

# Socio Economic Conditions of Street Vendors in Kerala

Pushpalatha. V

Associate Professor, Department of Economics,  
M. P. M. M. S. N. Trusts College, Shoranur, Calicut University, Kerala, India- 679122  
Email address: Plathavenu@gmail.com

**Abstract**— Street vending forms a significant part of the urban informal sector by providing employment and affordable goods to low-income populations. This study examines the socio-economic conditions and major problems faced by street vendors. For the study, a sample of 150 street vendors are selected from Palakkad District in Kerala. The study analyses income patterns, working conditions, access to social security, and marketing practices. The findings reveal that street vendors face prolonged working hours, financial insecurity, lack of government support, limited savings, and high work-related stress. The study concludes that targeted policy interventions, institutional support, and financial inclusion are essential for improving the livelihood and sustainability of street vendors.

**Keywords**— Street Vendors, Informal Sector, Urban sector, Livelihood, Socio-economic Conditions

## I. INTRODUCTION

Street vending is an integral component of the informal economy, providing self-employment opportunities to millions of urban poor. Vendors sell goods and services in public spaces through temporary or mobile structures. Despite their economic contribution, they face multiple challenges such as harassment, lack of regulation, insecure income, and poor access to financial and social security systems. In Kerala, street vending plays an important role in local markets and daily consumption. This study focuses on Palakkad District in Kerala to understand the working conditions, problems, and survival strategies of street vendors.

The study pursues the following three objectives as;

1. To analyse the socio-economic conditions of street vendors.
2. To examine the marketing practices adopted by street vendors.
3. To analyse the problems faced by the street vendors.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study based on the Primary data that are collected from 150 street vendors operating in urban areas in Palakkad District using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data are collected from journals, books, government reports, and online sources. The collected data are analyzed by using simple statistical tools such as percentage analysis, tables, and graphical representation.

## II. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic profile reveals that street vending is dominated by middle-aged males with low educational attainment. Most vendors belong to nuclear families, indicating financial responsibility towards dependents. Most street vendors lived in tiled houses. Majority of the vendors do not possess any fixed income-generating assets. Most of the vendors do not own any motor vehicle, restricting mobility and market access.

TABLE 1: Socio - Economic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	120	80%
	Female	30	20%
Age Group	25-40 Years	69	46%
	40-60 Years	75	50%
	Above 60 Years	6	4%
Education	Below SSLC	75	50%
	SSLC	30	20%
	Plus Two	30	20%
	Graduation	15	10%
Family Type	Nuclear	99	66%
	Joint	51	34%
Ration card category	APL	48	32%
	BPL	102	68%
	Tailed	78	52%
Nature of house	Concrete	30	20%
	Sheet	42	28%
	Yes	45	30%
Fixed Income Earnings asset	No	105	70%
	Money	6	4%
Nature of saving	Gold	15	10%
	No	129	86%
	No Vehicle	75	50%
Motor vehicle	Two- wheeler	51	34%
	Three- wheeler	15	10%

The study reveals that 86% of respondents have no savings. Only 26% possess any form of insurance coverage. This reflects high financial insecurity and vulnerability to economic shocks. A significant majority (84%) of respondents have financial liabilities, mainly due to borrowing for business and household expenses. Majority of vendors lack savings and insurance and suffer from heavy financial liabilities, reflecting economic vulnerability.

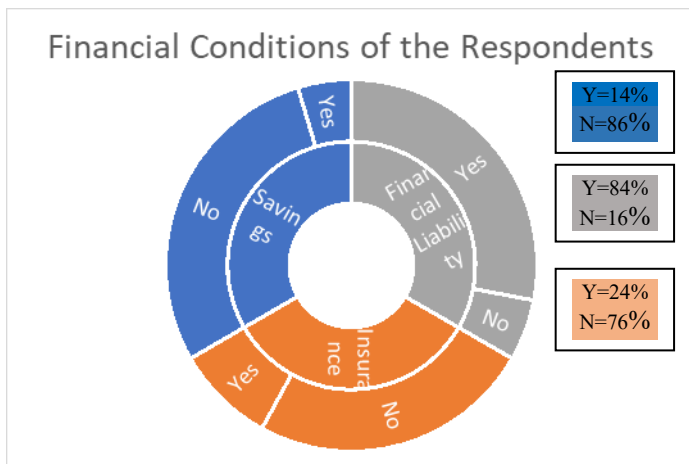


Fig. 1: Financial conditions of the street vendors

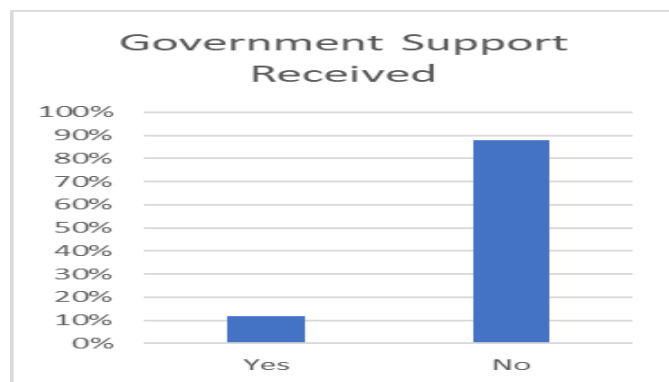


Fig. 2: Opinion about government support received

Very few vendors receive government assistance. This shows inadequate implementation of welfare schemes. Most vendors are unaware of welfare schemes or face difficulties in accessing them.

