

## PROBLEMS OF STREET VENDORS DURING COVID-19: A STUDY IN ERODE DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU

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### ABSTRACT

*Street vendors hailing from urban and semi urban peripheral are increasingly subjected to various new dimensions of challenges, business constraints and ever changing needs in shifting market paradigm. Being major urban livelihood source for especially for poor and vulnerable sections of society, it is growing at faster pace in tandem with growth trajectory of urban nodes. The growing organized retail industries and some physical infrastructural development projects have posed a certain degree of threats to them in form of cut throat competition, glut of low cost substitutes and pressures on efficiency up-gradation. Here the main research objective is to find out the problems of street vendors during Covid 19 and needs for street vendors operating in Erode. In addition, there is no proper attention, which is given to street vending by policy makers, decision makers and planners. At present, there is an even strong negative measure and views prevailing against street vending both by the local government and by the formal business operators, street vendors are continuously increased in Erode district. Nowadays street vendors are facing many problems in the course of running their activities. Therefore, the focus of this study is to assess the problems of street vendors during Covid 19 in Erode District.*

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**Keywords:** *Street Vendors, Business Constraints, Livelihood, Street Vending, Market Paradigm.*

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### Introduction

Street vendors are frequently who cannot land ordinary positions in the gainful proper area because of their low degree of training and aptitudes. They attempt to take care of their day to day issues through their own small money related asset. They are the principle conveyance channel for a huge assortment of results of day by day utilization like natural products, vegetables, readymade articles of clothing, shoes, family devices, toys, writing material, papers and magazines, etc. If they somehow happened to be wiped out from the metropolitan business sectors, it would prompt a serious emergency for leafy foods ranchers, just as little scope ventures which cannot stand to retail their items through costly conveyance networks in the conventional area.

The significance of this sector cannot be subverted, particularly thinking about that the administration does not have the ability to give occupations to the large number of jobless and underemployed individuals in India. Indeed, even the corporate area can retain just a little extent of our extending work power. In general work in the proper area is really declining. This implies the vast majority in India need to battle for themselves. Individuals in the casual area should be urged to develop and thrive if the administrations need to lessen joblessness and neediness in nation. They contribute critical function in neighborhood monetary development and advancement of the metropolitan economies.

Road sellers offer significant types of assistance to the metropolitan masses while making out a living through their own endeavor, restricted assets and work. Road merchants have been requesting assurance from community offices and the state government so they can procure their business unafraid. Road sellers are the chiefly obvious segment of the casual market. Road distributing as an occupation has been in continuation in India since days of yore. In the 26 significant urban areas of Tamil Nadu, the

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enormous quantities of metropolitan poor live on by working in the casual area. Absence of beneficial work in the country regions of Tamil Nadu and in the minor towns drives huge quantities of individuals to the capital city for work and vocation. These individuals are having low aptitudes and do not have the degree of training fundamental for the better paid positions in the coordinated area.

Moreover, lasting detached positions in the coordinated area are low in Tamil Nadu; thus even those having the essential abilities cannot find legitimate work. For these individuals, peddling/road distributing is one of the assets of acquiring a work, as it requires more modest monetary information and the aptitudes included are low and furthermore no section level hindrances in this work. The administration supported relief programmes leave out casual organizations, for example, street vendors because of thorough innovative and documentation necessities. However, maybe the greatest boundary is the absence of a federal retirement aide number. A critical number of sellers are undocumented, which implies they will not meet all requirements for joblessness benefits, regardless of gathering and paying deals charge like some other business<sup>1</sup>

### Review of Literature

**Haritha<sup>2</sup>(2019)** identified the socio-economic profile of the labours working in safety match industries and evaluated the problems faced by the safety match industry. Primary data were collected from the workers working in the safety match factories by interviewing them. Secondary data were collected from published reports, journals and magazines. This study was conducted in random sampling method to select 20 sample respondents who were working in the match factories in three taluks of Virudhunagar District. At present, India had become self-sufficient in respect of matches and also exports matches to other countries. It was an unforgettable fact that the genesis of the match industry was largely responsible for lowering caste tensions in many parts of Tamil Nadu, especially in Virudhunagar district. Earlier, due to unemployment, localities in the area indulged in illicit distillation of arrack, burning thorny bushes for charcoal and robbery. It is to be remembered that the match industry provides the bread and butter for thousands of cottage match unit owners and for six lakh direct as well as indirect employees of Virudhunagar district. It is high time both for the state and central governments to step into the field of cottage matches to devise suitable measures to tide over the problems faced by the match manufacturers.

