



## PROBLEMS OF STREET VENDORS IN PONDICHERRY

**K Dhamodharan**

Research Scholar, PhD (Law)

Department of Law Kalinga University, Raipur

### Abstract

The street vendors are one of the constituent pillars of the giant unorganised workforce. They are the self-employed category contributing a significant share to the economy of each country. The street vendors across the globe face many problems in the daily chores of their vending activities. The street vendors are the visible workforce found everywhere selling goods and commodities at a cheaper price in the convenient locations of the consumers. Despite legal protection, issues against the street vendors are reported in media. The present study is conducted to examine the socio-economic, working conditions and problems of domestic workers in Pondicherry. The study is conducted at Pondicherry. Sixty samples were drawn from the universe under simple random sampling method. An interview schedule is used for primary data. The results show that women are dominating the street vending trades. The major problems include sexual harassment, physical evictions by the enforcement authorities. The study concludes that the Government of Puducherry has implemented more than 75% of the provisions of the Street Vendors Act. The study ends with the concluding note that the Street Vendors Act is to be implemented in letter and spirit to minimise the problems and issues against the street vendors in Pondicherry.

**Keywords:** Street vendors, Unorganised sector, Unskilled, Sexual harassment, Eviction

### Introduction

The street vendors are the unorganised workers offering goods and commodities to the public. Street vendors are the self-employed category of the unorganised sector. Street vendors are the most deprived category self-employed worker category (DebdulalSaha, 2011, p. xx) They sell almost everything starts with vegetable, cooked food, fish, plastic items, electrical & electronics items, garments and the list goes on. Street vending has been practised by both men and women all over the world. Reliable data is not available as every day a new vendor engage himself or herself as a street vendor and commence the vending



activities in the place convenient to them. But the statistical records show that women are more in numbers than men. They face many challenges in their daily vending. Though the street vendors supply goods and commodities at competitive prices, street vending is viewed as a nuisance (Yatmo, 2008)

### ***Definition of Street vendor***

According to Section 2 (1) of Street Vendors Act, 2014 “***Street vendor***” means a person engaged in vending of articles, goods, wares, food items or merchandise of everyday use or offering services to the general public, in a street, lane, sidewalk, footpath, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area, from a temporary built-up structure or by moving from place to place and includes hawker, peddler, squatter and all other synonymous terms which may be local or region-specific; and the words “street vending” with their grammatical variations and cognate expressions, shall be construed accordingly; “Street vendors are classified as Mobile vendors and Static vendors. The mobile vendors move from place to place and sell their goods and commodities. The static vendors remain in a fixed place and sell their products to the public

### ***Contribution of street vendors***

Street vending is an important source of employment for many unskilled men and women from rural to urban backgrounds (Tshuma and Jari 2013). It is a boon for the rural poor to generate employment (Mishra, 2011). Street vending will be increasing and the demand for space will also expand in future (RamanathJha, 2016). According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, there are approximately 10 million street vendors in India (2019, September 27) (Bhowmik, 2001) RamanathJha. (2018) reports that the statistical estimation of street vendors are different and conflicting as “The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014” calculates a maximum of 2.5 percent of a city’s population as street vendors while the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors (2009) estimates the street vendors as 10 million.

### ***Problems of Street vendors***

The street vendors in their daily vending activities encounter various problems. The street vendors mainly draw from the marginalised illiterate groups. They often migrate to the towns and cities due to poverty and failure to get prospective employment locally. Once they migrate the issue of accommodation and adjustment creep in. They live in low-cost houses with limited facilities around the vending zones. In some other cases, they reside far from the town limits and depend on the public transport system. Being new to the