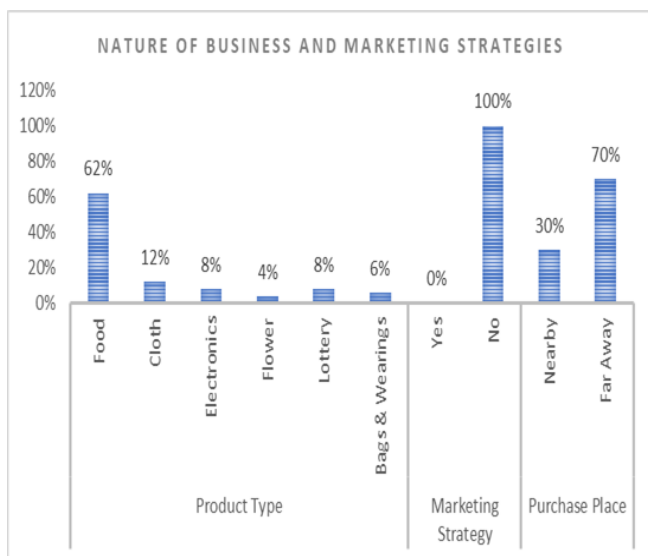


Fig. 3: Nature of business and marketing strategies

Food vending is the dominant activity. None of the respondents follows modern marketing strategies; they rely

mainly on traditional selling methods and price discounts. Most procure goods from distant markets, increasing costs and reducing profit margins.

TABLE 2: Problems faced by the street vendors

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Working Hours	6-8 Hours	27	18%
	8-10 Hours	27	18%
	Above 10 Hours	96	64%
Work-related Stress	Yes	144	96%
	No	6	4%

Most vendors work for more than 10 hours daily and experience high stress levels. This indicates poor work-life balance and unhealthy working conditions.

#### IV. FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are:

- Street vending in the district is male-dominated and concentrated among middle-aged individuals.
- Vendors earn low and unstable incomes with limited savings.
- Most respondents lack insurance, assets, and institutional credit.
- Working hours are long and stressful.
- Government support and welfare coverage are inadequate.
- Marketing practices are traditional and unorganized.
- Financial liabilities are widespread among vendors.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The study highlights that street vendors face serious socio-economic and occupational challenges. Financial insecurity, lack of social protection, prolonged working hours, and weak institutional support affect their quality of life and business sustainability. Despite their vital role in urban supply chains, vendors remain marginalized in policy frameworks. Therefore, comprehensive interventions focusing on credit access, insurance coverage, skill development, and infrastructure provision are essential. Supporting street vendors will not only improve their livelihoods but also strengthen the urban informal economy.

#### REFERENCES

- [1]. Jyothsana(2021), Street Vendors in Bangalore: An Overview, IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM), Vol. 23, Issue 4, Ser. II, April, pp. 36-39.
- [2]. Amrutha, Ibrahim (2021), Socio-Economic and Health conditions of Street Vendors in Kozhikode, International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews (IJRPR), Vol. 2, No. 10, October, pp. 381- 387
- [3]. Nitya Maniktala and Tanisha Jain (2021), State of Street Vendors in India: Pre and Post Covid-19 Analysis, International Journal of Policy Sciences and Law, Vol. 1, Issue2, pp.542-560..
- [4]. Vinod C &Abhin Vyas (2020June), Socio-Economic Profile of Street Vendors in Kerala: A Case Study of vendors in East fort, Thiruvananthapuram. Mukt Shabd Journal IX (VI),151-165.
- [5]. Dhamodharan, K, (2019), Problems of Street Vendors in Pondicherry, International Journal of Multidisciplinary Education Research (IJMER), Vol.8, Issue8, pp.478-487.
- [6]. Sankar R (2019), Work-Life Balance among Street Vendors in Puducherry. International Journal of Research in Engineering.IT and Social Sciences, 965), 374-381

- [7]. Haritha (2019), "Problems Faced by Match Industry Workers: A Social Perspective". *Pen Acclaims: A Multi-disciplinary National Journal*, 7(9), PP. 1-11
- [8]. Chakraborty, Koley (2018), Socio- Economic View on Street Vendors: A Study of a Daily Market at Jamshedpur. *Journal of Advanced Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 5(1), PP.14-20
- [9]. Puja Mishra (2018), "Challenges faced by Women Street Vendors: A Case Study of Ranchi District". *International Journal of Latest Technology in Engineering, Management & Applied Science*, 7(1), PP. 172-174.
- [10]. Jaishankar and Sujatha (2016), A Study on Problems Faced by the Street Vendors in Tiruchirappalli City. *SSRG International journal of Economics and Management studies (SSRGIJEMS)*, 3 (9), 40-43.
- [11]. Manoj Panwar, Vikas Garg (2015), Issues and Challenges faced by Vendors on Urban Street: A Case of Sonipat City, India. *International Journal of Engineering Technology, Management and Applied Science*, 3(2), 71-84.
- [12]. Kumar (2015). Socio Economic features of street vending enterprises in Kerala. *International Journal of Management and Commerce Innovations*. 3 (1), 750-756
- [13]. Hemalata Sharma (2015), Laws Pertaining to Rights of Street Vendors in India: An Analysis; *PRANJANA: The Journal of Management Awareness*, 2(18), pp 60-68,