

APPENDIX – I

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
TO ELICIT INFORMATION ON THE ECONOMIC
STATUS OF SELECT WOMEN VENDORS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT.**

I. Socio – economic Background

1. Name:
2. Address:

3. Age:
 - a) 20 – 30 b) 31 – 40 years c) 41 – 50 years d) Above 51 years
4. Religion:
 - a) Hindu b) Muslim c) Christian
5. Caste:
 - a) BC b) MBC c) SC/ST d) OC
6. Education qualification:
 - a) Illiterate b) Primary c) Secondary d) Higher secondary e) Graduated discontinued
7. Marital Status:
 - a) Married c) Divorce/ speared d) widows
8. Size of the family
 - a) Less than 2 b) 2 Members c) 3 Members d) 4 Members e) More than 4 Members
9. Type of family
 - a) Joint family b) Single Parents c) Nuclear
10. Income level
 - a) Below 5000 b) 5000 – 10,000 c) 10,000 – 20,000 d) Above 20,000

II. Assets of the Family

S.no	Particulars	Yes/ No
1.	Land	
2.	Own house	
3.	Two wheeler	
4.	Television	
5.	Refrigerator	
6.	Washing mashing	
6.	Furniture	
7.	Gold	
8.	Silver	
9.	Live stock	

III. Living Condition

Housing and other amenities	
House type	Pucca/ Kutcha/ Tiles/ Concrete
Type of Flooring	Cement
Separate space for cooking	Yes/ No
Electricity	Yes / No
Main cooking fuel	Firewood / Kerosene/ LPG
Drinking water	Yes/ No
Sources of drinking water	Private tap/ Public tap/ Public water tank
Separate washing area	Yes / No
Separate toilet	Yes / No
Type of toilet	Pit/ Flush system
Drainage facilities	Closed drainage/ Open drainage

IV. Monthly Consumption Expenditure

Items	Monthly expenditure
Food	Below 5000/ 5000 – 7000/ Above 7000
Non – food	Below 3000/ 3000 – 5000/ Above 5000
Alcohol	Below 500/ 500 – 1000/ Above 1000
Miscellaneous	Below 500/ 500 – 1000/ Above 1000

V. Dietary pattern

Break fast	
Lunch	
Tea	
Dinner	

VI. Savings and Debt

1. Do you have any savings? Yes / No
2. If, Yes Sources of savings?
a) Banks b) Chit fund c) Co-operative society d) Other's.
3. How much do you save in a month?
a) Below Rs.1500/- b) Rs.1500 – 2000/- c) Above Rs.2000/-
4. From where did you borrow?
a) Money Lenders b) Family Members c) Friends d) No
5. Do you have Debt? Yes / No
6. Debt amount
a) Below 5000 b) Rs. 5000 – 10,000 c) Above 10,000
7. Repayment amount
a) Below 1000 b) Rs. 1000 – 5000 c) Above 10,000

8. Reasons for Debt
- a) Purchase of land
 - b) Purchase of household articles
 - c) Children's daughters marriage
 - d) Children's education
 - e) Repair the house
 - f) Others needs

VII. A. Nature of work

1. Reasons for taking up vending
 - a) Husband unemployed
 - b) Husband irresponsible
 - c) Widows
 - d) To take care of the family
2. Years of experiences as a street vendor?
 - a) Less than 1 year
 - b) 1 – 5 years
 - c) 5 – 10 years
 - d) Above 10 years
3. Source of fund
 - a) Relatives
 - b) Friends
 - c) Family
 - d) Others specify
4. How the vendors manage excess goods
 - a) Selling at lower price
 - b) Keeping at home
 - c) wasting the product
5. Nature of product sold?
 - a) Fruits
 - b) Vegetables
 - c) Flower
 - d) Food
 - e) Plastic products
 - f) Cosmetics and Decorative Items
 - g) Any other
6. Working days in a month?
 - a) Less than 20 days in a month
 - b) 21 – 25 days in a month
 - c) More than 25 days
7. Daily working hours?
 - a) Below 8 hours
 - b) 8 -16 hours
 - c) More than 16 hours.

B. Working conditions

1. Do you have licence?
 - a)Yes
 - b) No
2. Status of vending place?
 - a)Stationary
 - b) Mobile
3. Rent fees paid per month?
 - a)Below Rs. 200
 - b) Rs. 200 – 300
 - c) 300 – 400
 - d) Above Rs. 1000
 - e) No paid
4. Daily income of the respondents?
 - a)Below Rs. 300
 - b) Rs. 300 to 400
 - c) Rs.400 to 500
 - d) Above Rs.500
5. The distance of vending place from home?
 - a)Less than 2 Kms
 - b) 2 – 4 Kms
 - c) 4 – 8 Kms
 - d) More than 8 Kms

6. Mode of travel
a) By walk b) Bus c) Share auto d) Any other
7. Do you get support from the family? Yes / No
If yes, who supports?
a) Parents b) Husband/ Children c) Friends d) Any other
8. Satisfaction level of Work place Amenities?