migrated area the street vendors are to adjust with local goondas and unlawful elements who exhort money from them. It is very hard for them to get loans from the Banks due to the procedure involved. Many street vendors borrow money from money lenders and return the principal amount on a daily sales basis on higher interest rates. The perishable goods if any unsold bring loss to the vendors as there are no storing places to perishable goods. They are not regulated by the laws until 2014. After a long struggle the “Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.” was enacted by the Government of India. Street vendors were not considered as “worker” as there are no employer-employee relations. Social security measures are not provided to them. Transportation and storage is a big issue for street vendors. Now after passing the Act, they are entitled to some social security measures, but the problem is till now many states in India are not fully implemented the Act. At the implementing stage, many street vendors are to be relocated depending on the vending zones which causes inconvenience to continue in the primary zones where familiar consumers depend on the concerned street vendor. Organising the street vendors is a big task for the Unions. The working hours are long and they have no toilet facilities. Women vendors are sexually harassed and abused. They are evicted repeatedly by the enforcement and municipal authorities and the confiscated goods are not returned many times. Regular bribing and extortion are part of their occupational hazards. Despite all these problems, street vendors cater to the needs of various sects of consumers. Central Unions like CITU and the National Association of Street Vendors Associations (NASVI) playing a pivotal role in organising them. Despite their initiative, many numbers of street vendors are yet to join as a member of the union.

## Literature Review

Doibale, M. K., Mohite, S. D., Sawase, G. B., &Pagadal, P. H. (2019) in their study of socio-demographic profile and causes of street vending in an urban area, Aurangabad, Maharashtra found that one-fourth of the street vendors experience health problems associated with their work. ParikshitChakraborty, &SamarpitaKoley (2018) in their study found that the street vendors working conditions and the working environment is very poor. They also face problems in the absence of shelters and storage space (Kurniawati, W. 2012). Saha, (2009) in his study stated that the street vendors are typically treated as encroachers of public space and are considered as unlawful face the harassment of police and enforcement authorities. Mkhize (2013), in his study, found that the street vendors are harassed, assaulted and their goods confiscated by urban authorities, Hasam, 2015) Hard work, meagre income place most of the street vendors as indebted. They have been bribing many people to run their business.



Channamma K C (2010) in her study found that women vendors are mainly engaged in fruit, vegetable and flowers vending which are perishable bring loss if left unsold. Women constitute about forty per cent of the total street vendors and thirty per cent of them are the sole earning members of their family (Government of India, 2009; Geetika, et al, 2011)

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Statement of the Problem***

The street vendors face various problems in their vending chores. The magnitude and the dimensions of the problem vary from vendor to vendors depending on certain factors. Some of the review of the literature on street vendors which is presented here portrays the appalling conditions of the street vendors. The Government of India, to protect and promote the rights and interests of the street vendors had enacted “Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.” The Act intends to regulate the street vending does not bring desired change in the livelihood of the street vendors in Pondicherry. Hence the present study is conducted to examine the socio-economic, working conditions and to analyse various problems of the street vendors in Pondicherry.

### ***Objectives of the study***

The study is conducted with the following objectives

1. To study the socio-economic profile of the street vendors in Pondicherry
2. To examine the implementation of the Street Vendors Act 2014 in Union Territory of Puducherry
3. To examine the problems faced by the Street Vendors.
4. To understand the gender-based issues and violence against the Women Vendors.
5. To suggest suitable measures to improve the conditions of the street vendors in Pondicherry.

### ***Need and importance of the study***

Though street vendors contribute a significant share to the national economy, they are not considered as a worker and are systematically eliminated from the application of Labour Laws of the land. A few studies are conducted on street vendors in Pondicherry. But the studies failed to examine the inner realities and implementation of the Laws relating to street vendors and their impact on minimising the problems of street vendors. Hence the present study is unique as it intends to fill the gap left in the earlier studies.



### ***Research Design***

The study is a descriptive type of study. In any Research the Research design plays a dominant role. It is a blueprint in the edifice of the Research. It shows the direction to the Researchers to choose the right path of the research. In the research design, a systematic approach is formulated making provisions for various steps to be followed by the researchers. For the present study, the Descriptive method is adopted.

