education to Children	0.221	0.278	Positive	0.005	0.982	Positive	-0.156	0.448	Negative

Difficulty at work	Working Hours			Distance from Residence			Type of Product		
	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation	r	Significance	Correlation
Theft									
Non Sales									
Standing Long Hours	0.23	0.259	Positive	-0.033	0.873	Negative	0.201	0.326	Positive
Away From Family	-0.233	0.252	Negative	-0.243	0.232	Negative	0.078	0.706	Positive
No Permanent Location	-0.076	0.714	Negative	0.028	0.893	Positive	0.01	0.96	Positive
Sun and Rain	-0.667	0	Negative	0.083	0.696	Positive	-0.006	0.978	Negative

(Source: Primary Data)

From the above table we may realize significant correlation between age of the street vendor and requirement for free health care ( $r=0.417$ ), number of children and concern for unhygienic work place (0.477), type of shop and standing long hours ( $r=0.607$ ), type of shop and requirement for easy and subsidized loan ( $r=0.426$ ), working hours and no permanent location ( $-0.0667$ ), working hours and the difficulties of hardship weather( $r=0.474$ ).

The women street vendor owing to very unhygienic and hardship work condition is vulnerable to illness. Moreover with their low income which could further reduce due to aging, will not be sufficient to take of their health care needs. Hence the aging women street vendors look forward to government for better and free health care service to them. Since many of these street vendors would not have any one at home to attend to their children, they bring the kids along to the work location. The unhygienic work place may act as evil for contracting any disease. There is evidence that income generating women in informal economy does not translate better health for their children and infact it has been contrary (William Pick, 1998). Attending to sick children could force them to be away from work resulting in loss of income on one side and meeting medical expenses on the other. Though women street vendors who are moving around to sell the products earn better income, but they also are physically strained. They may expect an easy loan facility which may allow them to hire a shop for continuing their profession.

**Table: Livelihood Enhancement Factors, Professional Challenges and Support Requirements for Women Street Vendors living without their spouse – Regression Analysis**

Livelihood Factors	R Square	Beta Value					
		Age	No of Children	Type of Shop	Working Hours	Distance from Residence	Type of Product
Children Education	0.31	0.008	0.308	-0.085	0.026	0.316	0.404
Revenue Per Month	0.215	0.045	0.061	0.369	0.14	-0.097	0.121
Profit Per Month	0.343	0.13	-0.074	0.146	0.374	0.015	0.462
Savings	0.199	-0.097	-0.159	0.059	0.211	-0.222	-0.254
Threat from Organized Sector	0.201	-0.243	0.013	-0.006	-0.056	0.235	0.355

<b>Difficulty at work</b>							
Theft							
Non Sales	0.168	-0.164	-0.079	0.035	0.272	-0.002	0.244
Standing Long Hours	0.474	-0.12	0.233	0.663	-0.234	-0.032	-0.21
Unhygienic Work Place	0.252	-0.156	0.56	-0.045	-0.108	-0.028	-0.005
No Permanent Location	0.582	0.1	-0.352	-0.017	-0.693	0.195	-0.077
Sun and Rain	0.295	0.016	0.255	0.102	0.476	-0.043	-0.012
<b>Govt Support Requirement</b>							
Loan	0.496	-0.589	0.538	0.293	-0.143	0.034	0.176
Shop Place	0.029	0.164	-0.125	0.102	0.095	0.077	0.01
Free House	0.274	-0.212	0.404	0.293	-0.259	-0.158	-0.2
Health Care	0.336	0.697	-0.274	0.316	0.124	0.307	0.058
Education to Children	0.2	0.286	-0.179	-0.129	0.324	-0.178	-0.051

