

# An Overview on Social Framework of Street vendors in Madurai City

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**Citation:** Angel D, Dr. S. Theenathayalan (2024), An Overview on Social Framework of Street vendors in Madurai City, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4), 9358-9363  
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i4.3752

## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Street vendors play a significant role in the local economy and add to the colorful tapestry of Madurai's street areas. This study explores the intricate socio-economic conditions of street vendors in Madurai City, aiming to provide understanding of their livelihoods and challenges. Street vending is a vital component of urban economies, contributing to the informal sector's dynamism. Madurai, with its rich cultural heritage and bustling urban landscape, serves as a compelling backdrop for examining the experiences of street vendors. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys, interviews, and observational studies to gather comprehensive data. Key aspects under investigation include income levels, working conditions, access to resources, and social dynamics impacting the lives of street vendors. By employing both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study seeks to identify patterns and shed light on the social framework and landscape of street vendors in Madurai.

## Introduction

Street vendors are an integral part of the unorganized sector in many urban and semi-urban areas across the world. The unorganized sector refers to economic activities that are not regulated by the government, lack formal structures, and often operate on a small scale. Street vending is a prime example of such unorganized economic activity, and street vendors are individuals who sell goods and services in public spaces such as streets, sidewalks, and marketplaces. It requires skills that can be gained outside the formal education setup, is quite flexible and does not require heavy capital investment and also does not have significant entry barriers. According to National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, Department of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation. "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. In this policy document, the term urban vendor is inclusive of both traders and service providers, stationary as well as mobile vendors and incorporates all other local/region specific terms used to describe them, such as, hawker, pheriwalla, rehri-patri walla, footpath dukandars, sidewalk traders, etc.

The street vendor in Madurai city plays a vital role and major of the business are food items. Many areas in Madurai district are filled with street vendors in with many livelihoods are based on the daily work and wage. Due to raise in population and poverty, the need for street vending business is enlarging. Many middle-class families are purchasing the needs through street vendors. with a general overview of the types of street vendors and the popular areas where they operate in Madurai.

## Characteristics of Street Vendors

- 1. Informality:** Street vending is characterized by its informal nature. Vendors often operate without proper licenses or formal business registrations, making it a part of the unorganized or informal economy.
- 2. Low Capital:** Many street vendors start their businesses with minimal capital. They may not have access to significant financial resources, and their businesses are often self-financed or rely on microfinance.

**3. Flexible Operations:** Street vendors typically have flexible working hours and locations. They can adapt to the changing demands of their customer base and may relocate their stalls to different areas based on factors such as foot traffic and events.

**4. Diverse Goods and Services:** Street vendors offer a diverse range of goods and services, including street food, snacks, fruits, vegetables, clothing, accessories, and small household items. This diversity reflects the adaptability of street vendors to cater to the varied needs of the local population.

**5. Entrepreneurial Spirit:** Many street vendors are entrepreneurs who have chosen self-employment as a means of livelihood. They display creativity and resourcefulness in managing their businesses within the constraints of the informal sector.

**6. Social and Economic Importance:** Street vending plays a crucial role in providing livelihood opportunities for a significant portion of the urban workforce. It is a source of income for many individuals who might not have access to formal employment.

**7. Challenges:** Despite their economic contribution, street vendors face various challenges, including the lack of legal recognition, vulnerability to eviction, limited access to credit and social security, and potential exploitation.

### Review of Literature

**Mrs. Parimala, M. Priyadharishini<sup>1</sup> (2023) conducted a study on “A Study on Socio-Economic Conditions and Challenges Faced by the Flower Vendors with Special Reference to Madurai City”** The aim and purpose of study is to find out the problems faced by the Flower Vendors. With convenient sampling technique, 55 Flower Vendors are met from the areas of Simmakal, Meenakshi Amman Temple (East and West), Park Town, Anna Nagar and Kalavasal. Simple percentage analysis was made to identify the problems faced by Flower vendors. The major finding of the study is 60-80% managed to survive the pandemic with their money and some others went to their native villages and The Government has issued identity cards for Flower vendors and has granted loans and benefits for the vendors who have the card. 90% of the respondents are aware of the card and the benefits. The study concluded that a significant percentage of flower vendors faced problems such as insufficient space and facilities for business and in certain cases they had to sell the unsold flowers at low cost without margin of profit, so they are in socio and economic stress to borrow money for their business.

**T. Krishna Kumar, R. Florence Bharathi<sup>2</sup> (2022) has done research on “Socio Economic Condition of Street Food Vendors – An Empirical Study in Salem City, Tamil Nadu”**. This research is aimed at analysing the socio-economic condition of the street food vendors in Salem city. This study would be useful to the prospective micro entrepreneurs who are interested in doing street food business. It is a descriptive type of research. The sample size was 75. Both questionnaire and interview schedule were prepared for measuring the socio-economic condition of the street food vendors and to analyse the awareness of government policies and the support systems available to the street vendor. The study reveals that there is no evidence that when the income of the respondents increases the attitude of investing for business expansion increases and highly significant association was found between the Working Hours of the respondents and the Income. The Study concludes that the street food vendors should follow the regulations provided by the act for the long running of the business and to develop their socio-economic condition.