### ***Profile of the Study Area***

Pondicherry is the capital of the Union Territory of the state Puducherry located in the south-east coast of India with Tamilnadu boundaries. It is located in the Pondicherry district. The Pondicherry municipality comprises 42 wards. It is one of the clean cities in India. Pondicherry is the French colony ceded to India blended with its architecture during 1962. with 492 square miles area. Hindus are dominating in the state capital of Puducherry while Muslims are living in large numbers in Karaikal. The famous Aurobindo Ashram was established in 1872 stands as a monumental centre for religious retreaters Shri Aurobindoji in India.

### ***Scope of the study***

The present study focusses the socio-economic working conditions and problems of the street vendors in Pondicherry. The study covered the following street in which the street vendors are concentrated. Samples were drawn from the vendors moving and static at the above street

1. Mahatma Gandhi Road
2. Jawaharlal Nehru Street
3. Mission Street
4. Aurobindo Street

### ***Sampling method***

For the purpose, the entire universe is stratified into four units consisting of above said major streets in busy Pondicherry. It is roughly estimated as 240 and 25 % of the universe population is taken as sample size. Accordingly, 60 samples were drawn under simple random sampling method.

### ***Data collection***

The primary data is collected from the street vendors engaged in vending activities in four streets of Pondicherry. A structured interview schedule consisting of the closed-ended questions on socio-economic working conditions and problems related to the street vendors are incorporated to elicit information from the street vendors. Secondary data were collected from printed books and internet resources All the data were statistically analysed with the appropriate statistical tools. All the collected data from the sixty respondents are codified and



tabulated. By the use of the SPSS package, the statistical test required for the study is done and analysed with necessary diagrams and charts.

**Limitations of the study**

The study is conducted as a Pilot study to PhD Research work with limited samples of 60 from four streets of Pondicherry due to time constraint. Hence while generalising the results adequate care to be taken. Also, some of the respondents are afraid to furnish the correct information on sexual harassment and other issues. This is a micro-level study to get first-hand information for developing an appropriate strategy for future research.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

For meaningful analysis of Research problem, the data collected from the respondents are to be analysed with appropriate statistical tools. In this section, the information obtained from the 60 respondents were analysed

Table .1 Gender and Age of the Respondents

Age (Years)	Male	Per cent	Female	Percent	Total	Per cent
Not completed 14 years	1	1.67	2	3.33	3	5.00
15 years - 18 years	2	3.33	3	5.0	5	8.33
19 years - 30 years	6	10.0	6	10.0	12	20.0
31 years - 40years	7	11.67	5	8.33	12	20.0
41 years – 50years	6	10.0	6	10.0	12	20.0
51 years - 60 years	5	8.33	7	11.67	12	20.0
Above 60 years	1	1.67	3	5.0	4	6.67
Total	28	46.67	32	53.33	60	100
Total		46.67		53.33		100

Source: Primary data

From Table No: 1 It is seen that more women are engaged in street vending activities. Women in the busy streets of Pondicherry sells the mostly the perishable goods like vegetables, greens, fruits, fish. The percentage of the men engaged in street vending is comparatively less than the women. The women vendors are mostly mobile vendors who move from place to place either carrying the goods on their heads or through pushcarts. They cover a limited number of streets and return home after the specified area. There is more number of women engaged in part-time vending. These women complete the vending early in the morning and leave their home and perform their role in their houses as an unpaid domestic worker. Usually, these multiple roles played by women is taken into



account for statistical purpose. There are considerable men engaged in part-time street vending and the typical example is newspapers vendor who delivers the paper before 7 am.