**Puja Mishra<sup>3</sup>(2018)** examined the study to consider the contribution of ladies in informal market of street vending. Further it is intended to comprehend the financial attributes of the women road sellers and the degree of difficulties looked by them on an everyday premise which influenced their endeavors to support the work through road distributing. The main motto was to discover different difficulties looked by ladies road merchants and the working state of ladies road sellers in Ranchi region. The examination utilized descriptive strategy to clarify the difficulties looked by women street vendors. The data was utilized schedule and interview technique as the fundamental devices for gathering information, as a greater part of respondents were uneducated and were not able to poll all alone. The picked respondents were associated with selling vegetables, natural products, fish, tea and cheap food. The total samples considered for the examination was 50 ladies road merchants and the sampling method adopted was nonprobability judgmental sampling. Frequency and percentage distribution were utilized to break down the information being gathered. It was noted that, dominant part of them were of over 20 years old. A large portion of the respondents had total work understanding of over 5 years. The greater part were occupied with selling vegetables and organic products. Furthermore the significant difficulties looked by them were absence of fundamental courtesies.

**Prasad Begari<sup>4</sup> (2018)** identified that the issues and challenges of weekly market street vendors in Hyderabad. The study was based on secondary as well as primary data. The primary data had been collected from weekly market street vendors at different place (Darga, Beeramguda and Patancheru) in Hyderabad. The primary data had been collected from three weekly markets in Hyderabad. The secondary data had been collected from different online and offline sources generated

<sup>1</sup> Karthikeyan and Mangaleswaran (2017). "Problems Faced by the Street Vendors in their Workplace: A Study with Special Reference to Tiruchirappalli City, Tamil Nadu, India". *International Journal of Recent Research and Applied Studies*, 4(8), PP. 30-39.

<sup>2</sup> Haritha. "Problems Faced by Match Industry Workers - A Social Perspective". *Pen Acclaims: A Multi-disciplinary National Journal*, 7(9), PP. 1-11

<sup>3</sup> Puja Mishra. "Challenges faced by Women Street Vendors: A Case Study of Ranchi District". *International Journal of Latest Technology in Engineering, Management & Applied Science*, 7(1), PP. 172-174.

<sup>4</sup> Prasad, Begari. "Issues and Challenges of the Weekly Market Street Vendors in Telangana: A Special Reference to Hyderabad". *Economic Affairs*, 63(1), PP. 45- 51.

by different institution, agencies, and from different government officials in Hyderabad. Therefore, an attempt had been made here to understand issues and challenges of street vendors and operation of their activities. The total sample size of 120 weekly market street vendors had been considered for this study by applying the random and purposive sampling method. From the examination it was revealed that street vendors do not have adequate infrastructure facilities at their working place. The government supported to encourage their activity and does not treat this occupation as an illegal activity. The social security programs of the government did not reach them properly and they were not aware of those programmes. The Vending activity were not recognised or recorded by any law and they had not yet been issued vending license identity cards under the street Vendor Act-2014.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

- To study the business profile of street vendors' and their behavior during Covid 19 pandemic situation.
- To find out the factor influencing customers during the time of purchase
- To sort out the problems faced by the street vendors in the study area.
- To offer suggestions to improve the business strategy of street vending.

#### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Erode district of Tamil Nadu, because Erode district has recorded the Covid 19 pandemic situation at the first starting place in Tamil Nadu. The researcher has adopted descriptive research study since it describes the state of affairs as it exists at present. This research was purely based on survey technique. The researcher prepared the interview schedule for collecting data from the street vendors in Erode district. In order to collect primary data for the purpose of the study, purposive sampling method was adopted. Out of 210 interview schedules used for this study, 10 interview schedules were rejected due to inconsistency answer from the respondents and 200 sample respondents were considered for the final analysis.

#### **Employment Scenario in Tamil Nadu**

##### **National Association of Street Vendors in India, (NASVI) 2004**

In 2004 the National Association of Street Vendors in India submitted a report on Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. That report found out the problems faced by the hawkers which are listed below. The NASVI recommended the government of India to solve these issues.

- Many vendors but limited space
- Problems with site allocations systems
- Problems with permit system in trading areas
- Lack of facilities (e.g. shelters, storage)
- Lack of access to credit
- No banks available to vendors as they are considered "unbankable"
- Shortage of money
- Lack of business skills and Legal illiteracy among vendors (authorities take advantage)
- No co-operation with listen government authorities
- Stubbed leaders who want to work alone
- Power struggle among leaders affecting ordinary vendors

They provide a market for both home-based manufacturing products and agricultural products, supporting small scale and home-based workers as well as agricultural workers. Therefore, several sectors and types of labour are linked with the street vendors. Street vendors also support the urban rich as well as the urban poor. They support the urban rich by providing daily requirements right on their doorsteps. Urban youth prefer to purchase clothes and accessories from street vendors, because the products that the vendors sell are typically cheaper than those found in formal retail outlets. Majority of the street vendors are migrants from rural area where poverty as well as lack of opportunities for gainful employment has pushed them to look for better opportunities in the cities. The hawkers and street vendors are constituting substantial proportion of the urban informal sector and it accounted two third of urban employment.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1: Business Profile of the Respondents**

Profile	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Nature of Ownership	<b>Proprietorship</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>76</b>
	Partnership	47	24
period of doing business	<b>Below 3 years</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>25</b>
	3 to 6 years	82	41
	7 to 9 years	40	20
	Above 9 years	27	14
Daily Working hours	Below 8 hours	41	21
	<b>9 to 10 hours</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>37</b>
	Above 10 hours	84	42
type of street vendor	<b>Mobile street vendor</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>71</b>
	Standard street vendor	58	29
Type of Business	Flower	18	9
	<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>33</b>
	Fruit	31	16
	Seasonal Product	38	19
	Eatable Items	33	16
	Others	14	7
Mode of handling products	<b>Carry goods on overhead</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>34</b>
	Pull or push carts	31	22
	Bike	24	17
	Mini vans	27	19
	Goods carriers	11	8
Method of cope up with competitors	<b>Wearing Mask &amp; using Sanitizer</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>37</b>
	Polite Customer Services	56	28
	Cleanliness of the vehicle & Products	43	22
	Competitive Pricing Strategy	14	7
	Increasing variety of products	12	6

Source: primary data

From the above Table 1, it could be understand that,

- Majority (76 percent) of the street vendors are the proprietors of their own business.
- Maximum (41 percent) of the street vendors are doing this business for 3 to 6 years.
- Majority (42 percent) of the street vendors are working for above 10 hours
- Majority (71 percent) of them are mobile street vendors.
- Majority (33 percent) of the street vendors are doing vegetable business.
- Majority (34 percent) of the mobile street vendors carry goods on overhead.
- Majority (37 percent) of the street vendors are wearing mask and using sanitizer to cope up with the competitors and also to prevent from Covid 19.

