



A Study on Socio-Economic condition of street vendors and their contribution to the Economy of Patna

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Abstract : Due to the increasing rate of unemployment in the organized sector of Patna, a large chunk of unemployed population is moving towards the unorganized sector to earn their livelihood. Around 8.3% of the working hands, are unemployed in Bihar which is 2.5 times more than the national average of unemployment. So, they prefer getting self-employed by doing street vending. Also, they prefer doing street vending because of the following reasons. (i) Lack of education (ii) Lack of money (iii) Lack of opportunities and (iv) Family Business, but their contribution to state economy is sizeable.

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Street vendors are among the most deprived sections of self-employed workers in Patna. This paper tries to portray the socio-economic condition of street vendors. The socio-economic condition of street vendors is explained in terms of their financial condition and the extent of debt, the amount of bribe they have to pay in order to sustain themselves in the market, their working hours, the issues of public space utilization and the legal aspect of their activity and their living conditions. This paper also analyses the contribution of street vendors to the economy of Patna and the satisfaction level of consumers buying street goods.

The study shows that the street vendors borrow from moneylenders, not merely for their economic activity, but also for social security, at an exorbitant rate of interest, which, in turn, leads them to fall into a debt-trap. It has been further found that they have extremely long working hours, which have been continuously increasing over the years. Further, they enjoy neither safety nor security at the workplace as they face constant harassment from the local authorities. Hence, the current working hours of the vendors together with the safety and security conditions in their workplace, contribute to a deteriorating working environment as well as economic deprivation for street vendors.

Key words: Street vendors, socio-economic condition, self-employment, contribution to the economy.