**Table 2 Religion & Caste of the Respondents**

Religion	Male	Female	Total	Percent	SC/ST	BC	Others
Hindu	17	23	40	66.67	18	14	08
Muslim	04	03	07	11.67	-	03	04
Christian	07	06	13	21.66	8	04	01
Others	00	00	00	00			
Total	28	32	60	100	26 (43.3%)	21 (35%)	13 (21.67%)

Source: Primary Data

From the Table showing the religion of the respondents, the Hindus are dominating in the street vending business. Though Muslims and Christian are engaged in specific vending activities, their percentage is very less. The percentage of SC/ST is considerably higher than the backward class vendors.

**Table 3. Monthly Income of Respondent**

	Less than ₹ 5000	₹ 5001 - ₹ 10000	₹ 10001 - ₹ 15000	₹ 15001 - ₹ 20000	Above ₹ 20000	Total
Male	11	14	3	-	-	28
Female	14	18	-	-	-	32
Total	25	32	3			60
Percent	41.67%	53.33%	5%			100%

Source: Primary Data

From the table showing the monthly income of the respondents, it is seen that majority of the respondents are earning Rs 5000-10000 per month. Only 5% of the respondents are earning more than 10,000 per month. None of the respondents is drawing above 15000 in street vending in Pondicherry.

## Findings, Suggestions, and Conclusion

### *Implementation of the Street Vendors Act 2014*

The Union Territory of Puducherry in continuation of the Central Act “Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.” had enacted “Puducherry Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Rules 2017 and started implementing the Act from 2017. The Government of Puducherry had constituted the “Town Vending Committees” following Section 5 of the above Rules. The street vending committee had made an extensive survey of the street vendors and the process of



issue of certificate vending the street vendors continue. Apart from the above, the Government has been arranging skill development programme for the street vendors in Puducherry. Street vendors are encouraged to access the basic banking services for availing the credit facilities for their vending business. The Government of Puducherry is also initiating the social security measures through Government schemes like Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana. Around 50 % of the street vendors were issued the ID cards by the street vending Committee.

### ***Findings***

The study identified that 5 % of boys and girls in the age group 14- 18 are either engaged themselves as street vendors or assisting their parents in their street vending business. The right to education guaranteed under the constitution is greatly affected in the case of child vendors. Among the street vendors, 53.3 % of them are women and 61% of them are engaged in perishable goods. Majority of the street vendors earn Rs 300-400 per day in their vending activities. Interestingly 5 % of the women above the age of 60 are also engaged in street vending while the male counterpart is 2 %. 78 % of the respondents are married and living with a spouse. Majority of the street vendors reported that the education of their children is not affected due to their vending. Among the 53.3 % of the women vendors, 67% of the vendors reported that they have one or more health issues. Around 68% of the regular vendors are enumerated by the municipal administration and the rest are left as they move around as mobile vendor. 50 % of the street vendors are provided with the ID cards. 37% of the vendors reported that they face problems in vending space and 42% of the vendors stated that they are to bribe police and other enforcement officials periodically. 39 % of the respondents accuse the enforcement authorities of the illegal eviction process and confiscation of their goods and commodities. 41 % of women vendors state that they face issues of sexual harassment at vending sites. Only 19 % of the women vendors have reported the incident of sexual harassment to the appropriate authorities. The women vendors besides the sexual harassment are facing domestic violence (32%) which causes much hardship in their work-life. Despite the problems, 52% of the respondents are satisfied with their present vending activities. The study found that the majority of the street vendors are indebted and the Socio-Economic conditions have not altered their life to the desired level despite the enactment of the Street Vendors Act, 2014.

### ***Suggestions and Conclusion***

The conditions of street vendors in Pondicherry are in the contemptible state. The major issue of the street vendors is adequate vending space and regulation of the vending space by the municipal authorities. The Government of Puducherry has started implementing the provisions of the Street vending Act, 2014. From the Government of India report, the state is pioneering in the implementation in the country as almost 75 % of Act is implemented. If the Act



completely implemented most of the problems would come to an end. The vending zones may be regulated and the town vending committee shall be vested with the power of relocating the vendors from the vending zones will put an end to unlawful evictions and illegal confiscations. The women vendors are to be sensitised in various issues through awareness building which will empower them in combating the sexual harassment and other violence against them.