Particulars	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dis-Satisfied	Highly Dis-Satisfied
Water facility					
Toilet facilities					
Shed					
Adequate space					
Sanitation					
Waste disposal					
Street lighting					
Congested working place					

9. Problems faced by street vendors?
- a) Lack of skill
 - b) Lack of space
 - c) Uncertainty and Insecurity
 - d) Lack of capital
 - e) Unfavourable working conditions
 - f) Threat from police and Higher authority
 - g) Heavy competition between vendors
 - h) Misbehaving
 - i) Bargaining
 - j) Does not get easy financial assistance from bank
 - k) Exposure to all weather conditions
 - l) Pollution
 - m) Lack of transport facilities
 - n) Communication problem
 - o) Changing the currency notes and coins
 - p) Products getting spoiled

VIII. A. Health problems

1. Health status of the women vendors

a) Very Good b) Good c) Average d) Poor c) Very poor

2. Do you have any health problems? Yes / No

B. Details on sickness

S.no	Common sickness	Incidence of sickness
1.	Vision problems	
2.	Joint pain	
3.	Urinary infection	
4.	Skin allergy	
5.	Kidney stone	
6.	Fever	
7.	Diarrhoea	
8.	Blood pressure	
9.	Asthma	
10.	Thyroid	

C. Hospitalization details

No. of days hospitalised	In the last one year	Payment (in Rs.)
Type of hospitals 1. GH 2. Private 3. Trust hospital 4. Any other		
Type of ailment		
No. of working days lost due to sickness		

D. Reason for not taking medicine

1. Self– medication
2. Poor income
3. High medical expenses
4. Long distance to hospital
5. Religious reasons
6. Poor quality services
7. Fear of discovering serious illness

E. Cost of treatment (in Rs.)

- a) Less than 300 b) 301- 500 c) 501- 1000 d) Above 1000

IX. Job Satisfaction level of the Respondents

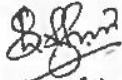
- a) Highly satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Neutral
- d) Dissatisfied
- e) Highly dissatisfied

X. Are you aware of any government schemes for street vendors? Yes/no Did you receive any support from government?

Give your suggestion to improve vending activities.

UGC CARE JOURNAL LIST

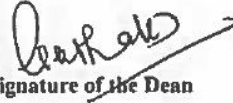
S. no	Journal name	Title	Evidence
1.	Anvesak, UGC Care Listed Journal	A Study on The Challenges Faced By Women Street Food Vendors In Selected Areas of Coimbatore, Vol.51, No 1, (2021) Pp 19 - 30. ISSN: 0378 - 4568.	Enclose
2.	The Journal of Oriental Research Madras , UGC Care Listed Journal	Demographic Profile of Selected Women Flower Vendors In Coimbatore. Vol. XCII-V, (2021) Pp 208 - 219. ISSN: 0022-3301, Impact factor: 7.193	Enclose



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A STUDY ON THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN STREET FOOD VENDORS IN SELECTED AREAS OF COIMBATORE

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ABSTRACT

Street vending is a global phenomenon. Among the various street vending, food trade is an outstanding activity which caters to the food demand from lots of people. The items made available by the food street vendors comprise of a diverse range of food products which are consumed by people from all strata. For the current study 70 women food street vendors from two main commercial areas namely R.S. Puram and Puliyakulam of Coimbatore was considered and general living standard and their problems and challenges faced by them were analysed by using direct interview method. It was tool used by percentage and simple regression. Apart from the regular health problems they also had to face several challenges like wastage of food stuffs, selling at lower price, and lack of capital to improve the existing business units. Though their social and economic position is vulnerable they continue to be in the business to supplement family income and protect their family.

Keywords: street vending, women food vendors, general living standard, challenges faced, health facilities availed.

INTRODUCTION

Article 19(1) (g) of the Indian Constitution enshrines the right to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business, albeit limited by reasonable restrictions imposed by any law. Street vending is a global phenomenon aid both men and women. Among the various street vending, food trade is an outstanding activity which caters to the food demand from lots of people. Street vending is a means of livelihood to large number of the urban poor. It meets not only the food demands of the people but offers employment and income to as wide range of people involved.

The volume of street vendors before independence was very low there were total one lakh street vendors all over the country, but after independence the volume of street vendors increased, and

now there are over one crore street vendors in the country. Some studies estimate that street vendors constitute approximate 2 percent of the total population of the metropolis. Mumbai has roughly 2,50,000 street vendors. Kolkata has nearly 2,00,000 (Sharat&Bhowmik, 2005). The NSSO data reveals that nearly 200,000 women and 21,500 children are engaged in street vending. Around 1.18 million households are dependent on this informal sector as their primary source of income. With more urbanisation likely to happen across India, the number of street vendors is likely to rise substantially. There are an estimated 50-60 lakh street vendors in India, with the largest concentrations in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad. (The Shack, 2020).

The country has witnessed a gigantic pitch in the number of women entering in different fields of economic activity. Many of the women are in unorganised sector as this is a perfectly competitive sector with ease of entry and exit. They do face struggles and challenges both at home and at workplace but continue to be working with tenacity and determination.

Women form a large segment of street vending in almost every city. Street vending is not only a source of self – employment but also a means to provide an income to the family. Street entrepreneurship has attracted marginalized women as an income earning activity world over. Several studies conducted earlier have shed light on the fact that women play a significant role in street entrepreneurial activities.

Street vendors are the main distribution channel for a large variety of products of daily consumption like fruits, vegetables, readymade garments, shoes, household gadgets, toys, stationery, newspapers and magazines and so on. The items made available by the food street vendors comprise of a diverse range of selection, starting from small snacks such as bonda, biscuits, tea, nuts to wholesome meals such as idly, dosai, chappathi, puri, and rice.

Though the government is making strides to improve and protect the vendors they work under gruelling condition, exposed to all weather conditions, standing or sitting in the same postures for long hours and very often harassed by police and municipal authorities. The national Alliance of Street Vendors in India study found that around 20 percent of their earnings are taken as rent by the authorities. Lack of social security is a major problem of all workers engaged in the informal sector (NCEUS). The work of street vendors as part of the larger informal sector, is full of insecurity and uncertainty at workplace. However, they do not have any social security from the State (Bhowmik 2001, and Anjria 2006).

Realising the importance and the contribution the street vendors make to the economy, a study was undertaken on food street vendors with the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the socio – economic conditions of selected food vendors in Coimbatore.
2. To identify the problems and challenges faced by these vendors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Debdulal (2008) found that street vendors faced problems like dependence on money lenders, lack of security and persecution at the hands of local police and other authorities. Therefore, the need for trade union and different member based associations to come forward and take necessary action for these types of problems faced by street vendors was stressed.

