



Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Street Vendors

A study in Coimbatore City

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on street vendors worldwide, with many experiencing significant financial losses and struggling to maintain their livelihoods. Lockdowns and other pandemic-related restrictions have resulted in decreased foot traffic and reduced sales for many street vendors, particularly those who operate in densely populated areas such as markets or public transportation hubs.

Additionally, street vendors often face unique challenges related to accessing government support and financial assistance, which can make it difficult for them to recover from pandemic-related losses. In some cases, street vendors have been subject to harassment or eviction by local authorities in attempts to enforce social distancing measures, further exacerbating their economic insecurity.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the precariousness of street vendors' livelihoods and the need for greater support and recognition of their contributions to local economies.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on global societies and economies, affecting businesses of all sizes and types. Among those who have been hit hardest by the pandemic are street vendors, who often rely on daily sales to support themselves and their families. In many cases, street vendors face unique challenges related to accessing government support and financial assistance, which can make it difficult for them to recover from pandemic-related losses. This study aims to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in Coimbatore, shedding light on the specific challenges they face and identifying potential solutions to support their livelihoods. By examining the experiences of street vendors in Coimbatore, this study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations and the need for targeted support and policy interventions to address these

challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the world, with widespread economic, social, and health implications. One group that has been particularly affected by the pandemic is street vendors, who often operate in densely populated areas and rely on foot traffic for their livelihoods

This essay will focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors, with a specific focus on a study conducted in Coimbatore. It will examine the challenges that street vendors have faced as a result of pandemic-related restrictions and reduced foot traffic, as well as the unique challenges that they face in accessing government support and financial assistance. Finally, this essay will discuss the broader implications of the pandemic on the recognition and support of street vendors, and the need for greater recognition of their contributions to local economies. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on economies and societies around the world. One of the groups most affected by the pandemic are street vendors, who often operate in informal settings and rely on daily sales to support their livelihoods. The pandemic has disrupted the usual patterns of urban life and commerce, resulting in reduced sales and financial losses for many street vendors. In this context, it is important to examine the impact of the pandemic on street vendors and explore potential solutions to help support these individuals and their communities. This essay will focus specifically on a study of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in Coimbatore, India, and will provide an overview of the key findings and implications of this research.

Objectives of the study

To examine the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on the income and livelihoods of street vendors in Coimbatore, including changes in sales volume, customer behavior, and supply chain disruptions.

To identify the coping mechanisms adopted by street vendors to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on their businesses, including changes in product offerings, marketing strategies, and partnerships.

To explore the role of social networks and community support in helping street vendors weather the pandemic, including the effectiveness of government programs and initiatives.

To identify potential policy solutions and support mechanisms that could help mitigate the impact of the pandemic on street vendors and help them recover from pandemic-related losses.

To provide a detailed picture of the challenges faced by street vendors during the pandemic, and to document the social and economic implications of the pandemic on this vulnerable population.

Statement of the problem

Decreased foot traffic and sales: With lockdowns and restrictions in place to slow the spread of COVID-19, many street vendors experienced a significant decrease in the number of customers and sales. Reduced foot traffic in areas like markets, transportation hubs, and other public spaces made it difficult for street vendors to earn a living.

Supply chain disruptions: Many street vendors rely on a complex network of suppliers and middlemen to source their products. The pandemic caused disruptions in these supply chains, making it harder for vendors to get the products they need to sell.

Inability to adapt to new market conditions: The pandemic has caused a shift in consumer behavior, with more people shopping online and avoiding crowded areas. Street vendors who were not able to adapt to these new market conditions may have struggled to maintain their businesses.

Lack of government support: Street vendors often operate in the informal economy and may not have access to government support programs or financial assistance. In some cases, local authorities may have harassed or evicted street vendors in an attempt to enforce social distancing measures, leaving them without any source of income.

Health and safety concerns: Street vendors may not have had access to personal protective equipment (PPE) or sanitation facilities, which put them at risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. Additionally, customers may have been hesitant to buy food or other items from street vendors due to concerns about contamination.

Scope of the study

Geographical scope: The study would focus specifically on street vendors operating in Coimbatore, India, and would examine the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses.

Temporal scope: The study would cover the period of the pandemic, from the onset of COVID-19 in Coimbatore to the most recent available data, in order to capture the full extent of the pandemic's impact on street vendors.

Sample size: The study could include a representative sample of street vendors in Coimbatore, selected using random or stratified sampling techniques, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of the pandemic on this population.

Data collection methods: The study could use a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, in order to gather a range of perspectives and insights from street vendors and other stakeholders.

Analysis methods: The study could use statistical analysis and qualitative analysis techniques to examine the data collected, in order to identify patterns and trends and draw conclusions about the impact of COVID-19 on street vendors in Coimbatore.

Overall, the scope of the study would be to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by street vendors during the pandemic, and to identify potential solutions and support mechanisms to help them recover from pandemic-related losses.

Research methodology

- Research is a process of systemic study.
- Research is in depth study about the particular problem.
- Re-search is for any particular topic.
- Research is a search of knowledge.
- Research is a movement from known to unknown.
- Research is an area of investigation, which includes collection, analysis and interpretation of data.
- Research can be called as voyage of discovery.

