



Socio-Economic Condition of Street Food Vendors: A Case Study of Patna Municipal Corporation Area (PMC)

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Abstract: A street food vendor is a person who offers cooked food on streets or other public places for immediate consumption. In every locality of Patna, we can see street food vendors selling ready- to- eat items, like chola batura, chat, pani-puri, chowmein, momos, egg roll etc. Street food is popular among students because it is cheap and affordable. Street food vendors contribute significantly to the informal as well as to the overall urban economy, in terms of employment and cheap availability of food and services. Even though

street food is less hygienic and less nutritious, it is preferred because it is appealing. It tastes good and is cheap in price. Despite the importance of street food and street food vending, the fact that the street food vending involves many problems is an issue to be discussed. The present conditions in which most of the street food vendors cook and sell are unsuitable. By taking advantage of poor monitoring and controls, vendors sell and prepare food in an unhygienic manner. A proper food handling training programme would save many from diseases resulting from unsafely prepared food. The other issue faced during study was vendor's vulnerable condition in the society. Unlike the formal job sector, selling food on streets does not require any prior skills. It leads to low income and an insecure work environment. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to explore the contribution of the street food vendors to the society, to observe the role of street food vendors in hygienically maintaining food, to assess the problems faced by the street food vendors, to examine the role of Patna Police and Municipal employees in the business of street food vendors, to investigate the role of government in their smooth running of the business and to know the overall socio - economic condition of the street food vendors of Patna.

Key words: Street food vendor, Economic Status, Education and illiteracy, Social status, Nutrition, Hygiene.

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Introduction:

A street food vendor is a person who offers cooked food on a street or other public location for immediate consumption. Street food is tasty, ready-to-eat, low cost food or drink sold on the streets in a market, park or other public place. It is sold by a hawker from a portable stall, cart or food truck (weigo.org.)

Street food vendors contribute significantly to the informal as well as to the overall urban economy, in terms of employment and cheap availability of food and services. The main problems that the street vendors face, both during the start-up and the operation of their activities are lack of working place, harassments and eviction from the selling place by police and private shop guardians, lack of a market, non-profitability of the business, lack of credit, lack of freedom and social security during the operation of their business and cleanliness of their working environment. Their own earning is very low. These vendors do not have access to formal finance. They rely largely on their own savings and loans from friends and relatives. The working conditions of these vendors are very tough. On an average, food vendors have to work for 10 to 12 hours a day to earn a meagre amount of money (nasvi.net.org).

Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. To study the contribution of the street food vendors to the society.
2. To observe the role of street food vendors in the hygiene of the city.
3. To assess the problems faced by the street food vendors.
4. To examine the role of Patna police and Municipal employees in the business of street food vendors.
5. To investigate the role of government in smooth running of their business.
6. To know the overall socio-economic conditions of the street food vendors of Patna.

Hypotheses:

The working hypotheses of the proposed study would be that-

1. Unemployment and migration are responsible for increase in size of street food vendors.

2. Income of street food vendors is very low.
3. Street food vendors are patronized mainly by youth.
4. Street food vendors do not maintain cleanliness and hygiene.
5. Street food vendors are regularly harassed by police and government administration.

Methodology and Database:

This research work is based on a distinct methodology, which follows the three following stages:

- **Pre Field Survey Stage:** Study of relevant literature; Collection of study materials, data and maps. Visit to libraries, concerned websites and government offices.
- **Field Survey:** Preparation of questionnaire; and generation of schedule survey of 100 samples, and generation of primary data.
- **Post field survey stage:** Analysis of secondary data, Compilation, tabulation and cartographic treatment of primary data and Preparation of a project report.

This project was based on a 100 sample survey, in which fifty were street food vendors and fifty students. The area of study was New Capital Circle and Bankipur Circle, in which some of the street food vendors were seasonal and some were permanent vendors.

Study Area:

The study area of the proposed project work was the Patna M.C. area, which is divided into 72 wards, which have been further re-arranged into 4 Circles, namely- New Capital, Bankipur, Kankarbagh and Patna City (District Gazette, 2007).

The database of the study constituted 100 samples, a sample of 50 being collected from the New Capital and Bankipur circle of Street Food Vendors and 50 students from Colleges and Schools.

