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A socio-economic background among the women vendors of Moirang market, Bishnupur, Manipur, North East India

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Abstract

The word 'Women vendor' described to those who are incapable to getting regular jobs in formal sector. The study focuses on the socio-economic condition among women vendors in a daily market at Moirang. Moirang is a major town located in the district of Bishnupur district in Manipur. Moirang is largely known for its tourist places. The present research's attempt to explore the socio-economic background of women vendors of Moirang market, Bishnupur district Manipur, North East India. Particular importance has been given to inward bound as women vendors. The data has been collected by anthropological methods in terms of observation method, personal interview and questionnaire and other qualitative methods including case studies. This study covered 95 women vendors. Fundamental of this study, illustrated the socio-economic background of women vendors of Moirang. Thus, the study pointed that economic background of the women vendors is very marginal status. Therefore, anthropological perspective of the study exposed that the income of women vendors is low because most of the women vendors are illiterate and the majority of the respondents belonging into poverty and below poverty line families. Moreover, the study also demonstrates that women vending in Moirang market is not an easy task for women for surviving their livelihood.

Keywords: Women vendor, socio-economic background, daily market, livelihood

Introduction

Socio-economic status (SES) is a combined economic and social aggregate measure of an individual's work experience and family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When comparing household income to an individual, along with their own characteristics, household income, education, and employment are also taken into account. Socio-economic plays a significant role in determining people's livelihoods because it has an impact on their level of education, skill set, and financial situation (Devi and Sachdeva, 2022) [4]. Women do not enjoy equal status in social conditions. Religion and socio-cultural practices have denied opportunities of the growth of the women. Therefore, they are the victims in the field of social status. Women are economically dependent on men and carry out household work which is painful and restless. Their work is unrecognized and not paid. They serve their family without taking any leave without maintaining any record. A woman spends her whole life in up bringing their family. Even though they are illiterate, but having the good knowledge of economy and manages their house expenses (Laxmidevi and Athani, 2018) [7]. Women are good economist of the house however it is not recognized. Women vendors are recognized as self-employed workers in the informal sectors. The women who were without any expertise of knowledge and had no other option then they were adopting the works like housemaids and selling of vegetable, fruits, fishes, ornamental or nuts as vendors on street (Anjaria, 2006) [1]. The rise of female involvement in the informal sector like women vending is more due to economic need than any change in work. Apart from that, aspect for which the women to engage in such kind of unorganized work where the women vendors breakup of the family owing to death or divorce, unemployed husband, domestic violence and pressure of in laws to earn for their family. However, street vending is a global phenomenon and it is most noticeable aspect of casual division in any types of informal sectors inside our country. According to Nisbet (1967) [9] the

terms 'formal' and 'informal' were used in the anthropological circles in the 1960's, with meanings closely analogous to their current usage in development studies and employment policy. However, women vending is characterized by low level of income, easy of entry, unskilled knowledge, self-employed that's why it's includes large number of people. In developing country like India as well as the states Manipur especially Moirang stated thousands of people earn money and living their livelihood by selling wide range of goods and services of the women vendors. One of the women vendors narrated his view on the socio-political scenario is not only captivating but it also shows how her social life and livelihood are regulated on the women vendors through various forces. Therefore, it indicates that not only uneducated people engaged in these types of occupation sometime some educated people or individual also choose this occupation also.

Street vendors are one of the important components of the urban informal economy. Street vendors occupy a significant proportion of the total employment in the informal sector (Saha, 2011) [10]. Despite that women vendors face a lot of challenges and biases from local government representatives and also in government policies and regulations. However, the women vendors came from outside of the Moirang town while most of the women vendors are vegetable vendors and they try to live their life with dignity and self-respect through hard work. Hence, Moirang is a developing town and because of capital town and proper opportunity, many rural areas worker came in here and as per convention of a developing market indicates heavy man power like labour and that forces, pressurize to the market.

Moirang is a major town located in the district of Bishnupur district in Manipur. Moirang is largely known for its tourist places. The town is located about 45 km south from the city of Imphal. The town consists of about 12 Gram Panchayats. Moirang lies in between 24.5°N latitude and 93.77°E longitude at an average elevation of 2513 feet above sea level. The total area of the region is 269 square kilometers.

Another study by Nidan 2010, in his paper "Study on Street Vendors at Patna (Bihar)" was based on 600 street vendors in 72 wards in Patna. It found that most of the respondents chose vending as a profession because there were no other jobs available, entry was easier and investment was low.

