

Research Article

An Economic Analysis of Street Vendors in Tirupattur District of Tamil Nadu, South India

R. Kurinji Malar^{1*} and G. Jessy²

^{1,2}PG & Research Department of Economics, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, India
kurinjimalar@shctpt.edu*

Received: October 12 2023/Accepted: November 30 2023/Published: 07 January 2024

Abstract

This study provides an economic analysis of street vendors in the Tirupattur District of Tamil Nadu, South India. Findings reveal a diverse demographic engaged in street vending, with both young and older individuals participating, and a significant representation of males (66.7%). Educational background is limited, as many vendors are illiterate (31.7%), but business skills and adaptability are emphasized. The average income for many is less than 30,000 rupees monthly, with high expenditure on business maintenance and rent. Despite limited financial security, the majority (93.3%) express satisfaction with their work. Health issues are prevalent, yet government subsidies are largely absent. The study highlights the resilience of vendors in managing economic and environmental challenges.

Keywords: Street vendors, income, business skills, health issues, Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu.

Introduction

Street vendors are employed in unregulated work. A street vendor is someone who operates in the community without a permanent structure (National Association of Street Vendors of India) and is classified as self-employed. These vendors often operate illegally and without a license. Since ancient times, people have been selling goods on the streets of India and other countries. Due to their low income, vendors are regarded as part of the informal sector. Millions of street vendors worldwide depend on selling various goods on the streets for their livelihood. In 2014, regulations were introduced to control street vendors in public spaces and secure their rights. Street vending plays a significant role in creating employment opportunities among the underprivileged (Socio-Economic Status of Street Vendors). Street vendors fall under the low-income category, offering ease of entry into the workforce and attracting a large population. In cities and towns globally, millions rely on trading various goods and services for their income. With limited education, street vendors often struggle to enter stable employment in the formal sector. Relying on their own financial resources, they sell a wide range of products, such as vegetables, fruits, and flowers (A Study on Problems Faced by Street Vendors).

Street vendors represent only a small fraction of the labor force in the formal economy. Public authorities often view street vendors as nuisances and encroachers on sidewalks and pavements, overlooking the valuable service these vendors provide to the general public. Street vending has been an integral part of urban economies for centuries, providing livelihood opportunities to millions around the world, especially in developing nations where formal employment options are limited. A street vendor, as defined by the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), is an individual who sells goods or services in public spaces without a permanent structure. As self-employed individuals, these vendors operate largely without formal recognition or regulation, often lacking licenses and facing informal work conditions. Despite this, street vending contributes significantly to urban economies and employment, particularly for underprivileged populations, by creating accessible income-generating opportunities. Studies on street vending in India have consistently highlighted a range of economic and social challenges faced by these workers. Nidan (2010) found that a significant number of vendors in Patna, Bihar, choose street vending as it requires minimal capital and skills in the absence of alternative employment opportunities.

*Corresponding author

©Youth Education and Research Trust (YERT)

jairjp.com

Kurinji Malar & Jessy, 2024

However, female vendors are particularly vulnerable, often facing issues of safety and lack of access to basic amenities like restrooms and childcare facilities. Further studies by Bhowmik and Saha (2010) across ten cities revealed that 60-70% of street vendors routinely pay bribes to local authorities, with female vendors often having less capital to invest, thereby limiting their business growth and daily income. Ghosh (2010) examined the vulnerabilities of 600 street vendors in Delhi, noting that most vendors lack licenses, pay daily bribes, and do not have access to institutional credit or adequate storage facilities for unsold goods. In other countries, similar dynamics persist. In Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Kuskabe (2010) emphasized the social stigma around street vending, despite its role in supporting rural-to-urban migration. Meanwhile, Nirathron (2010) highlighted the importance of street vending in Bangkok, particularly for slum dwellers, as a primary source of income, especially amid economic instability.

In India, several region-specific studies further illuminate the socio-economic conditions of street vendors. Saheb (2011) reported that 360 female vegetable vendors in Visakhapatnam operate below the poverty line with earnings highly dependent on seasonal fluctuations. In Mumbai, Saha (2011) noted the exploitation of vendors by intermediaries due to the low rates of active union membership, leaving these individuals vulnerable to government and police demands. Research on Shivamogga City's street food vendors found issues related to water availability, operating hours, and limited infrastructure, which affects business and reduce customer numbers. Street vendors often lack formal education and high-level skills, which restricts their access to better-paying, formal-sector jobs. Even with the requisite skills, declining opportunities in the formal sector have led many to rely on street vending as their primary source of livelihood (Alfie, 2014). Studies by Prakasam (2021) and Imam (2021) in Chandigarh and Bodh Gaya, respectively, highlighted the socioeconomic status of street vendors, often focusing on migrant laborers and examining both the challenges they face and the potential for formal recognition through conditional permissions. Considering the above facts in view this study was aimed with the following objectives.

- To study the socio-economic conditions of street vendors in Tirupattur district.
- To examine the income and expenditure details of street vendors in Tirupattur district.
- To identify the problems of street vendors in Tirupattur district.

