

# A Study on Socio-Economic Conditions of Push Cart Vendors in Erode District of Tamil Nadu

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## Abstract

Push cart vendors are the most visible section of the informal economy. Push cart vending as a profession has been in existence in India since times immemorial. A cart that is pushed by a person used especially to describe a cart that is used for selling something outdoors for examples selling fruits, vegetables and other goods from pushcart. The push cart street vending is meant for the pedestrian to walk and to avoid traffic congestion and accidents. But the push cart and street vendors are illegally occupying the streets and plat-forms for the purpose of purchasing goods at the cheap rate from the vendors who sell on the street. This is one the main causes for the steady increase of push cart vendors. In most Indian cities the urbanity survives by working in the informal sector. The in-depth analysis of the socio economic facets of the push cart vendors in Erode town has led to the unambiguous conclusion that their economic condition is really deplorable and there is a dive need for concrete action plan to ameliorate the socio economic conditions of the push cart vendors. The social security network of Tamil Nadu Government is quite strong. The Ministry of Housing and urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA) has passed the 2013 Street Vendor's Bill. This study aims to find out the socio-economic status and their working patterns of their livelihood. Hence, the researchers had used convenient sampling method to select 50 respondents for the present study which is in descriptive nature. The findings of this study are elaborated in the full paper. The central and the state governments are trying to amend rules in order to protect the push cart vendors.

**Keywords:** Push Cart Vendors, Informal Sectors, Push Cart Vendor's Socio-Economic Status, Working Conditions and Push cart vendor policy.

## Introduction

In general socio economic conditions of the push cart vendors are pitiable, even though the law is against them; they acquaint and adjust the laws according to their way of life. A cart that is pushed by a person used especially to describe a cart that is used for selling something outdoors for examples selling fruits, vegetables and other goods from pushcart. The push cart street vending is meant for the pedestrian to walk and to avoid traffic congestion and accidents. But the push cart and street vendors are illegally occupying the streets and plat-forms for the purpose of purchasing goods at the cheap rate from the vendors who sell on the street. This is one the main causes for the steady increase of push cart vendors. In most Indian cities the urbanity survives by working in the informal sector. Poverty and lack of useful employment in the rural areas and the smaller towns drive large numbers of people to the cities for work and their employment. These people usually own low skills and lack in the level of education required for

the better paid jobs in the formal sector. Besides, everlasting Protected jobs in the formal sector are shrinking hence even those have the requisite skills are unable to find proper employment.

For such sort of people working in the informal sector are the only means for their endurance. This has led to a rapid increase of the informal sector in most of the bigger cities. For the municipal poor, push cart vending is one of the means of earning livelihood, as it requires minor financial input and the skills involved are low. A large section of push cart vendors in urban areas are those with low skills and who have migrated to the larger cities from rural areas or small town in such as employment.

These people take to push cart vending when they do not find other means of livelihood. The investment too is low and the people do not require special skills or training. Hence for such people, both men and women, push cart vending is the easiest form for earning their livelihood.

### **About Push Cart Vendors**

Push cart vending in India falls in unorganized sector category. Push cart and street vending has been a profession since time immemorial, with push street vendors an integral part of our urban history and culture. Shopping and marketing, in a traditional Indian sense, has primarily been informal. Social interaction is integral to Indian markets in contrast to the mechanized and the sterile concept of shopping favored by modern market and super market structures. Vendors exhibit remarkable entrepreneurial skills. Purchasing of commodities is no easy task with constant market fluctuations. Besides, middlemen have a major say in the wholesale markets. Commodities have to be in sync with both consumer tastes and paying capacity. As most vendors deal in perishables, the goods have to be sold at the right time. It is believed that the largest concentration of vendors is in the age group 16 -35 years. It indicates that vending involves enormous physical labour. A vendor starts early in the morning with the day's purchase. The marketing place is in an invariably far from his residence. Bringing large sacks of vegetables and fruits and loading them in a rickshaw cart is a tedious job.

Urbanisation is the most significant all India phenomena of our times. The city has today become an engine of growth, the main job provider. Twenty nine per cent of the people of the country generate 60% of the GDP. However, our cities remain ill -prepared to address the problems of poverty. Planning and governance continues to be the preserve of the politician -mafia -bureaucrat nexus. Whatever policy that does exist is poorly implemented. There is unabated official and social hostility towards the unorganized sector, even though the formal sector has ceased to grow, having reached saturation point. As the cost of creating jobs in the unorganized sector is very low, it needs to be integrated into the context of the overall macro -economy. Every social system must cater to the needs of its members to enable them to survive; it must have effective means of allocating and distributing resources.

