



Livelihood Pattern and Demographic Condition of Street Vendors of Patna Sadar Block

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ABSTRACT

Street vendors play a crucial role in the informal economy and urban dynamics, selling goods or services in public spaces without a fixed establishment. Millions of people in cities and towns make a living by selling a wide variety of goods and services on the streets, pavements, and other public spaces. However, due to their lack of education, skills, and experience, street vendors often struggle to obtain permanent employment in the formal sector. This has a significant impact on employment generation, output, and revenue, but has not been given the attention it deserves. This study aims to analyse the livelihood patterns and demographic conditions of street vendors in Patna Sadar Block, using data from a primary survey conducted in 2022 among 80 respondents. The demographic characteristics of street vendors can be understood by examining socio-economic conditions such as age, gender, level of literacy, level of education, marital status, family size, number of earning members, types of vending, nature of vending, place of residence, housing condition, income, expenditure, and savings. The study is descriptive and uses a quantitative paradigm to explain the conditions.

KEY WORDS

Unorganised / Informal economy, Street Vendors, Livelihood pattern, Demographic condition, Socio-economic condition.

INTRODUCTION

Street vending is an important part of India's unorganised economy, providing livelihood

opportunities to a significant section of the urban population. About 2.5% of India's urban residents earn their living through street vending (Bhowmik, 2005). This sector not only offers self-employment to economically vulnerable groups but also ensures that urban dwellers have access to affordable and convenient goods and services (Bhowmik, 2005; Jha, 2018).

Many street vendors are unable to secure employment in the formal sector due to limited education and skills, and they rely on vending as either a primary or supplementary source of income (Jha, 2018). They sell a wide range of everyday items, including fruits, vegetables, clothes, stationery, household items, etc., usually in public spaces without permanent establishments (Bhowmik, 2005). Street vendors often serve the rush-hour population, which primarily consists of lower and middle-income working individuals, providing products at fair prices (Bhowmik, 2005).

Street vending allows for flexible work arrangements. Some vendors move between multiple locations in a single day to reach diverse consumers, while others work long hours at a single spot. Although most operate independently, some employ family members or assistants, and a few are informally employed by others (Husain et. al., 2015). Despite the advantages of street vending, vendors often contend with numerous challenges. They operate under difficult conditions, face limited access to formal financing, and frequently rely on high-interest loans from moneylenders. In addition, inadequate allocation of vending spaces, coupled with rapid urban growth and the increasing number of vendors, contributes to congestion and other urban management difficulties. Occasional interventions by local bodies as municipal of the area and enforcement further disrupt their operations, affecting their livelihood stability (Bhowmik, 2005).

Recognising the economic and social importance of this sector, the Government of India enacted the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, aiming to safeguard street vendors' rights and provide legal recognition (Government of India, 2014).

Review of Literature

Husain et al. (2015), the study examined street vendors' lives, including income, financial resources, working hours, employment, education, and social networks. Factors like poverty, migration, low level of education, labour excess, and family size contribute to their activities. Social capital increases income. Challenges include limited funding, poor management, risk mitigation, transportation, and law enforcement intimidation. Laws and programs are suggested to address these issues.

Desak Putu Eka Nilakusmawati et al. (2019), researchers in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, developed a welfare model for street sellers, focusing on their socio-economic features. The informal economy, a significant source of income, is crucial for the urban poor. Most street vendors are married men, new immigrants, and self-employed, working nearly eight hours a day. They lack access to money and participate in business skills education initiatives.

R. Karthikeyan and R. Mangaleswaran's (2013) study on street vendors in Tamil Nadu found a significant correlation between gender and overall quality of life, and a significant difference between the general quality of life and the level of education.

Sandeep Kumar Baliyan et al. (2016) study on street vendors in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, found that female vendors face more difficulties and are in worse shape than male vendors. The study revealed that 42.75% faced eviction and 28.25% faced difficulties in selling different kinds of products at work.

The research by **Sharit K. Bhowmik (2001)** revealed that Patna has 80,000 street vendors out of seven Indian cities, with 32% living in the city. 67% were male and 33% were female. The literacy rate among these vendors was 40%, with 27% illiterate and 33% having completed secondary schooling. Male street vendors earn between Rs.50 and Rs.100, while female vendors earn between Rs.35 and Rs.40.

Dolly Kumari et al.’s (2009) study on street vendors in Patna found that unemployment and poverty are the main causes of the city’s growing vendor population. Street sellers, who make minimal income, face unstable living conditions and illegal tax payments. Their low level of education also contributes to their poverty cycle.