Geetha (2010) explored the socio – economic problems of female workers in urban informal sector. Findings revealed that females in informal sector were overburdened with work and are exploited. The study recommended that, required policy should be prepared and appropriate steps should be taken to improve working and living conditions of female workers in this sector. Kabita and Subhransubala (2012) conducted a study on social security in Informal Sector. The aim of this paper was to know the degree of social security of the working women in the informal sector in Odisha. The study suggested that social security in the organised sector was steadily shrinking but the major concern was for informal sector which imposes a heavy cost on society in terms of jobs, income and health care.

METHODOLOGY

Coimbatore is a fast growing city with large and small industrial units and blessed with host of educational and health institution. It is also an area where there are lots of temples, Commercial hubs and the mushrooming growth of IT sector has attracted people from all over. Based on this and the growth of population in the urban area, coupled with lack of jobs in alternative sectors, there has been a spurt in the entry of food vendors. To understand the various dimensions and issues of workers involved in food vending, which is widely acknowledged, the present study is primarily based on field data. Convenient sampling was used to choose the sample of 70 street food vendors from two main commercial areas namely R.S. Puram and Puliyakulam of Coimbatore. Care has been taken to include street vendors who are selling different variety of food products like idly, dosai, chapatti, variety rice etc. data has been collected with the help of well – structured interview schedule, which was pre – tested before actually administering it. The data collected were analysed by using percentage and simple regression. These areas were selected as there is a great number of foot falls due to the existence of malls, temples, educational institution, health centres and various markets which cater to the growing demands of general public.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

The socio –economic profile of the selected women vendors portrays their age, education, religion, caste, marital status, size of the family and income. The vendors constitute one of the poorest and weaker sections among the unorganised workers. Each of the above factors makes a difference and this determines or has an influence on their working condition. The socio – economic details of the sample are given in the following table.

Table 1: Socio – economic condition

S. No	Indicators	No. of respondents	Percentage	
1.	Age (in years)	20 – 30	8	11.4
		30 -40	12	17.1
		40 -50	20	28.5
		above 50	30	42.8
		Total	70	100
2.	Religion	Hindu	55	78.5
		Muslim	10	14.2
		Christian	5	7.1
		Total	70	100
3.	Caste	BC	23	32.8
		MBC	18	25.7
		SC/ST	17	24.2
		OC	12	17.1
		Total	70	100
4.	Income per day in (RS.)	Less than 400	13	18.5
		401 – 600	15	21.4
		601-800	25	35.7
		Above 800	17	24.2
		Total	70	100
5.	Size of the family	less than 2	6	8.5
		2	5	7.1
		3	20	28.5
		4	22	31.4
		More than 4	17	24.2
		Total	70	100
		6.	Education	Illiterate
Primary	40			57.1
Secondary	15			21.4
higher secondary	6			8.5
Graduates (discontinued)	5			7.1
Total	70			100

Data pertaining to the age composition of the sample respondents reveals that the main concentration of street women food vendors were in the age of above 50 years and nearly 30 women vendors are in the food vending activity. Followed by this around 20 (29 percentage) women who belonged to the age group of 40 – 50 years and there were 12 women in the age group of 30 -40 years and only eight women below the age of 30 who were involved in this

business. Religion plays a very vital role in determining the attitude and behaviour of people in India. In Tamil Nadu also certain religious practices are strictly followed and women take it up in a serious manner. The data reveals that a whopping proportion (78.5 percentages) of the food vendors belongs to Hindu community and only 14.2 percentages belongs to Muslim community and the rest followed Christianity. Each community had their own practices and this did not matter much in their daily regular activities. Tamil Nadu is also very popular in following caste system. Majority of the women vendors belonged to backward caste (32.8 percentage). There is a small percentage that came from SC/ST group too. People from other caste were to the tune of 17.1 percentages.

Marriage is a social obligation in the Indian society. Marriage is an institution which has great bonding and this is the foundation on which Indian society is built up. Through there are sweeping changes brought out in the society due to lifestyle and demonstration effect, the family structure is so strong in India and we consider it as a blessing for the foundation of the economy. The marital status of the women vendors revealed that nearly 71 percentage of women vendors were married and in few cases the husband helps them. The family members are a great support to these women. Some of them cook the food at home and is brought to the vending place. They have a permanent shed or a place to serve the food. Some women who are slightly better off, have their own vehicle and use this itself as the serving place. These people who bring the food in the car or a vehicle, park it in a regular spot. Customers regularly approach these food vendors who bring idly, dosai, chapatti and colour rice they stop their vehicle in the regular area and customers could come and enjoy the food. Some vendors make idly or dosa at the spot itself and serve it hot. The sample selected for the study had regular customers who go to office after taking break – fast from the women vendors. Some women from nearby houses also take the food from them.

Education helps in the all-round development of an individual and also enriches the economy because it is the educated people who are the assets of an economy and they bring glory and riches to the place where they are. It is commonly believed that the illiterates are the ones who take up some work in unorganised sector. Lack of education and skill do not permit them to go to better paid jobs. Around 40 (57 percentage) of the women food vendors had primary education. While 15 (21.4 percentage) had done secondary education. There were six women who have completed higher secondary education. The table reveals that five women had joined the college to do their graduation but they had to discontinue due to personal problems. There were four vendors who were illiterates. Though they have had no formal education they can do small calculations, counting etc. with which they run the business.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCES

All jobs require education and training these days training and experience is required and everyone is expected to have this. But in unorganised sector, anyone could venture into a new job without education or experience. But however, experience counts in any job. Even among the food vendors there were 27 women with more than 5 years of experience. Almost 35 had less than 5 years of experience. It was those with good experience who became successful in their venture and they have better income compared to the new comers. Their experiences helps them to extent their business or establish more units.

