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Impact of COVID 19 on street vendors in Ernakulam city

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Abstract--The outbreak of covid-19 caused many challenges across the world. Among them street vendors were the one who affected the most. Our study aims to identify and quantify the issues street vendors faced during Covid 19 – especially, the financial impact – with specific reference to the city of Ernakulam. The study also explores how street vendors survived the current situation. They also faced competitions from new vendors and so on. The present study includes street vendors such as cloth, vegetable or fruit sellers, street food sellers and more. The result of the study gives us a better understanding how they survived the lockdown phase.

Keywords---street vendors, COVID-19, financial, lockdown, ernakulam.

Introduction

A street vendor may be defined as one who sells goods/services to the public on without a fixed base of operations such as a permanent structure and instead working from some ad hoc static structure or a movable stand. They may be fixed, seen occupying the same space on sidewalks on a regular basis or moving among locations, transporting their wares on push carts or bicycles or carrying them in baskets as headloads – they are often seen peddling their stuff in running

trains/buses. Street vendors, or hawkers as they are commonly known, have existed since the beginning human civilization. No city, modern or ancient, ever has existed without traders selling their things informally in public locations. The tradition of natural marketplaces, or mandis, in Indian cities attests to this (Sampath 2015). The word "urban vendor" is used by the Indian government to refer to both fixed and portable traders and service providers, as well as all other local/regional terms used to characterize them, such as hawker, pheriwalla, sidewalk dukandars, sidewalk dealers, and others. In India, they make up 4% of the urban workforce and perform a number of tasks in the city. The counterpart street vending economy has a daily average turnover of Rs 80 crore, and each street entrepreneur or trader employs a minimum of three others as employees, partners, or commission workers.

The so-called informal sector is the backbone of Indian economy and street sellers are a vital component thereof. With earnings low and highly unstable, their social status is very vulnerable. As a result of a lack of awareness, education, and required documents, they are trapped in a cycle of debt related to loans with high-interest rates. Although the law is against them, street vendors have poor socioeconomic conditions; they adapt and adjust the norms to their way of life. In 2014, Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Law was implemented to regulate and protect street vendors in public spaces. A Street is just for pedestrians to stroll on so that traffic congestion and accidents are avoided. However, street vendors are illegally occupying roadways and platforms for the purpose of selling items, and purchasers are also engaged in acquiring goods for a low price from street markets. One of the main reasons for the steady increase in street vendors is this. Covid-19 has had quite a particularly harsh impact on informal laborers, who have spent all of their savings and wages attempting to feed themselves during the lengthy lockdown. Vendors need to be allowed to resume their activities just in order to survive and governmental action should seek to make streets and public spaces accessible to them for earning their livelihood.

Statement of problem

Street vendors are a vital part of urban economies and allow rapid dispersal of a diverse range of goods and services via public spaces. Despite their unorganized and unregularized nature, their contributions are vital to urban economies. Aside from providing huge employment opportunities, street vendors also play a vital role in food distribution, food security, and the safety of public spaces. According to a trade union poll, Ernakulam has over 5,500 street vendors, with over 3,000 of them working in Kochi corporation divisions. The majority of Kochi Corporation's street vendors are located around the length between Ernakulam North's Town Hall and the Marine Drive area, which includes Broadway. More than 500 vendors operate their enterprises in these areas, which have been presented to the committee as vending zones. This study examines the impact of covid 19 on street vendors in Ernakulam city.

Objectives

- To study the problems and difficulties faced by street vendors during Covid-19 pandemic period.
- To study the impact of Covid-19 on sales, income level and profitability on street vendors in Ernakulum city.
- To identify the factors affected the sales of street vendors during Covid-19.

Research Hypothesis

- H0₁: There exist no significant differences between sales with that of online shopping.
- H1₁: There exist significant differences between sales with that of online shopping.
- H0₂: There exist no significant differences between sales with that of poor public space.
- H1₂: There exist significant differences between sales with that of poor public space.
- H0₃: There exist no significant differences between sales with that of hygiene.
- H1₃: There exist significant differences between sales with that of hygiene.
- H0₄: There exist no significant differences between sales with that of malls and retail outlets.
- H1₄: There exist significant differences between sales with that of malls and retail outlets.
- H0₅: There exist no significant differences between sales with that of non-availability of goods
- H1₅: There exist significant differences between sales with that of non-availability of goods.

