

A Study on Women Street Vendors in Sibsagar Town

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ABSTRACT

There are two basic aims of providing micro-finance to the needy persons as well as to the unprivileged class institutions namely for production purpose and consumption purpose. Neither such unorganized and micro class gets financial benefits from big financial institutions nor gets any other support for business development. And at the same time the big financial sectors are not very interested to involve these unprivileged class people or organizations under their ambit of service because of various economic and non economic considerations. In order to indulge this gap of formal financing to various needy, micro-financial institutions have come up with the services with greater extent. The various programmes hosted by micro-financial institutions mainly focused on the most of the unprivileged section like tribal, women, BPL family members etc. Out of the various unprivileged sections, street vendors are not financially self sufficient to manage all their financial needs of business and specially the is very much prominent in case of women street vendors who are integral part of the society. This study is an attempt to examine the sources of finance of women street vendors and its pattern based on primary data. For the purpose, randomly few women vendors were taken as sample for study and with the help of a question schedule the sample respondents were interviewed and inferences were drawn there from. It was seen from the study that most of the women street vendors manage their capital from their own sources. Bankers are not interested to support them financially on the ground that they are unable to give back credit or unable to give security against loans. However, it was seen that the women street vendors were very much interested to save a part of their earnings in various schemes of the banks and other financial institutions. The empowerment of women street vendors can be possible only when the banks and other financial institutions come up with various financial services and schemes.

Keywords: unprivileged section, women, street merchants, savings, micro-finance, formal banks

INTRODUCTION

The poorest has also an integral part in our socio-economic system and for their socio-economic development, they need timely and hassle free financing services. In this regard, the micro-financial institutions have been recognized as one of the best tools for patronizing the financial

needs of the poorest. There are two basic aims of providing micro-finance to the needy persons as well as to the unprivileged class institutions namely for production purpose and consumption purpose. Out of these two, production purpose is more focused because even though they do not have available financial resources, they are likely to be more confident to get them involved in pro-

duction sector (Goswami and Borgohain,2008). However, consumption part cannot be ignored because the improvement of health and safety of the poorest are concerned. Usually it is seen that the formal financial institutions like banks and other FIs have been targeting the rich section of the society on the other hand ignoring the poor people and as a result they become poorest of poor. In order to fulfill this gap, micro-finance institutions have been identified as the best tools for empowering the poor financially. In many developed countries, the governments patronize to establish various micro-financial institutions to help the economically weaker class entrepreneurs as well as the weaker citizens. In the evolution of micro-finance concept, the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh has set example in 1976 when they provided micro credit to the poor women. In India, NABARD has followed that track in 1996 and taken 500 women as sample and provided them micro credit to start up ventures and significantly the idea accelerated with abundant outcomes (Goswami,2012). Self Employed Women Association(SEWA) is an Indian trade union registered in 1972, which took many initiatives to preserve the right of the working women particularly the self employed by providing micro-credit, insurance, social security measures, hygiene and secured workplace through its organization. The various programmes hosted by micro-financial institutions mainly focused on the most of the unprivileged section like tribal, women, BPL family members etc.

Engagement of vast majority of labour in informal as well as unorganized sector is a common phenomenon. Informal sector contributes above 90% of country's workforce and about 50% of country's national product which signifies in the country's economy. Usually a greater proportion of people who are socially and economically of weaker class concentrated in unorganized sector activities. The quinquennial survey of NSSO (2004-05) says, in rural India informal sector workers in each population segment was more than 90% and of which women workers constituted a bigger share than male workers i.e. 94.5% female and 90.34% male.