Objective of the Study

The study focuses on the street vendors of Patna Sadar Block, analysing their demographic characteristics and livelihood patterns through primary data to understand how socio-economic factors shape their work and daily strategies.

Research Methodology

The research project was conducted in Patna’s Sadar Block. The paper is based entirely on primary data. 80 samples, who are street vendors in the city of Patna, were drawn at random from the four wards of the urban population, namely, ward-28, ward-38, ward-44, and ward-66. Direct interviews were used to gather the primary data, and a questionnaire was created based on the study’s objectives, and was used. Questions were prepared accordingly. The average and percentage approaches were used to analyse the data.

Major Findings of the Study

The goal of the current study is to obtain a better understanding of the demographics, means of subsistence, and livelihood patterns that influence the vending operations of street vendors in Patna Sadar Block. The study’s conclusions are supported by empirical data.

1. Demographic Profile of the Street Vendors

Street vendors’ demographic conditions include a wide range of individual characteristics, such as gender, age, education, status as a migrant, family structure, and cultural background. Men and women, people of all ages, and people with varying levels of education make up the diverse collection of street vendors. Their motives and livelihood tactics are influenced by their family duties and socioeconomic backgrounds. These demographic variables are vital in determining the make-up and dynamics of the street vending workforce, necessitating tailored strategies to meet their particular needs and enhance their general welfare. Data can be used to understand the demographics of the street vendors in the Patna Sadar Block.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Street Vendors

Sl. No.	Demographic Characteristic	Classification	Percentages (%)
1	Gender	Male	78.75
		Female	21.25
2	Age	Below15	0
		15-30	32.5
		30-45	37.5
		45-60	22.5
		Above 60	7.5
3	Marital Status	Married	80
		Unmarried	13.75
		Widow	3.75
		Widower	2.5

4	Educational Qualifications of Street Vendors	Illiterate	32.5
		Primary	8.75
		Secondary	22.5
		Higher Secondary	26.25
		Graduation	10
		Post Graduation	0
5	Family Size	Below 3	8.75
		3 to 5	52.5
		5 to 7	25
		7 to 9	12.5
		Above 9	1.25
6	Place of Residence	Owned House	21.25
		Rented House	65
		Free House	13.75
7	Types of Houses	Kaccha house	33.75
		Pucca house	66.25
8	Number of Earning Members	1	60
		2	21.25
		3	16.25
		4 & above	2.5
		Total	100

(Source: Primary Data)

The following table illustrates the respondents' various demographic attributes, their accompanying classes, and their corresponding percentages:

The data analysis highlighted the gender distribution of households engaged in street vending operations, which showcased that females predominantly engage in some types of vending activities, such as the sale of food, fruits, vegetables, clothes, tea, and crockery vendors or, other miscellaneous items. However, both genders engage in a variety of vending activities. It is observed that male dominance is found in this profession, which accounts for 78.75% of the total, over the female vendors, consisting of the remaining 21.25%.

Most street vendors are between 30-45 years (37.5%) and 15-30 years (32.5%), showing that younger and middle-aged people are more involved. Around 22.5% are aged 45-60, while only 7.5% are above 60, as older individuals are less active in vending.

The age distribution of the sample's respondents revealed that most of the working population is found between the ages of 15 to 60, whereas the average working group, accounts for 37.5% which shows that middle-aged individuals are more involved. Around 22.5% are aged "45-60" years, while only 7.5% are above 60 years, as older individuals are less active in vending businesses.

From the above data analysis examined the marital status distribution of households engaged in street vending operations. A significant majority of the households, accounting for 80%, are married which indicates that many vendors likely have family responsibilities to fulfill. However, unmarried households account for 13.75%, which may reflect younger vendors entering the workforce. Further, widows represent 3.75% and widowers 2.5%, suggesting that a small proportion of vendors have turned to street vending as a means of livelihood following the loss of a spouse. This distribution underscores the importance of street vending as a source of income for people from diverse marital backgrounds.

The distribution of educational attainment among street vendors reveals that a sizeable section of the group lacks formal schooling. It is observed that 32.5% of street vendors are illiterate, while 8.75% have completed primary education. About 22.5% have reached secondary education, and 26.25% have completed higher secondary schooling. Only 10% of vendors are graduates, and none have pursued postgraduate studies. This indicates that many vendors lack higher education, which limits their opportunities for formal jobs and pushes them toward informal work like street vending.