SAVINGS

The study made an attempt to examine the behaviour of the women vendors with respect to saving. Saving is mainly done by the higher income groups as they have an extra amount which they can allot for savings after meeting all their regular expenses. For the poor since their income itself is limited, there is no question of saving. But still same people do save in spite of their limited income. The data revealed that only 25 women vendors saved. The place of the saving is given in the following table.

Table 2: Source of savings

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Bank	5	20
Chit fund	11	44
Other	9	36
Total	25	100

There are different areas where one can keep their savings. Banks are the most preferred place for many people in these modern times, but there are other sources too. In the study it was observed that five women saved in bank they had account in the bank. Though this is a small amount it was a welcome sign to see many women vendors wanting to save an amount for future. Around 11 women saved in chit funds. The people who were running the chits were known to them and these people will come to their place to collect the amount. They preferred this because they could take the amount at any time in case of emergency. They found it easy to save as they come to their doorstep to receive the amount. If they want to expand their business they can approach these people to take money. Another reason as to why they saved in chit funds is the easy and convenient way to deal with. If it is bank they need to fill up the form and as some were illiterates they were hesitant to approach the banks. Chit funds do not require any such procedure

and hence it was easy for the women food vendors to keep their savings in chit funds. A minuscule did save with friends for easy accessibility. The amount saved was very little. There was no uniformity in the amount saved. Only for chit funds they regularly pay the amount. This use to be Rs.200/- or Rs.500 per month and there is a plan to take the money after 11 months or in certain cases after two years. In case there is an urgent need the women can approach the chit funds and they will give the money within the stipulated amount. There are clear rules to regulate the chit funds too. This was a very positive move observed among the food vendors.

DEBT AMOUNT

Debt is a common problem faced by the poor. Though the women who were surveyed were working, they found it difficult to meet certain unexpected emergency or unforeseen eventualities in their daily walk of life. So when income is inadequate they borrow from different sources or taken a loan. Almost all the women who were surveyed had debt and is classified as above. More than half of the women food vendors (53 percentage) had debt above Rs. 10,000/. Nearly one forth (25.7 percentage) had debt to the tune of Rs.5000 – 1000/- and 15 of them had less than Rs.5000/-. These are very big amount for food vendors and they struggle a lot to make the payment. However, they are making payments in smaller amounts. This is explained in the following table.

Table 3: Details of Debt

Particulars	Indicators	No. of respondents	Percentage
Debt amount	Below Rs.5000/-.	15	21.4
	Rs.5000 – 10,000/-.	18	25.7
	Above Rs. 10,000/-.	37	53.0
	Total	70	100
Source of loan	Money lenders	35	50
	Friends	20	28.5
	Andy others	15	21.4
	Total	70	100
Amount Repaid	Below Rs. 1000	35	50
	Rs. 1000 – 2000	25	35.7
	Rs. 5000 – 10,000	10	14.2
	Total	70	100

The survey revealed that all of them have gone in for a loan for some purpose or the other. It is a time when people cannot live with their limited income and while it is difficult to manage both ends, it is even more difficult to meet any specific long pending work. The reason for taking loan is presented in the following section.

Nearly one third of the women surveyed took loan for the marriage function of their children. Marriage is a great ceremony in India and it involves huge amount of money. And further if it is

girl the expenses are much more. The parent should give dowry either in the form of money or other articles which costs huge amount. Normally the parents take loan for marriage purposes. The next item was for meeting the children's education. Though education is free in government schools, they prefer private schools which cost them much. The private school charges very heavy fees and all the parents find it difficult to meet this. But it is a fashion for all parents to send their children to private school. The women vendors are of the view that at least their wards should get better education and it is for that purpose they are taking loan and sending them to private institution. Women food vendors have also availed loan to buy household articles, for starting their business and to repair their house. These expenses made them borrow and their debt position is given in the above table.

Though repayment of money borrowed is a difficult task, for anyone who takes a loan, it is more severe in the case of vendors who live on pittance from their daily sale. But they try their best to pay back in small amounts. The above table reveals that nearly half of the women food vendors who were taken for the current study paid less than Rs. 1000/- and 25 (35.7 percentage) paid between Rs. 1000 – 2000/-. There were only 10 (14.2 percentage) who could make a payment between Rs. 5000 – 10,000/-. The third group who were able to make a heavy repayment are those who are slightly better off. These vendors have their own vehicles and they prepare some food items at home and bring it to the sales spot. Some food like dosa, or puri or pan puri is made on the spot. They make all the ingredients ready and when the consumers come and demand they make the product and give. The batter, the cut onions, vegetables and other masalas or mix are done at home and makes very convenient for the vendors also to make items fast for sale. This means that they make all these at home requiring their labour. The family members also join them in washing, cutting or chopping. They station near big business units, flats, temples or complexes where large member of people come for shopping and other activities. This attracts lots of people these days. It is true in the case of working women who go for work to get items like idly, dosai or chapatti for breakfast. Some women vendors, after finishing the breakfast items, they swift back to their homes to make items, for lunch. They bring colour rice or any such type of working lunch. For this also there is a great demand. People who work in and around these areas come and take lunch. This is a booming business and this type of vendors are better off compared to the others who sell very ordinary items like vada, bonda or such snacks. It is because of the heavy demand for breakfast and lunch these vendors who are into this business are able to pay back their borrowed amount in large sum.

HEALTH PROBLEM

Health is the vital indicator of human development. It is the general wellbeing of an individual to carry on these day to day activities without physical ailments, laziness or lethargic approach. If a person is physically healthy he will be able to do his work properly. Health mainly depends upon the food and the poor and the downtrodden and the economically weaker section do not get adequate food to eat due to lack of income. Poverty leads to poor health.