Literature Review

Winarno & Allain (1991) study states that individuals or families commonly own and operate street food businesses. Street food businesses are often small, requiring only a few basic skills, basic equipment, and a wad of cash. The success of street food sellers' marketing is entirely dependent on their location and word-of-mouth marketing. Sharit K. Bhowmik (2005) finds that Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Hanoi, Cambodia, Bangkok (Thailand) Seoul, and India are among the ten Asian countries with street vendors. The growing number of street vendors is one of the most noticeable features of Asian cities. Unfortunately, rather than recognizing their economic contributions, governments regard street vendors as encroachers or criminals.

Hans F. Lily (2015) exposes the regulation and evasion of street vendors in Manila. The Manila Street Vendors Association pushes for a more positive attitude to street vendors, combining minimum laws with incentives and governmental aid. In keeping with the study, ignoring the hard socio-economic realities of a given cultural environment reduces compliance with street vending legal measures. In such cases, the restrictions don't seem to be only symbolic and

ineffective, but they also allow to harassment and extortion. V. Jaishankar, L. Sujatha (2021) study challenges faced by these vendors in Tiruchirappalli. The primary challenge they face is competition from others in the same line of business. Food safety is a major concern and there are no government agencies that evaluate and certify food. Moreover there is a lack of recognition from the government of the vendors' contribution in maintaining the overall (economic and social) well-being of the urban system. But lately, government has passed "Street Vendors Bill 2013", which protects the rights of street vendors. The goal of this paper was to identify the causes of street vending, the challenges that street vendors face, the importance of street vendors, and what steps the government is taking to prevent police and other authorities from harassing street vendors, as well to enhance working conditions, ensure social protection, and development of life skills that enhance their economic adaptability.

Parikshit Chakraborty, Samarpita Koley (2018) reveal that vendors have inadequate working circumstances in terms of working hours per day, as well as unhealthy and risky working environments. They demonstrate that the majority of street sellers earn a low daily wage, revealing their living conditions. The study also shows that the vendors working hours, inadequate safety and security conditions at their businesses and the illegal compensations they must pay the local government are all factors. Bhaskar Acharjya Dekha (2020) focuses on the livelihoods of the vendors who have constantly remained as an important part of nation's economy. They have traditionally provided a market environment in which necessities available at and cheaper prices. The livelihoods of these vendors were stabilized and a proper source of income was made available. The survey provides insights into vendor's life and the hardships brought about by the pandemic.

Sonu Meher et al. (2020) find that during a lockdowns, roads are closed but not homes. Incomes stop but expenses go on. They show that the lockdown has hugely damaged the street vendors of Maharashtra. They have face losses in their earnings and will have the negative impact of these lockdown on their livelihood for a long period. Many vendors were compelled to stop working as well as switch to other works. As an end result they not only faced financial losses but had to deal with mental stress as well. Sonu R. Meher et al. (2021) analyse the sufferings street vendors went through the current situation in the state Maharashtra. The samples were collected from total of 12 food vendors and 8 fruit & vegetables were studied. Government help was also availed to these sectors as their financial sufferings were not able to meet their daily requirements. After the announcement of the lockdown in all the IV phases, the street vendors a bad trip, Government support made their livelihood easier.

Noah Allison et al. (2021) discuss the impact of covid-19 on food vending in cities, as well as a global examination of street food and the mobilization of urban areas for the food supply and micro-enterprise. The paper also examines the role of street food in cities of India, China, South Korea and Taiwan, as a well as the relationship between micro-enterprises and the urban peppiness of street vendors' social lives. Jessica C Romero-Michel et al. (2021) conduct a study during the phase II of the covid-19 pandemic in a Mexican residential city comparing its informal street vendors and formal employees. The street vendors

are the sector of population who are exposed to the risk for contagion and spread of the disease, were the work from home cannot be done by these sectors when compared with normal employees. The government make steps here in this phase as the result shows that in phase III and I, street vendors can be increasingly be affected.

Mushagalusa Balasha Arsene et al.(2020) examine the street vendors' condition in the African town of Bukavu. Data collected from the street vendors supplying goods and services beyond the scope of legal trade and bureaucratic regulations and rules. Selection of the vendors was based on long experienced. The result shows that street earnings are insignificant to meet the daily basic needs of vendor's households. The outbreak of covid-19 impacts strongly the food production and the supply system. Martha Chen (2020) study urban informal workers, with comparisons to street sellers in India and other developed and developing countries. The two urban cases are being researched: South Africa's cities and India's Ahmedabad. During the pandemic, street sellers in South African cities faced difficulties. As these were their primary source of income, the Indian government took a crucial innovative move in the shape of 'Vegetables on Wheels' to help these informal vendors.

