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A Study On Working Conditions Of Street Venders In Guntur City Of Andhra Pradesh.

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Working conditions of street vendors, highlighting the informal and strenuous nature of their occupation. Most vendors operate in open and unregulated spaces, working long hours exposed to extreme weather conditions without adequate shelter. The absence of basic amenities such as drinking water, toilets, and waste disposal facilities adds to their daily struggles. Their work environment is further strained by frequent interactions with municipal authorities and law enforcement, often involving harassment, evictions, or bribe demands. These findings underscore the precarious nature of street vending and the urgent need for improved legal protections and infrastructure support.

Statement of the Problem

Given these multidimensional challenges, there is an urgent need to critically examine the socio-economic conditions of street vendors, with a particular focus on their financial status, access to rights, working conditions, and the threats they face in a rapidly urbanizing and formalizing economy. There is also a pressing need to propose practical, policy-oriented solutions that can support their integration into the formal economy without compromising their autonomy and entrepreneurial spirit.

This study, therefore, aims to fill the existing research gap by focusing on the lived realities of street vendors in Andhra Pradesh, assessing the effectiveness of existing legal protections, and recommending evidence-based strategies to improve their livelihood security, dignity, and social recognition. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to a more inclusive and equitable model of urban development one that recognizes street vendors not as impediments, but as vital contributors to city life.

The review of literature by Dutta and Das (2023) conducted an empirical study on street vending in Silchar, Assam, based on interviews with 101 vendors to gain a deeper understanding of their socio-economic conditions. The study found that the majority of street vendors in Silchar were men, and their average monthly income was approximately ₹6,000, reflecting the precarious nature of their livelihoods.

A critical insight from the study was the limited access to institutional support systems. Only 11% of the respondents reported receiving any form of social security benefits, and similarly, just 11% had access to formal bank loans to support or expand their businesses. These findings highlight the marginalized status of street vendors within the formal financial and social protection systems, despite their vital contribution to the urban economy.

The study calls attention to the need for greater inclusion of street vendors in welfare schemes and financial services, as well as the formulation of supportive policies to enhance their economic stability and social security.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the working conditions of street vendors in the study area.
2. To identify the key challenges and problems faced by street vendors in the study area.

Hypothesis

1. **(H_0):** There is no significant correlation between gender of the vendor and the impact of street vending business.
2. **(H_0):** There is no significant correlation between education of the vendor and the impact of street vending business.

Sampling Method

The study focuses on analyzing the economic and social conditions of street vendors, with an objective of evaluating how these conditions impact the esteem associated with street vending. A descriptive survey method was adopted, and a sample of 250 street vendors was selected primarily using convenience sampling.

The sample was drawn from within the municipal limits of Guntur city including major commercial hubs, marketplaces, bus stations, railway stations, residential areas. The selection process was carried out with proper guidance and consultation from the research supervisor to ensure relevance and feasibility within the scope of the study.

Table - 1: Reasons for Street Vending

Sl. No	Reasons for Street Vending	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total N=250
1	Illiteracy/ Low level of education	53.6	16.4	30.0	100.0
2	Untimely death of Father/ Parents	16.8	12.8	70.4	100.0
3	Parental business	25.6	12.4	62.0	100.0
4	Non availability of jobs in the market	60.0	25.6	14.4	100.0
5	Needs no skill	82.8	5.2	12.0	100.0
Overall Total Percentage		**47.8**	**14.5**	**37.7**	**100.0**

The data collected from 250 respondents highlights several key reasons for engaging in street vending, revealing important socio-economic insights into this informal sector occupation.

A significant proportion of respondents (53.6 percent) agree that illiteracy or a low level of education is a crucial factor driving individuals to street vending. This suggests that limited educational attainment restricts access to formal employment opportunities, thereby pushing many towards informal work where education requirements are minimal. Conversely, 30 percent of respondents disagree, indicating that illiteracy is not a universal determinant but remains a prominent challenge for many in this workforce.

The impact of family circumstances, such as the untimely death of parents, appears less influential. Only 16.8 percent agree that this is a reason for entering street vending, while a majority of 70.4 percent disagree. This indicates that while loss of parental support may contribute in some cases, it is not a widespread factor across the sample group. Similarly, having a parental business in vending influences about a quarter (25.6 percent) of respondents, suggesting that some street vendors follow family traditions or inherit the occupation, though the majority do not follow the father occupation.