Analysis:

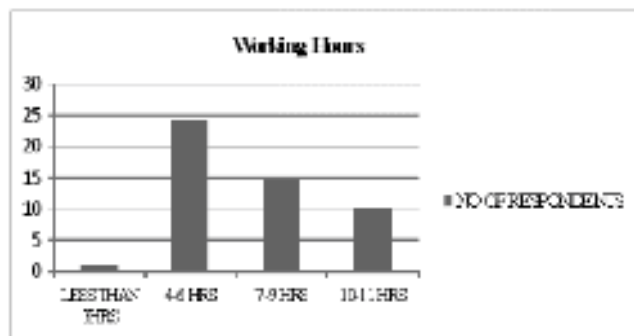
The information presented is in no way comprehensive, covering all aspects of street food vending. Unfortunately, there are not many studies on the street food vendors in PMC and this is one of the main handicaps of the present study. The main findings of this project have been summarized in the next few paragraphs, which try to point out the important common issues.

Demographic composition:

“Demography is the quantitative and qualitative aspects of population.” Or “Demography is defined as the numerical portrayal of the population” (businessdictionary.com). The street food vendors of Patna Municipal Corporation Area belong to different religions, castes, age groups, communities and educational qualifications. From the sample survey, it was analyzed that the average age of street food vendors was 31 years and the average age of their marriage was 24 years. Out of 50 respondents, 46 were male and only 4 females, the majority were from OBC category i.e. 42%. 86% engaged in this occupation were Hindus, the other part being Muslim, which constitute 14% of the sample population. 50% of the vendors surveyed were married. It was found that the majority of the population had a nuclear families i.e., 54%.

Economic status:

Economic status is the status of a person’s financial position at a specific period of time. Economic status is also called economic condition. Economic status is often used to measure people’s welfare (businessdictionary.com).



* Based on sample survey 2017

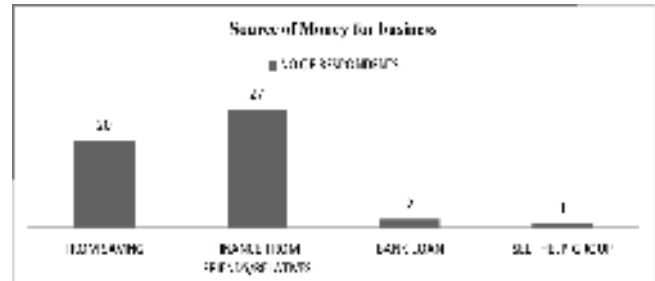
Fig. 1.

Table 1.

Working hours	No of Respondents	% Share
< 3 hours	1	2
4-6 hours	24	48
7-9 hours	15	30
10-11 hours	10	20
Total	50	100

The Figure 1 and table 1 represent that 48% of the street food vendors spend 4-6 hours in vending. They

work in the evening and during job hours. While 30% of the street food vendors spend 7-9 hours in vending, 20% spend 10-11 hours in vending, because this is the only source of income for them. The rest 2% spend less than 3 hours in vending, as they are generally seasonal street food vendors.



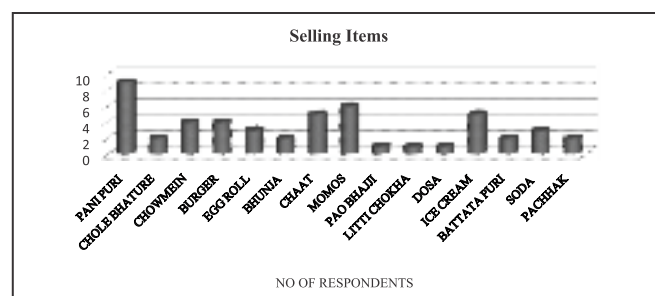
* Based on sample survey 2017

Fig. 2.

Table 2.

Source of Money	No of Respondents	% Share
From saving	20	40
Finances from friends/relatives	27	54
Bank loan	2	4
Self help group	1	2
Total	50	100

It is clear from the Figure 2 and table 2 that 54% of the street food vendors arrange for money by taking loans from friends or relatives, whereas 40% of them arrange for money from their savings, 4% of them take loans from a bank and the rest 2% arrange for money from self help groups. A majority of the street food vendors prefer taking loans from friends, as it is an easy option, while the bank process requires many documents and papers.



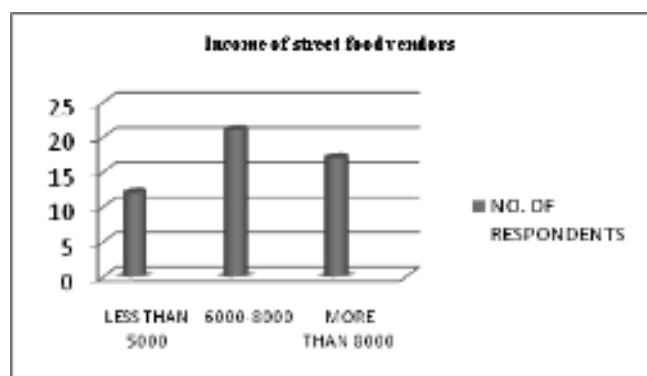
* Based on sample survey 2017

Fig. 3.