The vendors provide a wide array of goods and commodities to the urban populace at reasonable prices and convenient locations. The type of goods they sell makes an interesting study – from daily needs like vegetables, fruits, fish, meat and snacks to occasional needs like flowers and readymade garments. A survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Health and Hygiene in 1997 counted 300 types of eatables sold by the hawkers of Calcutta. It would be hard to find an urban Indian who doesn't purchase something from a vendor. The middle and lower class consumer specifically prefers to purchase from them, though even well-off citizens purchase many commodities given reasonable prices.

Indian social institutions show an uncanny ability to adjust and adapt to changing societal conditions. Indian agriculture is organized around the family mode of production, with the entire family engaged in various stages of agricultural production, i.e., sowing, harvesting and so on. The same system

has crept into urban areas; it is not uncommon to find the entire family involved in the micro -enterprise. Thus, on a roadside tea stall, while the husband looks after customers, the wife prepares tea and snacks, and children wash utensils. The same is true for vegetable and fish vendors where the husband purchases commodities while the wife sells.

Nevertheless, the planners remain oblivious to the role of vendors who are victimized, harassed, marginalized and pushed from one area to another. Rolling stones gather no mass; so it is with the street vendors. Pushed to the city in search of employment, they take to vending as self-employment for it is an easier option, perhaps the most promising avenue for the poor. Many vendors are erstwhile workers, who after the closure of mills and factories took to vending. Some are victims of displacement caused by developmental projects. Sometimes they are survivors of natural disasters. Often they are simply looking for work. Vendors are regularly subjected to mental and physical pressures by city officials. At times this has led to riotous situations, loss of property, or monetary loss. A major problem is that master plans prepared for the cities do not allocate space to vendors/hawkers, as planners blindly imitate the western concept of marketing, ignoring Indian traditions. No wonder, weekly markets struggle to survive and natural markets are ignored. The policy statements of the Regional Development Authorities talk of making provision for trading and commercial activities, which unfortunately is interpreted as making provision for rich traders and big business.

The vendors have to deal with multiple authorities the Municipal Corporation, Police, Regional Development Authorities, District Administration, and Local Panchayats and so on. This leads to exploitation and extortion. In many cases the positive steps taken by one authority are nullified by the actions of others. The Municipal Corporation laws, based as they are on 19th century British practice, are outdated and detrimental to the peaceful conduct of business by vendors. Harassment stems from an absence of official recognition of the rights of street selling and vendors' lack of political and economic power. Instead of regulating vendors, Municipal Corporations treat them as a nuisance and an irritant; their policies and actions are aimed more at removing and harassing them rather than at regulation. The most frightening experience for the vendors is, however, the regular eviction carried out by the District or Municipal Administration. They fear the very sight of the eviction team which is known locally by different names.

### **Statement of the Problem**

By witnessing the characteristics of the vending workforce in unorganized sector their living conditions are poor and they spend their life in open air here there is a hot sun or rain. The highest Indian Constitutional Document provides equality to all human beings with dignity, but it is not seen in the case of this workforce. This is very painful to those who love the humanity and its values. Apart from their hard working they are harassed by police, local rowdies and politicians and they pay them from their low income. They face a threat from the giant Indian and Multinational Companies in the name of globalization. Many retail outlets are coming to compete with this poor helpless workforce. So studying socio economic status and suggesting measures to improve their status is so significant and the researcher sees this as the most significant researchable problem.

### **Scope of the Study**

Erode town is taken by the researcher to conduct the study. Erode is the age old town situated on the banks of river Cauvery. All the roads and rail links to the Southern part of Tamil Nadu from the capital

Chennai passes via Erode. Researcher feels comfort and convenience of choosing this area as the study area which caters the need of the researcher.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To learn about the socio-economic status of the push cart vendors in Erode town.
2. To study about the working patterns of push cart vendors.
3. To know the respondent's perceptions and awareness on push cart vendor's policy.
4. To study how the people participate in the push cart street vending for buying goods.
5. To come out and suggest meaningful suggestions to the policy makers to upgrade the status of push cart vendors.

### **Period of the Study**

The study is done since January 2023 and the primary data is collected during May 2023.

### **Data and Methodology**

The area of the proposed study is Erode town in Tamil Nadu. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The focus of the study is the street vendors. At first the researcher divides the Erode Town area and surroundings. Secondly a list of push cart vendors is prepared after a physical verification by the researcher. This is done due to the non-availability of proper official records from the Government offices. And there are 50 push cart vendors are identified by the researcher in the study area. The convenient sampling method is to select 50 respondents for the present study which is in descriptive nature. The findings of this study are elaborated in this paper. The primary data are collected from the respondents have been classified and tabulated for the purpose of analysis and the data have been scrutinized. To elucidate the outcome of the study the researcher has used frequency tables, Well Being Index and appropriate techniques.