One of the strongest factors identified is the non-availability of formal jobs, with 60 percent of respondents agreeing that this is a decisive reason for engaging in street vending. This underscores the role of unemployment and limited labor market opportunities in pushing people toward informal economic activities, which often serve as a fallback for livelihoods.

Most notably, the highest level of agreement (82.8 percent) is associated with the perception that street vending requires no special skills. This highlights that the accessibility of vending as a livelihood option is due, in large part, to the minimal skills or training needed to enter this line of work. It emphasizes street vending as an employment avenue for those who may lack specialized education or vocational abilities.

In an analysis reveals that street vending largely functions as a response to structural barriers such as low education, scarcity of formal jobs, and the need for accessible income-generating options with minimal skill requirements. While personal and family factors have some influence, systemic issues like unemployment and educational limitations appear to be the primary factors. These findings point to the need for policies and programs that improve educational access and create formal employment opportunities to reduce reliance on informal street vending livelihoods.

Table - 2: Nature of Street Vendors by their Size of Family

Nature of Street Vendors	Size of family				Total
	1- 2	3-4	0 -5-6	7 and above	
Full time	16	106	62	5	189
	6.4%	42.4%	24.8%	2.0%	75.6%
Part time	3	33	23	2	61
	1.2%	13.2%	9.2%	.8%	24.4%
Total	19	139	85	7	250
	7.6%	55.6%	34.0%	2.8%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between the nature of street vending and the size of the family reveals that full-time vending is more prevalent among vendors with medium-sized families. Out of 250 respondents, 75.6 percent are full-time vendors, with the highest proportion (42.4 percent) belonging to families of 3–4 members, followed by 24.8 percent from families with 5–6 members. Only a small number (6.4 percent) are from families with 1–2 members, and very few (2.0 percent) from families with 7 or more. Among part-time vendors, who make up 24.4 percent of the total, a similar trend is observed but with lower proportions 13.2 percent from 3–4 member families and 9.2 percent from 5–6 member families. Overall, vendors from families with 3–4 members dominate both categories, indicating that family size may influence the level of engagement in vending, with moderate-sized families more likely to rely on full-time vending for livelihood.

Table - 3: Area of Vending by their Age

Area of Vending	Age					Total
	< - 25	26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 55	56 - >	
Residential	5	6	11	7	5	34
	2.0%	2.4%	4.4%	2.8%	2.0%	13.6%
Commercial	28	41	48	54	15	186
	11.2%	16.4%	19.2%	21.6%	6.0%	74.4%
Both	8	8	9	5	0	30
	3.2%	3.2%	3.6%	2.0%	.0%	12.0%
Total	41	55	68	66	20	250
	16.4%	22.0%	27.2%	26.4%	8.0%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between area of vending and age indicates that street vending in commercial areas is the most common across all age groups, accounting for 74.4 percent of the total respondents. The highest concentration is among the 36–55 age group, with 40.8 percent of all vendors in this range vending in commercial zones likely due to their experience and economic responsibilities. Residential vending is less common (13.6 percent) and more evenly distributed across age groups, with slightly more participation from the 36–45 age group. Vending in both residential and commercial areas accounts for 12 percent of respondents and is most common among younger and middle-aged vendors, particularly those under 45. Notably, the youngest group (<25) and the oldest group (>56) have relatively lower representation overall, with limited presence in dual vending areas. This pattern suggests that middle-aged individuals dominate commercial vending due to greater earning potential, while younger or older vendors may opt for residential areas or limited zones due to lower risk or physical constraints.

Table - 4: Location of Vending by their Gender

Location of Vending	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Open place	8	5	13
	3.2%	2.0%	5.2%
Temple	14	3	17
	5.6%	1.2%	6.8%
Bus stand	31	13	44
	12.4%	5.2%	17.6%
Railway station	28	7	35
	11.2%	2.8%	14.0%
Market	93	48	141
	37.2%	19.2%	56.4%
Total	174	76	250
	69.6%	30.4%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between location of vending and gender shows that both male and female street vendors predominantly operate in market areas, with 56.4 percent of the total vendors vending there 37.2 percent male and 19.2 percent female. Other common vending locations include bus stands (17.6 percent) and railway stations (14.0 percent), where male vendors significantly outnumber females—12.4 percent vs. 5.2 percent at bus stands and 11.2 percent vs. 2.8 percent at railway stations. Temples and open places are relatively less common, accounting for 6.8 percent and 5.2 percent respectively, again with more males vending at these locations. Overall, male vendors dominate across all locations, comprising 69.6 percent of the total vendors, while females make up 30.4 percent. This suggests a gendered pattern in vending spaces, with men more likely to occupy high-traffic and public transit areas, while women are more concentrated in market zones, possibly due to safety concerns and social norms.

