

# Poverty Battle from the Street

## (A Study of Street Food Vendors at Chennai)

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**Abstract:** Street vendors deliver many benefits both to themselves and to their communities. For starters, since vending has low startup costs, it expands economic opportunities. As a result, these entrepreneurs can create new jobs and make a living to support their families, all while at a fraction of the cost of starting other ventures. In addition vending unleashes the possibility of upward mobility. One of the greatest success stories of upward mobility is Daymond John, the founder and CEO of FUBU and star on ABC'S shark tank. Before he built his clothing empire, Daymond started out as a street vendor, hawking homemade hats in front of the New York Coliseum. In this paper we try to study the lives of the street vendors at Chennai. The study investigated how the street vendors battle with poverty. Most of the street vendors don't have adequate earnings. The Street vendors are affected by money lenders because of insufficient capital. Many of them having high school education only and because of unemployment they opted this street vending business

**Keywords:** Street vendors, Poverty, Un employment, Informal sector.

### INTRODUCTION

Street vendors are an integral part of urban economies around the world. They sell everything from fresh vegetables to prepared food. Street food account for a significant proportion of daily urban food consumption for millions of low and middle income consumers in urban areas representing the least expensive and most accessible means of obtaining a nutritionally balanced meal outside the home. In addition , the preparation and sale of street food provides regular source of income for millions of men and women with limited financial, social and cultural capital, since the start up investment and the overheads are relatively low and cooking requires little or no training

### MEANING OF STREET VENDOR

According to national policy on "A Street vendor is broadly defined as a person who offers goods or services for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure but with a temporary static structure or mobile stall (head load)". Street vendors may be stationary by occupying space on the pavements or other public/private areas, or may be mobile in the sense that they move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts or in cycles or baskets on their heads , or may sell their wares in moving bus etc.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Street vending far from being a hindrance to progress and sustainable development is in fact the basis of a vibrant street economy which has strong linkages with the formal economy (Pradheepkumar2015) (Sharit Bowmik 2005) estimates that about 2.5% of India's urban population is engaged in street vending. According to government of India there are around 10 million vendors in India of whom around 25,00,000 are in Mumbai. Mumbai has the highest number of street vendor among all major cities in India. About 12.5% of the total self employed population in the city is dependent on street vending for livelihood. It is estimated that Delhi has 5,00,000 to 6,00,000 street vendors. Kolkatta has nearly 2,00,000

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Ahmedabad has 1,00,000 and Patna has around 80,000. Indore , Bangalore and Bhubaneswar have around 3.30,000 street vendors .

Most of the street vendors were in the age group of 25 to 45 years old. They came from poor and illiterate families. They were satisfied for vending as they were earning enough to meet their family needs (G.M.Bhat, Asif Hussain nengroosi, 2013) Street vendors depend on money lenders especially for social security purpose but also for their economic activity. That they are forced to borrow money at an exorbitant rate of interest(amounting to 5-10% per month) which in turn leads them to fall into a debt trap situation(Debdulsaha,2009). Street vending is a profitable business and contributes to the economy in a huge way besides being a form of self employment which brings down the numbers of unemployed in the country. Street vending allows for entrepreneurship, economic and agency freedom and it is what puts a faced on cultural and social life (S .Rahul and R. Dhamotharan 2014)

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio economic characteristics of street vendors.
2. To find the satisfaction level of street vendors
3. To find the problems of street vendors in their life
4. To give suggestions to improve street food vending in Chennai

### Scope of the Study

This study traces the impact of street food vending on the economic status of the urban labor force

### Limitation of the Study

The study is confined only for Parrys corner, Koyambedu market, Kolathur and Villivakkam

## METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data collected through structured questionnaires. Secondary data related to this study were collected from the Journals and websites.

In this study we used convenient sampling method to select 30 respondents for the present study. The collected data were analyzed with the help of percentage analysis method.

### Data analysis

SI No	Characteristics	Street vendors
I	<b>Domicile</b>	
1	North Region of Tamilnadu	13.33%
2	South Region of Tamilnadu	20.00%
3	East Region of Tamilnadu	23.30%
4	Western Region of Tamilnadu	20.00%
5	Chennai	23.33%

II	Reasons for coming to Chennai	Street vendors
1	Find work	50.00%
2	Accompany family members	50.00%

III	Age	
1	25 less than 30years	Nil
2	30 less than 40 years	33.30%
3	40 less than 50 years	20%
4	50 less than 60 years	16.60%
5	Above 60 years	30.00%

IV	Sex	
1	Male	50.00%
2	Female	50.00%

V	Education	
1	None	16.60%
2	Primary Education	30.00%
3	High school	50.00%
4	Secondary Education	3.33%