Street Vending –an unprivileged sector

Street vending is a common street selling trade across the country. It is a very significant and integral part of urban economy also. In India, Mumbai has the highest numbers of street vendors i.e.0.25 million, followed by Kolkata is having 0.2 million street vendors which offer tremendous employment opportunities and livelihoods to the urban weak (Bhatt and Jariwala, 2018). Out of the various unprivileged sections, street vendors are not financially self sufficient to manage all their financial needs of business and specially this is very much prominent in case of women street vendors who are integral part of the society. In India street vending business has become one of the significant parts of informal sector. As per an estimation about 80% of population are engaged in such profession. In many cities of the country women constitute a significant segment of street vending . Along with the opportunities of self employment of urban poor through street vending, it provides “affordable” as well as “convenient” services to the urban population (Jaishankar & Sujatha, 2016). Women can equally contribute to the nation's development like male by way of contribution to education, politics, diplomacy, economic, environment etc. That is why the capabilities of women can never be denied. Thus, ensuring empowerment of women and identifying their capabilities in all respect have been regarded as social obligation of the nation. Micro-financial institutions have been playing significant role in strengthening the poor women traders by way of providing various services which include savings, micro-credit, insurance and training to the women in some thrust areas which again increases the skill and ability to business. Now in our country, there are 94 non banking financial companies as registered by RBI as of May 2021, which are running micro financial institutions covering the schemes like Suchanan Micro loan, Suraksha, Srishti micro loan, Samadhan loan, Su-briddhi micro loan etc. The various FIs like Bandhan Bank, LNT, North East Small Finance Development Corporation,Ujjivan Small Finance Bank, Equitas

Small Finance Bank, Suryoday Small Finance Bank, Annapurna Finance Pvt Ltd, Arohan Finance Pvt Ltd, Sanata Finance Pvt Ltd, Credit Access Grameen Ltd etc are working specially for empowering the poor through its credit schemes (Jaishankar & Sujatha, 2016). As per NSSO data, of the total Country's workforce 82% is being employed in unorganized sector. The 94% of total female workforce of the country is employed in unorganized sector as per the information of National Commission of Women (Keshwari and Arocikam, 2016). Among the unorganized section, women street vendors are the most neglected organ of the urban economy who are usually not financially sound to undertake expansion of their business and who do not have a permanent trading place. Generally, they do their business from the parking places, footpath and other sites which are meant for other use. This study is an attempt to examine the financial inclusion of the poor women and their linkage to various micro-financial institutions and banks and how such linkage gives them a path for financial independency.

The data of Periodic Labour Force Survey, India (2017-2018), says that 54.8% women workers were employed in non-agriculture sector, 72.3% of them working without written job agreement, 50.4% of salaried women did not get paid leave and 51.8% were not being able to avail social security benefits. In a study SEWA figured out in 2019 that approximately 300,000 street vendors were dwelling in Delhi, around 30% of them were women street vendors (Sonawane, S. 2007).

In the capital city Delhi, street vendors constitute approximately 2.5% of the population, and they face lots of challenges to survive (Sonawane, 2007). At the same time government fails to provide them adequate social security measures. In fact the economic, social and legal position of street vendors have been the major challenges for the state for improving their work condition. The introduction of new Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 has laid down several provisions which may be considered as landmark initiation and brought ray of hope for development of

the status of street vendors (Kumari, 2015).

The total number of street vendors in India recorded as 10 million as per the data of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, and Delhi has alone more than 2,00,000 street vendors which is the second highest number in the country (Goswami, 2012). Most of the street vendors were immigrants from other places who came out in search of job opportunities and had capability of working on an average 10-12 hours a day. They use to work below conditions of economic and social insecurity. It is a fact to be noted that the unorganized or informal sector has been growing in urban areas tremendously because of ample opportunities opened up along with other sector in urban economy. At present among the total workforce in the country unorganized sector accounts for 91.5 per cent (Keshwari & Arocikam, 2016).

Place of Women street vendors

Street vendors are basically migrated from rural places where poverty and less gainful employment condition push them to look for better opportunity in the urban areas. The hawkers and street vendors are constituting substantial proportion of the urban informal sector and it has accounted two third of urban employment. As per the Report of a study titled 'Understanding the Levels of Women's Empowerment' conducted by CII in 2005, in the workplace women represented only 6% of total workforce in corporate houses (Bhatt and Jariwala, 2018). Significantly the rate of women leading in managerial position is expectedly low. Women street vendors normally deal goods at the public places are called street or bus stand or market outside areas. Women vendors are scattered in different category such as in selling different products like broomsticks, cane basket, utensils, petty cosmetics, bangles, vegetables and running road site tea stalls, mess etc. Nearly 40% of total street vendors are women and 30% these women vendors are the one and only earning member of their families. All most all such women vendors started this business because of their primary requirement to earn money and growth of their economic condition. They opted such profession not only to earn but for sheer survival too.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objective of the study:

- 1.To examine the pattern of finance used by the women street vendors and the associate difficulties in procuring finance by them.
- 2.To examine the saving habits and pattern of the women vendors.