Table 3. Selling Items of street food vendors of PMC Area

Selling Items	No. of Respondents	% share
Pani puri	9	18
Chole Bhature	2	4
Chowmein	4	8
Burger	4	8
Egg Roll	3	6
Bhunja	2	4
Chaat	5	10
Momos	6	12
Pao bhaji	1	2
Litti chokha	1	2
Dosa	1	2
Ice cream	5	10
Batata puri	2	4
Soda	3	6
Pachaak/Churan	2	4
Total	50	100

According to the data from Figure 3, it is analyzed that 18% of the vendors sell pani puri, as it is the most popular of the snacks among young girls and children. 10% of the vendors sell chaat, some other food constituents ice cream 10%, chowmein 8%, burger 8%, egg rolls 6 %, soda 6%, Momos 12%, chole bhature 4%, bhunjia 4%, batata Puri 4%, pachak 4%, Pav Bhaji 2%, litti Chokha 2% and dosa 2%.



* Based on sample survey 2017

Fig. 4.**Table 4.**

Income	Number of Respondents	%share
< 58000	12	24
6000-8000	21	42
> 8000	17	32
Total	50	100

Figure 4 and table 4 clearly shows that 42% of the street food vendors earn between 6000 - 8000 per month, where as 24% of the vendors earn < 8000 per month and the rest 34% earn > 8000 per month.

Table 5. Pattern of saving of street food vendors of PMC Area

Have Saving Account	No. of Respondents	%Share
Do not save	14	28
Money order	10	20
Relative hand	12	24
Bank	11	22
Other	3	06
Total	50	100

* Based on sample survey 2017

In the above table, 5 represents that 28% of the surveyed vendors don't have any savings, while 20% have savings by money order, 24% of the street food vendors give the money to relatives for saving, 22% have savings in the bank and the rest 6% have savings account in other places.

Table 6. Working Area of street food vendors under vending zone of PMC Area

Working Area	No. of Respondents	%share
Under vending zone	15	30
Not under vending zone	35	70
Total	50	100

*Based on sample survey 2017

Table 6 shows that 70% of the street food vendors carry out their occupation under non vending zone. So they often face harassment from police and the Municipal authority, while 30% of the street food vendors did the vending in the vending zone, but they also have to pay bribes for carrying on their occupation. Almost all the street food vendors are unaware about the vending zone of Patna.

From the survey, it was found that a majority of the street food vendors favour the system of Vending Zones and they expressed their willingness to operate towards this. They also had some expectations from the vending zone, such, as social security, toilet and water facility, light facility, pakka pavement facility, garbage disposal facility etc. Here also we see that many people don't know about the vending zone. This is because they are not educated enough to know all this. They just take their mobile stall from place to place for the sake of earnings, even without knowing about vending zones.

Table 7. Harassment faced by street food vendors of PMC Area

Harassed by	No. of Respondents	%Share
Police	23	46
Municipality	4	8
Others	6	12
Not harassed	17	34
Total	50	100

*Based on sample survey 2017

The Table 7 shows that 46% of the street food vendors face harassment from police, 8% face harassment from municipality and 12% face harassment from others, like local goons. Only 34% of the vendors do not face any kind of harassment.

Health and nutrition:

Good nutrition leads to good health and may include a diet that contains vitamins, proteins etc. Lack of good food remains a serious problem in developing countries. The international food policy research institute (IFPRI) was established in 1975 to identify and analyze alternative National and International Strategies and policies for meeting food needs of the developing world. (wikieducator.org)

About 52% of the street food vendors enjoyed good health status and nutrition, while 40% enjoyed satisfactory health status. It was found that 60% of the population was provided with good quality of food while 38% got satisfactory quality of food and only 2% got poor quality of food. 80% of the street food vendors could afford two meals a day with their meager income. 14% of the family could afford two meals for most of the days. Only 6% of the families could not afford it. They were from BPL families. 32% of the street food vendors of Patna were suffering from diseases. 28% were addicted to tobacco, Pan Parag, Gutakha, smoking and alcohol. 72% of the total surveyed street food vendors were dependent on government hospitals for their treatment. While 26% were dependent on doctor's clinics and only 2% were dependent on medical shops for the treatment.

Educational Qualification:

Education is a very vital tool that is used in the contemporary world in order to succeed. It is important because it is used to mitigate most of the challenges faced in life. The knowledge that is attained through education helps open doors to a lot of opportunities for better prospects in career growth (wikipedia.org).

