



THE PANDEMIC THAT SHOOK THE WORLD AND ITS IMPACT ON STREET VENDORS

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Abstract: Street vendors are an important feature of global urban economies. They are the integral part of informal sector, which is the backbone of the Indian economy, who aims at providing quick access to a diverse range of goods and services in public locations. The present study was done in the streets of Madikeri town where the street vendors sell their commodities. The objective of the present study is to examine the impact of Covid 19 on the livelihoods of street vendors during phase 2. The data was collected by structured interview schedule. The recent COVID 19 outbreak has disrupted the activity of most street vendors. The present study aims to focus on the impact of national and state wide lockdowns on the street vendors, and effects on their livelihoods. Study reveals that 94.5% respondents were highly impacted by the pandemic during phase 2 lockdowns.

Key Words - Covid 19, Global, Livelihood, Lockdown, Pandemic, Street Vendors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Street vendors have existed since ancient times. Street vendors are an important part of the urban economy throughout the world, offering easy access to many goods and services to the consumers in public places (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing [WIEGO, 2014].

The virus is called the “**CORONA**” because of its likeness to a “**ROYAL CROWN**” has now infected royalty and the common people with same viciousness. After spreading across several countries and affecting a large number of people, the WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic on March 11 2020. The source of the outbreak still remains a mystery. The virus which broke out from Wuhan, China has spread to more than 195 countries so far. The dance of death has affected the entire world. Lockdown and social distancing seem to be the only weapons that are being used to fight the disease.

The COVID-19 lockdown has wreaked havoc on communities all around the world, causing tremendous agony. Almost every sector observed a significant decrease in job openings. While many employees in the informal sector and marginalized populations suffered, as a result of the epidemic, The impacts are varied, distress created by loss of job, loss of income, for the salaried class, for the petty businessmen, the daily wage earners, for the farmers and street vendors who were unable to sell their produce in the market.

Prior to Covid 19, the livelihoods of these street vendors were relatively secure, and they were able to acquire a consistent stream of income on a timely manner. The recent COVID 19 outbreak has disrupted, if not completely halted, the activity of most street vendors. The state wide lockdown was initially dealt with by these street vendors in a clandestine manner, but when it was extended for a period of time the sellers had to halt their business which had a negative influence on their livelihoods (Deka 2020). The minor income earners, primarily street vendors, were the most badly hit by this series of lockdowns. Though it appeared that the economy was reviving after the lockdown, it represented a scenario in which the country was in disorder for conducting business in a purposeful manner. The street vendors had to go through a lot of difficulties in order to make a living. All over the world, street vendors provide essential services in cities; the residents depend on them for basic requirements. The pandemic has caused havoc on street

vendors' livelihoods, hampering their ability to do their tasks and leaving many in a fight for survival (Balbuena et.al 2020). According to the National Policy of Urban Street vendors, 2004 by Govt. of India, Street vendors are defined as "A street vendor is a person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure but with a temporary static structure or mobile stall or head load. Street vendors may be stationary by occupying space on the pavements or other public/private areas, or may be mobile in the sense that they move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts or in cycles or baskets on their heads, or may sell their wares in moving trains, bus etc. In this policy document, the term urban vendor is inclusive of both traders and service provider's stationary as well as mobile vendors and incorporates all other local/region specific terms used to describe them, such as *hawker*, *pheriwalla*, *rehri-patriwalla*, *footpath dukandars*, *sidewalk traders* etc."

The present study is based on the impact of Covid 19 pandemic on the street vendors in Madikeri town which is in Kodagu District, Karnataka State. These vendors travel from different parts of the district to sell their products in the streets of Madikeri town. The street vending provides unemployed the source of income with little investment and these vendors are the sole bread winners, enabling them to be self-sufficient.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Extensive studies have been done on the impact of Covid 19 on street vendors in different parts of the world. **Lee. S. Dzaramba & Tracy, Marumure (2021) in their study on Impact of Street Vendors' Eviction from Harare Central Business District (CBD)** showed that unemployment was the highest contributor towards street vending. Despite numerous constraints placed on various groups of street vendors these groups had actually developed survival and resistance strategies that enabled them to maintain their livelihoods from public urban space.

Saha, Debdulal (2009) in Condition of 'Decent Working Life' of street vendors in Mumbai highlights that the street vendors depend on money lenders for economic activity and also social security at high rate of interest which lead them to fall into debts, long working hours, do not enjoy safety or security at workplace as they face constant harassment from local authorities. The study concluded that there is a deteriorating working environment as well as economic deprivation for street vendors.