Table 2: Length of time engaged in vending activity		
SI No	Length of time	Street vendors
1	Less than 5 years	10.00%
2	5 less than 6 years	10.00%
3	7 less than 10 years	10.00%
4	10 less than 15 years	10.00%
5	16 less than 20 years	23.33%
6	21 years and above	36.60%

Table 3: Type of business operation		
SI No	Types of operation	Street vendors
1	Individual business	43.30%
2	Family Business	53.33%
3	Employees/ Family members	3.33%

Table 4: Selling different types of food		
SI No	Types of food	Street vendors
1	Food prepared on the street	50.00%
2	Ready to eat Food	13.30%
3	Fruits	36.60%

Table 5: Daily stock value and net profit			
S No	Amount	Stock Value	Profit
1	Less than 400 Rupees		70.00%
2	400 - 1000 Rupees	23.30%	30.00%
3	1001 - 1400 Rupees	20.00%	
4	1401 - 2000 Rupees	26.60%	
5	2001 - 3000 Rupees	10.00%	
6	3000 - 4000 Rupees	20.00%	

Table 6: Percentage of vendors according to amount of earnings		
SI No	Amount of earnings	Street vendors
1	Adequate	10.00%
2	Inadequate	90.00%

Table 7: Satisfaction with occupation		
SI No	Satisfaction with occupations	Street vendors
1	Yes	93.30%
2	No	6.60%

Table 7: Satisfaction with occupation		
SI No	Satisfaction with occupations	Street vendors
1	Yes	93.30%
2	No	6.60%

SI No	Would you like to be a street food vendor all your life	Street vendors
1	Yes	40.00%
2	No	60.00%

SI No	Reasons	Street vendors
1	Want to open store have fixed selling locations	85.00%
2	Tired	
3	Want to go home	15.00%

SI No	Attitudes towards earning opportunities	Street vendors
<b>I</b>	<b>Opportunity of food vending in Chennai</b>	
1	Yes	93.33%
2	No	6.66%
<b>II</b>	<b>Would you encourage friends into food vending</b>	
1	Yes	80.00%
2	No	20.00%

SI No	Do you want your children to be street food vendors	Street vendors
1	Yes	13.33%
2	No	86.66%

SI No	Levels of success	Street vendors
1	Subsistence level	83.33%
2	Have savings but not considering expansion	Nil
3	Have savings and considering expansion	16.66%

### Findings of the Study

1. The majority (77%) of these vendors came from outside Chennai. The highest percentage of vendors came from the eastern region of Tamilnadu. The percentage of male and female vendors was almost par
2. The youngest vendor was 34 years old and oldest was 68 years. Majority of the vendors (33%) are in the age of 30 less than 40 years. 50% of the respondents had received high school education only and 3% of the respondents had received Higher secondary education.
3. 36% of the respondents have been vending 21 years and above. 23% of the respondents have been vending 16 less than 20 years. 10% of the respondents have been vending less than 5 years. Over 90% of street vendors were in the true self employment and another 10% of the street vendors were involved in disguised wage work.
4. As for the types of operation, 53% were engaged in family business and 43% were in individual business. Only 3% reported employing workers
5. 50% of the street vendors sold food that could be consumed on the street. Reflecting a culture of public eating. Only 13% traded in ready to eat foods.
6. A large proportion(90%) of vendors reported that earnings were inadequate. Only 10% of vendors reported that earnings were adequate.
7. Majority of street vendors (93%) said that they were satisfied with their occupation. Only 6% of street vendors reported low satisfaction.
8. When asked if they wanted to be in the same occupation all their life, more than 60% of the respondents replied in negative

9. 93.3% stated that the earning opportunity from street vending was high with low capital and they would encourage friends to do this business. However only 13% said that they would encourage their own children to do the same.
10. 83% of the street vendors saw themselves at subsistence level. More than a 16% of vendors said they have savings and considering expansion.

### **Problems Faced by the Street Vendors**

1. The street vendors always suffer competition with other street vendors because of fluctuation in market prices insecure and irregular employment.
2. Street vendors are forced to pay 15 to 20% of their daily income as bribes to the local police
3. They are very badly affected by money lenders because of insufficient capital
4. Few street vendors don't have a house (even rented house) and they are staying in platforms.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The government should give proper authorization to do vending and vending identification card for vendors.
2. The government should provide proper housing facilities to the vendors
3. The government should provide the loan facilities to save the street vendors from money lenders
4. The education up to bachelor degree should be made as compulsory for all in order to avoid the new generation of street vendors
5. The government should plan to close all the existing street vendors within 10 years span and providing proper alternative solution to existing street vendors.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study gives the information regarding how street vendors struggled with poverty. Most of the street vendors not having the basic amenities like house, water, proper toilet facilities etc. They sleep in platforms and pavements etc. They are regularly affected by rain, windstorm, curfews etc. The duration of business hours are very high and the profit is very less. The government should take compulsory actions to improve those peoples standard of living.

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