## Reference

1. Channamma K C (2010). MahileyaDudime: EkaroopateyaPrashne, Working Paper No.249, Kannada University, Hampi.
2. DebdulalSaha. (2011). WORKING LIFE OF STREET VENDORS IN MUMBAI. The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, 54(2).
3. Doibale, M. K., Mohite, S. D., Sawase, G. B., &Pagadal, P. H. (2019). Study of socio-demographic profile and causes of street vending in the urban area, Aurangabad, Maharashtra. International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health, 6(9), 4005. <https://doi.org/10.18203/2394>.
4. Geetika, Tripti Singh, Anvita Gupta (2011). “Women Working in Informal Sector in India: A Saga of Lopsided Utilization of Human Capital”, paper presented in the International Conference on Economics and Finance Research, IPEDR, vol 4 (2011) IACSIT Press, Singapore.
5. Government of India (2009). National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, New Delhi.
6. Hasan, M. and Alam, J., (2015) Street Garment Vendors“ Contribution to the Economy and Local Community: An Empirical Study to the Street Garments Vendors in Dhaka City, Bangladesh. International Journal of Management and Business Research, 5(2), 2015 pp. 129-139.
7. Kurniawati, W. (2012). Accommodative study of public space for marginalized people. Asian Journal of Environment-Behaviour Studies, 3(10), 1-10.
8. Mkhize, S., Dube, G., and Skinner, C. Street vendors in Durban, South Africa. Informal Economy Monitoring Study. 2013.
9. ParikshitChakraborty, &SamarpitaKoley. (2018). Socio-Economic View on Street Vendors: A Study of a Daily Market at Jamshedpur. Journal of Advanced Research in Humanities and Social Science, 5(1), 14-20 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329773186\\_SocioEconomic\\_View\\_on\\_Street\\_Vendors\\_A\\_Study\\_of\\_a\\_Daily\\_Market\\_at\\_Jamshedpur](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329773186_SocioEconomic_View_on_Street_Vendors_A_Study_of_a_Daily_Market_at_Jamshedpur)
10. RamanathJha. (2018). strengthening urban India’s informal economy: The case of street vending. ORF. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/strengthening-urban-indias-informal-economy-the-case-of-street-vending/>



11. Saha, D. (2009). Decent work for the street vendors in Mumbai, India—A distant vision! *Journal of Workplace Rights*, 14(2), 229-250. <https://doi.org/10.2190/wr.14.2.f>
12. Shweta Sharma, “Hawking Space and National Policy on Urban Street Hawkers: A study of NDMC, Delhi,” *Procedia Technology* 24 ( 2016 ): 1734–1741, [https://ac.els-cdn.com/S2212017316302985/1-s2.0-S2212017316302985-main.pdf?\\_tid=655ef801-4426-4fbe-acbc-0d9a18758176&acdnat=1523100854\\_036ffbc3daa8f30fca5d894937130d2](https://ac.els-cdn.com/S2212017316302985/1-s2.0-S2212017316302985-main.pdf?_tid=655ef801-4426-4fbe-acbc-0d9a18758176&acdnat=1523100854_036ffbc3daa8f30fca5d894937130d2)
13. *Street vendors Act 10 million street vendors in India*. (2019, September 27). JatinVerma's IAS Academy. <https://www.jatinverma.org/street-vendors-act>
14. The Street Vendors (Protection Of Livelihood And Regulation Of Street Vending) Act, 2014, published in the Gazette of India by Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice on 5 March 2014, <http://www.egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2014/158427.pdf>
15. Tshuma, M C and Jari, B., *The informal sector as a source of household income: 2013*
16. Yatmo, Y. A. (2008). Street vendors as ‘out of place’ urban elements. *Journal of Urban Design*, 13(3), 387-402