**Table 2: Factors that Influence Customers**

S. No	Factors	Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Mean Score	Rank
		Weightage	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			
1.	Reasonable price	F	24	51	29	19	15	21	17	24	200	5.00	III
		fx	192	357	174	95	60	63	34	24	999		
2.	Price discounts	F	27	32	55	36	20	12	15	3	200	5.50	II
		fx	216	224	330	180	80	36	30	3	1099		
3.	Variety of products	F	64	41	18	24	16	14	14	9	200	5.85	I
		FX	512	287	108	120	64	42	28	9	1170		
4.	Credit Facility	F	31	19	20	26	29	24	16	35	200	4.43	V
		FX	248	133	120	130	116	72	32	35	886		

5.	Cleanliness of the products	F	24	20	32	41	30	21	13	19	200	4.79	IV
		Fx	192	140	192	205	120	63	26	19	957		
6.	Quick service	F	6	21	27	28	29	36	33	20	200	4.04	VI
		Fx	48	147	162	140	116	108	66	20	807		
7.	Quality of product	F	9	8	9	14	38	24	68	30	200	3.21	VII
		Fx	72	56	54	70	152	72	136	30	642		
8.	Ambience	F	14	8	11	12	24	47	25	59	200	3.20	VIII
		Fx	112	56	66	60	96	141	50	59	640		

Source: Primary Data – Weighted Average Ranking Score Method

From the ranking analysis, it is inferred that main factor that influences customers is variety of products which is ranked first with score of 5.85. The second, third, fourth and fifth factors are price discount with score of 5.50, reasonable price as 5.00, cleanliness of the products as 4.79 and credit facility with the score of 4.43. The sixth, seventh and last ranking factors are quick service with score 4.04, quality of products as 3.21 and ambience recorded 3.20. The majority of the street vendors stated that the main factor influenced as variety of products.

### Problems of Unorganized Labour

The majority of workforces are engaged in huge informal sectors. They are supposed to face various types of problems in their regular life like they stay very close to their workplace; extending working hours is a regular practice, exploitation and hazardous workplace are very common.

- Minimum Wages
- Lack of proper housing facility
- Lack of knowledge
- No proper monetary and non-monetary benefits
- They do not have idea on Trade Union/ labour union
- Job insecurity
- Moderate wages for women workers
- Lack of quality employment due to fraudulent activity of contractor
- Loss of employment due to immaterial reason is a natural incident
- Numbers of harassment issues at work place for working Women
- Susceptible to diseases
- Bonded labor

### Problems of Street Vendors

By and large street vendors are more influenced by passing vehicles out and about and walkers. Leafy foods sellers by and large stick on to one spot; organic product merchants cannot move about on the grounds that natural products are delicate to the sun and blossom sellers normally sit in one spot so their bloom tying isn't upset, while vegetable sellers for the most part meander around on roads, remaining in arbitrary spots. Nonetheless, this may open them to hazards from passing vehicles and walkers. It is intriguing to take note of that a dominant part of the sellers get participation from house proprietors, shops and sanctuaries, and not from the police and BBMP (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) specialists

Some other problems are:

- The street vendors lead a very difficult life, the mode of travel or their working hours, it provides hardly any time for rest and for relaxation, which creates adverse effects on their health.
- Increased traffic affects their mobility on main street.
- Pollution is affecting them in many ways, road widening also effect of street vendors.
- Harassment from local authorities or from policemen during vending.
- Uncertainty and insecurity are the basic problem of vendors as their profession is considered illegal.
- Vendors are not protected by government, NGO's, labour union by any labour laws
- They are insecure due to their low income, irregular employment and their sale fluctuation.
- They are not getting easy financial assistance from bank due to their low income and fluctuation in income.
- Vendors need some market amenities such as water toilet, storage or shades, waste disposal.
- Sanitation and work place security