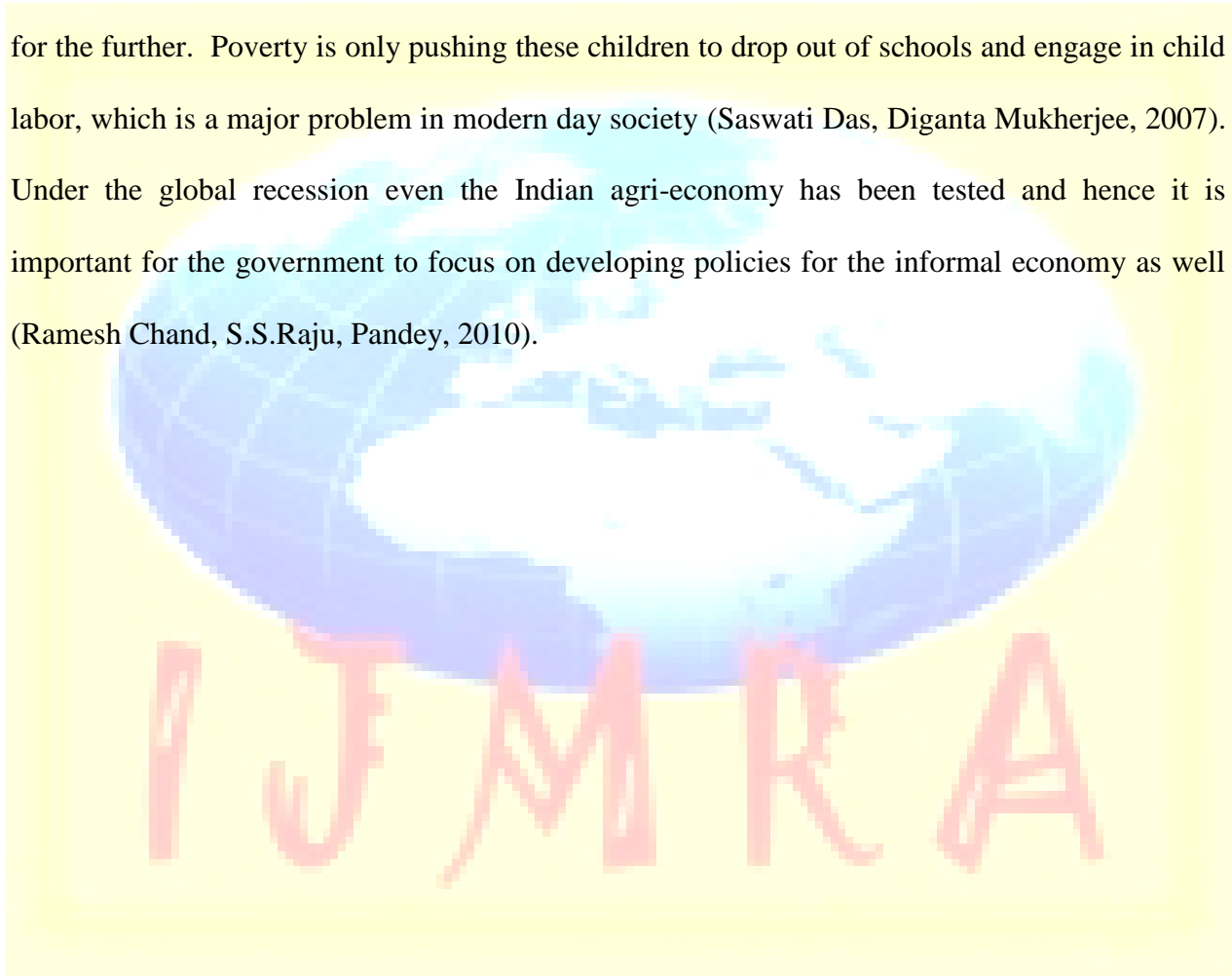
(Source: Primary Data)

Significant proportion of variance in livelihood can be explained by the livelihood factors like children education (31%), profit per month (34.3%). The variance in difficulty is contributed by no permanent location (58.2%), hard weathering conditions (29.5%). The support measures expected from the local government is loan (49.6%), Health care facilities (33.6%).

### Conclusion

The unorganized sector has been the life-line boat for many employed Indians. Street Vending is one such unorganized profession which does not demand for much capital, education or skill. Irrespective of the women with or without husband support, the living condition of these families, especially women, do not have much difference. The study on women in Street Vending profession at Thanjavur reveals the poor economic condition of women engaged in Street Vending. However with certain regularization as suggested in the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009, there is a possibility to see some good to this community. The recognition of the informal economy by the local government in Durban is a living case to draw opportunity for these women street vendors (Caroline Skinner, Imraan Valodia, 2003). Development policies focused on informal economy can bring in encouraging results especially

for rural villages and small towns (Robinson Ngugi, Dickson Nyariki, 2005). The above study reveals that in the current condition the street vending profession will not be able create substantial wealth for improving the condition of the families. Also the hard life conditions in this profession can only further deteriorate the family health. The children who are neither well fed, taken care by elders or provided with sufficient basic necessities are prone to be non-assets for the further. Poverty is only pushing these children to drop out of schools and engage in child labor, which is a major problem in modern day society (Saswati Das, Diganta Mukherjee, 2007). Under the global recession even the Indian agri-economy has been tested and hence it is important for the government to focus on developing policies for the informal economy as well (Ramesh Chand, S.S.Raju, Pandey, 2010).



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