Chakraborty and Koley 2018, focus on the socio-economic condition among street vendors in a daily market at Jamshedpur. They illustrated the socio-economic condition of women street vendors; thus, the study pointed that economic condition of the women street vendors is very poor. Therefore, the study exposed that the income of women vendors is lower because most of the women vendors are illiterate and the majority of the respondents belonging into poor schedule tribal families.

Saikia 2019 [5], work on Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on Women Work force Participation in Informal Sector of Assam. She mentions that, it is evident that rather than being absorbed in to modern formal wage employment, Indian labour force is becoming increasingly informal. Changes in employment pattern may reflect the intense competition, risk and uncertainty, which both the employers and employees face due to globalisation. Not only in India, this type of trend prevalent in the state of Assam also. National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data reveals that though female workforce participation rate in India as well as Assam has increased, most of the employment was informal in nature. This predominance of informality may be attributed to lower bargaining power, immobility and higher rate of illiteracy of female population.

Trivedi, *et al.* 2020 [11], studies on social and economic status of women vegetable vendors. They revealed that, (Other Backward Classes (OBCs) category dominating the vegetable vending business. Women adopt this business after marriage because it is their family business. Though, literacy level is very low in women vegetable vendors, they are able to earn more than prevailing minimum wages in Gujarat for unskilled labours. Even though kachchaa, they are having their own house. avoid regular saving or borrowing money from financial institutions may be due to unawareness or illiteracy and always felt shortage of funds. Thus, women vegetable vendors are very important part of the informal sector in the country as they are not only a source of self-employment but also provide affordable and convenient service to the society.

Studies on Socio Economic Background of Women Street Vendors in Ongole Prakasam District. They mention that, street vending is an important activity of unorganised sector, involving street vendors as the key players. Street vendors are continuously victimised and subjected to mental and physical torture by the police and municipal employees, as their job is considered illegal. Women hawkers face more problems than men like eve teasing, sexual harassment, physical torture etc.

Recent studies by Kumar and Bharathi 2022 [6], on Socio Economic Condition of Street Food Vendors – An Empirical Study in Salem City, Tamil Nadu. They reported that street food sector provides employment opportunities to many and plays a major role in reducing the cost of living in cities. The food and safety standard authority of India supports the street food vendors by providing guidelines to start street food business. This research is aimed at analyzing the socio-economic condition of the street food vendors in Salem city.

During the last five years of Moirang market, the socio-economic condition of women vendors has not massive change in vending activity. Thus, it is important that the women vendors have not been improved in terms of income level, working hours, access to finance, safety on work place and intolerance by local bodies and others important aspect. There for the present study try to find out the socio-economic status of the women street vendors of a daily market of Moirang, Bishnupur District, Manipur.

In view of the above background the present study aims to point up on the socio-economic condition of the women vendors of Moirang, Bishnupur District, Manipur. The following specific objectives have been given as to illustrate the demographic view of the women vendors, to explore the socio-economic milieu of the women vendors and to find the subsistence pattern as well as their sustainable livelihood.

Methodology

The present study has been conducted on women vendors of Moirang market, Bishnupur where majority of the women sitting on permanent/temporary plots and street for selling their good and most of the vendors are selling garments, vegetables as well as local fishes. Therefore, for the present study, respondents have been selected on who was selling various types of goods.

For the selection of respondents using convenient sampling method and the sample size confined as 95 women individuals who selling goods on the market.

Data has been collected from primary sources. For the collection of data some anthropological methods such as observation method, interview with the structure and unstructured questionnaire, group discussion, case history

method was adopted to know some of the issues that were not incorporated in the schedule.

However, during study semi-structured questionnaire used which based on the objectives of the study (Bryman, 2008) [2]. Both closed and open-ended questions have been included in the questionnaire. Since the study was exploratory in nature, an open-ended question has been used to give a hand to exploring the present condition. Group discussion has been conducted with vendors under study area. In depth discussion has been also prepared with the women vendors, who provided information.

Data has been analyzed with the help of Microsoft Excel 2019. Suitable statistical implements have been used to measure the socio-economic conditions of the women street vendors of a daily market of Moirang, Bishnupur district, Manipur.

Results and Discussions

Table-1 deals with demographical aspects such as “Age Distribution, Marital Status and Educational Status” of the women vendors under study area. From this table it is revealed that in case of ‘Age Group’ wise distribution of the total number of the respondents under study maximum numbers of women street vendors were belongs in the age group 25-59 i.e., 49.47 % out of the total number of respondents whereas, 28.42% women vendors were belongs in the age group 15-24. On the contrary, 60 and above age group shows 22.11 %.

