



A STUDY ON “QUALITY OF LIFE OF STREET VENDORS OF VADODARA CITY”

Dr. Christina Parmar¹, Miss. Isha Patel²

1Assistant Professor, Parul Institute of Social work, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat

2, Student, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat

ABSTRACT

In the city of Vadodara, street sellers are among the poorest members of the informal sector, or self-employed people. This report attempts to represent the working circumstances and quality of life of street sellers in Vadodara. The research is exploratory in character, with the situations being described using a quantitative approach. The researchers used purposive sampling to get data from fifty people for this investigation. The study's findings include socioeconomic factors as well as working conditions and their impact on the quality of life of a typical street vendor. The findings also cover the working lives of vendors, which are explained in terms of their access to finance and the type of vending they do, as well as how respondents spend quality time with their families in this Covid-19 situation, how the pandemic affects street vendors psychologically, how they convert their minds from fear, depression, anxiety, and unstable mental states, and issues related to vending facilities. This paper also discusses the implications of the findings.

Keywords: Street vendors, Quality of life, Vadodara city.

INTRODUCTION

The majority of India's urban poor make a living in the informal sector. W. Arthur Lewis coined the phrase "informal sector" to characterise the working culture of a certain section. In terms of urbanisation and industrialization, people who labour in the informal sector are being pushed out of the mainstream (Robert L. And Tignor., Arthur Lewis, 2005). Highly skilled and qualified applicants will receive white-collar positions as a result of increased urbanisation, but under-skilled and under-qualified persons will have to seek self-employment in the informal sector, which includes the profession of street vending.

"A person engaged in the vending of articles, goods, wares, food items or merchandise of everyday use or offering services to the general public, in a street, lane, side walk, footpath, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area, or from a temporary built-up structure or by moving from place to place," according to the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. This Act also specifies who is permitted to engage in street vending (Bare Act, 2014). Every street vendor, identified under the survey carried out under sub-section (1) of section 3, who has completed the age of fourteen years or such other age as may be prescribed by the appropriate Government, shall be issued a certificate of vending by the Town Vending Committee, subject to such terms and conditions and within the period specified in the scheme, including the restrictions specified in the plan for a certificate of vending,' according to Section 4(1) of the Act.

According to WHO definitions, quality of life is defined as "an individual's view of their place in life in relation to their goals, aspirations, standards, and concerns in the context of the culture and value system in which they live" (World Health Organization, 1997). This definition emphasises that the term encompasses a wide range of factors, including a person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social ties, personal beliefs, and relationships with key characteristics of their environment. The majority of street vendors are migrants from rural areas who have been forced to seek better prospects in the city due to poverty and a lack of gainful employment options. As a result, for the rural poor, street selling is the simplest and most vital means of making a living, as it involves only a small financial investment and relatively few skills in comparison to other occupations. One of the key issues that all workers in the informal sector face is a lack of social security (NCEUS). The labour of a street vendor, which is part of the greater informal economy, is fraught with risk and uncertainty. Despite this, they do not receive any state-provided social security. (Debdulal, Saha, 2012)

In the 1990s, India's main cities faced difficulties that were familiar to many cities around the world: rising urbanisation, congestion, a lack of formal job prospects, and a substantial development in informal sectors. In some cities, as in other countries, the urban elites' quest to acquire "world class city" status resulted in large-scale evictions of street sellers, and many tiny street vendor associations arose to fight these evictions (Shalini Sinha and Sally Roever, 2011). These demonstrations were largely focused on municipal governments and settling local issues with the use of public space for street vendors.

According to additional research, the number of street sellers in major Indian cities has increased significantly during the last few decades. Mumbai has the most street sellers, with over 250,000, followed by Kolkata, which has more than 150,000. Ahmedabad and Patna each have approximately 80,000 street vendors, while Indore, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar each have around 30,000. (As quoted in Urban Responses to Street Trading: India by Sharit K. Bhowmik, 2003).