Mathew Nyashanua, Prisca Simbanegavib and Linda Gibson (2020) "Exploring the impact of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on informal settlements in Tshwane Gauteng Province, South Africa", the study found that during the research participants were affected by lack of space to practice social distancing, over-burdened infrastructure, lack of savings, loss of income and shortage of food, hunger and diseases, anxiety and depression and poor access to education.

Deka, Bhaskar Achariya. 2020. "With standing Covid 19 and its Effects by Street Vendors: A study on their Livelihoods during Post Lockdown Phase in Guwahati City" highlights that the survey has given an outlook of the street vendors' life that has faced immense hardships and trouble tackle the situation of an unplanned nationwide on-going Pandemic "Covid 19"situation.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the impact of Covid 19 on the livelihoods of street vendors during phase 2.
2. To study the business activities during lockdown and post lockdown.

4. Research Methodology

Research Methodology includes the collection of data, framing questionnaire, field work and framework of analysis.

The present study was conducted in the streets of Madikeri town; these hawkers sell different types of products. The present study was done to understand the impact of Covid 19 pandemic phase 2 on the street vendors. The study is descriptive in nature. Information was collected through structured interview schedules.

Sampling Design: The sample was selected from the streets of Madikeri town. The sample size was 55 street vendors who sell various products. Simple Random Sampling was used to select the sample.

Collection of data: The study is based on Primary and Secondary Data. The Primary Data is collected from the vendors directly through interview schedule. Secondary Data is collected from various journals and articles from websites.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table: 1 Profile of the Respondents N = 55

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	41	74.5
Female	14	25.5
Age		
18-27	7	12.7
28-37	9	16.4
38-47	19	34.5
48 and above	20	36.4
Marital Status		
Unmarried	8	14.5
Married	47	85.5
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	11	20
Primary	18	32.7
SSLC	12	21.8
PUC	6	10.9
Degree	8	14.5
Monthly Income		
< 5000	24	43.6
5000 - 10000	15	27.3
10000 - 15000	7	12.7
>15000	9	16.4

Source: Primary Data

Table-1 highlights the profile of the respondents. Street vendors sell different products and their activities are diverse in nature. It was observed that the sale of flowers, vegetables, green leaves and fruits were done by females and many other commodities were sold by both the gender. The study reveals that male vendors (74.5) and female vendors (25.5) were engaged in street vending activities. Age profile of the respondents shows that 12.7% are in the age group of 18 - 27, 16.4% in the age group of 28-37, 34.5% in the age group of 38-47 and 36.4% are in the age group of 48 and above. It can be inferred that majority of the respondents are in the age group 38- 47 and 48 and above are involved in street vending. Among the respondents majority of them (85.5) were married and (14.5) were unmarried. Educational qualification reveals that 20% are illiterates, 32.7% have studied up to primary level, 21.8% up to SSLC, 10.9% have studied till PUC and 14.5% up to degree. Study revealed that majority of the respondents are having primary education and 14.5% respondents who have studied up to degree level are into vending mainly due to unemployment. Monthly income of the respondents is as follows 43.6% respondents income is <5000, 27.3% respondents monthly income range from 5000-10000, 12.7% respondents income is between 10000-15000 and 16.4% respondents monthly income is >15000 per month.

Type of Commodities

Table: 2 Type of Commodities

Types of Commodities	Frequency	Percent
Fruits	5	9.1
Vegetables	23	41.8
Clothes	10	18.2
Toys/Utensils	9	16.4
Street Food	4	7.3
Flowers	3	5.5
Groceries	1	1.8
Total	55	100.0