### Objectives

- To study the social framework of the street vendors in Madurai City.
- To find the problems faced by the street vendors.

### Research Methodology

In the present study, extensive used primary. For collecting primary data, field survey technique was used in the study area i.e in Madurai city. First-hand information pertaining to the respondents' socio-economic background, general details related to the job, factors contributing to the running of street food vending. The primary data was collected from the street food vendors, using random sampling method.

<sup>1</sup> Parimala, M. Priyadharishini (2023), A Study on Socio-Economic Conditions and Challenges Faced by the Flower Vendors with Special Reference to Madurai City, Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research- JETIR, April 2023, Volume 10, Issue 4 ISSN-2349-5162

<sup>2</sup> T. Krishna Kumar, R. Florence Bharathi; “Socio Economic Condition of Street Food Vendors – An Empirical Study in Salem City, Tamil Nadu” Quest Journals Journal of Research in Business and Management Volume 10 ~ Issue 4 (2022) pp: 34-39 ISSN(Online):2347-3002

### Sources of data collection

Primary Data: The primary data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire and the interview schedule were pre-pared after pre-testing with a pilot survey through preliminary interviews with about 660 respondents. The finally redrafted questionnaire and the interview schedule were administered among the street food vendors.

### Analytical Framework

The data collected were organized as simple tables and further analysed with the help of appropriate statistical tools such as – Percentage Analysis, Weighted Average Method for logical interpretation of the data collected.

### Social framework of the street vendors

The social framework of street vendors is a complex tapestry woven from various factors. Cultural norms and values influence their business practices and interactions with customers and authorities. Social institutions like informal networks and local associations provide support and solidarity within the street vending community. Social stratification manifests through differences in vendors' socio-economic status and access to resources. Socialization processes shape their entrepreneurial spirit and negotiation skills, often learned through familial or community ties. Power dynamics play out in interactions with local authorities, shaping the extent to which vendors can operate and thrive. Overall, the social framework of street vendors reflects a dynamic interplay of cultural, institutional, and interpersonal factors that shape their livelihoods and social identities within urban environments.

**Table: 1 Social framework of the street vendors**

Variables	Frequency (n=660)	Percentage
<b>1. Gender composition</b>		
Male	232	35%
Female	428	65%
<b>2. Age (in year)</b>		
18-28	56	8%
28-38	235	36%
38-48	256	39%
48-58	113	17%
<b>3. Education</b>		
Degree	23	3%
HSC	234	35%
SSLC	256	39%
Primary Education	147	22%
<b>4. Religion</b>		
Hindu	334	51%
Christian	207	31%
Muslim	119	18%
<b>5. Community</b>		
FC	11	2%
BC	221	33%
MBC	156	24%
SC	148	22%
ST	124	19%
<b>6. Marital Status</b>		
Married	556	84%
Unmarried	65	10%
Divorcé Separate	39	6%
<b>7. Type of Family</b>		
Nuclear	426	65%
Joint	202	31%
Extended	32	5%
<b>8. Nativity</b>		
Rural	326	49%

Urban	334	51%
<b>9.Type of House</b>		
Hut	42	6%
Tin	345	52%
Concert	273	41%
<b>10.House</b>		
Own	156	24%
Rent	392	59%
Lease	112	17%
<b>11.Earning members in the family</b>		
1	266	40%
2	166	25%
More than 3	33	5%
Nil	195	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

The table-1 reveals that in terms of age distribution, the surveyed population reveals a diverse representation across different age groups. Among the respondents, 8% fall within the age range of 18 to 28 years, with 56 individuals falling into this category. The majority, constituting 36% falls within the age group of 28 to 38 years. Another significant portion, comprising 39% falls within the age range of 38 to 48 years. The age group of 48 to 58 years is represented by 17% of the respondents, with 113 individuals falling into this category.

Regarding gender distribution, the survey indicates that 35% of the respondents identify as male, with a total of 232 respondents. The majority, constituting 65% of the respondents identifies as female in Madurai city.

In terms of education level, a diverse educational background is observed among the respondents. Approximately 3% of the respondents possess a degree-level education. The majority, constituting 35% of the respondents has completed Higher Secondary education. Furthermore, 39% of the respondents have attained SSLC, while 23% of the respondents, have completed primary education.

Religious affiliation among the respondents shows diversity as well. Hindu constitute the majority at 51%, of the respondents found as Hindu. Christian respondents make up 33%, of the respondents while 18% find as Muslim.