Table 1: Demographical aspects such as age distribution, marital status, educational status, caste/community wise distribution of women vendors

Variables	Female		Variables	Female	
	(N= 95)	(%)		(N= 95)	(%)
Age distribution			Educational status		
15-24	27	28.42	Illiterate	35	36.84
25-59	47	49.47	Ability to sign	13	13.68
60 above	21	22.11	I –IV	17	17.89
Caste/community wise distribution			V –VIII	15	15.79
General	21	22.11	X Above	15	15.79
OBC	33	34.74			
SC	34	35.79			
ST	7	7.37			

*Age Division years, basis on the category of the age group to follow the “Population by major age group and percentage distribution by age group for the world” page – 37. Source: World Population Prospects: the 2004 Revision, Extended Dataset, United Nations, 2005.

It is further revealed from the Fig. 1 that in case of marital status wise distribution of the women vendors shows 70.53 % respondents were married whereas, 15.79 % women street vendors were widow, 7.37% women vendors were unmarried, only 6.14% women vendors were separated, respectively.

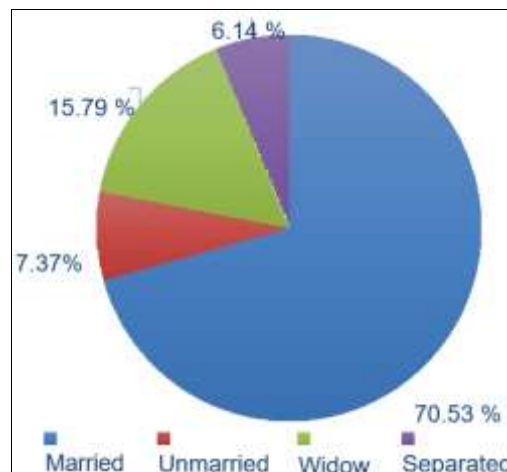


Fig 1: Marital status of women vendors of Moirang market

Further, Fig. 1 illustrate that most of the women vendors has been married that means after married the women were living unhappy, poor livelihood in the sense economically poor; therefore, those women engaged their occupation as vending of different goods for surviving the livelihood.

The education all eve among the women vendors has been generally low, as indicated in education status wise distribution. Out of the total studied women vendors, 36.84 % were illiterate, whereas, 13.68 % can only sign their names. On the contrary 17.89% has been attained primary level education. Respectively, 15.79 % achieved middle primary level education and post middle school of education (Table 1). Therefore, the education status table refers that most of the women street vendors were less educated.

Some of the respondents stated that, “there is no opportunity other than vending, as it necessitates less education, unskilled knowledge and comparatively minor resources as compared to other occupations.” They also added that “most of the women vendors carry out to this occupation for support their own families because here, vending is not

safe for women but we had no other option. Therefore, we engaged as women vendors in this daily market.”

Furthermore, the table also deals with another demographical aspect that is cast/community wise distribution of the women vendors. The cast/community wise distribution of the women vendors demonstrated that out of the total number of respondents most of the women vendors were belongs into schedule cast (34.79 %) which is followed by OBC (34.74 %) and on the contrary 7.37 % respondents belongs into schedule tribe and 22.11 % belongs as general caste community.

From the table 2, the ‘Daily Income’ category illustrate that majority (36.84 %) of the women has been earned Rs.10lto Rs.200 per day, followed by lowest income category has Rs. ≥ 100 who earned this amount per day i.e., 18.15%. whereas, 17.89 % women has been earned Rs. 201 – 300, while, daily income Rs. 401 above shows that 13.68 % women this amount per day. But, only 12.63 % women was earned Rs. 301 to Rs. 400 per day and this is the tiniest percentages; Apart from that, Therefore, the daily income clearly pointed out that an average number of women earned lowest rupees per day and that

amount not enough to sustaining the livelihood for a small family, in the current situation.

Apart from the ‘Daily Income’ of women vendors, the table 2 also demonstrate the ‘monthly household income’ of the women vendors. Thus, the ‘monthly household income’ illustrated that foremost percentage (47.75 %) under the category of Rs. 2501.00 to Rs. 4000.00 and followed by 21.05 % of the category of Rs. 4001.00 – 5500.00 where the majority of the women vendors surviving their livelihood. However, only 13.68 % of women vendor has monthly household income of Rs. ≤ 5501. Furthermore, the table also reveals that about 17.89 % women vendors have the monthly household income Rs. ≥ 2500. Therefore, the ‘monthly household income’ stated that nearly every women vendor sustaining their livelihood with lowest household income. Thus, the study indicates that the women vendor has the poor economic situation.