Research has to proceed systematically in the already planned direction with the help of a number of steps in sequence. To make the research systemized the researcher has to adopt certain methods. The method adopted by the researcher for completing the project is called Research Methodology.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

- Simple Percentage analysis
- Likert scale analysis

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research area is limited to Coimbatore city only

Sample size:

The sample size for the study would depend on the research objectives and statistical power required. A representative sample of street vendors in Coimbatore could be selected using random or stratified sampling techniques. The sample size could be determined using a power analysis that takes into account factors such as the effect size, level of significance, and desired statistical power.

Data analysis:

The data collected could be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Statistical analysis could be used to examine the relationship between different variables, such as the impact of the pandemic on sales volume and customer behavior. Qualitative analysis could be used to identify emerging themes and patterns in the data, such as coping mechanisms adopted by street vendors and the role of social networks in supporting street vendors during the pandemic.

Tools used in the analyses:

The specific tools used in the data analyses would depend on the research questions and objectives. Possible tools that could be used include:

Descriptive statistics: Descriptive statistics could be used to summarize the characteristics of the sample, such as the mean and standard deviation of sales volume before and after the pandemic.

Inferential statistics: Inferential statistics could be used to examine the relationship between different variables, such as the impact of the pandemic on sales volume and customer behavior. Possible inferential statistics include t-tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis.

Content analysis: Content analysis could be used to identify emerging themes and patterns in the qualitative data, such as coping mechanisms adopted by street vendors and the role of social networks in supporting street vendors during the pandemic.

Data visualization: Data visualization tools, such as charts and graphs, could be used to present the findings in a clear and accessible way.

Overall, the specific tools used in the data analyses would depend on the research questions and objectives, as well as the nature of the data collected. A combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses would likely be used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on street vendors in Coimbatore.

Limitation of the study

Sampling bias: The sample of street vendors selected may not be fully representative of all street vendors in Coimbatore, which could limit the generalizability of the findings.

Social desirability bias: Street vendors may provide responses that they believe are socially desirable, rather than fully truthful, which could affect the accuracy of the data collected.

Data collection limitations: The pandemic-related restrictions may limit the ability to conduct in-person interviews or focus groups, which could limit the depth of information that can be obtained from participants.

Language barriers: Some street vendors may speak languages other than English or the regional language, which could limit the ability to collect data from a diverse group of participants.

Recall bias: Street vendors may have difficulty accurately recalling the impact of the pandemic on their business, especially if the pandemic has been ongoing for a long period of time.

External factors: The impact of COVID-19 on street vendors in Coimbatore may be influenced by external factors, such as government policies, that are beyond the scope of the study.

Review of the literature

Prasad and Begari (2018) in their study have inspected about the issues and challenges faced by street vendors in Telangana. The study examines the street vendors are not recognised and regulated by state, and therefore, they do not get any support from government to operate their activity. They face several problems like harassment and pressure by police department, municipality authorities, local leaders and market contractor so rent seekers.

Kumar and Pillai (2017) in their study on

„Problems of street vendors in Kollam district“ probed into various issues faced by street vendors. According to their study, Economic instability, Social insecurity, Weather fluctuations, Barrier towards credit facility, health issues, Discrimination, Working instability, Deciduous implementation of Government policies and programs, Lack of awareness about legal rights etc. are the major issues faced by street vendors.

Dr. G. Jayanti, Baranipriya. A and Sreeanadan (2020) in their study examined the socioeconomic condition and problems faced by the street vendors in Coimbatore city. The result reveals that, female's contribution in this sector is lesser than the male respondents and they were facing problems like health issues, wastage of unsold goods, and insecurity in employment. Therefore, the government should take some corrective measures to improve their socio-economic and living conditions of street vendors.

According to Geetam Tiwari (2000) bicycles, pedestrians and bus traffic attract street vendors. Often the side roads and pedestrian paths are occupied by people selling food, drinks and other articles which are in demand by road users. Vendors often locate themselves at places which are natural markets for them. A careful analysis of the location of vendors, their numbers at each location and the type of services provided clearly shows that they are needed since they work under completely „freemarket“ principles. If their services were not required at those locations, they would have no incentive to be there. Road and city authorities, however, view their existence as illegal.

A.H.Subratty P.Beeharry, M.ChanSun (2004) A survey of hygiene practices among food vendors in rural areas in Mauritius. It was found that generally food vendors were quite aware of hygienic conditions. But majority of them were not implementing their knowledge into practice. They perceived that their products were of low risk to customers. It highlights the need for further health education of food vendors

STATUS	No of respondents	Percentage of respondents (in%)
Married	60	60
Single	40	40

Occupation	No of respondents	Percentage of respondents (in%)
Home maker	26	26
Professional	56	56
Student	18	18
Total	100	100

	No of respondents	Percentage of respondents (in%)
Male	60	60
Female	35	35
Prefer not to say	5	5
Total	100	100

STATUS	No of respondents	Percentage of respondents (in%)
Married	60	60
Single	40	40
Total	100	100

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be whispered that though India has witnessed an amplified in street vendors, the government is apathetic to specific needs of this sector. Street vendors perform a vital role in offering services to the city population especially the poor. The street vendors’ offerings are unfortunately barely ever documented by the government. As an alternative the government is more often than not aggressive to them. This is a consequence of a wider concern relating to the informal sector as a whole. In most Asian countries the informal sector is extremely huge and comprises the stronghold of the financial system. Unfortunately, instead of recognizing their assistance to the economy, the government is not motivating the street vendors.