Table - 5: Types of Business by their Caste

Types of Business	Caste				Total
	OC	BC	SC	ST	
Fruits	32	52	15	9	108
	12.8%	20.8%	6.0%	3.6%	43.2%
Vegetables	22	39	10	6	77
	8.8%	15.6%	4.0%	2.4%	30.8%
Tiffin/Food	6	13	4	4	27
	2.4%	5.2%	1.6%	1.6%	10.8%
Flowers	8	12	1	4	25
	3.2%	4.8%	.4%	1.6%	10.0%
Toys	4	5	2	2	13
	1.6%	2.0%	.8%	.8%	5.2%
Total	72	121	32	25	250
	28.8%	48.4%	12.8%	10.0%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between types of business and caste displays that street vending is most common among individuals from the Backward Classes (BC), who represent 48.4 percent of the total vendors. They are greatly involved in selling fruits (20.8 percent) and vegetables (15.6 percent), followed by a smaller presence in food, flower, and toy vending. Other Castes (OC) form the second-largest group (28.8 percent) and also mainly engage in fruit (12.8 percent) and vegetable vending (8.8 percent). Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) together make up 22.8 percent of the vendors, with notable but smaller representation across all types of vending, particularly in fruits and vegetables. The majority of vendors, regardless of caste, are concentrated in fruit (43.2 percent) and vegetable (30.8 percent) vending. This suggests that caste influences occupational distribution within street vending, with BCs dominating the sector, possibly due to socio-economic constraints and limited access to formal employment, pushing them toward informal livelihood activities like vending.

Table - 6: Years of Doing Street Vending by their Education

Years are you doing street vending	Education					Total
	Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	Inter	Graduate and above	
1-4 Years	6	11	3	7	3	30
	2.4%	4.4%	1.2%	2.8%	1.2%	12.0%
4-8 Years	5	15	3	6	4	33
	2.0%	6.0%	1.2%	2.4%	1.6%	13.2%
9-12 Years	27	56	33	22	13	151
	10.8%	22.4%	13.2%	8.8%	5.2%	60.4%
13- > Years	7	15	4	5	5	36
	2.8%	6.0%	1.6%	2.0%	2.0%	14.4%
Total	45	97	43	40	25	250
	18.0%	38.8%	17.2%	16.0%	10.0%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between years of experience in street vending and education level shows that the majority of vendors (60.4 percent) have been engaged in the occupation for 9–12 years, with the largest share coming from those with primary (22.4 percent) and secondary (13.2 percent) education. Illiterate vendors also form a significant part of this group (10.8 percent), suggesting that individuals with limited formal education often continue vending over long periods as a stable livelihood. Short-term vending (1–4 years) accounts for 12 percent of the total, mostly among those with primary education (4.4 percent), while vendors with higher education levels (intermediate and above) are more evenly spread across all experience groups. Interestingly, even those with graduate-level education (10 percent of total) have been vending for 9–12 years (5.2 percent) or more than 13 years (2 percent), indicating that formal education does not always translate into formal employment opportunities. Overall, street vending appears to be a long-term livelihood, especially for less-educated individuals who face barriers in accessing formal job markets.