Similarly, it is a well-known truth that the rights of street vendors are often infringed in numerous Indian cities. The Supreme Court, on the other hand, has taken a different stance. For example, the New Delhi Municipal Corporation evicted a common street seller, Sodhan Singh, who sold clothing on Janpath in New Delhi, more than a decade ago. He filed a Public Interest Litigation with the Supreme Court, saying that the act infringed on his fundamental rights, notably his right to carry on business or trade under Article 19(1)(g) of the Indian Constitution. This landmark Supreme Court decision emphasises the significance of street vending and the usage of public space. The positive aspect here is that street vending supplies many vital commodities at a lower cost, as the case of Sodhan Singh vs. N.D.M.C. and ors, 1989, clearly shows. The most crucial point to remember is that street sellers are exercising their constitutional right to conduct commerce or business; hence they should be appropriately controlled rather than outlawed.

The common challenges that street vendors encounter suggest that they can only be addressed at a national level, rather than through haphazard local initiatives. As a result, there was a need to develop a national organisation that could help coordinate and project the actions of street vendor associations on a national basis. SEWA was a major contributor to the Bellagio Declaration of 1998. In order to raise awareness of the declaration's objectives, the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) was founded in September 1998 in Ahmedabad, India, as a coalition of labour unions and independent organisations that work for street vendors across the Indian subcontinent. It primarily advocates for the rights of street sellers. NASVI provides a unified forum for street vendors to unite and express their demands and rights. The Alliance now includes over 350 street vendor organisations from 22 states around the country. It raises awareness of the positive features of vendors and hawkers, as well as their problems and plight, so that city planners and authorities can no longer overlook them (Sharit K. Bhowmik, 2003).

Even while the government has begun to enact legislation to protect street sellers, it is a sluggish and inefficient process. The concerns of street vendors have been emphasised by studies undertaken by Bhowmik (2001) and Anjaria (2006), which are mostly issues linked to street vendor social protection, working conditions, credit accessibility, and public space utilisation. Furthermore, a study conducted in Imphal, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Patna, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, and Bengaluru by Bhowmik (2001) on "Hawkers and the Urban Informal Sector - A Study of Street Vending in Seven Cities" indicates that street vendors have limited resources for their trade and are frequently forced to use credit to obtain goods. This research is critical because it aims to investigate how street vendors manage their financial access. Another big issue that he has mentioned is the street merchants' access to social security. According to studies, a large percentage of vendors surveyed had experienced harassment, confiscation of products, penalties, or eviction. Almost half had been evicted, some with violence that resulted in additional injuries. As a result, the current research aims to determine whether there have been any changes in the working circumstances or quality of life of street vendors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective of the Research:

1. To study the respondent's awareness about the quality of life in Vadodara.
2. To learn how respondents spend quality time with their families in the context of Covid-19.
3. Conduct research to determine the socioeconomic status of street vendors in Vadodara.

Research Design:

This is an exploratory study that looks at people's perceptions of quality of life, their knowledge of governance and administration, the services provided during Covid, recreational requirements, and their attitudes on Vadodara's way of life.

UNIVERSE:

All the residents of Vadodara working as a street Vendors form the universe of the present research study.

SAMPLE SIZE:

The sample size for the research study is 50 who is residents of Vadodara. The researcher had approached 50 respondents during the period of data collection and after examining the collected raw data for errors and omissions, sample size for the purpose of the research came down to 50. The respondents in this research are hawkers, pheriwallas, vegetables seller, footpath dukandars, sidewalk traders, etc persons.

SAMPLING DESIGN:

A purposive sampling technique was adopted for the purpose of the research study, in order to give a proper and adequate representation to all the residents of Vadodara a purposive selection was done of respondents.

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which researcher uses their judgement to select a sample that is most useful to the purposes of the research.

It is often in qualitative research, where the researcher wants to gain detailed knowledge about a specific phenomenon rather than make statistical inferences. An effective purposive sample must have a clear criteria and rationale for inclusion.

DATA COLLECTION:

Period for Data Collection

The data was collected in the months between August to January 2021-2022.