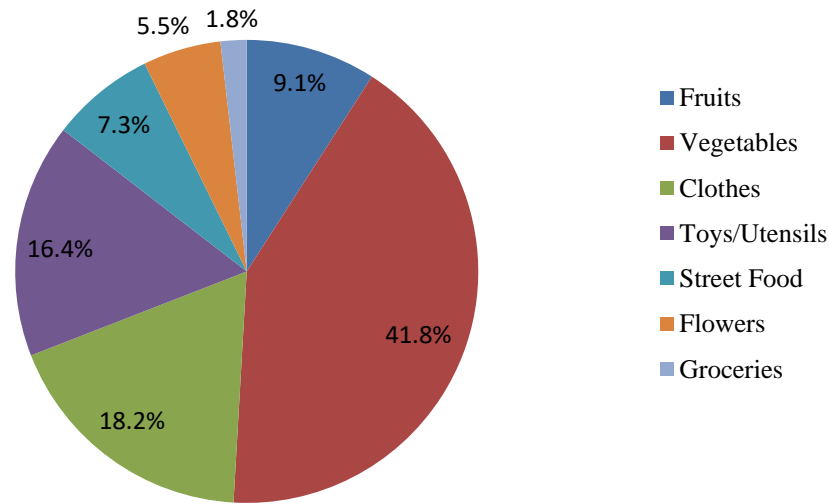


Figure 1: Types of Commodities

Figure 1 show that the respondents were selling different commodities, majority of the respondents (41.8) were engaged in selling vegetables, 18.2% sold clothes, 16.4% sold Toys/Utensils, 7.3% sold street food, 5.5% sold flowers and 1.8% sold groceries. The study can be justified that majority of the vendors were selling vegetables.

Impact of lockdown on livelihood

Table:3 Impact of Lockdown on Livelihood

Impact of Lockdown on Livelihood	Frequency	Percent
No Impact	0	0.0
High Impact	52	94.5
Moderate Impact	3	5.5
Total	55	100.0

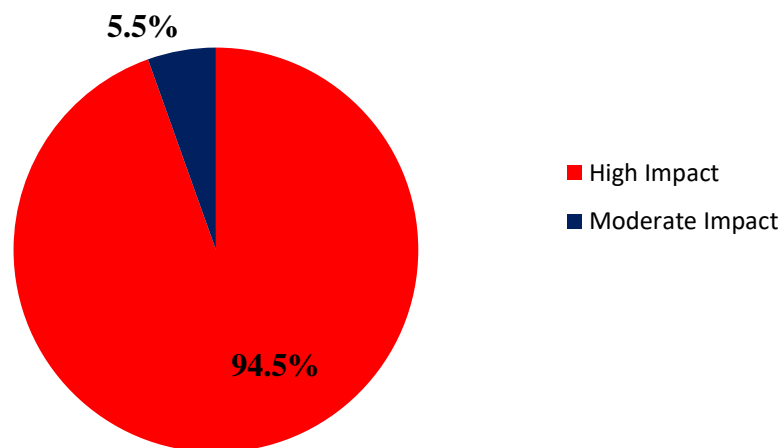


Figure 2. Impact of Lockdown on Livelihood

The outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic phase 2 had impacted negatively on the economic activities. Study revealed that 94.5% respondents were highly impacted by multiple lockdowns to control the pandemic and 5.5% respondents were moderately affected by the lockdowns (Figure 2).

Obstacles faced during Lockdown

Table:4 Obstacles faced during Lockdown

Obstacles faced during Lockdown	Frequency	Percent
No Transportation	10	18.2
Loss of Income	40	72.7
Fear of repaying debts	5	9.1
Total	55	100.0

Source: Primary Data

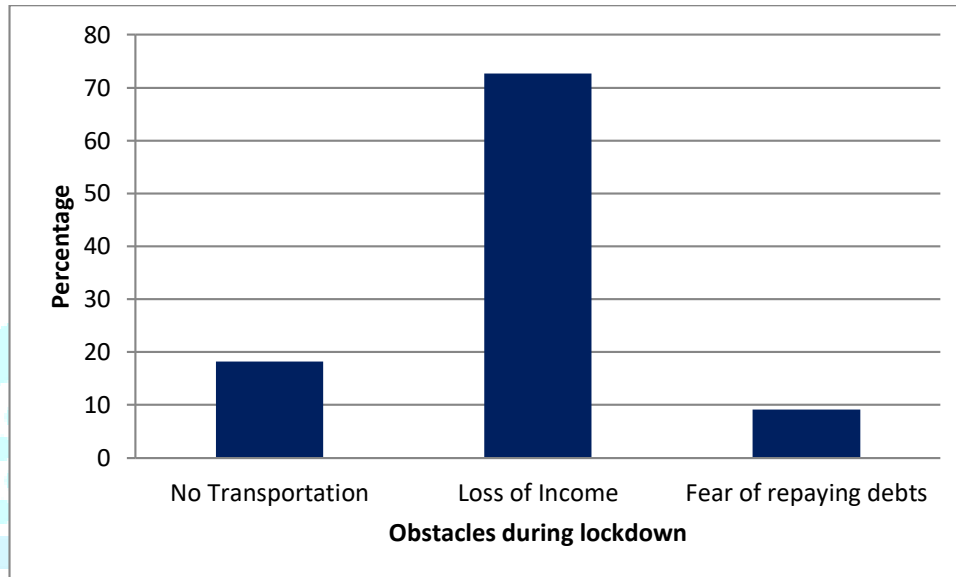


Figure 3. Obstacles faced during Lockdown

Study depicts the obstacles faced during the lockdown, 18.2% respondents stated that there was no transportation to sell their vegetables and greens, 72.7% stated the loss of income, but 9.1% stated the fear of repaying their debts as there was lockdown of economic activities.