The educational qualification level of street food vendors was observed to be very low because of their background. They belonged mainly to the poor class and could not afford better education. 56% of the street food vendors were illiterate. The rest 44%, were educated, while 6% of the street food vendors had done graduation. 73% of the street food vendors who had children send their children to school, while 27% do not send their children to school because of poverty. They did not have enough money to provide education for their children. It was also found that most of the street food vendors, whose children were receiving informal education, send their children to government schools.

Recreation and Social Life:

Recreation is an essential part of human life and finds many different forms, which are shaped naturally by individual interests but also by the surrounding social construction. Recreational activities can be communal or solitary, active or passive, outdoors or indoors, healthy or harmful, and useful for society or detrimental. A significant section of recreational activities is designated as hobbies, which are activities done for pleasure on a regular basis (wikipedia.org).

A majority of the street food vendors spend their leisure time doing housework, 32% spend time watching TV, It is the main source of entertainment for them. Almost all the street food vendors were found to have friends in their locality. Major forms or sources of Recreational activities taken up by street food vendors were - tour with friends, visit to parks and going out to cinemas.

Table 8. Status of women in the family of street food vendors of PMC Area

Status	Number of Respondents	%Share
Equal	38	76
Inferior	12	24
Total	50	100

*Based on Sample Survey 2017.

It is clear from the table 8 that 76% of respondents said that women are treated equally in the family. As the society is changing today, so is the mentality of people. Only 24% of the respondents said that women are inferior to men. 76% of the respondents were fully satisfied with their present life, as they were able to earn a good amount for living comfortably.

Consumers' Opinion:

Street food is preferred by young people because of its cheapness, availability and variety. This study revealed that 44% of young respondents ate three to four times a week, while 28% had street food everyday. When asked about its nutritional aspect, 64% said it was nutritious and 34% said otherwise. Many youngsters were found to be attracted by the street food's value for money appeal.

Government Schemes for Street Food Vendors:

The Indian government, at all levels, announces welfare schemes, for cross sections of the society from time to time. These schemes could be either Central, state specific or a joint collaboration between the centre and the state. Some of the schemes are: to provide training to the street food vendors to enable them to voluntarily adopt hygienic practices to improve the quality of food served; to assist them in getting registered and provide them with identity cards; allotting authorized vending spaces in the vending zones from the municipal authorities; Grant of 25% towards the cost of a scientifically designed, safe and hygienic food cart/kiosk or stall and to promote the concept of "clean and tasty" street food and provision of awards for the best vendor Municipalities.

The rehabilitation of street food vendors is one of points on the agenda of the Bihar government. Patna High Court asked the Bihar government to set up vending zones in Patna and, as a result, vending zones were established in PMC. Hence, it is clear that the government is working on providing facilities for the welfare and development of street food vendors, but it is not sufficient, because the majority of vendors do not even have primary education, hence are not able to reap maximum benefits from these schemes. The Government should take some steps towards making them aware of these schemes meant for them (nasvi.net.org).

Conclusion :

The above discussion shows some common features in all the areas of PMC covered during study. The income of street food vendors is more or less the same everywhere. Despite the fact that street food vendors provide various types of services, they are persecuted by the Municipal authorities and the police. Bribery is a commonly faced problem of street food vendors. Poverty and unemployment are the two main reasons for migration of street food vendors in all areas of the PMC. Street food vendors maintain a considerably good health status. Street food vendors of Patna do not maintain a high standard of social environment. As most of them belong to the lowest strata of society, they cannot afford many basic amenities and are deprived of a good quality of life. Thus, it is clear that the condition of street food vendors of PMC is merely satisfactory. Much

effort on the part of the Bihar government and vendors themselves is needed for the overall development of street food vendors.

Suggestions :

Despite the importance of street food and the street food vending, the fact that the street food vending involves many problems cannot be ignored. The present condition in which most of the street food vendors cook and sell is unsuitable. The place where they work is not clean, not well lit and close to sources of contamination. Most of the street food vendors do not practise hygienic methods of preparing and covering food and water. Uncovered food is exposed to flies, birds, rodents etc. It causes food-borne pathogens. Street food vendors also lack training in proper food handling and waste disposal. Some street food vendors, who are less educated, do not have formal training for selling ready cooked food. Given below are some of the suggestions-

Proper training about safe food handling and proper financial and infrastructural support, like loans for improving their business, should be taken into consideration by the authority. For taking care of vending issues, ideally, there should be a committee. Moreover, supply of clean water, permanent kiosks, proper toilet facility and a system of garbage disposal might be helpful to overcome the challenges faced by the vendors.

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