Area of the study: The study was conducted on 30 numbers of women street vendors doing business in different public spots in Sibsagar town area particularly in the municipality areas. Respondents/samples were collected from the places like Dolmukh Charali, Borpukhuripar, Jenganikotia, Court area, Dikhow bridge, Station Charali etc.

Research design: The research is purely empirical and descriptive type in nature. Data collected from field survey have been analyzed with the help of tabulation and ratio calculation and an attempt was made to draw inferential interpretation of analyzed data.

Sample method: As the populace is vague, the non-probabilistic strategy for testing for example Snowball Sampling Method was utilized to gather information for the review.

Population of the Study: The universe/population is vague or not defined. There was no clear information in the office of municipality about the total number of women street vendors in Sivasagar town. Since the universe is not clear so snowball method was adopted to meet 30 numbers of respondents.

Data collection: Both primary and secondary sources were used for primary data and secondary data/information. The primary data was collected from field survey conducted with the help of interview schedule with the respondents. Secondary data was collected from many other sources like research papers, reports, Websites, Journals and Book. Usually the common time of dwelling on street is morning and evening time. As such the research choose to meet the respondents on those

timings for collecting information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Status of women street vendors

Status is a huge perspective to get the versatility of the labor forces. Table 1 shows that most of the respondents ladies road sellers for example 20 (Represent 667%) are from neighborhood 10 (Represent 33.3%) are relocated from different states.

Age of Women Street Vendors

Age of the respondents vendors shows the functioning capacity for road exchanging. Road exchanging is a difficult work that requires physical and mental solidarity to deal with the calling. The review uncovered that larger part of test remembered for the age gathering of 31 to 40 is addressing 70% of the example while there are 07 merchants are in the age gathering of 41 to 50 is addressing 23.3% and 20 to 30 which is just 6.7% of the example. The following table shows the age level of respondents.

Conjugal Status of Women Street Vendors

The following table demonstrates that 90% of the sample merchants are hitched and procuring individuals from the family and only 10% are unmarried. The following table uncovers the marital status of respondents.

Education Level of Women Street Vendors

Educational capability is a significant perspective for by and large advancement of individuals. During the study it was observed that greater part of merchants are uneducated for example 24 nos. (Address 80 %) of the respondents have done their education up to class x. This uncovered low degree of schooling among the example ladies merchants. Out of the total respondents 16.7% completed 12th standard of education and only 1 respondents as found graduate. The following table shows the educational level of street women merchants.

Table 1. showing status of women street vendors (place of origin)

Status	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
Local	20	66.7%
Migrated	10	33.3 %
Total	30	100 %

Source: Field Survey

Table 2. showing status of women street vendors

Age level	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
20-30	02	6.7 %
31-40	21	70 %
41-50	07	23.3 %
Total	30	100 %

Source: Field Survey

Table 3. shows marital status of women respondents

Situation	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
Married	27	90 %
Unmarried	03	10 %
Total	30	100 %

Source: Field Survey

Table 4. showing educational level of women street vendors

Education level	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
School dropout	10	33.3%
10 th standard	14	46.7%
12 th standard	05	16.7%
Graduate	01	3.3%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 5. showing investment quantum of women street vendors

Quantum (in Rs)	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
Up to 2000	04	13.3%
2001-4000	12	40%
4001-6000	08	26.7%
Above 6000	06	20%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 6. showing sales(deals) pattern of women street merchants

Quantum (in Rs)	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
Less than 500	02	6.7%
501-1000	10	33.3%
1001-1500	12	40%
Above 1500	06	20%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

Investment of Vendors in Business- Investment is the main input for every business activity. Thus an effort was made to see the investment quantum in business by the women street merchants. Certain amount of fixed cost is required at initially for buying of push truck, pull truck, box for showing of their products. Including these fixed investments, the respondents demonstrate their beginning investment quantum in the manner shown in the following table. The table 5 demonstrates that majority of 40% respondents had their investment in the range of 2001-4000, 26.7% of respondents invested in between 4001-6000, 20% of respondents took investment between above 6000 while 13.3% respondents limited their investments within 2000.