### **Well Being Index**

In India, TATA strategic Management Group (TSMG) is using the Well-Being -Index (WBI) as a tool to measure the quality of life. WBI is measured on the basis of eight parameters namely Home amenities, Transport, Kitchen facility, Hygiene, Education, Entertainment, Communication and Health care (Source: *The Hindu*, 27.06.2010, Trichirappalli Edition, p .7).

### **Limitations of the Study**

- The reliability of the primary data is very much depends on the respondent's attitude to such study and how she/he has taken to answer the questions raised by the researcher.
- The sampling is done based on the available street vendors physically verified by the researcher where there is no availability of proper records. The push cart vendors don't have a permanent place or shop to sell their products. They are virtually pushed to the every nook and corner of the town. Their constant mobility makes the data collection a difficult process.

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

An official Census 2011 detail of Erode, a district of Tamil Nadu has been released by Directorate of Census Operations in Tamil Nadu. Enumeration of key persons was also done by census officials in

Erode District of Tamil Nadu. Hand loom, power loom textile products and readymade garments industries contribute to the economy of the city. The people in the city are employed in various textile, oil and turmeric manufacturing industries.

### Erode District Population 2011

In 2011, Erode had population of 2,251,744 of which male and female were 1,129,868 and 1,121,876 respectively. In 2001 census, Erode had a population of 2,016,582 of which males were 1,024,732 and remaining 991,850 were females. Erode District population constituted 3.12 percent of total Maharashtra population. In 2001 census, this figure for Erode District was at 3.23 percent.

### Erode District Population Growth Rate

There was change of 11.66 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001. In the previous census of India 2001, Erode District recorded increase of 11.85 percent to its population compared to 1991.

In order to analyze the objectives of the study, firsthand information was collected from field survey with the help of an interview schedule. The sample respondents have been chosen from Erode District. The forgoing paragraph provides the review of studies and related to push cart vendors in Erode District, which would be helpful to analyze the collected data and interpretations are given as follows.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section is intended to analyze the thread base of the socio and economic conditions of the push cart vendors of Erode town. The data collected are classified and tabulated. The tables are scientifically explained. The Interpretations of the data are given with skill and neatly.

**Table 1: Age of the respondents**

| Age of respondents | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Below 25 years     | 2         | 4.0          | 4            |
| 25-30 years        | 12        | 24.0         | 28           |
| 31-40 years        | 11        | 22.0         | 50           |
| 41-50 years        | 12        | 24.0         | 74           |
| Above 50 years     | 13        | 26.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly shows the age composition of the respondents. Very young people below 25 years are very low in percentage. On the other hand majority of the respondents (26.0) are under the age group of above 50 years, followed by 41-50 years of age group and 25-30 years of age group. The remaining 24 per cent of the respondents are under the age group of above 25-50 years. The above analysis reveals that very young energetic age group (below 25 years) are not engaged in the push cart vending. Only people more than 25 years of age are engaged in push cart vending in large numbers.

**Table 2: Educational Qualification**

| Qualification      | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Illiterate         | 18        | 36.0         | 36           |
| Primary            | 14        | 28.0         | 64           |
| Middle school      | 4         | 8.0          | 72           |
| High school        | 13        | 26.0         | 98           |
| Graduate and above | 1         | 2.0          | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the educational qualification of the respondents. Majority 36 per cent of the respondents are illiterates, 26 per cent of the respondents are high school and 2 per cent of the respondents have completed graduate and above. Majority of the respondents are illiterates. This shows clearly that illiterate people lacking opportunities in other spheres of employment and forced to join in the push cart vending.

**Table 3: Size of Families**

| Size of the family | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| One member         | 8         | 16.0         | 16           |
| 2-3 members        | 33        | 66.0         | 82           |
| 4-5 members        | 9         | 18.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table explains about the size of the family of the respondents. Among the respondents 66 percent of the respondents have 2-3 members in their family and the remaining 18 per cent of the respondents have 4-5 members in their family. Majority of the respondents have a small family. This clearly follows the demographic pattern of Tamil Nadu. There is a growing awareness about the benefits of small family system in Tamil Nadu. This is endorsed by the fact that the majority of the respondents have 2-3 members.

**Table 4: Duration of the work**

| Duration of the work | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1-5 years            | 6         | 12.0         | 12           |
| 6-10 years           | 10        | 20.0         | 32           |
| 11-15 years          | 14        | 28.0         | 60           |
| 16-20 years          | 11        | 22.0         | 82           |
| Above 20 years       | 8         | 16.0         | 98           |
| Below 6 months       | 1         | 2.0          | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

Push cart street vendors work longer hours than the 8 hour work schedule of a normal individual. (28%) percent of the vendors are doing work duration of 11-15 years on the street. Of these 22 percent of the street vendors work 16-20 years, while 20 percent of them work for 6-10 years. Sixteen percent of the



vendors said they work above 20 years and below 6 months is shown with 2 percent of respondents. About working hours, this time does not include the time they spend to travel, buy the goods and reach their workplace. Also, most vendors have to clean their own places, as the footpaths are usually filled with dust and also garbage adding to the work hours.