**Table 3: Problems Faced Due to Covid-19**

S. No	Factors	Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Mean Score	Rank
		Weightage	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			
1.	More expenses in transport	F	28	49	30	17	44	16	14	2	200	5.43	IV
		fx	224	343	180	85	176	48	28	2	1086		
2.	Low return on investment	F	2	2	9	16	38	42	61	30	200	2.97	VII
		fx	16	14	54	80	152	126	122	30	594		
3.	Difficult to wear mask and use sanitizer regularly	F	89	26	23	34	8	9	4	7	200	6.38	I
		FX	712	182	138	170	32	27	8	7	1276		
4.	Difficult in changing customer behaviour	F	3	10	7	14	29	62	57	18	200	3.20	VI
		FX	24	70	42	70	116	186	114	18	640		
5.	Difficult to handle police and corporation people	F	33	18	19	31	35	24	26	14	200	4.69	V
		Fx	264	126	114	155	140	72	52	14	937		
6.	Fear of Covid 19 issue	F	25	42	54	47	20	6	2	4	200	5.80	II
		Fx	200	294	324	235	80	18	4	4	1159		
7.	Fear of cash transactions & product handling	F	26	46	56	31	19	14	6	2	200	5.77	III
		Fx	208	322	336	155	76	42	12	2	1153		
8.	Maintain more cleanliness of vehicle and products	F	10	3	2	10	7	27	26	115	200	2.20	VIII
		Fx	80	21	12	50	28	81	52	115	439		

Source: Primary Data – Weighted Average Ranking Score Method

It is noted that the main problem as difficult to wear mask and use sanitizer regularly ranked first with score of 6.38. The second and third ranks are given to fear of Covid 19 issue with the score of 5.80 and fear of cash transaction and product handling with 5.77 as its score. The fourth, fifth and sixth ranks are assigned to problems namely more expense in transport with the score of 5.43, difficult to handle police and corporation people with 4.69 and difficult in changing customer behavior as 3.20. The seventh and last ranks are assigned to low return on investment as 2.97 and maintain more cleanliness of vehicle and products with the score of 2.20. The majority of the street vendors stated that the main problem they are facing is difficult to wear mask and use sanitizer regularly.

### Suggestions

- Authorities should provide license to the vendors so that they can be protected by harassment and eviction by local authorities.
- Some street vendors are food vendors, they have not received formal training as they are less educated while selling ready food. Local authorities should have to provide training to those vendors.
- Skill training and credit facilities to be made available to the vendors.
- Scheme like regular health checkup or health care and pension should also be extended to vendors.
- In town there must be a vending committee they should take care of vending issues. Allotment of vending space near public parks, bus stands, etc. needs to be made part of urban planning. The interests of vendors and consumers need to be taken into consideration before identifying vending space. This helps avoid not only frequent evictions of vendors, but also interruptions in their livelihood option. The overcrowding of public spaces can be effectively avoided by this measure. The rift between vendors and pedestrians can also be reduced.
- Authorities should provide permanent sheds for vendors and minimum facilities such as first aid, drinking water, toilet, garbage collection and solid waste disposal etc.

- Authorities should provide permanent sheds for vendors and minimum facilities such as first aid, drinking water, toilet, garbage collection and solid waste disposal etc.
- It is also desirable to encourage intervention of NGOs as part of creating awareness among the vendors. NGOs can be approached to train them regarding their responsibilities. NGOs can also empower them by making them realise their rights and duties. They can also inform vendors and educate them about SHGs thereby reducing their dependence on private money lenders. They can also assist them in obtaining licenses and renewing them.
- Provide social security to vendors so that poor vendors, who cannot afford proper treatment for their health issues, can benefit from health insurance. Group insurance also can be introduced to secure the lives of vendors toiling on the busy streets of the bustling Bangalore city.

### Conclusion

In the post reform period, India's economic growth increase has enhanced significantly and placed India as one of the greatest growing economies in the World. This status is applicable to Tamil Nadu also. Spaced out from other social problems like poverty, health care and education, the problem of unemployment is also deal with in a serious manner. Further most of the street vendors are facing problems such as difficult to wear mask and use sanitizer and there is lot of fear on this pandemic Covid 19 situation. So, the local government takes necessary steps to protect the street vendors through maintaining cleanliness of streets and drainages through corporation people. Also, the government make arrangement to distribute quality N95 mask and sanitizer to the street vendors to protect them from Covid 19 pandemic in the study area. It leads to increase the satisfaction of the street vendors towards the local ruling government in Erode district.

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