Women’s health is of utmost importance as it is a pointer to the economic development. Though this is the fact, not much significance is given to women’s health in general. The women also do not give much priority their own health. They take care of the children, elders at home and do all the chores at home and most of time they neglect their own health. They do not take any effort to look after their health. This is very visible among the people working in unorganised sector. The women whom we have surveyed are working at home and also do their business as vendors. More work and less time for leisure coupled with poor food intake make them sick. Slight or mild sickness is not considered as a burden by many women.

Even on days when they were sick, some use to carry on their daily routine work. Only a few take medicine or visit a hospital. However some of them have certain health issues and treatment taken from different sources are given in the following table.

Table 4: Health and Related Aspects

Particulars	Indicators	No. of respondents	Percentage
Health problems	Eye sight	15	21.4
	Asthma	8	11.4
	Joint pain	23	32.8
	Blood pressure	9	12.8
	Urinary infection	10	14.2
	Allergy	5	7.1
	Total	70	100
Health facilities availed	GH	8	11.4
	Private hospital	4	5.7
	Clinic	12	17.1
	Self – Medication	25	35.7
	Primary health centre	21	30
	Total	70	100
Cost of treatment (in Rs.)	Less than 100	20	28.5
	100 – 300	25	35.7
	301 – 500	12	17.1
	Above 500	13	18.5
	Total	70	100

women food vendors had some problem or the other. Some of them had two or three health issues; however, the prominent health issues alone are depicted in the table. Nearly 23 (32.8 percentage) women had joint pains. Continuous work without giving rest to the body causes joint pains. Around 15 women had problem of poor vision and 10 had urinary infection. During their

vending activity most of the women are outside their home, some very far off and there is no facility for relieving themselves. They control for a long time. Further even if they use public toilet, it is not clean and since many people use the same wash room it causes infection. They also suffer from asthma, allergy and other skin problems. These women are exposed to all kinds of weather conditions and this leads to asthma and allergy. The health facilities availed by these women are also given in the table. Most of them did self – medication or took care of themselves or treated themselves with medicines they make at home. Though treatment and medicines are available or given at free of cost in General Hospital, many do not turn to GH because of lack of cleanliness, poor treatment, lack of medicines, negligence and hostile behaviour of the hospital staff. It is reported that some go to private hospital or clinic even if it is costly. They are sure to get good medicine and people prefer this. To enable poor to make use of health care the government has set up primary health centre in different areas. It is gratifying to note that 21 women make use of this PHC and they are happy with the working of PHC's. with regard to the cost of treatment it was found that nearly 20 women spent less than Rs.100/- per month while 25 of them spent between Rs.100 – 300 and 12 women were found to be spending between Rs. 301 – 500 and 13 women had to incur a monthly expense above Rs. 500/- were the better off people who could afford. The above matters are represented in the following figure.

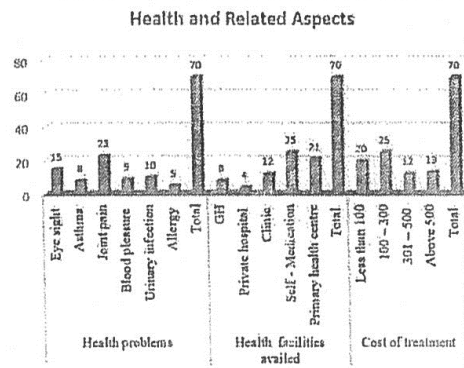


Figure 1: Health problems

CHALLENGES FACED

The major objective of the study was to assess the challenges faced by the women food vendors. Among the many challenges faced by this group of women the most dominant are taking the cooked food back home in the night. Some of them prepare idli, chappathi, chutney, sambar and such things at home and bring it to the workspot. If it is not completely sold off it has to be taken home. If there is excess supply in the morning or at noon, they reheat it and supply at night. But at night, food prepared for dinner becomes a waste if it is not purchased by consumers. There

are certain foods that cannot be kept overnight. Many a time these food has to be wasted. Nearly 73 percentage of the women reported this as a big challenge they face very often. Also this leads the sellor or vendor to give certain items at a lower price. This is also a loss for them. Further there are times when people do not pay ready cash for the eatables. Since they are regular consumers, they come, eat and go off, promising them that they will pay next day. With confidence in them the vendors also do not take this as a serious matter. Rainy season is a time of threat and challenge for the food vendors. If it rains heavily the vendors do not venture outside to do their daily business. The women vendors face such challenges in their regular business. While other street vendors who sell vegetables, craft materials, toys, clothes, chappals, bags and such novelty items there is always a threat from police and authorities. The common man also make complaints on occupying the road as it causes a threat to the traffic. Very often their goods are confiscated by police and they may get back after two days or some times it may not come back go them. However in the case of food vendors, who were taken up for the study no such incident took place. Only problem that face in this regard is that the police people come and eat food and do not pay. The vendors also don't ask them for fear of eviction.

**REGRESSION ANALYSIS
HYPOTHESIS**

Ho: There is no significant relationship between independent variable (Age) and dependent variable Health Problem.

Table 5: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.868	.753	.749	.766

Table shows, that R is 0.868 and R square value is 0.753. The degree of determination shows the extent to which extent the independent variable influences the dependent variable. In the study the health is determined to an extent of 75.3% by age.

Table 6: coefficients

Variables	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Age	.868	14.402	.000

** Dependent Variable: Health Problems*

The regression results for Health Problems predicted by the Age (β) beta value= .868, t value= 14.402, P= 0.000. In this analysis, mentioned variables the P value is less than 0.05. The variables

are statistically significant and there is positive association between health problems and age. Thus, the variable age has significant impact on health issues.