Source of income during lockdown

Table: 5 Source of income during lockdown

Source of income during lockdown	Frequency	Percent
Working in Coffee Estates	45	81.8
Depending on Food Kits	7	12.7
Borrowed Money to buy basic necessities	3	5.5
Total	55	100.0

Source: Primary Data

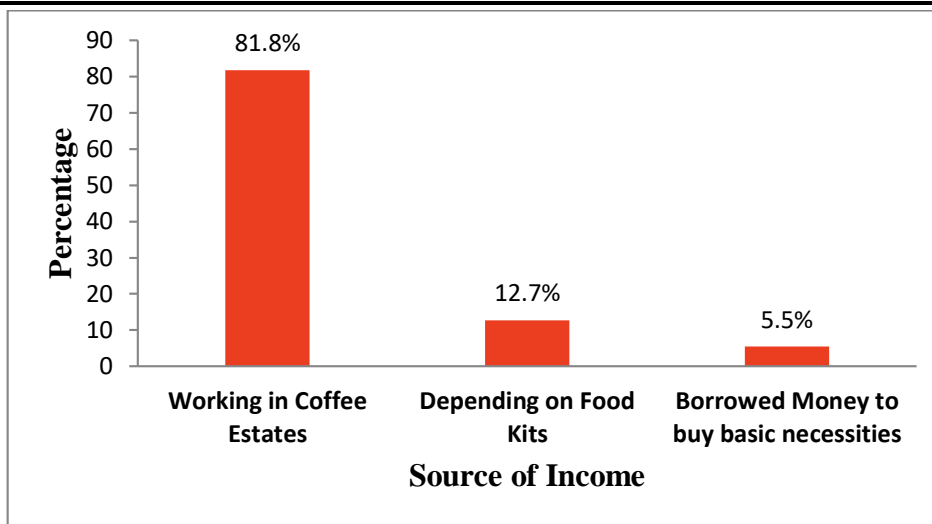


Figure 4. Source of income during lockdown

Study reveals that as there was phase wise lockdowns and they had no source of income 81.8% respondents worked in nearby coffee estates to make a living and look after their family, 12.7% depended on the Food kits distributed by the Government, Individuals and other organisations and 5.7% borrowed money from their friends and relatives to buy basic necessities.

Business before Lockdown

Table: 6 Business before lockdown

Business before lockdown	Frequency	Percent
Very Good	17	30.9
Good	18	32.7
Satisfactory	11	20.0
Bad	9	16.4
Total	55	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Regarding the business before lockdown, the study reveals that 30.9 % respondents said that their business was very good, for 32.7% respondents the business was good and for 20% respondents it was satisfactory, but for 16.4% respondents the business was bad (Table 6).

Business after Post-lockdown

Table:7 Business after Post-lockdown

Business after Post -lockdown	Frequency	Percent
Good	4	7.3
Satisfactory	21	38.2
Bad	30	54.5
Total	55	100.0