**Table 5: Status of cart**

| Status of cart     | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Own cart</b>    | 29        | 58.0         | 58           |
| <b>Rental cart</b> | 21        | 42.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

Data on status of cart was obtained that the 50 number of surveys done. When we think of push cart vendors and their families the common perception one has of push cart vendor family is a huge family. However the study indicates more than 58 percent households of street vendors have own cart vehicles. 42 percent vendors have rental cart for work. This results shows more number of vendors have vehicles.

**Table 6: Reasons for doing this work**

| Reasons for doing this work  | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Illiterate</b>            | 3         | 6.0          | 6            |
| <b>Not get other job</b>     | 10        | 20.0         | 26           |
| <b>Family support</b>        | 21        | 42.0         | 68           |
| <b>Agricultural business</b> | 4         | 8.0          | 76           |
| <b>Seasonal work</b>         | 4         | 8.0          | 84           |
| <b>More income</b>           | 6         | 12.0         | 96           |
| <b>Family business</b>       | 2         | 4.0          | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table depicts about reasons for doing this work of the respondents. Among the total respondents 42 per cent are working for family support. 20% respondents said not get other job. While analyzing 12 per cent respondents mentioned that more income opinion. Very low percent of 4 per cent respondents have family business of reasons.

**Table 7: Nature of business**

| Nature of business                      | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|---|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Fruit seller</b>                     | 18        | 36.0         | 36           |
| <b>Vegetable seller</b>                 | 10        | 20.0         | 56           |
| <b>Canteen</b>                          | 5         | 10.0         | 66           |
| <b>Seasonal business/Flowers/others</b> | 17        | 34.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the varied activities undertaken by the push cart vendors in the unorganized sector. The fruit selling is the major business activity of the push cart street vendor's in the study area (36

per cent). Vegetable selling is contributing 20 per cent, closely followed by running seasonal or other business with 34 per cent. Canteen business constitutes a small proportion of 10 percent in the study area.

**Table 8: Amount of investment for business**

| Amount of investment for business | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Below Rs. 2000</b>             | 1         | 2.0          | 2            |
| <b>Rs. 2001 - 3000</b>            | 10        | 20.0         | 22           |
| <b>Rs. 3001-4000</b>              | 12        | 24.0         | 46           |
| <b>Rs.4001-5000</b>               | 8         | 16.0         | 62           |
| <b>Above Rs. 5000</b>             | 19        | 38.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

It is lime lighted from the above table that 38% respondents opined that they have invested amount of above Rs. 5000 and 24% of the respondents said that invested with Rs.3001-4000. From the analysis it is found the majority of the push cart vendors were noticed from the highest investment of above Rs. 5000 category.

**Table 9: Number of street visit for selling per day**

| Number of street visit for selling per day | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Below 5 streets</b>                     | 7         | 14.0         | 14           |
| <b>6-8 streets</b>                         | 7         | 14.0         | 28           |
| <b>8-10 streets</b>                        | 7         | 14.0         | 42           |
| <b>Above 10 streets</b>                    | 2         | 4.0          | 46           |
| <b>Regular/permanent place</b>             | 27        | 54.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

It is witnessed from the above table that majority (54%) of the respondents express that they have obtained the work in a regular place. 14% of the respondents opined that they have worked with minimum 5 street to 10 streets. On the other hand, merge (4%) respondents opined that they have gone above 10 streets per day. From the analysis, it is inferred that majority of the respondents were identified that regular place push cart vendors category.

**Table 10: Purchase of goods per day**

| Purchase of goods per day | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Below 5 kg</b>         | 1         | 2.0          | 2            |
| <b>6-10 kg</b>            | 3         | 6.0          | 8            |
| <b>11-15 kg</b>           | 11        | 22.0         | 30           |
| <b>16-20 kg</b>           | 8         | 16.0         | 46           |
| <b>21-25 kg</b>           | 23        | 46.0         | 92           |
| <b>26 kg and above</b>    | 4         | 8.0          | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |



Source: Primary Data

From Table it is evident that majority of the respondents are (46 per cent) are purchasing of goods with 21-25 kgs per day, 22 per cent are buying 11-15kgs and 2 per cent have below 5 kgs category. It is also evident that a considerable portion of the respondents (46 per cent) are using 21-25kgs and lowest 2 per cent respondents have below 5 kgs category.

