

LIFE OF STREET VENDORS AT BANGALORE CITY BEFORE AND AFTER COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic Covid 19 is very big misfortune for many lives in the Karnataka State, as well as in the country. Though there was a reference of the virus in medical sector its very new to the common people. The effect of disease across the globe was a big disaster where it was spread all over the world very rapidly and created distressing uncertainties in Human lives. Perhaps if the people were aware of the disease there may be chances of prevention of virus spread at large. In the beginning stages of this pandemic there was no much knowledge about the virus especially to the common people and hence the people were in lot of confusions to take proper measures and decisions to curb the virus. And the Covid hit very badly on the day earners and it was became a big challenge for this segment to fight against the virus as well as with many social and economic difficulties, leading life at this tough situation was a challenge to common people, Especially the street vendors who are an integral part of the informal sector and considered as a backbone of the economy were harshly affected due to the covid 19. Holding their lives and earnings has really become hard for them. Hence, in the present paper an attempt has been made to focus on how this particular segment has affected due to the Covid -19 pandemic and how they got through at different phases of lockdown, the government aids offered for the affected community and to know how the Street vendors' resumed their economic and social status.

Keywords: COVID-19 (Pandemic), Lockdown, TVCs-Town Vending Committees.

Introduction

Bengaluru is considered as a very opportune place for all kind of people. The city has provided a place to n number of people to flourish their lives with an ample opportunity to carry the business, but since the people who are belongs to the community of street vendors and who are considered as back bone of economy of the nation are under miserable situation in the society due to the various reasons like lack of awareness, education and due to many other social, physiological and economic reasons. However apart from all these impediments they have hardly leading and found their lives in the city. When, the first case of pandemic in the Karnataka state was confirmed on 8 March 2020. It was really worsening their situation, it was an big hurdle to carry their daily business activities, they were in the situation where they could not able to catch the adequate customers and unable to get supply of goods and products on on-time that's because of the unexpected happenings like Lockdown, containment zone, Night curfew and Sundays curfews etc., All these consequences made the city empty and this emptiness of city came down toughly on daily earnings of the street vendors there was gradual decreasing in the number of customer and their earnings. Hence the community has undergone crisis.

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Objectives

- To know the street vendors pre-lockdown livelihood activities.
- To know the challenges being faced by the street vendors at lockdown period.
- To Identify the Government initiations during COVID-19 to street vendors.

Methodology

20 street vendors are selected based on easy accessibility from different parts of the city. The Researcher has been collected their phone numbers from known friends and family circle, who are the regular customers for street vendors in their area, residing at different parts of the city. Prepared a simple questionnaire and collected information by contacting them through the mobile phones.

The Different Stages of Lockdown and its Impact on Street Vendors

• Initial Lockdown

The Covid affected Cases were gradually increased everywhere in the country. To stop the community transmission of the virus, the central government announces complete 21 Days of lockdown from 25th March. That was the first phase where the street vendors are exposed to the threat, they found it very crucial to earn their day bread because that was the situation where the entire Bangalore city was become suddenly empty, and all the activities were stopped abruptly and they did not get the way to come out from this wall opening pressure. They drained of all their savings to feed themselves during the lockdown. However the government announced the toll free helpline number 155214 to help the poor in the state. But this would not reach entire community.

• Lockdown 2.0

Again the second lockdown was initiated from 14th April to 3rd May, once again the people were set in trouble but some of the street vendors like fruit sellers, food vendors and vegetable sellers began venturing out without explicit permission, and they have caught up with police harassment and other difficulties. But after some weeks, the government has brought some relaxation in the restrictions and essential vendors were being permitted to vend. However, the cost of doing business, as well as the risk, has gone up significantly, with vendors not having access to wholesale markets and suppliers and having to spend more on travel costs due to travel restrictions in place in the city. Due to the harsh summer heat, perishable fruits and vegetables also have lost its shelf life so vendors are unable to get back what they have invested.

• Lockdown 3.0

With the guidelines issued by the Government of India, the chief Minister of Karnataka further extended the lockdown up to 17th May, but at this time government has come out with new strategy of containment zones, it has classified the zones as Red, Orange and Green zones, conducting risk profiling of various places in the city, this strategy again posed many problems for street vendors as they could not able to travel easily and there was drastic reduction in the volume of business due to the decreased buying of the people and it was result in lessening of their regular income.

• Lockdown 4.0

On 18th of May 2020, again the lockdown in the state was announced by the Chief Minister up to 31st May 2020. During this phase of lockdown many relaxation were given to most of the activities to operate between 7 Am to 7 Pm except on Sundays. By that time many vendors financial position are shattered and this has led to increase their stress level and build up more tensions on every passing day, but still many vendors were slowly started their businesses with all the constraints however still some curbs on street trade remain and many customers were stayed away.

Discussion based on the Findings of the Study

Objective 1

Pre-Lockdown livelihood activities of street vendors

- As a fact the street vendors were not earning much even before lockdown but they were able to sustain themselves and many of them were paying taxes to the local authority too.
- It was found that the street vendors were good enough to manage their vending activities before the covid crisis based on the loans and other financial assistance received from local financial bodies.