Family size is a major component as it significantly impacts their economic responsibilities and livelihood. From the above data analysis, it is observed that larger household families often rely more heavily on vending income to meet their basic needs which accounting for 12.5% with 7 to 9 family members. While smaller household families may face comparatively fewer financial burdens, consisting of 52.5% with 3 to 5 family members. This connection highlights the importance of street vending as a critical source of income for households of varying sizes.

Furthermore, the housing situation of street vendors is varied, consisting of a combination of Owned Houses (21.25%), Rented Houses (65%), and Free Houses (13.75%). The fact that 17 of these vendors are home owners indicates a certain degree of stability and financial security among the street vendor group.

According to the data, 66.25% of the households live mostly in Pucca houses, suggesting that these homes are more stable and long-term. A significant fraction (33.75%) resides in Kaccha houses, which are often fewer study buildings; this may indicate that households' living conditions and levels of housing stability differ.

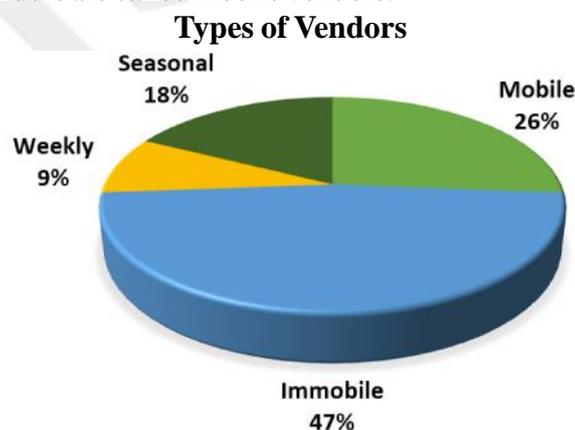
Among 60% percent of the households are street vendors, and most of them are single earners. A lower percentage of two, three, or four-earner household families indicates that extended family may contribute financially or that there may be shared financial responsibilities.

2. Livelihood Pattern of the Street Vendors

The different methods, pursuits, and approaches used by members of this community to make a living are collectively referred to as the street vendor's livelihood pattern. Street vendors sell goods and services in public areas like streets, sidewalks, and marketplaces as part of their informal economic activity. Their style of living might differ greatly based on things like where they set up shop, what kind of products they sell, local laws, and the state of the economy.

- Vending Location:** The location of street vendors affects their patterns of livelihood, as there are mobile and stationary types. Based on their immediate demands or availability of transportation, mobile street vendors set up shop and frequently move to other sites for sales, which might include weekly and seasonal vending. On the contrary, stationary street vendors establish their operations in certain locations, demonstrating a variety of livelihood patterns.

From the data analysis, it is observed that 26% of sampled street vendors are doing street vending by moving from one location to another location to carry out their vending activities along with their vending cart. These types of vendors are called mobile vendors.



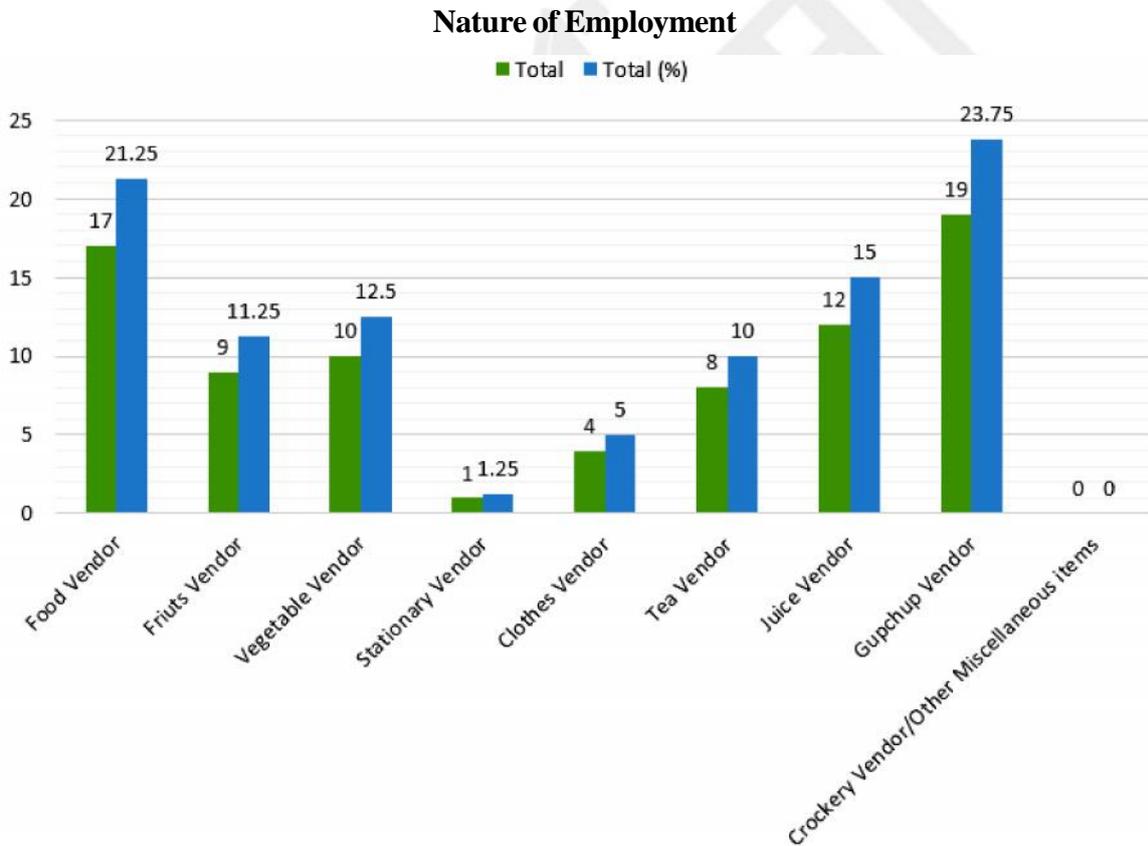
(Source: Primary Data)