**Table 11: Selling capacity per day**

| Selling capacity per day |                     | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.                       | <b>Below 5 kgs</b>  | 7         | 14.0         | 14           |
| 2.                       | <b>6-10 kgs</b>     | 7         | 14.0         | 28           |
| 3.                       | <b>11-15 kgs</b>    | 25        | 50.0         | 78           |
| 4.                       | <b>16-20 kgs</b>    | 8         | 16.0         | 94           |
| 5.                       | <b>21-25 kgs</b>    | 2         | 4.0          | 98           |
| 6.                       | <b>Above 40 kgs</b> | 1         | 2.0          | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>             |                     | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the selling capacity per day by the respondents. Among the respondents 50 per cent of the respondents are selling with 11-15 kgs per day and the remaining 16 per cent of the respondents are selling in their 16-20 kgs capacity. Low level of 2 percent of the respondents found in above 40 kgs category. This shows the poor economic status of the respondents and as income one of the essential prerequisites for dignified living and it is not available to the majority of the respondents. This indicates that respondents are not having a more standard of living.

**Table 12: Status of stock/surplus goods**

| Status of surplus goods |                                 | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.                      | <b>Sale for another one day</b> | 18        | 36.0         | 36           |
| 2.                      | <b>Sales by half rate</b>       | 14        | 28.0         | 64           |
| 3.                      | <b>Give with free of cost</b>   | 4         | 8.0          | 72           |
| 4.                      | <b>Own use</b>                  | 11        | 22.0         | 94           |
| 5.                      | <b>Others</b>                   | 3         | 6.0          | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>            |                                 | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

It is witnessed from the above table that if goods not sales in one day, majority (36%) of the respondents express that they have obtained the sale forthcoming day. 28% of the respondents opined that they have given with half rate sales. On the other hand, merge (6%) respondents opined that they have said that others opinion like not use or using fertilizers related purpose. From the analysis, it is inferred that the majority of the respondents were received the selling with another one day category.

**Table13: Average income per day**

| Average income per day |                      | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative % |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| 1.                     | <b>Below Rs. 300</b> | 9         | 18.0    | 18           |
| 2.                     | <b>Rs. 301- 400</b>  | 26        | 52.0    | 70           |

|    |                      |           |              |     |
|----|----------------------|-----------|--------------|-----|
| 3. | <b>Above Rs. 500</b> | 15        | 30.0         | 100 |
|    | <b>Total</b>         | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |     |

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly shows the net income of the respondents per day. Among the respondents 52 per cent of the respondents earn Rs. 301-400 as per day income, 30 per cent are earning more than Rs. 500 and the remaining 18 percent earn below Rs. 300. The average annual income of India is Rs. 44000 and in Tamil Nadu is Rs. 34,000. The above table clearly endorses the broad picture of income distribution prevailing in India. In India a 22.2 per cent of the people are below the poverty line. The above table shows that 27.7 per cent of the respondents are earning less than Rs. 3000 and it implies that they belong to the category of Below Poverty Line.

**Table 14: Police harassments during push cart vending**

| Police harassments |              | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.                 | <b>Yes</b>   | 36        | 72.0         | 72           |
| 2.                 | <b>No</b>    | 14        | 28.0         | 100          |
|                    | <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

It could be seen from the above table that 72% of the respondents have accepted that they have received harassment during vending from police and 28% of the respondent expressed the displeasure for noncooperation and help from police. From the analysis it is concluded that majority of the respondents expressed that they hadn't get any help.

**Table 15: Facing problems of harassment from Police during street vending if yes,**

| Police problems if, yes |  | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.                      | <b>Using unnecessary/bad words</b>         | 7         | 18.92        | 18.92        |
| 2.                      | <b>Taking goods without money or abuse</b> | 8         | 21.62        | 40.54        |
| 3.                      | <b>Demanding money</b>                     | 8         | 21.62        | 62.16        |
| 4.                      | <b>others</b>                              | 14        | 37.83        | 100          |
|                         | <b>Total</b>                               | <b>37</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly observes the problem of harassment occurred at the time of vending. Among the total number of respondents 28 per cent of the respondents opined that others category of problems from police, 13 per cent opined that no problems, 21.62 per cent of the respondents opined that they are harassing the push cart vendors.

**Table 16: Status of debt**

| Status of debt |              | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|----------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.             | <b>Yes</b>   | 27        | 54.0         | 54           |
| 2.             | <b>No</b>    | 23        | 46.0         | 100          |
|                | <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly explains whether the respondents having debt in their normal life. Among the total number of respondents 54 per cent of the respondents have said yes opinion and the remaining 46 per cent of the respondents do not have debt in their normal life.