Scope of the study

The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of covid-19 on street vendors in Ernakulam city. The study mainly focuses the problem, hurdles and the factors affecting their sales in this pandemic. It also shows the current income, sales and profitability level of the vendors. The findings of the gives a detailed review of the same. Moreover the government and other authorities would be able to understand the vendors current situation happening in the society. The study is extended to the respondents in the Ernakulam City which cover whole.

Interpretation

Table 1
Category of business * difficulties faced after lockdown

CATEGORY OF BUSINESS	DIFFICULTIES FACED AFTER LOCKDOWN						Total
	less demand for goods	increasing cost of raw materials	curfew	crowded areas	more new vendors	others	
Cloth sellers	11	6	5	8	15	3	48
Street food Sellers	8	6	5	11	13	0	43
Fruit/vegetable sellers	10	6	3	3	10	2	34
Fishmongers	7	4	4	6	5	1	27
Footwear sellers	13	4	14	5	10	3	49

Other	11	2	4	3	10	3	33
Total	60	28	35	36	63	12	234

In the above table, 48 respondents are cloth sellers, out of that 11 respondents faces the problem of less demand for goods, six of them finds increased cost of raw materials as a difficulty, five of them faces the problem of curfew, eight faces problems in crowded areas, 15 respondents faces difficulties because of new vendors and the three respondents faces other various problems. Out the total respondents 43 are street food sellers, out of that eight of them faces less demand for goods followed by six of the respondents finds difficulties due to the increasing of goods, five respondents finds curfew as problem, 11 respondents finds difficulties in crowded areas and the majority of 13 respondents faces the problem of new vendors. In a total of 34 respondents of fruit/vegetable sellers 10 respondents faces the difficulties of less demand for goods, six respondents faces the problems of increasing cost of raw materials, three respondents faces curfew problems, three respondents faces difficulties in crowded area, 10 respondents finds difficulties because of new vendors and two of the respondents have other problems.

A total of 27 respondents are fishmongers, in that seven respondents faces problem due to less demand of goods, four respondents faces the difficulties because of the increasing cost of raw materials, four respondents find curfew as difficulties, six respondents finds crowded areas as difficulties, five respondents finds difficulties because of the many new vendors and only one respondent has other difficulties. Out the total respondents 49 are footwear seller in that 13 respondents faces the problem of less demand for goods followed by four respondents faces the difficulty of increasing the cost of raw materials, while 14 of the respondents faces curfew difficulties, five respondents faces difficulties of crowded areas, 10 respondents have difficulties because of new vendors and three respondents has other problems. In the above table 33 respondents have other category of business in that majority of 11 respondents faces the difficulties of less demand for goods, only two respondents faces the problem of increasing cost of raw materials, four respondents faces curfew difficulties, three respondents have difficulties because of crowded area, while 10 of the respondents faces difficulties due to new vendors and three of the respondents have other difficulties.

Table 2
Place and location of outlet *difficulties faced after lockdown

PLACE AND LOCATION OF OUTLET	DIFFICULTIES FACED AFTER LOCKDOWN						Total
	less demand for goods	increasing cost of raw materials	curfew	crowded areas	more new vendors	others	
Around residential area	6	0	1	7	15	4	33

Transportation Area	4	10	18	10	6	1	49
Recreational area	8	4	5	6	11	3	37
In front of school/hospital	4	3	2	3	18	2	32
Market area	20	8	5	3	6	2	44
Other	18	3	4	7	7	0	39
Total	60	28	35	36	63	12	234

The above table shows the total 234 street vendors facing difficulties faced in their business after the lockdown face. Here, place and location factor are been looked upon. Around residential area, about six street vendors faces less demand for goods, no street vendors affected by increasing the cost of raw materials, only one faced curfew, about seven were faced due to the crowded areas, the increase of new street vendors were also affected by 15 street vendors and 4 faces other difficulties that are not mentioned before. And for the Transportation area, about four faced less demand for goods, 10 faced increase cost of raw materials, 18 for the curfew, 10 for the crowded areas, for more new vendors six were affected and only one stated other reason.