Methodology

Study Area and Sampling: The study is conducted in Tirupattur District, situated between Vellore and Krishnagiri districts, with a focus on the area spanning from Sivarajpet to the Tirupattur Bus Stand, where street vending is prevalent. As of a recent count, over 800 street vendors operate within Tirupattur, with vendors primarily engaged in selling items like fruits, vegetables, and flowers. For the purpose of this research, a sample of 60 street vendors was selected, consisting of 40 male and 20 female participants, representing a broad cross-section of the local vendor population. The sample size was determined to provide a manageable yet representative subset of the population, given the study's time constraints.

Data Collection: Primary data were collected from sample respondents through a structured field survey, employing the personal interview method. A well-designed questionnaire was developed to capture data on key variables, including demographics, income, expenditures, business challenges, and perceptions of street vending. The personal interview method allowed for more accurate and comprehensive data collection, ensuring respondents could elaborate on questions where necessary. Primary data collection was carried out over the period from 2022 to 2023. Secondary data was obtained from various sources, including academic journals, government publications, census data, and other relevant research studies. This data served to contextualize and support the findings of the primary research, providing broader insights into the socio-economic conditions and regulatory frameworks affecting street vendors.

Data Analysis: The study employs a range of statistical techniques to analyze the data and test the research hypotheses. The main statistical methods used include:

- **Correlation Analysis:** To assess relationships between variables, particularly income and expenditure.
- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** To determine if there are significant differences in income levels across different groups, such as caste categories.
- **Percentage and Average Calculations:** To present descriptive statistics and summarize the demographic and economic profiles of the respondents.

Hypotheses

The study tests two key hypotheses:

Ho: There is no relationship between income and expenditure among street vendors in Tirupattur District.

H1: There is no relationship between income and caste among street vendors in Tirupattur District.

Table 1. Gender and age details of the respondents.

Sl. No.	Gender	No. of. Respondents	Per cent	Age	No. of. Respondents	Per cent
1.	Male	40	66.7	20-30	22	36.7
2.	Female	20	33.3	31-40	18	30
	Total	60	100	41-50	12	20
				50 Above	8	13.3
				Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data.

Table 2. Educational Qualification and Income of the respondents.

Educational Qualification	No. of. Respondents	Per cent	Monthly Income	No. of. Respondents	Per cent
Illiterate	19	31.7	Below Rs. 15,000	24	40
Primary	9	15	Rs. 30,000	26	43.3
Middle	13	21.7	Rs. 45,000	5	8.3
High	6	10	Above Rs. 50,000	5	8.3
Higher Secondary	4	6.7	Total	60	100
Degree	8	13.3	Source: Primary Data.		
Others	1	1.7			
Total	60	100			

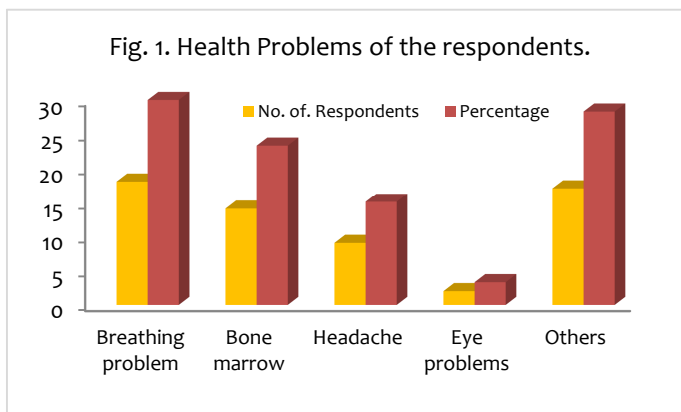
By analyzing these hypotheses, the study aims to understand the socio-economic patterns and challenges faced by street vendors in the district and explore factors that influence their earnings and financial stability. The findings will provide insights into how income disparities and socio-demographic factors affect this vital segment of the informal economy.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the gender details of the respondents: the majority, 66.7 percent, is male, while 33.3 percent are female. This indicates that most street vendors are male. The Table 1 shows the age distribution of the respondents, divided into four groups. The majority, 36.7 percent, are between 20-30 years old. Around 30 percent belong to the 31-40 age group, 20 percent are between 41-50 years, and 13.3 percent are 50 years or older. These details pertain to the street vendors in Tirupattur.

The Table 2 shows the educational qualifications of the respondents. The majority, 31.7 percent, are illiterate, while 21.7 percent have completed middle school, 15 percent have primary education, 13.3 percent have a degree-level education, 10 percent have high school education, and 6.7 percent have completed higher secondary education. A small portion, 1.7 percent, falls into the "other" category.

Fig. 1. Health Problems of the respondents.



Most street vendors have low levels of education, with a significant portion being illiterate. The income details of the respondents indicate that the majority, 43.3 percent, earn around Rs. 30,000. About 40 percent earn below Rs. 15,000, while 8.3 percent earn Rs. 45,000 and above (Table 3). Figure 1 illustrates the health issues faced by street vendors, with data shown in terms of both the number of respondents and percentage for each health issue.