**Table 17: Enough of income**

| Enough of income |            | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.               | <b>Yes</b> | 33        | 66.0         | 66           |
| 2.               | <b>No</b>  | 17        | 34.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>     |            | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table 17 clearly explains whether the respondents having enough level of income or not in their normal life. Among the total number of respondents 66 per cent of the respondents have said yes opinion and the remaining 34 per cent of the respondents have no enough level of income from this business in their normal life. This leads to poverty conditions of their standard of living.

**Table 18: Type of house**

| Type of house |                  | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.            | <b>Own house</b> | 14        | 28.0         | 28           |
| 2.            | <b>For rent</b>  | 36        | 72.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>  |                  | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the nature of house owned by the respondents. Among the respondents 72 per cent of the respondents are living in the rental houses and the remaining 28 per cent of the respondents are living in their own houses. Majority of the respondents do not own a house. This shows the poor economic status of the respondents and as shelter being one of the essential prerequisites for dignified living and it is not available to the majority of the respondents. This indicates that respondents are not having a decent standard of living.

**Table 19: Reasons for debt**

| Reasons for debt |                           | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.               | <b>Loans for vehicles</b> | 4         | 8.0          | 8            |
| 2.               | <b>Goods purchase</b>     | 24        | 48.0         | 56           |
| 3.               | <b>Others</b>             | 22        | 44.0         | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>     |                           | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

It is lime lighted from the above table that 48% respondents opined that they have obtain the reasons for debt of purchasing goods and 44% of the respondents obtained other reasons category. From the analysis it is found the majority of the push cart vendors were obtained from goods purchase, low reasons obtained from loans for vehicles category.

**Table 20: Willingness to change of work**

| Willingness to change of work |              | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.                            | <b>Yes</b>   | 11        | 22.0         | 22           |
| 2.                            | <b>No</b>    | 39        | 78.0         | 100          |
|                               | <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that a sizeable portion of the respondents (62%) did not have the habit of saving their earnings. Even though the respondents are not earning enough income, only a very few (22%) are willing to change their job. It is disheartening to note that, though they are getting very meager income through this activity, they are not willing to switch over this work.

**Table 21: If yes, Reasons for change of work**

| If yes, Reasons for change of work |  | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.                                 | <b>Income is not enough</b>                | 4         | 8.0          | 8            |
| 2.                                 | <b>Obstacles of purchasing and selling</b> | 8         | 16.0         | 24           |
| 3.                                 | <b>Need of qualification based work</b>    | 3         | 6.0          | 30           |
| 4.                                 | <b>Others</b>                              | 13        | 26.0         | 56           |
| 5.                                 | <b>Not willing to change of work</b>       | 22        | 44.0         | 100          |
|                                    | <b>Total</b>                               | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

From table 3.27 it is evident that majority of the respondents are not willing to change of work (44%) and most of the push cart vendors do their work throughout the day whenever they get time apart from their domestic works. About 16 % of the respondents have obstacle of purchasing and selling problems and 8% of respondents said that income is not enough. This picture shows that, they are not having many alternatives for their livelihood.

**Table 22: Other Problems in this Business**

| Other Problems in this Business |   | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative % |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.                              | <b>Govt Officials</b>                     | 4         | 8.0          | 8            |
| 2.                              | <b>Local Politicians</b>                  | 1         | 2.0          | 10           |
| 3.                              | <b>Rowdies And Local Dada's</b>           | 1         | 2.0          | 12           |
| 4.                              | <b>All</b>                                | 23        | 46.0         | 58           |
| 5.                              | <b>Loss</b>                               | 18        | 36.0         | 94           |
| 6.                              | <b>Others Like Profession Competition</b> | 3         | 6.0          | 100          |
|                                 | <b>Total</b>                              | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |              |

Source: Primary Data

The above table 3.28 clearly observes the problem of harassment occurred at the time of vending. Among the total number of respondents 46 per cent of the respondents opined that all categories, 36 per cent opined that loss, 46.24 per cent of the respondents opined local politicians and the remaining 1 per cent felt rowdies and local dada's. The local politicians are harassing the street vendors by forcing to donate a part of their hard earned money for their personal aggrandizement. They also demand money for arranging functions related to their political parties.