CONCLUSION

Women food vendors play a vital role in the urban community by providing food stuffs at a very reasonable rate. Many people from different economic status enjoy their services. It is a haven for the poor people who can survive on the food that is available with the food vendors. These women food vendors face several health issues and few of them get health care from hospital but a majority of them get domestic treatment. Some women are accompanied by their spouse while all of them get support from family members. They are open to several challenges, but are able to overcome with years of experience. Even during Covid – 19 pandemic, they were away or at home for few months but once the lockdown got relaxed they were back in the business with greater enthusiasm. As food is the basic essential need of any human being the women food vendors are looked upon as great blessings. They not only provide food to many but their own contribution to the family and the society is largely recognised and applauded.

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DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SELECTED WOMEN FLOWER VENDORS IN COIMBATORE

BY

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ABSTRACT

The importance of flowers in our life is recognised right from the early days, and it has become a matter of great prominence during weddings, religious festivals, ceremonies and functions. Flower vending is a big business in the city of Coimbatore. This paper seeks to analyse the socio-economic conditions of women flower vendors and the major challenges faced by them. Primary data was collected with the help of an interview schedule. The study was carried out with 60 women flower vendors located in Thoundamuthur block. Random sampling was used to select the women vendors. Most of the women ventured into this business to help the family. Lack of capital was a major problem for many women to start the business, however, with the help of friends and money lenders they were able to start the business and also earn and contribute to family. The study revealed that the women vendors faced loss when all varieties of flowers could not be sold. They also faced challenges in health. Lack of basic amenities. Competition and difficulty in handling the customers. In spite of the difficulties and challenges they wish to continue and expand their business.

Keywords: Informal sector, women vendors, savings and debt, health issues.

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INTRODUCTION

The term informal sector was originally used by Arthur Lewis, to describe the working culture of a particular section. The people who are working in informal sectors are marginalised from the mainstream business with regard to growth of urbanization and industrialization (Lewis, 2005).

The Indian labour market is characterised by predominance of informal employment with more than 90 per cent of India's informal workforce. Nearly 81% of all employed persons in India make a living by working in the informal sector, with only 6.5% in the formal sector and 0.8% in the household sector; according to a new ILO (International Labour Organisation 2018) report indicates that 95% of work force is in the informal sector.

Women constitute a majority of workforce in the unorganised sector. The influx of women into the labour force both at the urban and rural and had been tremendous in the recent past. It was basically the economic needs or to meet the familiar needs that majority of the women were forced to work outside their homes. Further the economic, social and political upliftment of the society in general and women in particular paved the way for the women to enter into several spheres of activity. A large number of unorganized sector people obtain their means of maintenance by selling wide range of goods on the streets, and other public places. Street vendor is a person engaged in vending of many articles like food items, toys, flowers, vegetables, fruits and other products of everyday use to the general public, in a street, footpath, pavement, public-park or temples at a cheaper rate.

Street vendors constitute an important segment at the bottom of the pyramid of the informal economy in cities. Street vending provides a source of self-employment and acts as a measure of urban poverty alleviation. Street vending has a prominent place in the urban areas as they provide inexpensive and convenient goods and services to all segments of the population. Street vending is therefore an integral part of the economic growth process in urban areas. (National Urban Livelihoods Mission 2018)

Flowers have a key role to play in the life of every person. Women vendors carry flowers right to the house making it very convenient for women. The women street vendors who sell flowers make it their way of life. Many have ventured into this activity to either contribute to household income or to maintain the living standard. While some flower vendors have a better life, majority of the street vendors do lead a miserable life. These vendors are unable to get a regular job which would fetch them some income. So many women have taken up this activity. Since it is not very time

consuming and as they have liberty to carry on their activity they are able to establish a trust among the women folk in their areas.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Road side vendors are a common sight and now a days a host of women have ventured into this activity. The involvement of women in such activities creates an interest to study more about their life style, their working pattern, the problems and challenges they face, and how they manage the household chores and the vending activity. Though there are schemes by the government to help the vendors, the benefits has not trickled down to this group. In the light of this the current study is undertaken with the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the socio-economic condition of the women flower street vendors in the selected area.
2. To identify the health Problems and challenges faced by them.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shibin and Nishanth (2017) studied the problems of street vendors in Kollam district and observed that formal sectors play inevitable contributions to the mainstream of urban economy. They inferred that the number of people involved in informal sectors is increasing day by day. Apart from that the competition among them is observed to be increasing in order to stabilize their economic status. Their research study depicted the challenges faced by street vendors in their business development as Economic instability, Social insecurity, Weather fluctuations, Barriers towards credit facility, Health issues, Discrimination, Working instability, Deciduous implementation of Government policies and programs, Lack of awareness about legal rights.

Varghese (2010) explored the livelihood issues of vendors in urban Cochin and revealed that street vendors worked overtime to earn their livelihood. Around 83 percentage worked more than 9 hours and 16.7 percentage worked more than 11 hours and most of them did not hold ID cards, they can be thrown out by civic authorities anytime. It is estimated that more than 66.7 percentage faced eviction one or more times. Shifting to a new place and getting familiarized there takes time due to which their business is affected. More than 53 percentage were often disturbed by goons. The author recommended for permission of mobile vending, installation of vending spaces at right place, issuing of ID cards, formation of town vending committees.

Kambara and Mutharayappa (2018) carried out a study on female street vendors in Bangalore city, by relying on primary and secondary sources. Finding of the study revealed that one-fourth of women vendors belong to the age group of 31 to 50 years. The vendors sell different items like vegetables, fruit and flowers on the ground or a push cart or on a makeshift stand. While some of them had financial support from family members many vendors have borrowed from private financiers. The street venter's earnings vary between from Rs.100 to Rs.1500 per day, and they have long working hours. The women suffer from work related health problems and the most common were perpetual headache, hand pain, leg and knee pain, backache, body pain etc., The study found out that most of the vendors do not seek any treatment for their health problems but they rely on self-medication and Over the Counter (OTC) medicines, as they lack money to consult doctor, or go to a hospital to seek health care.