Deals Pattern of Women street vendors- The table 6 uncovers that most of women merchants in the study area deals in between 1001-1500 per day, followed by 33.3% deals between 501-1000, 20% of respondents are capable of doing business

as much above 1500 in a day and only 6.7% is not as much as Rs. 500.

Nature of Financing of women street vendors-

The financial requirement of women street vendors to deal in everyday trading is an important aspect of the study. The table 7 shows that majority of women merchants i.e.43.3% get the initial fund from their own sources like hard earned deposits, other family income etc. It was seen that 20% of respondents took credits from local money lenders at a high rate of interest (10% rate of interest per month), 16.7% respondents have borrowings from family members and few of their friends, 13.3% of women vendors have loans from Bandhan Banks, Arohan Finance and LNT etc and only 6.7% respondents get credit from formal bankers like PNB and Grameen Vikash Bank. Much other formal sources are not opened for the street vendors. The private cash moneylenders charge high pace of revenue while assets from companions and family members are not effectively available like bank fi-

Table 7. showing various sources of fund of women street merchants

Sources	No of women street vendors	Percentage (%)
Own	13	43.3%
Family/friends	05	16.7%
Local money lenders	06	20%
MFIs/NGO	04	13.3%
Banks	02	6.7%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 8. showing savings habits of women street merchants

Situation	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
Savings	27	90%
No saving	03	10%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 9. showing monthly saving quantum of women street merchants

Saving (in Rs)	No of women street vendors	Percentage(%)
Up to 500	01	3.3%
501-1000	10	33.3%
1001-1500	15	50%
Above 1500	04	13.3%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

Saving habits of Women street vendors- The women merchants have enthusiasm to save in different plans of banks and other monetary foundations. The table 8 uncovered that 27 nos. (90 %) of respondent women have savings stored in different plans while 3 nos. (10 %) women merchants have no record in banks and other monetary foundations. This uncovered the saving behavior among the ladies road sellers. From this it can be concluded that future savings has been taken as very serious effort by the respondents. They are very much concerned about their children education and family development for which they require plenty of money and as such they anyhow try to keep a part of their earnings aside every day.

Savings quantum of Women street vendors- Since the everyday dealing of respondents is not such big amount, however from that small earnings the women merchants try to maintain savings per month in different plans of banks and other monetary foundations. They generally prefer Grameen Vikash bank and Punjab National Bank for savings purpose. An observation was also made on the saving pattern and quantum of wom-

en street vendors. Most of the respondents deposits in recurring accounts as they get comparatively a high rate of return than other saving account. Some of the respondents keep on buying KVP and NSC every month. Few of them were found having recurring deposits in Post office. The following table shows the saving quantum of respondents in different plans.

The above table uncovers that majority of respondents i.e.50% women merchants are able to save 1001-1500 in a month which is absolutely positive signal for economic empowerment of such small vendors. Similarly 33.3% of respondents have monthly savings between 501-1000, followed by 13.3% respondents have above 1500 in a month.

CONCLUSION

- The banks and other Financial institutions should come forward with extensive benefit schemes for the working women so that they can avail easy financing.
- The municipality board should play active role

in form of incorporating the women street vendors and develop mechanism for the monitoring of their financial and non financial requirements.

- The involvement of NGOs is important for structuring SHGs concepts among the women vendors through which up to certain extent monetary issues can be resolved.
- Recognition is a very important task to be exercised by the government and non government agencies, since women street vendors are significant part of the urban economy and hence they should be given adequate image.
- Concern agencies should initiate for skill training of the vendors on retail trading.
- Official recognition to the women street vendors inform of issuing Identity card, may be initiated by the municipality.
- The municipality administration may provide storage facilities to the street vendors for storing their items after everyday dealing.

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