**Table 23: WELL BEING INDEX**

| QUALIFICATION              | Frequency | Well Being Index Score | Cumulative % |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------|
| Illiterate                 | 18        | 36.0                   | 36.0         |
| Primary                    | 14        | 28.0                   | 64           |
| Middle school              | 4         | 8.0                    | 72           |
| High school                | 13        | 26.0                   | 98           |
| Graduate and above         | 1         | 2.0                    | 100          |
| <b>BEDROOM</b>             |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 38        | 76                     | 76           |
| No                         | 12        | 24                     | 100          |
| <b>HALL SEPERATELY</b>     |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 28        | 56                     | 56           |
| No                         | 22        | 44                     | 100          |
| <b>TOILET AND BATHROOM</b> |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 24        | 48                     | 48           |
| No                         | 26        | 52                     | 100          |
| <b>KITCHEN</b>             |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 19        | 38                     | 38           |
| No                         | 31        | 62                     | 100          |
| <b>ELECTRICITY</b>         |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 48        | 96                     | 96           |
| No                         | 2         | 4                      | 100          |
| <b>DRINKINGWATER (TAP)</b> |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 28        | 56                     | 56           |
| No                         | 22        | 44                     | 100          |
| <b>DRINAGE/SEWAGE</b>      |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 44        | 88                     | 88           |
| No                         | 6         | 12                     | 100          |
| <b>GRINDER</b>             |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 43        | 86                     | 86           |
| No                         | 7         | 14                     | 100          |
| <b>MIXI</b>                |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 32        | 64                     | 64           |
| No                         | 18        | 36                     | 100          |
| <b>GAS</b>                 |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 41        | 82                     | 82           |
| No                         | 9         | 18                     | 100          |
| <b>TV</b>                  |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 48        | 96                     | 96           |
| No                         | 2         | 4                      | 100          |
| <b>COMPUTER/LAPTOP</b>     |           |                        |              |
| Yes                        | 36        | 72                     | 72           |

|                                |    |    |              |
|--------------------------------|----|----|--------------|
| No                             | 14 | 28 | 100          |
| <b>INVESTMENT FROM SAVINGS</b> |    |    |              |
| Yes                            | 19 | 38 | 38           |
| No                             | 31 | 62 | 100          |
| <b>WELL BEING INDEX</b>        |    |    | <b>45.16</b> |

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the Well Being Index is a composite index which is constructed on the basis of 14 well defined parameters clearly reveals that the wellbeing index of the push cart vendors is abysmally low. The wellbeing index of the street vendors are worked out to the just 45.16 out the maximum of 100. There are certain spheres the push cart vendors are lacking severely.

### Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

The in-depth analysis of the socio economic conditions of the push cart vendors have led to the following findings:

- From the study, very young people below 25 years are very low in percentage. On the other hand majority of the respondents (26.0) are under the age group of above 50 years, followed by 41-50 years of age group and 25-30 years of age group. The remaining 24 per cent of the respondents are under the age group of above 25-50 years. The analysis reveals that very young energetic age group (below 25 years) are not engaged in the push cart vending. Only people more than 25 years of age are engaged in push cart vending in large numbers.
- Majority 36 per cent of the respondents are illiterates, 26 per cent of the respondents are high school and 2 per cent of the respondents have completed graduate and above. Majority of the respondents are illiterates. This shows clearly that illiterate people lacking opportunities in other spheres of employment and forced to join in the push cart vending.
- Among the respondents 66 percent of the respondents have 2-3 members in their family and the remaining 18 per cent of the respondents have 4-5 members in their family. Majority of the respondents have a small family. This clearly follows the demographic pattern of Tamil Nadu. There is a growing awareness about the benefits of small family system in Tamil Nadu. This is endorsed by the fact that the majority of the respondents have 2-3 members.
- Push cart street vendors work longer hours than the 8 hour work schedule of a normal individual. (28%) percent of the vendors are doing work duration of 11-15 years on the street. Of these 22 percent of the street vendors work 16-20 years, while 20 percent of them work for 6-10 years. Sixteen percent of the vendors said they work above 20 years and below 6 months is shown with 2 percent of respondents. About working hours, this time does not include the time they spend to travel, buy the goods and reach their workplace. Also, most vendors have to clean their own places, as the footpaths are usually filled with dust and also garbage adding to the work hours.
- When we think of push cart vendors and their families the common perception one has of push cart vendor family is a huge family. However the study indicates more than 58 percent households of street vendors have own cart vehicles. 42 percent vendors have rental cart for work. This results shows more number of vendors have vehicles.
- Among the total respondents 42 per cent are working for family support. 20% respondents said not get other job. While analyzing 12 per cent respondents mentioned that more income opinion. Very low percent of 4 per cent respondents have family business of reasons.