Table - 7: Source of Initial Capital by their Marital Status

Source of Initial Capital	Marital status				Total
	Married	Unmarried	Widow	Divorced	
Own saving	30	0	2	0	32
	12.0%	.0%	.8%	.0%	12.8%
Money lender	128	2	9	4	143
	51.2%	.8%	3.6%	1.6%	57.2%
Relatives/Friends	20	0	2	2	24
	8.0%	.0%	.8%	.8%	9.6%
Self-Help Group	18	2	0	1	21
	7.2%	.8%	.0%	.4%	8.4%
Financial Institutions/Banks	28	0	1	1	30
	11.2%	.0%	.4%	.4%	12.0%
Total	224	4	14	8	250
	89.6%	1.6%	5.6%	3.2%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between source of initial capital and marital status depicts that the majority of street vendors, particularly married individuals, rely heavily on informal credit sources. Out of 250 respondents, 57.2 percent began their vending business with loans from money lenders, with married vendors constituting the bulk (51.2 percent). Only a small portion of widows (3.6 percent) and divorced individuals (1.6 percent) used this source, indicating limited access or higher risk aversion among these groups. Own savings were used by 12.8 percent overall, mostly married individuals (12 percent), while no unmarried or divorced respondents reported using this method. Support from relatives or friends accounted for 9.6 percent, and was also mainly used by married vendors. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) contributed to the initial capital for 8.4 percent, showing a small yet significant role, especially among women. Formal financial institutions or banks were the source for 12 percent of vendors, again predominantly married individuals. The data highlights a strong dependence on informal financial networks, especially among married vendors, and suggests that vulnerable groups like widows, divorced, and unmarried individuals have more limited access to diverse or secure financial sources for starting their vending activities.

Table - 8: Working Hours by their Type of Family

Working hours per day	Type of family			Total
	Nuclear	Joint	Extended	
1-4 hrs	34	10	3	47
	13.6%	4.0%	1.2%	18.8%
5-8 hrs	46	13	0	59
	18.4%	5.2%	.0%	23.6%
9-12 hrs	61	13	6	80
	24.4%	5.2%	2.4%	32.0%
13- > hrs	51	12	1	64
	20.4%	4.8%	.4%	25.6%
Total	192	48	10	250
	76.8%	19.2%	4.0%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between working hours per day and type of family shows that street vendors from nuclear families tend to work longer hours compared to those from joint or extended families. Among the 250 respondents, 76.8 percent belong to nuclear families, and they are prominently represented in each working-hour category. Notably, 24.4 percent of nuclear family vendors work 9–12 hours per day, and 20.4 percent work more than 13 hours—suggesting a strong individual responsibility for income generation. Vendors from joint families also work long hours but in smaller proportions, with 5.2 percent each working 5–8 and 9–12 hours, and 4.8 percent working more than 13 hours. Extended family members have a limited presence overall (4 percent) and tend to work fewer hours. This data suggests that members of nuclear families may face greater economic pressure or have fewer support systems, compelling them to invest more time in vending. In contrast, joint and extended family structures may offer shared responsibilities or alternative income sources, allowing slightly reduced working hours.

Table - 9: Holding of License by their Type of Family

Holding of License	Type of family			Total
	Nuclear	Joint	Extended	
Yes	67	14	5	86
	26.8%	5.6%	2.0%	34.4%
No	125	34	5	164
	50.0%	13.6%	2.0%	65.6%
Total	192	48	10	250
	76.8%	19.2%	4.0%	100.0%

The cross tabulation between holding a license and type of family displays that a significant majority of street vendors (65.6 percent) do not possess a vending license, reflecting the informal and often unregulated nature of street vending. This is most prominent among those from nuclear families, who make up 76.8 percent of the sample—only 26.8 percent of them have a license, while 50 percent operate without one. Among joint families, 13.6 percent vend without a license, and just 5.6 percent have own. Interestingly, vendors from extended families are evenly split, with 2 percent holding licenses and 2 percent not holding. Overall, the data suggests that licensing is limited across all family types, with nuclear families being the most represented showing the greatest need for formalization. The low rate of license holding may be due to lack of awareness, bureaucratic barriers, or the absence of structured licensing mechanisms, highlighting the need for policy interventions and inclusive urban planning to integrate street vendors into formal economic frameworks.

Table - 10: Impact of Street Vending Business by their Caste

Impact of Street Vending Business	Caste				Total
	OC	BC	SC	ST	
Satisfactory	21	40	7	5	73
	8.4%	16.0%	2.8%	2.0%	29.2%
Not satisfactory	51	81	25	20	177
	20.4%	32.4%	10.0%	8.0%	70.8%
Total	72	121	32	25	250
	28.8%	48.4%	12.8%	10.0%	100.0%