And there is Recreational area, eight were affected less demand for goods, four for increase cost, five for curfew, six street vendors for crowded areas, 11 faced from new vendors and three says other reason. In front of School/Hospital vendors, says that four affected for less demand for goods, three for increased cost, two for curfew, three for crowded areas, 18 for new vendors and two says other reason. Market area street vendors, states that about 20 vendors faces less demand for goods, eight respondents difficulties for increased cost of raw materials, five vendors for curfew, three for crowded areas, and about six affected form new vendors and other reason stated by the vendors affected by two. And the 39 respondents from other areas says that 18 were affected form less demand for goods, three faces increase cost, four faces curfew, seven faced crowded areas, only seven respondents affected form new vendors and no other reason stated by the vendors.

Table 3
Family annual income on an average basis – pre and post lockdown

Family annual income	Before lockdown		After lockdown	
	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
<100,000	19	8%	51	22%
100,000-200,000	66	28%	77	33%
200,000-300,000	127	55%	96	41%
>300,000	22	9%	10	4%
Total	234	100%	234	100%

The table 3 shows the family annual income before lockdown, only 8% of respondents had less than 100,000 income, 28% respondents had income level between 100,000-200,000, 55% respondents had income between 200,000-300,000 and 9% respondents had more than 300,000 income. This shows that the street vendors before the lockdown phase they manage to meet their livelihood. The above table also shows the family annual income after lockdown for the street vendors, about 22% of respondents have less than 100,000 income, 33% of respondents with income level between 100,000-200,000, a majority of 41% of respondents have income between 200,000-300,000 and 4% respondents with more than 300,000 income. This shows that the street vendors were affected during the lockdown phase but they manage to survive during this pandemic. As their income were lower but able to have an average income level.

Table 4
Total sales turnover - pre and post lockdown

Total Sales turnover	Before lockdown		After lockdown	
	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
<8000	11	5%	17	7%
8000-16000	58	25%	87	37%
16000-24000	63	27%	89	38%
24000-32000	59	25%	36	16%
>32000	43	18%	5	2%
Total	234	100%	234	100%

The table shows the total sales turnover before lockdown for the street vendors, only 5% of respondents had less than 8000 sales, 25% of vendors had sales level between 8000-16000, a majority of 27% of respondents had sales between 16000-24000, 25% respondents had sales between 24000-32000 sales and 18% respondents had sales turnover more than 32000. The above table also shows the total sales turnover after the lockdown phase for the street vendors, about 7% of respondents with less than 8000 sales, 37% of respondents sales level between 8000-16000, a majority of 38% of respondents have sales level is

between 16000-24000, 16% of respondents have sales turnover between 24000-32000 and only 2% of respondents with more than 32000 sales turnover. This means that the sales for the street vendors were affected.

Table 5
Total profit turnover – pre and post lockdown

Total profit turnover	Before lockdown		After lockdown	
	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
<7000	11	5%	17	7%
7000-14000	58	25%	87	37%
14000-21000	63	27%	89	38%
21000-28000	59	25%	36	16%
>28000	43	18%	5	2%
Total	234	100%	234	100%

From the table:5, shows the total profit turnover before lockdown for the street vendors, only 5% of respondents have less than 7000 profit level, 25% of respondents have profit level between 7000-14000, a majority of 27% of respondents has profit between 14000-21000, 25% of respondents had profit turnover between 21000-28000 and 18% of respondents has profit turnover more than 28000. The above table shows the total profit turnover before lockdown for the street vendors, only 7% of respondents have less than 7000 profit level, 37% of respondents have profit level between 7000-14000, a majority of 38% of respondents has profit between 14000-21000, 16% of respondents had profit turnover between 21000-28000 and only 2% of respondents has profit turnover more than 28000.

Table 6
Reasons for sales affect - online shopping

	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.606	5	1.921	1.457	.205
Within Groups	300.548	228	1.318		
Total	310.154	233			

The table reveals the result of one way ANOVA, which says that the calculated value ($F=1.457$) is significant as the P value is >0.05 which is significant at 5% level. So here, researcher accepts the null hypothesis(H_0) and reject the alternate hypothesis(H_1) in a nutshell the result concludes that there is significant different between sales with that of online shopping.

Table 7
Reasons for sales affect - poor public space

	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	32.896	5	6.579	4.685	.000
Within Groups	320.219	228	1.404		
Total	353.115	233			

The result of ANOVA, which says that the calculated value ($F=4.685$) is significant as the P value is <0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_{12}). Therefore, there exist significant differences between sales with that of poor public space.

Table 8
Reasons for sales affect – hygiene

	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	41.080	5	8.216	5.940	.000
Within Groups	315.352	228	1.383		
Total	356.432	233			

The above table reveals the result of one way ANOVA, which says that the calculated value ($F=5.940$) is significant as the P value is <0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_{13}). Location factor for the hygiene have significant effect on sales affect for the street vendors.