Tool for Data Collection:

Questionnaire in the google form with both the types of questions like open ended questions and close ended questions was prepared for the purpose of the data collection.

FINDINGS

The researcher discovered in this study that: -

- In this Study, 10% (5) of the respondents are beyond the age of 51, while 14% (7) are between the ages of 15 and 30, 44% (22) are between the ages of 41 and 50, and 32% (16) are between the ages of 31 and 40.
- It may be deduced from the preceding data that 78 percent (39) of respondents were male and 11 percent (22) were female.
- 12 percent (6) of respondents are illiterate, whereas 56 percent (28) have completed H.S.C. or less, 20 percent (10) have completed standard 12 or less, 8 percent (4) have graduated, and 4 percent (2) have completed an ITI course. There isn't a single person who has completed their post-studies. master's
- 78 percent (39) of the population lives in their own home, while 22% (11) live in leased housing.
- 50 percent (25) of respondents have worked for more than ten years, 30 percent (15) have worked for six to ten years, 16 percent (8) have worked for one to five years, and just ten percent (2) have worked for a few months. In other words, less than a year.
- 4 percent (2) of respondents have more than 6 family members, followed by 2 percent (1) who have no family members, 14 percent (7) who have two family members, 56 percent (26) who have three to four family members, and 20 percent (10) who have five family members including themselves.
- 22% (11) of respondents had a total of 10,000 rupees. Or less than that amount of monthly revenue, with 28% (56) earning between 20,000 and 30,000 Rs. and only 2% (1) earning more than 50,000 Rs. Twenty percent (10) earn between Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 50,000.
- 14 percent (7) of respondents have no children, 42 percent (21) have one child, 34 percent (17) have two children, and 10% (5) have more than two children.
- Positive responses account for 24 percent (12), negative responses for 48 percent (24) and may be responses for 28 percent (14%). That is to say, they did not always have difficulty meeting the needs of the family.
- While serving in public, 96 percent (48) of respondents practise good hygiene. While 4% (2) of respondents do not keep their personal hygiene in check while serving in public.
- 92 percent (46) of respondents are unaware of government initiatives involving street sellers. While 8% (4) of respondents are unaware of government initiatives involving street sellers.
- VMC's services were rated as satisfactory by 9 percent (18) of respondents. While 28% (14) of respondents were dissatisfied with the VMC services they received. Another 54% (27) of those polled have no idea what their answer is.
- The government does not provide any financial assistance to 46% (92) of the respondents. During the period of lockdown, 8% of respondents (4) receive monetary incentives from the government.
- There are 28% of respondents that strongly agree with the assertion that they have suffered a money difficulty in this pandemic (14). Apart from that, 56 percent (28) of respondents agree with the statement, while 16 percent (8) have a neutral opinion to it. This statement was agreed upon by all respondents.
- That 66 percent (33) of respondents were able to make enough money to meet all of their own and their family's needs, 14 percent (7) were unable to meet all of their own and their family's needs, and 20 percent (11) were unsure whether to say yes or no.
- 52 percent (26) of respondents are hooked to any form of bad habit, whereas 48 percent (24) are not addicted to any form of bad habit.
- 86 percent (43) of respondents do not have any significant ailments; 10% (5) of respondents do have serious diseases; and 4% (2) of respondents have no clue about their health status.
- 46 percent (23) of respondents are extremely health conscious, while 16 percent (8) are not at all health conscious, and 38 percent (19) are occasionally unconcerned about their health.