Khanam (2006) in her study mentioned, that the number of women street vendors is increasing in Dhaka city. This is because women who do not have any other way to meet the subsistence needs of their families and enter into the informal sector like street vending. But street vending is a non-traditional and male-dominated job and there is an earning gap between men and women vendors. **Chopra (2004)** suggested National Policy for Urban Street Vendors for a supportive environment for earning livelihoods of the Street vendors, as well as want to make sure the absence of congestion and maintenance of hygiene in public spaces and streets.

RESEARCH METHODS

The present study is based on primary data collected from 60 women flower vendors around Thoundamuthur area. A structured interview schedule was used to collect information from the sample. Appropriate statistical tools were used to analyse the collected data.

FINDING OF THE STUDY

The results of the present study is discussed in the following section. The vendors constitute one of the poorest and weaker section among the unorganised workers. The social and economic profile of the selected women vendors portrays their age, education, religion, caste, marital status, size of the family and income. Each of the above factors makes a difference and this has an influence on their working condition. Table 1 gives an account of the socio – economic condition of the women street vendors who sell flowers.

Table 1: Socio – economic condition

Particulars	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)	21 – 30	5	8.3
	31 – 40	12	20
	41 – 50	25	41.6
	Above 50	18	30
	Total	60	100
Marital status	Married	46	76.6
	Widow	6	10
	Separated	8	13.3
	Total	60	100
Size of the family	Less than 2	12	20
	3	23	38.3
	4	15	25
	More than 4	10	16.6
	Total	60	100
Education	Illiterates	5	8.3
	Primary	29	48.3
	Secondary	12	20
	Higher secondary	13	21.6
	Total	60	100
Daily income (in Rs.)	Below 200	12	20
	201 – 400	20	33.3
	401 – 600	18	30
	Above 600	10	16.6
	Total	60	100
Years of experience	Less than 5 years	17	28.3
	6 – 9 years	20	33.3
	More than 10 years	23	38.3
	Total	60	100

Source: Field Survey (2020)

Age

Data pertaining to the age composition of the sample respondents reveals that the main concentration of street women flower vendors were in the age of above 50 years and nearly 30 women vendors are in this group activity. Followed by this around 25 (41.6 percentage) women belonged to the age between 41 – 50 years and there were 12 women in the group of 31 -40 years of age and only eight women below the age of 20 – 30 who were involved in this business.

Marriage

Marriage is a social obligation in the Indian society. Marriage is an institution which has great bonding and this is the foundation on which Indian society is built up. Through there are sweeping changes brought out in the society due to lifestyle and demonstration effect, the family structure is so strong in India and we consider it as a blessing for the foundation of the economy. The marital status of the women vendors revealed that nearly 76.6 percentages of women vendors were married and in few cases the husband helps them. The family members are a great support to these women.

Education

Education helps in the all-round development of an individual and also enriches the economy because it is the educated person who are the assets of an economy and they bring glory and riches to the place where they are. It is commonly believed that the illiterates are the ones who take up some work in unorganised sector. Lack of education and skill do not permit them to go to better paid jobs. Around 29 (48.3 percentage) of the women flower vendors had primary education. While 12 (20 percentage) had done secondary education. There were 13 who have completed higher secondary education. There were five vendors who were illiterates. Though they have had no formal education they can do small calculations, counting etc. with which they run the business.

Years of Experiences

All jobs these days demand training and experience and this enhances one's ability to work. But in unorganised sector, anyone could venture into a new job without education or experience. But however, experience counts in any job. Even among the flower vendors there were 23 women with more than 10 years of experience. Almost 17 had less than 5 years of experience. It was those with good experience who became successful in their venture and they have better income compared to the new comers. Their experience helps them to improve their business and venture into new places.

Savings

The study made an attempt to examine the behaviour of the women vendors with respect to saving. Saving is mainly done by the higher income groups as they have an extra amount which they can allot for savings after meeting all their regular expenses. For the poor since their income itself is limited, there is no question of saving. However these flower vendors attempted to make an earnest effort to save some amount regularly. The details on savings of the women vendors are given in the following table.

Table 2: Savings (per month)

Saving (in Rs.)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 1500	17	47.2
1500 – 2500	8	22.2
2500 – 3500	7	19.4
Above 3500	4	11.1
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey (2020)

Table 2 indicated that 17 respondents saved less than Rs. 1500 in a month, while eight respondents saved Rs. 1500 – 2500 and around 19.4 percentages of respondents did a saving of Rs. 2500 – 3500 and above Rs. 3500 were saved by four women. The last two groups who were able to save a higher amount were doing business along with their husbands and this enabled them to have a higher income and thereby make a saving. When both husband and wife were involved in flower vending they were able to save some amount.

Debt amount

Debt is a common problem faced by the poor. Though the women who were surveyed were working, they found it difficult to meet certain unexpected emergency or unforeseen eventualities in their daily walk of life. So when income is inadequate they borrow from different sources or take a loan. The debt position of the selected women is presented in the following table.

Table 3: Debt position

Amount (in Rs)	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5000	8	13.3
5000 – 10,000	25	41.6
10,000 – 20,000	15	25
Above 20,000	12	20
Total	60	100

Source: Field Survey (2020)

As given in the above Table, more than half of the women flower vendors (41.6 percentage) had debt between Rs. 5000 – 10000/. Nearly one forth (25 percentage) had debt to the tune of Rs.10000 – 20000/- however, 20 percentage of them had above Rs.20000/- and 13.3 percentage had debt less than Rs. 5000/-. The amount borrowed from other sources, were to run the family or when there is a shortage by sum amount. Those who had borrowed more than Rs. 20000/- the amount were mainly used for house construction or minor repair. Also a few had borrowed for the purpose of children's marriage. These vendors are taking efforts to repay the amount.

PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN VENDORS

The major objective of the current study was to assess the problems encountered by the women street flower vendors. Among the many problems faced by this group of women the most dominant one is pollution. Since these women work sitting or standing for long hours in the open area they are exposed to dust all the time. This causes health issues like asthma or skin allergy. Wastage occupied the next position. Taking the unsold flowers back home at night, is a difficult procedure. If there is excess stock of flowers in the morning or at noon it becomes a waste. There are certain flowers that cannot be kept overnight. Many a time these flowers has to be wasted. Nearly 11 percentage of the women reported this as the major problem. Lack of spaces is yet another problem they face very often. They keep baskets one upon another due to lack of spaces. Water scarcity and no proper shed also makes a difficult to proceed with their activity. Rainy season is a time of threat and challenge for the flowers vendors. If it rains heavily the vendors do not venture outside to do their daily business. Lack of proper shed forces seller or vendor to give certain items at a lower price. This is also is a loss for them. To keep the flowers fresh, they cover it with wet clothes and

keep it in a cool place. The street vendors are often subject to harassment by police. Apart from this there were other problems which made their life difficult and these are listed in the following table and these are being ranked based on the score.

Table 4: Problems faced by women vendors

Problems	Score	Rank
Lack of capital	1.71	6
Lack of basic amenities	1.22	3
No shed	1.60	4
Pollution	1.00	1
Water scarcity	1.80	7
Lack of space	1.84	8
Bargaining by consumers	1.89	9
Wastage of products	1.18	2
Threat from police	1.69	5

Source: Calculated figures based on the data compiled.

To start any business be it big or small there should be adequate capital. Some flower vendors did face shortage of capital to begin or start the business. In the present study, the respondents were rank the major problems is the percent position by using the rank formula

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{100 (R_j - 0.5)}{N}$$

Where R_j is the rank of the i^{th} item and N refers to the number of items ranked. The percent position was converted into score by using Garrets' Rating scale and the average score obtained for differential reasons are tabulated and presented in table

Problems respondents were stated as 'pollution' (1strank), wastage of products (2nd rank), and 'lack of basic amenities' (3rd rank), 'no shed' (4th rank), 'Threat from police' (5th rank), 'Lack of capital' (6th rank), 'Water scarcity' (7th rank), 'Lack of space' (8th rank) and Bargaining by consumers (9th rank).



Figure 1: Problems faced by women vendors

HEALTH

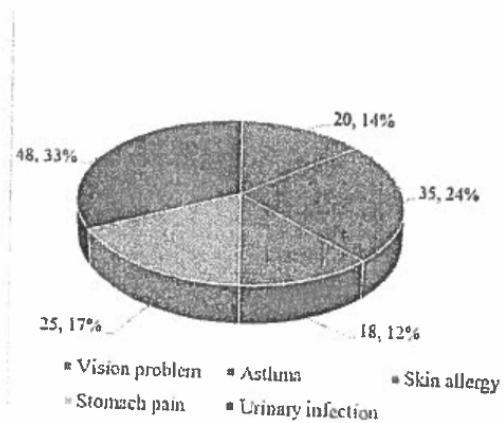
Health is the vital indicator of human development. It is the general wellbeing of an individual to carry on the day to day activities without physical ailments, laziness or lethargic approach. If a person is physically healthy he will be able to do his work properly. Health mainly depends upon the food intake. The poor and the downtrodden and the economically weaker section do not get adequate food to eat due to lack of income. Women's health is of utmost importance as it is a pointer to economic development. However, the women do not give much priority their own health. They take care of the children, elders at home and do all the chores at home and most of time they neglect their own health. This is very true among the people working in unorganised sector. The women whom we have surveyed are working at home and also do their business as vendors. More work and less time for leisure coupled with poor food intake make them sick. Even on days when they were sick, some use to carry on their daily routine work. Only a few take medicine or visit a hospital. The major health issues faced by the respondents are given in the following table.

Table 5: Health problems

Health problems	Frequency
Vision problem	20
Asthma	35
Skin allergy	18
Stomach pain	25
Urinary infection	48

Source: Field Survey (2020)

Majority of them had urinary infection. The women do not drink adequate water as there is no rest room near their vending areas. Also if it all they use rest room it is usually the public toilets which are not clean resulting in some infection. Many women (35) had the problem of asthma as they were exposed to dust for long hours during their business. The heat and dust emitting in the area also results in skin allergy. These people do not take any treatment in the beginning but only when it becomes worst they visit a hospital for treatment. The survey pointed out that many women resort to self-medication as this would save their money and also the time they need to spend for contacting a doctor. Only when the sickness is beyond their control they resort to medical health care.

**Figure 2: Health Problems**

CONCLUSION

Street vendors are an important part of the informal sector in India. Large numbers of goods are supplied by the street vendors at lesser cost and both the poor and the rich purchase many items

from the street vendors. The street vendor's contributions are of immense benefit not only to their families but to the society also. The street vendors face innumerable problems and challenges but they continue their business to support the family. The women who had taken up flower vending has a predominant position in Tamil Nadu as flowers are used by every one for various occasions. The study probed into the health issues of the women flower vendors and it was observed that most of the women have asthma and this is due to their exposure to the dusty atmosphere for long hours. They also face the problem of lack of toilet facilities, drinking water, no proper shed and storage facilities. Steps need to be taken to these women vendors to improve their working condition so that they can look after not only themselves but also their families and be a support to the economy also, as the women vendors are a strong force in promoting and accelerating development.

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