Objective 2

Various challenges being face by street vendors due to lockdown

- During the study it was found that the lockdown was posed a serious question of livelihood on most of the street vendors.
- It was found that many vendors were faced police harassment while at the lockdown period due to having stalls at restricted areas and travelling at the clampdown time and not wearing of masks etc.,
- Very few percentages of Street vendors were got government and non-government assistance during the lock down period.

Objective 3: The Government initiations during COVID-19

Hence, the street vendors are one of the major victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government have taken many financial initiations to combat the problems of street vendors and also to the poor. In the month of June 2021 the Federal Government launched scheme of offering collateral free loans of 10,000 rupees to about 5 million street vendors according to NASVI¹ and one more initiation was under The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Scheme, which has covered 80 crore poor People, which includes cash transfers and food security. apart from this The Government of India announced Rs. 1.7 lakh crore relief package to take care of poor workers and those who need immediate help in the course of lockdown to combat the corona virus pandemic². In spite of all these schemes and aids the non-Government agency were also extended their help to the pandemic affected community to some extent and volunteers also have given their helping hands to the street vendors.

The following Table summarises some of the findings of the study

Sl. No	Age in Years	Gender	Area	Education	Schooling	Migrated	Number of Members in family	Product category	Support from family members	Period of working as a street vendor (in Year)	Other source of income	Able to conduct same vending activity	Awareness about govt assistance schemes	Got any relief from Govt or NGO
1	45	Male	Malleswaram	8	No	6	Fruit Vendor	No	10	No	Yes	No	No	
2	39	Female	Malleswaram	10	No	7	Fruit Vendor	No	8	No	No	yes	Yes	
3	30	Male	Malleswaram	12	No	5	Vegetable Vendor	Yes	11	No	No	yes	Yes	
4	23	Male	Malleswaram	7	Yes	8	Vegetable Vendor	No	5	No	Yes	yes	No	
5	49	Male	Indiranagar	8	Yes	6	Flower Vendor	Yes	14	No	Yes	No	No	
6	43	Male	Indiranagar	9	No	7	Flower Vendor	Yes	15	No	Yes	No	No	
7	48	Female	Indiranagar	4	No	9	Food Vendor	No	13	No	Yes	No	No	
8	45	Male	Indiranagar	5	Yes	4	Flower Vendor	Yes	15	No	Yes	No	No	
9	37	Male	Banaswadi	10	No	8	Fruit Vendor	No	14	No	Yes	No	No	
10	54	Male	Banaswadi	4	No	5	Vegetable Vendor	No	16	No	Yes	no	No	
11	22	Female	Banaswadi	10	Yesno	6	Food Vendor	Yes	4	No	Yes	Yes	No	
12	45	Male	Banaswadi	7	No	8	Vegetable Vendor	No	10	No	Yes	No	No	
13	48	Male	HSR Layout	5	No	4	Vegetable Vendor	No	12	No	Yes	No	No	
14	53	Male	HSR Layout	3	Yes	7	Vegetable Vendor	No	15	No	Yes	yes	No	
15	48	Female	HSR Layout	7	Yes	5	Vegetable Vendor	No	13	yes	No	yes	Yes	
16	27	Male	HSR Layout	8	Yes	9	Fruit Vendor	No	8	yes	No	No	No	
17	53	Male	Koramangala	5	No	8	Fruit Vendor	No	15	No	Yes	No	Yes	
18	44	Female	Koramangala	7	No	10	Flower seller	Yes	10	yes	Yes	Yes	No	
19	23	Male	Koramangala	10	No	8	Flower seller	Yes	05	yes	Yes	Yes	No	
20	51	Male	Koramangala	0	Yes	5	Flower seller	Yes	15	No		No	No	

Suggested Measures

- The government should work on Livelihood promotion for all vendors by adapting strategic methods for restructuring of markets and bringing back all the affected vendors.

¹ M.economicstimes.com

² www.bloomberquint.com

- The government needs to boost up the regulatory bodies to uplift the lives of street vendors by extending its helping measures to the victim segment by strengthening the regulatory frameworks under the street vendors Act 2014, and forming Town Vending Committees TVCs and vendor organisation.
- The government needs to take certain safety and hygiene facilities like running water, washing stations, provision for sanitisations, soaps and toilets and the like; the authority must work with Town Vending Committees to resume back the street vendors Economic and social status
- Apart from the government the vendor organisations must work on the problems of street vendors. And should carry the survey of vendors to register more vendors and issuing ID cards for the vendors to access for many government benefits meant for the particular sector like credit linkage facility under “Atma Nirbhar Bharat”.

Conclusion

The Novel corona has imposed chaotic pressured on not only the street vendors but also on the poor people who find loss of life and earning due to the disaster of Covid 19. As the disaster is at global level the local level strategies designed to combat is not enough, the Government must take initiations to take up the strong and effective measures to resolve the problem and it needs to develop some more financial assistance schemes to help the affected community to resume their lives back. However many Street Vendors comeback for the same activity with lots of positive hopes and energy but still some street vendors are struggling with many issues as it is the impact of covid-19 and also other discriminations in the system, in this regard the Government and also other non-government organisations should take initiations to assist them in financial and in other matters.

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4. www.m.economictimes.com
5. www.bloomberguint.com.