On the other hand, 18% of sampled street vendors do seasonal vending due to agricultural needs like seasonal vegetables and fruits. The rest 9% of sampled vendors operate only weekly markets by migrating from rural to urban areas. It is noteworthy that the majority of the sampled street vendors, accounting for 47%, are immobile because the higher proportion of immobile vendors can be attributed to urban development and city management, where designated vending places are allotted. Additionally, street vendors are more aware and secure due to the possession of vending licenses.

- Vendor Category:** A wide range of products and services, including food items, fruits, vegetables, stationery, clothing, tea, juice, gupchup, and crockery vendors/ other miscellaneous items, can be sold by street vendors. The various categories of sellers indicate the types of jobs to which they belong, which can have an impact on the street vendors’ patterns of livelihood.

The chart below illustrates the nature of employment among different categories of street vendors. Gupchup vendors are the largest vending group, comprising 23.75%, which reflects the popularity and demand for ready-to-eat snacks in urban areas. Although, food vendors are the second largest group, accounting for 21.25%, indicating that food vending is the most common and perhaps the most accessible business among other vending businesses. Juice vendors account for 15%, showcasing a significant preference for beverages in the vending businesses.

However, vegetable vendors and fruit vendors, comprising 12.5% and 11.25% respectively, represent a considerable portion of the vending businesses, emphasising the reliance of urban households on such vendors for fresh produce. Furthermore, smaller proportions are observed for stationary vendors (1.25%) and tea vendors (10%) which reflects niche markets in these categories. Also, clothes vendors comprise the smallest group, with only 5%. None of the sampled data have been found in the crockery vendors and other miscellaneous items types vending category.



(Source: Primary Data)

3. Economic Conditions: Street vendors' financial situation is affected by several factors, including the family's income, the children's educational backgrounds, the number of earners in the household, where they live, and the kind of dwelling they own. All of these variables are reliant on their daily, monthly, savings, and expenses. In fact, street vendors' financial situation has a profound connection to their daily income, monthly earnings, and capacity for saving and cost management. Their total financial stability and standard of living are greatly influenced by these financial factors.

The data provides a comprehensive analysis of street vendors' economic conditions, including income, savings, and expenditure patterns, highlighting their financial diversity and revealing their overall economic well-being.

The table-2 highlights significant variations in daily income levels. From the data analysis, it can be observed that most vendors earn between Rs.300 and Rs.600, accounting for 55% which supports their basic living requirements but limits the potential for savings. Around 18.75% earn Rs.600 to Rs.900 daily, while 13.75% earn Rs.900 to Rs.1200. A small fraction, approximately 6.25% earns more than Rs.1200 daily, which indicates a select group benefiting from higher demand or better market locations. Conversely, 6.25% earn less than Rs.300, facing challenges in sustaining their livelihood due to competition or limited sales.