Source: Primary Data

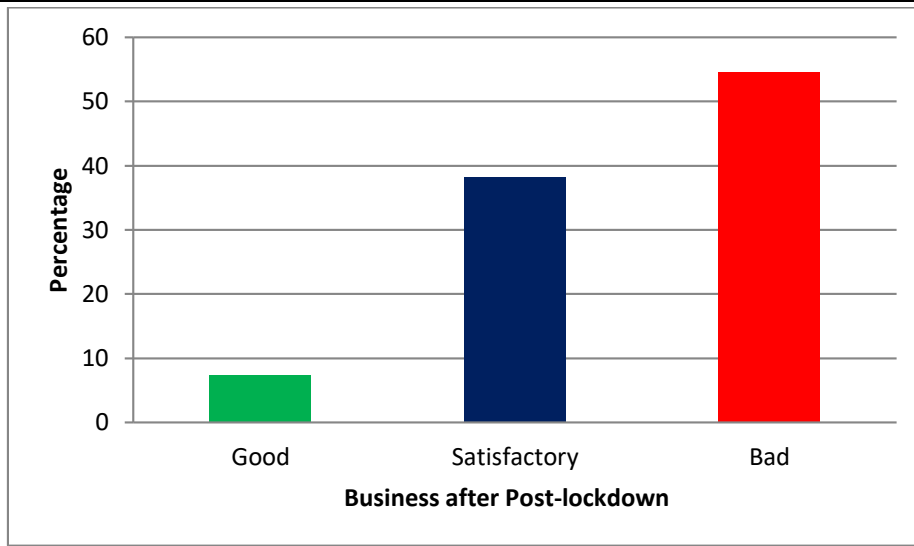


Figure 5. Business after Post -lockdown

The post-lockdown period, during which phase-by-phase relaxation criteria were applied, gradually reactivated the economic activities. Study reveals that for very few respondents (7.3%) business was good, for 38.2% respondents it was satisfactory and for majority of the respondents (54.5%) the business was bad.

Financial Assistance from the Government

Table:8 Financial Assistance from the Government

Financial Assistance from the Government	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	14.5
No	47	85.5
Total	55	100.0

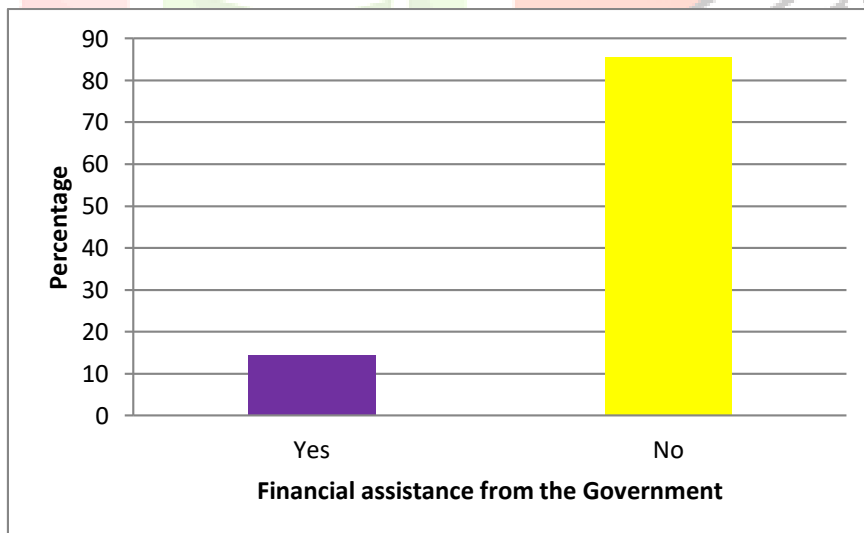


Figure 6. Financial Assistance from the Government

The lockdown had a severe impact on street vendors’ business operations; in order to mitigate the situation, the government has announced a financial package for them. The study highlights very few respondents, 14.5% have received financial assistance and the majority of the respondents 85.5% have not received any assistance as they do not have proper documents{ Figure 6).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Majority of the respondents 74.5% are Male. This can be justified by the fact that male street vendors predominate female street vendors.
- It can be inferred that majority of the respondents are in the age group 38- 47 (34.5%) and 48 and above (36.4) are involved in street vending.
- Study revealed that majority of the respondents 32.7% studied up to primary level and 14.5% respondents have studied up to degree level are into vending mainly due to unemployment.
- Majority of the respondents 43.6% belong to income group below 5000.
- Majority of the respondents (41.8) were engaged in selling vegetables and only one respondent 1.8% sold groceries.
- Study revealed that 94.5% respondents were highly impacted by Covid 19 pandemic during phase 2 lockdown.
- It was found that 72.7% respondents stated the loss of income as a major obstacle during lockdown.
- It was found that for 81.8% respondents the source of income was working in the coffee estates during lockdown.
- Majority of the respondents 32.7% said the business was good satisfactory, but for 16.4% respondents the business was bad before lockdown.
- Majority of the respondents 54.5% stated that the business was bad and for very few respondents 7.3% the business was good after the post lockdown.
- Majority of the respondents 85.5% have not received any financial assistance from the Government as they do not have proper documents.

CONCLUSION

Street vendors are a sector of the population that are highly vulnerable to significant economic loss during the restrictions imposed throughout the current pandemic. The Covid 19 pandemic has affected almost all the sectors of the economy but most severely affected are the street vendors. Study reveals that street vendors were highly impacted by this pandemic. They claim that before the lockdown the business activity was good for most of the respondents. After lifting the phase wise lockdown most of the respondents claim that their business was bad and majority of the respondents have not received any financial assistance from the Government. The Government should understand the magnitude of the problem and implement specific policies and programmes which will benefit these vendors.

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