- The fruit selling is the major business activity of the push cart street vendor's in the study area (36 per cent). Vegetable selling is contributing 20 per cent, closely followed by running seasonal or other business with 34 per cent. Canteen business constitutes a small proportion of 10 percent in the study area.
- It is lime lighted from the above results that 38% respondents opined that they have invested amount of above Rs. 5000 and 24% of the respondents said that invested with Rs.3001-4000. From the analysis it is found the majority of the push cart vendors were noticed from the highest investment of above Rs. 5000 category.
- It is witnessed from the results that majority (54%) of the respondents express that they have obtained the work in a regular place. 14% of the respondents opined that they have worked with minimum 5 street to 10 streets. On the other hand, merge (4%) respondents opined that they have gone above 10 streets per day. From the analysis, it is inferred that majority of the respondents were identified that regular place push cart vendors category.
- 72% of the respondents have accepted that they have received harassment during vending from police and 28% of the respondent expressed the displeasure for non-cooperation and help from police. From the analysis it is concluded that majority of the respondents expressed that they hadn't get any help.
- Among the total number of respondents 28 per cent of the respondents opined that others category of problems from police, 13 per cent opined that no problems, 21.62 per cent of the respondents opined that they are harassing the push cart vendors.
- 66 per cent of the respondents have said yes opinion and the remaining 34 per cent of the respondents have no enough level of income from this business in their normal life. This leads to poverty conditions of their standard of living.
- About 62 per cent of the respondents have no kitchen in their house. This clearly exhibits that the respondents have no mode of basic facilities on their own and they have to depend upon the public system.
- The total numbers of respondents 56 per cent of the respondents have above mentioned facilities and the remaining 44 per cent of the respondents do not have separate hall facilities in their house.
- Among the total number of respondents 52 per cent of the respondents have toilet and bathroom facilities in their house and the remaining 48 per cent of the respondents do not have facilities in their house.
- 78 per cent of the respondents have toilet and bathroom facilities in their house and the remaining 22 per cent of the respondents do not have facilities in their house. This also shows the unhygienic lives led by the vast section of the section of the push cart vendors in this present study area.
- 62% respondents did not have the habit of saving their earnings. Even though the respondents are not earning enough income, only a very few (22%) are willing to change their job. It is disheartening to note that, though they are getting very meager income through this activity, they are not willing to switch over this work.
  
- Among the total number of respondents 46 per cent of the respondents opined that all categories, 36 per cent opined that loss, 46.24 per cent of the respondents opined local politicians and the remaining 1 per cent felt rowdies and local dada's. The local politicians are harassing the street vendors by forcing to donate a part of their hard earned money for their personal aggrandizement. They also demand money for arranging functions related to their political parties.

### Suggestions

In the light of the foregoing analysis and findings the following suggestions can be made to improve the conditions of the street vendors.

- Sustained and continuous efforts are needed to improve the education, health and employment conditions of the street vendors. The government can create a separate ministry or a special cell under the Ministry of Labour to look after the welfare of the workers in the unorganized sector under which the street vending falls.
- Push cart vendors can be trained in food preservation methods. And they can be provided with a common chilling warehousing to preserve their unsold articles.
- A market place can be allotted specially for street vending where the street vendors may be charged a very nominal rent.
- A vigilance team can be constituted under the headship of the City Police Commissioner to prevent the harassments on street vendors.
- Pension scheme can be implemented and to protect the aged vendors and the premium can be paid by the Government.
- Government can provide a job in government sector to at least only one member from the vendor's family.
- The state run housing board can allocate low cost houses to street vendors with proper toilet, water and drainage facilities.
- Awareness programmes on environment and waste disposal management can be given to the street vendors.
- Government can set up counseling centers to council the street vendors to get rid of their vices.
- All the push cart vendors can be declared as people living under Below Poverty Line (BPL families).

### Policy Implications

- ❖ Government must ensure the equal treatment of unorganized workers in par with organized workers.
- ❖ Retail trade which is done by the street vendors must be protected and reserved; so the multinational companies and giant companies from India should not be allowed in retailing.
- ❖ Nationalized banks should give priority in giving loans to the push cart vendors at a nominal interest rate.
- ❖ The scope of the smart card should be extended to various usages.
- ❖ Allotment of houses to the push cart vendors should be done through the housing board. Reservation policy should be implemented by the government to intake the children of the push cart vendors in higher educational institutions.

### Conclusion

The in-depth analysis of the socio economic facets of the push cart vendors in Erode town has led to the unambiguous conclusion that their economic condition is really deplorable and there is a dive need for concrete action plan to ameliorate the socio economic conditions of the push cart vendors. The social security network of Tamil Nadu Government is quite strong. The noon meal scheme, a unique scheme specially designed to enhance the enrolment of children in the primary school has served a vast chunk of the vulnerable sections of the society. The smart card provides old age persons to get assistance from the government. The distribution of 1kg of rice for Rs.1 is another path breaking scheme of Tamil Nadu

Government. Under Samathuvapuram, houses are allotted for the BPL families. In spite of these concerted efforts of the government still majority of the street vendors are reeling under acute poverty and deprivation. The needs of food, clothing, shelter, education and alternate employment opportunities are not accomplished by the vast majority of the push cart vendors. The government would formulate tailor made programmes to suit and address the specific needs of the push cart vendors. The blanket approach is not giving to solve the problems of the push cart vendors. We should not forget the everlasting slogan that says “Poverty in anywhere; is a threat to the prosperity in everywhere”.

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