- **Breathing Problems:** The most common issue, affecting the highest number of respondents and percentage. This suggests that many street vendors experience respiratory difficulties, possibly due to environmental exposure.

Table 3. Monthly Income and Expenditure of the respondents.

		Monthly Income	Monthly Expenditure
Monthly income	Pearson Correlation	1	.364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	60	60
Monthly expenditure	Pearson Correlation	.364**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	60	60

Source: Primary Data; **. Correlation is significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- **Bone Marrow Problems:** A significant number of respondents also report bone marrow-related health issues, indicating potential issues with physical strain or inadequate nutrition.
- **Headaches:** This is a moderately common issue, affecting a notable portion of the respondents, likely linked to stress or prolonged exposure to outdoor conditions.
- **Eye Problems:** Although less prevalent than other issues, some vendors report eye problems, which could be due to long hours in direct sunlight or dust exposure.
- **Other Health Issues:** The "Others" category is substantial, both in number and percentage, indicating a variety of additional health concerns that street vendors face, potentially including joint pain, fatigue, and other chronic conditions.

Overall, the study shows that street vendors in this sample experience a range of health issues, with respiratory and bone-related problems being particularly prevalent. This data highlights the occupational health risks associated with street vending.

The correlation between the income and expenditure of street vendors is positive, with $r=0.364$ $r = 0.364$ at the 0.01 level of significance. This suggests that the income of the street vendors increases by approximately 36 percent in relation to their expenditure (Table 3). The analysis revealed a noticeable distinction between the monthly income and caste of the respondents, with $F=1.058$ $F = 1.058$ and $p=0.386$ $p = 0.386$, suggesting that caste may have an influence on monthly income.

Conclusion

Findings of the study revealed that a diverse demographic engaged in street vending, with both young and older individuals participating, and a significant representation of males (66.7%). Educational background is limited, as many vendors are illiterate (31.7%), but business skills and adaptability are emphasized. The average income for many is less than 30,000 rupees monthly, with high expenditure on business maintenance and rent.

Despite limited financial security, the majority (93.3%) express satisfaction with their work. Health issues are prevalent, yet government subsidies are largely absent. The study highlights the resilience of vendors in managing economic and environmental challenges.

References

1. National Association of Street Vendors of India. (n.d.-b). *Overview of Street Vendors – A Little History | National Association of Street Vendors of India – NASVI*. Retrieved November 1, 2020.
2. Shahid Imam, socio-Economic Status of the street Vendors: A Study with Reference to Bodh Gaya (Gaya District), *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)* ISSN: 2319-7064 SJIF (2020): 7.803 Volume 10 Issue 8, August 2021
3. Dr.A.Priya, T.Meenachi: A Study On Problems Faced By Street Vendors with Reference To Coimbatore Districts, *International Journal Of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)* ISSN: 2320-2882 (2022): Volume 10 Issue 8, August 2022
4. Centre for Civil Society. (2019, January). *IMPLEMENTING THE STREET VENDORS ACT 2014: Judicial Interpretation, Cross-State Compliance, and De Facto City-Level Practices*.
5. Rattan, P. (2014, December 15). *Street Vendors Act 2014: A Forgotten Promise?* Centre for Civil Society.
6. State of Street Vendors in India: Pre and Post COVID-19 Analysis, *International Journal of Policy Sciences and Law* Volume 1, Issue 2.
7. Nidan (2010); "Study on Street Vendors at Patna (Bihar)" *Centre for Civil Society (CCS), New Delhi*. Study Report on Street Vendor/ Nidan/2010
8. Sharit K.Bhowmik, *Hawkers in the Urban Informal Sector: A Study of Street Vendors in Six Cities*, National Alliance of Street Vendors of India, 2000.
9. Ruma, Ghosh, 2010: *Insecurities and Vulnerabilities of Workers in Informal Employment: A Study of Street Vendors of Delhi*. NLI Research Studies Series, No 092, V.V.Giri National Labor Institute Noida. Unni, J, 2011: *SEWA-NCAER project on contribution of the informal*



- sector to national income, sector unit (Ahmadabad: SEWA).
10. Kusakabe, Kyoko, 2010: *Women's participation in the market: Women retail traders in Phnom Penh, Cambodia*. Gender Studies Monograph 9, Gender and Development Studies, School of Environment Resources and Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand.
 11. Nirathron, Narumol, 2006: *Fighting poverty from the street: A Survey of Street Food Vendors in Bangkok*. International Labour Office, Bangkok.
 12. Bhanu Baba, Saheb, 2011: *Women Vendors in Urban Informal Economy*, Akanksha Publishing House, New Delhi.
 13. Alfie (2014). *Mangalore: Kankanady Market Merchants Association Want Street Vendors Out of Their Area*.

Cite this Article as:

Kurinji Malar, R. and Jessy, G. 2024. An Economic Analysis of Street Vendors in Tirupattur District of Tamil Nadu, South India. *J. Acad. Indus. Res.* 12(2): 42-46.