Table 2: Daily Income, monthly household income wise distribution, Product-wise distribution and daily working hours of the women vendors from Moirang market, Bishnupur district, Manipur

Variables	Female	
	(N= 95)	(%)
Daily income (approx., in Rs.) wise distribution		
≥ 100	18	18.95
101 – 200	35	36.84
201 – 300	17	17.89
301 – 400	12	12.63
≤ 401	13	13.68
Monthly house hold income (approx., in Rs.) wise distribution		
≥ 2500	17	17.89
2501 – 4000	45	47.37
4001 – 5500	20	21.05
≤ 5501	13	13.68
Daily working hours		
≥ 3	18	18.95
3 – 6	31	32.63
6 – 9	26	27.37
9 – 12	15	15.79
≤ 12	5	5.26

However, the income of the women vendors depends on which types of goods they sell, and it varies product to product and also in terms of the amount of product and spending time for selling of the products. Therefore, the daily income of the women vendors shows that a few vendors earn quite a high income. Moreover, the table also exemplify that the incomes of the women vendors depend on the selling’s of diverse of goods such as vegetables, fruits, flowers, cooked foods and fish’s vendors.

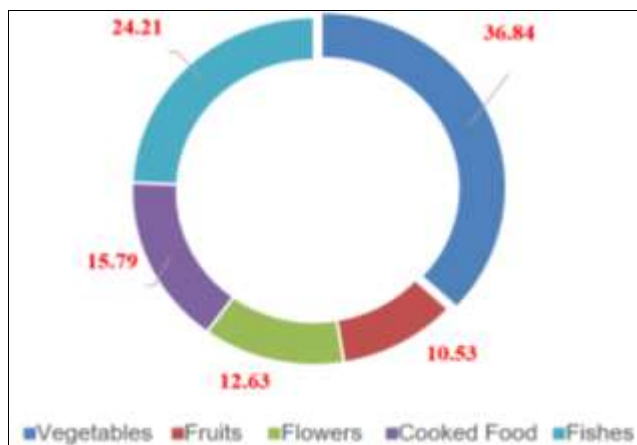


Fig 2: Types of vending product wise distribution

Furthermore, the Fig. 2 illustrate the ‘types of Product selling’ wise distribution where, majority of the women vendors have been selling vegetables i.e., 36.84 % whereas, second most selling product was fishes i.e., 24.21 %. Apart from these two types, the women vendors also selling fruits, flower and cooked foods i.e. 10.53 % 12.63 % and 15.79 %, respectively. Finally, the table also exemplified that, the working hour’s wise distribution of the women vendors on the daily Moirang market. Thus, distribution stated that, 18.95 % women vendors spending time in the market ≥ 3 hours; whereas, majority of the women i.e., 32.63 % vendors spending time in the market 3 - 6 hours followed by 27.37 % and 15.79 % women vendors spending time in market 6 – 9 and 9 – 12 hours, respectively. In addition to above information, only 5.26 % women vendors spending time in the market for 12 hours and above. These very few percentages of women living in the nearby market place and those were the fruit seller in this market. As the result of this, the women vendors of Moirang have been spend half a day in the market. Similar observation was reported by many workers from different places like Nidan 2010, Chakraborty and Koley 2018 and Kumar and Bharathi 2022 [6]. Despite the above facts, the women sustained their livelihood as vendors because most of them unskilled as well as uneducated and poor although, the vending did not require lot of money that’s why the poor, unskilled women choose vending as their occupation. However, vending as occupation for women not easy because as the women assured that “we faced endless harassment from both the local traffic police and some addicted people a tour work place. But we have no better option; therefore, we choose our occupation as vending. However, some time in regular basis the local traffic police forced us to pay payoffs.”

Conclusion

The present study shows the demographical and socio-economic aspects of women vendors in the Moirang market at Bishnupur; as the demographical aspects stated most of the women were illiterate and at the same time majority of the women belongs into the schedule cast communities. Another important finding of the study is that majority of the women earned par day less than two hundred rupees. In addition, the monthly household income of the women vendors illustrated that an average below four thousand which not a good amount to living a family life at urban as well as rural area. However, during the present study it’s clearly stated by the key respondents that most of the women came from nearby rural areas, especially the vegetable and fish vendors. Apart from the above factors, most of them were unskilled, less educated with poor economic condition. Thus, the study indicates both the poor economic and working conditions to rapidly rising competition and to survive in the local market, women vendors want to increase the number of hours of their work.

Moreover, the present study pointed out that majority of the women vendors has been earn low amount of daily basis on the contrary, their monthly household income also stated that actuality they sustaining their livelihood with so many difficulties and every day they struggling to living better livelihood, where, vending is problematic for women although, the women accepting the challenging occupation to improving the living situation.

Finally, the present study may be helpful to raise the different issues like social aspect of women vending, importance of informal economy, life of women vendors in both the urban and rural areas, problems of women vending and so many to study for further researches is required.

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