The distribution of the community among the respondents reveals further diversity. Among the respondents, 2% of the respondents belong to the Forward Class (FC), 33% of the respondents belong to the Backward Class (BC), 24% of the respondents belong to the Most Backward Class (MBC), 22% of the respondents belong to the Scheduled Caste (SC), and 19% of the respondents belong to the Scheduled Tribe (ST).

In terms of marital status, the survey reveals that 84% of the respondents are married, Unmarried are up 10% of the respondents while 6% of the respondents are report being either divorced or separated.

The type of family structure varies among the respondents, with 64% of the respondents belonging to nuclear families, 31% of the respondents belonging to joint families, and 5% of the respondents are belonging to extended families. Regarding nativity distribution, 49% of the respondents reside in rural areas, while 51% of the respondents reside in urban areas. The type of house among the respondents shows miscellany as well. Six percent of the respondents live in huts, 52% of the respondents live in houses made of tin, and 41% of the respondents live in houses made of concrete.

Housing tenure varies among the respondents, with 24% of the respondents owning their houses, 59% of the respondents living in rented houses, and 17% of the respondents residing in houses under lease agreements. The composition of families based on the number of earning members. The largest portion, constituting 40%, falls under the category of 266 earning members, suggesting a significant portion of families with relatively higher numbers of income earners. On the other hand, the category with 33 earning members represents a smaller percentage of 5%, indicating a minority of families with a lower number of income contributors. The distribution of earning members within families is essential for understanding economic dynamics, household financial stability, and potential implications for resource allocation. This information could be valuable for policymakers, researchers, and organizations working towards economic and social welfare.

### Labour's Problems in street vending

Review of literature is an important part of any 3empirical research which highlights on the works that are already been conducted by various researchers in the same field. The reviews from various study have helped the researcher to identify the specific segment problem of the unorganised sector. The researcher has analysed more than 60 reviews to identify the core problem of unorganised labour.

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321348657\\_Review\\_of\\_Literature\\_on\\_Working\\_and\\_living\\_Conditions\\_of\\_workers\\_in\\_organized\\_and\\_unorganized\\_sector](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321348657_Review_of_Literature_on_Working_and_living_Conditions_of_workers_in_organized_and_unorganized_sector)

**Challenges faced by the street vendors at national level**

- Lack of quality employment
- Women and child workers are vulnerable
- Not aware of work hazardous and occupational safety
- Insufficient labour laws
- No social security Guaranteed minimum wages
- Bonded labour
- No social security
- Lack of legislative protection
- No Compensation programs
- Low literacy
- Low incomes

**Challenges faced by the street vendors at state level**

- Excess working hours
- Seasonal employment
- Indebtedness
- Lower Social Status & Shortage of other Jobs
- Not united
- Unemployment due to mechanization
- Health problems
- Sexual harassment

**Challenges faced by the street vendors at the regional level**

- Unhygienic workplace
- Level of noise at workplace
- Underemployment
- Transportation problem
- Lack of Education
- Lack of Safety
- Family Issues
- Insecurity of job
- Bullying
- Debt

**Suggestions**

- To improve the labour conditions the wage rate laid by the government should have been increased and employer should pay the employee for the overtime.
- Better working conditions and job security have to be framed by government which is mandatory for all the unorganised sector.
- Proper registration (should be relaxed) and payment of tax should be made compulsory for all the informal organisation.
- Retirement benefit, sick leave, regular payment of wage, medical and health facility and most importantly health saving amenities to safeguard the health should be provided to the labours.
- Social security program and job security for all non-agriculture labours.
- Government plays vital role in strengthening the unorganised sector labour and labour responsibility to know about the government program and scheme.
- Organisation should provide a skill development program and work while learning process should be available and that should be regularly checked by the HR team.
- International incentives and special incentives have to be received by the workers
- Central and state government have to join together to take compulsory step to provide the requirements like employment injuries and financial assistance for occupational hazard.
- Public toilets, free lounge services and public refrigerators rooms will help the street vendors who come under unorganised sector.
- Legislative policy framework should be strong and fundamental rights for workers by Indian constitution should be aware of all the employer and employees.
- Agriculture migrant workers should go back to the agricultural work and state wise balanced labour force has fixed to resolve the overlapping of workers and underemployment.



### Limitations of the Study

1. Since the research was based only on the Madurai city, the same results may not be generalized over the whole universe.
2. As the topic is very vast and so does its constraints that make the report tough one to cover all area.
3. Due to time constraints and busy schedules of the street vendors it was difficult to interact with them completely. Collection of data from the respondents could be done only when they are at work.
4. Many respondents do not like to give information relating to their investment and profit.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, street vendors in the unorganized sector represent a dynamic and vital component of urban economies, contributing to local livelihoods and offering a diverse range of goods and services. Efforts to formalize and support the street vending sector aim to balance the needs of vendors with urban planning and development objectives. Recognizing the importance of street vending in the informal sector, many governments have implemented initiatives to regulate and support street vendors. This includes issuing licenses, providing designated vending zones, and offering financial assistance or training programs to enhance their skills.

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