Table 2: Economic Status of Street Vendors

Sl. No.	Indicator	Classification	Percentage (%)
1	Average Daily Income	Rs.0 - Rs.300	6.25
		Rs.300 - Rs.600	55
		Rs.600 - Rs.900	18.75
		Rs.900 - Rs.1200	13.75
		More than Rs.1200	6.25
2	Average Monthly Income	Rs.0 - Rs.5,000	0
		Rs.5,000 - Rs.10,000	26.25
		Rs.10,000 - Rs.15,000	37.5
		Rs.15,000 - Rs.20,000	25
		More than Rs.20,000	11.25
3	Average Monthly Savings	Rs.0 - Rs.500	40
		Rs.500 - Rs.1000	11.25
		Rs.1000 - Rs.1500	6.25
		Rs.1500 - Rs.2000	15
		More than Rs.2,000	27.5
4	Average Monthly Expenditure	Rs.0 - Rs.5,000	0
		Rs.5,000 - Rs.10,000	27.5
		Rs.10,000 - Rs.15,000	45
		Rs.15,000 - Rs.20,000	25
		More than Rs.20,000	2.5
		Total	100

(Source: Primary Data)

In terms of average monthly income, the largest earnings group comprises 37.5% between Rs.10,000 and Rs.15,000, which showcases a moderate-income range. Around 26.25% earn Rs.5,000 to Rs.10,000, reflecting lower income levels. Another 25% of sampled vendors earn between the income range of Rs.15,000 to Rs.20,000, while only 11.25% earn more than Rs.20,000 which signifies income disparities. Notably, none of the vendors earn less than Rs.5,000, reflecting a basic minimum income level.

Furthermore, sampled vendors' average monthly savings data revealed that 40% of vendors save less than Rs.500, highlighting limited financial capacity for many. On the other hand, 27.5% save more than

Rs.2,000, likely due to higher earnings or better financial management. The remaining 32.5% save between Rs.500 and Rs.2,000, which shows a mix of moderate savings habits.

Moreover, sampled vendors' average monthly spending pattern revealed that 27.5% of vendors spend between Rs.5,000 to Rs.10,000 each month, while 45% spend between Rs.10,000 to Rs.15,000. Approximately 25% spend between Rs.15,000 and Rs.20,000, demonstrating a range of financial priorities according to income levels. Only 2.5% spend more than Rs.20,000 each month, most likely because they are high-income vendors with more demands or high responsibilities.

- 4. Local Regulation & Governance:** Local laws and Government are very important. At times, street vending operations are interfered with by local officials, including the Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC), traffic police, and police. The legality of street vending is frequently ambiguous, and vendors might not always possess the necessary licenses or permissions. In order to preserve law and order and make sure that vendors follow safety and zoning requirements, local authorities may impose regulations. If street vending hinders traffic flow, or pedestrian traffic, or causes congestion, they may step in. In the process of preserving public safety and order, they may force vendors to relocate or submit to restrictions. The business of street vendors may suffer significant financial losses as a result of the disruptions brought on by municipal authorities. Governments are attempting to include suppliers in economies employing better services, instruction, and legal standing. In the face of these obstacles, street vendors thrive in the unregulated market, juggling complicated laws and disputes with law enforcement.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thorough investigation clarifies the street vendors' varied livelihood patterns and diverse demographic conditions of street vendors in Patna Sadar Block. A diversified community with a range of age groups, educational backgrounds, family sizes, and religious and caste connections is revealed by the demographic study. Interestingly, most vendors are married with little formal schooling. Their family structures and living arrangements differ, with a considerable proportion of them living in rented homes. Thus, from the above analysis, it is clear that street vending serves as a critical livelihood option for vendors across different marital statuses, with a notable majority being married, likely balancing family obligations alongside their work. The study also emphasises how diverse street vending is, with some categories drawing a preponderance of male vendors and others drawing a greater proportion of female vendors. Local laws, the kind of goods supplied, and the placement of the vending wares all have an impact on the livelihood patterns of the street vendors. For example, different vendor categories add to the lively marketplace, and mobile and immobile vendors work differently. This distribution underlines the diversity within street vending, where food-related businesses dominate due to their high demand and accessibility for vendors with varying levels of resources. Furthermore, the state of the economy varies greatly, and the intricate financial environment is reflected in daily and monthly incomes, savings, and expenses. The data reveals financial challenges and opportunities faced by street vendors, with limited savings and income disparities highlighting areas where targeted support could enhance their economic stability and quality of life. The street vending scene is shaped in large part by local laws and Government, which periodically halt operations because of permission problems. Street vendors continue to operate in the unorganised economy despite these obstacles, demonstrating their tenacity and will power. In the city of Patna Sadar Block, this empirical study offers helpful data for creating specialised strategies to improve the welfare of street vendors and promote inclusive urban development.

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