The cross-tabulation between the impact of the street vending business and caste portrays notable socio-economic disparities among different social groups. Out of 250 respondents, only 29.2 percent reported the business as satisfactory, while a significant majority (70.8 percent) found it unsatisfactory. Among those satisfied, the highest representation comes from the BC (Backward Classes) category at 16 percent, followed by OC (Open Category) at 8.4 percent. SC and ST groups report much lower satisfaction levels, at just 2.8 percent and 2.0 percent respectively. On the other hand, dissatisfaction is most prevalent among BC (32.4 percent) and OC (20.4 percent) vendors, while it is also relatively high among SC (10 percent) and ST (8 percent) communities. These findings suggest that while street vending offers limited satisfaction across caste groups, marginalized communities such as SC and ST appear to face even greater barriers to success, possibly due to fewer resources, limited social capital, or systemic disadvantages. The data underscores the importance of caste-sensitive policy measures and support systems to improve the livelihoods of vendors from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Table - 11: Impact of Street Vending Business by their Gender

(H_0): **There is no significant correlation between gender of the vendor and the impact of street vending business.**

Correlations			
		Impact of Street Vending Business	Gender
Impact of Street Vending Business	Pearson Correlation	1	-.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.808
	N	250	250
Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.015	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.808	
	N	250	250

The correlation analysis between Impact of Street Vending Business and Gender shows a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.015, with a p-value of 0.808. This very weak negative correlation indicates that there is almost no linear relationship between gender and the perceived impact of the street vending business. Moreover, the high p-value (greater than 0.05) suggests that the relationship is not statistically

significant. In other words, gender does not play a meaningful role in determining whether a street vendor finds the business satisfactory or not, based on this data.

Table - 12: Impact of Street Vending Business by their Education

(H_0): **There is no significant correlation between education of the vendor and the impact of street vending business.**

Correlations			
		Impact of Street Vending Business	Education
Impact of Street Vending Business	Pearson Correlation	1	-.124
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.051
	N	250	250
Education	Pearson Correlation	-.124	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	
	N	250	250

The correlation between Impact of Street Vending Business and Education shows a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.124 with a p-value of 0.051. This indicates a weak negative correlation, suggesting that as the level of education increases, the likelihood of perceiving the street vending business as satisfactory slightly decreases. However, the p-value (0.051) is just above the conventional significance level of 0.05, meaning the relationship is marginally non-significant statistically.

This result implies that education may have a small but not strongly reliable influence on how individuals evaluate the benefits of street vending possibly because more educated individuals have higher expectations or seek alternative employment opportunities. Further investigation with a larger sample or additional variables may help clarify this trend.

Table - 13: Knowledge about Street Vendor Act 2014 by their Age

Knowledge about Street Vendor Act 2014	Age					Total
	< - 25	26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 55	56 - >	
Yes	5	6	11	14	3	39
	2.0%	2.4%	4.4%	5.6%	1.2%	15.6%
No	4	9	10	8	3	34
	1.6%	3.6%	4.0%	3.2%	1.2%	13.6%
Don't know	32	40	47	44	14	177
	12.8%	16.0%	18.8%	17.6%	5.6%	70.8%
Total	41	55	68	66	20	250
	16.4%	22.0%	27.2%	26.4%	8.0%	100.0%

The cross-tabulation between age and knowledge of the Street Vendors Act, 2014 shows a significant lack of awareness across all age groups. Out of 250 respondents, a large majority 70.8 percent (177 individuals)—reported that they do not know about the Act. The highest numbers of uninformed vendors fall in the 36–45 and 46–55 age groups (18.8 percent and 17.6 percent respectively), which are also the most actively vending age Groups. Only 15.6 percent (39 individuals) said they are aware of the Act, with slightly higher awareness among middle-aged vendors especially those aged 46–55 (5.6 percent) and 36–45 (4.4 percent). Meanwhile, 13.6 percent said "No," indicating some confusion or misinformation about the Act.

These findings highlight a critical knowledge gap, especially given that the middle age groups dominate the vending population. The low awareness of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 suggests that vendors are likely missing out on legal protections, rights to designated vending zones, and grievance redress mechanisms. This emphasizes the urgent need for targeted awareness campaigns and outreach, particularly aimed at active vendors in their prime working years, to improve their understanding of their legal rights and entitlements.

Conclusion

The street vending in Guntur City is characterized by informal, strenuous, and often precarious working conditions. Vendors generally operate in open, unregulated spaces, working long hours under harsh weather without adequate shelter, drinking water, toilets, or waste disposal facilities. Many face frequent harassment from traffic police, government officials, or local rowdies, and evictions are common.

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