- Covid affected 56 percent (28) of respondents' family members, whereas 44 percent (22) of respondents' family members were not affected.
- During the Covid pandemic, 36 percent (18) of respondents lose their close ones, whereas 64 percent (32) of respondents do not lose their close ones.
- 85.7 percent (42) of respondents believe that a smart city is one in which inhabitants live happily without fear. 85.7 (42) respondents believe that all required items are readily available in the hand, which they refer to as smart city, and 41.7 percent (83.7) respondents believe that cleanliness is prevalent throughout the city, which they refer to as smart city. It is called smart city since 69.4 percent (34) of respondents feel that metros are available. 77.4 percent (38) of respondents believe that smart cities result in fewer crimes, whereas just 2% (1) believe that smart cities result in fewer crimes.
- 56 percent (28) of respondents believe that their own home is the best place for quality time spent and enjoyment, 78 percent (39) of respondents believe that their village is the best place for quality time spent and enjoyment, 21 percent (42) of respondents believe that their garden is the best place for quality time spent, 18 percent (9) of respondents believe that their lake side is the best place for quality time spent, and 15 percent (30) of respondents believe that theatre is the best place for quality time spent and enjoyment.
- 60 percent (27) of respondents' children prefer street food, while 23 percent (40) prefer home cooking.
- 41.7 percent (20) of respondents enjoy gossiping with their family in their spare time, while 77.1 percent (37) prefer to watch TV with their family and spend time with them, 39.6 percent (19) prefer to go outside and enjoy time with their family, 33.3 percent (16) prefers to cook delicious food for their family, and 2.1 percent (1) prefer to do some housework.
- Smart phones are used by 76 percent of respondents (38) and are not used by 24 percent of respondents (12).
- 76 percent (38) of respondents had air conditioning, refrigerators, televisions, and other electronic devices, whereas 24 percent (12) do not.

Suggestions of the study:

- There is a need for a venue to raise public knowledge about government programmes among street vendors at the grassroots level.
- Many facilities for street sellers must be expanded at VMC.
- During the lockout, the government should provide street vendors with some monitoring perks or tax exemption.
- Many street sellers do not make enough money, and when they try to locate another source of income, they are unable to do it. As a result, my recommendation is to enhance the number of different income opportunities.
- Many people who perform street vending have harmful habits, therefore the government should raise awareness about it and take the necessary steps to ensure that everyone lives a healthy life.
- Many people are unconcerned about their health; thus, the government must raise awareness about its importance. Because a healthy person lives a happy life and looks after his family. A happy existence is one in which one is in good health.
- People prefer to spend more time at their own homes, villages, gardens, lakes, and theatres, according to this study. So, I propose that the government build some low-cost, accessible venues where people may spend time with their children, families, and loved ones.
- Governments and non-governmental organisations are now responsible for the weaker sections of society, yet they sometimes abuse their powers. This study offers some recommendations for improving the livelihood of street vendors. The government should provide street vendors with official identification cards. The government should provide commercial buildings to street vendors at a cheap monthly rental rate and allow them to set up shop on prominent streets. The government should take action against individuals who harass them in their daily lives (especially police personnel). Their labour routines are quite hazardous to their health (due to climatic conditions). As a result, the government should establish particular health, welfare, and livelihood programmes for street vendors. Local governments and police officers should be trained to assist street vendors in conducting their business without interfering with people's routine activities. To better their financial situation, they should develop the habit of saving. The general public can contribute useful ideas and suggestions to help improve their products. Their psychological and physical well-being appear to be taken care of, and they have enlarged their environmental elements and social relationships in order to improve their Quality of Life.

Conclusion:

Vendors on the streets play an important role in human society. The conclusions of the street vendor study revealed insecure work and life situations, including large workload, limited sales and earnings, and no guarantee of safety and security. When street vendors become ill or disabled, they have little choice but to rely on others to keep their business running. It is critical to acknowledge that improving the working circumstances of street vendors is critical to improving their quality of life.

To do this, the researchers discovered that street vendors need join various trade unions, associations, and national and international organisations, as well as obtain memberships in national and international organisations, in order to escape harassment from police and municipal authorities. It is also critical that individuals have a basic understanding of the law and access to legal assistance. They must also register as street vendors under The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. This, in turn, can improve the quality of life and working conditions of each individual street vendor.

Individuals, groups, and communities are responsible for street sellers. Even if they work in this field, their daily lives are not secure. The government should play an active role in efficiently implementing the policies that it has enacted. As a result, the government should investigate the challenges that street vendors face in every aspect of their lives. It is our responsibility and commitment as professional social workers to work for the well-being of street vendors.

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