Table:9
Reasons for sales affect - malls / retail outlets considering the location factor

	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.949	5	2.790	2.443	.035
Within Groups	260.328	228	1.142		
Total	274.278	233			

The above table shows the result of one way ANOVA, which says that the calculated value ($F=2.443$) is significant as the P value is <0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected and accepts the alternate hypothesis (H_{14}). Location factor for malls and retail outlets' have no significant effect on sales affect.

Table 10
Reasons for sales affect - non availability of right goods

	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	23.535	5	4.707	2.860	.016
Within Groups	375.256	228	1.646		
Total	398.791	233			

The above table shows the result of one way ANOVA, which says that the calculated value ($F=2.860$) is significant as the $P = .016$ is <0.05 which specify that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and accepts the alternate hypothesis (H_1). Category of business factor for the non-availability of goods has no significant effect on sales affect for the vendors.

Table 11
Financial help availed during pandemic – considering the age factor

	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.620	4	2.155	.847	.497
Within Groups	582.542	229	2.544		
Total	591.162	233			

The above table reveals the result of one way ANOVA, which says that the calculated value ($F=.847$) is significant as the $P = .497$ is >0.05 which is significant at 5% level. So here, researcher accepts the null hypothesis; in short the result concludes that considering the age factor street vendors availed financial help during the pandemic phase.

Table 12
Financial help availed during pandemic - considering the gender factor

	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.838	1	.838	.329	.567
Within Groups	590.325	232	2.545		
Total	591.162	233			

The above table reveals the result of one way ANOVA, which says that the calculated value ($F=.329$) is significant as the P value is >0.05 which is significant at 5% level. So here, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis; in a nutshell the result concludes that street vendors availed financial help considering the gender factor. According to Sonu R. Meher(2021), the lockdown affected approximately half of the population of male. Several respondents had to take out a loan to cover their everyday needs. Their business has come to an end as a result of months of continual lockdown, leaving them with little choice than to refund the credit.

Findings

- Among the respondents, majority of them were the cloth sellers who faced difficulties because of more new vendors.
- Among the respondents majority, of the sellers in market area faced difficulties due to less demand for goods.
- Fifty five percentage of them had 200,000 to 300,000 annual income before lockdown and forty one percentage of them have 200,000 to 300,000 annual income after lockdown.
- Twenty seven percent of the respondents had sales turnover between 16000-24000 before lockdown and thirty eight of them have 16000-24000 sales turnover after lockdown.
- Majority of the respondents had profit turnover between 14000-21000 before and after lockdown.
- There is no significant difference between sales with that of online shopping.
- There is substantial variation between sales with that of hygiene.
- There is vast difference between sales with that of malls/retail outlets.
- There is considerable difference between sales with that of non-availability of goods.
- The location factor for the malls and retail outlets have no significant effect on the vendor's sales.
- Among the respondents, considering the age factor street vendors availed financial help during the pandemic phase.
- Based on Anova test done, considering the gender factor street vendors availed financial help during the pandemic phase.

Suggestions

- As more new vendors started street vending the government should provide a good environment for them in order to survive in this existing market as they contribute more services to the society.
- They should be given licenses for their business also social security like pension, insurance etc. for the street vendors.
- Authorities should give information and instructions about the present situation happening in the country in order to prevent them from problems.
- Street vendors should be protected from harassment and ouster.

Conclusion

In the urban sector, street hawking provides employment and income to agriculturally poor people. It offers a considerable source of revenue for the city of Ernakulum's economy and services to grow sustainably. India fell into disarray in March 2020 after a sudden and complete lockdown. The road vending was closed and unavailable for a few hours, causing traffic congestion. The majority of road vendors today lives on the outskirts of poverty and lack the money to support themselves without selling their wares. The research shows how street sellers cater to the pre-lockdown period. The pandemic had a significant impact on road vendors, since many of them were unable to reopen their businesses following the

outbreak. The paper shows the socio-economic condition of the road vendors during the Covid-19 phase as they faced many problems and difficulties on their sales, income and profit, their satisfaction level is additionally been looked. The study revealed a far better understanding of the case of the road vendors like cloth sellers, street food vendors, footwear sellers etc. The social problems like poverty, healthcare and education, the matter of unemployment are housing a significant manner. Further most, the road vendors face lot of fear on this pandemic situation, therefore the government must take necessary steps to safeguard the road vendors.

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