

**CONCEPT OF STREET VENDORS IN INDIA**

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**Abstract:**

The Act defines a “street vendor” as a person engaged in vending of articles of everyday use or offering services to the general public, in any public place or private area, from a temporary built-up structure or by moving from place to place. Faced with the hiatus between theoretical and empirical research on the one hand and no comparability of the results of different micro-level investigations on the other, scholars have questioned the relevance of informal sector studies, describing these as academic exercises (King, 1990). Some have dismissed the boundary between formal and informal activities as theoretically tenuous and empirically non-testable (Richardson, 1985). Admitting the difficulties of assessing the macro dimensions of this sector and of making generalizations about its socio-economic characteristics, some scholars have argued that we can know the informal sector only when we see it. There has thus developed a general cynicism among many researchers and policy makers who have come to believe that conclusions of the informal sector studies are highly subjective, depending almost totally on the subjective judgement of the researchers. Consequently, these studies have not been considered useful for providing inputs in policy formulation or developing support system for informal activities. In view of this scepticism regarding the theoretical validity of the distinction between formal and informal sectors and, more importantly, usability of micro-level studies in policy formulation, it would be worthwhile to begin this paper with a critical review of this existing literature focussing on their approaches and databases for assessing the dimensions of the informal sector in India. The Population Census, Economic Census, National Sample Survey (NSS) and other periodic surveys conducted by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Government of India, generate very useful information that can be used to identify the broad trends and characteristics of the informal sector. An attempt has, therefore, been made here to critically analyse the problems of comparability in the database and assess the trends and patterns of growth of the informal sector at the national level using this data. The literature surveyed here comprises books and articles, proceedings of seminars, workshops and meetings, and government declarations, having a bearing on this sector. The review covers studies using both secondary as well as primary data. Strengthening of administrative and institutional support systems for the healthy and sustainable development of the informal sector has been a major concern in this paper.

**Key words:** Population Census, NSS, CSO, Economic census, Formal and Informal sectors, compatibility, characteristics of the informal sector.

**Introduction:** According to Black's Law Dictionary, vendor is a person who buys to sell or a seller. The Compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary defines vendor as one who sells; a seller, sometimes in a restricted sense, a street seller. The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary gives the meaning of vendor as a person who sells something. According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English language unabridged. Vendor is one who offers goods for sale habitually or as a means of livelihood. Further, seller is an independent seller in a small way of business or a person who hawks and sells merchandise. According to Concise Oxford English Dictionary 11<sup>th</sup> edition, a person or a company offering something for sale, especially a trader in the street is called a vendor, whereas Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of current English defines vendor as a person who sells things, e.g. food or newspaper, usually outside on the street who are also called street vendors. For the purpose of this study vendor is a person who sells one or more products, one who combines selling and providing service (for example juice vendor) in fixed locations or/ and vending in weekly hats where locations 44 changes every day and /or one who does mobile or door-to-door vending of one or more products.

#### **Street Vendor's Effort:**

Effort will be made to diagnose the differences between male and female regarding their specific activities, conditions, needs, access to and control over resources, and access to development benefits and decision-making. The study is substantiated with case studies highlighting various aspects of street vending. The concept of the family is understood in the study with its biological significance and household with its economic content. A one-person household is a person who lives alone in a separate housing unit i.e., structurally separate and independent place of abode. A multi-person household, as understood in this study, is a group of two or more persons who combine together jointly to occupy the whole or part of a housing unit and to provide themselves with food or other essentials for living. The group may pool their incomes and have a common budget to a greater or lesser extent in different circumstances. The members of the household or composed of related persons or unrelated persons or a combination of both. The basic criteria under this concept of household is referred to persons constituting the household jointly occupy a common dwelling place, share principal means (unless prevented for eg. By working conditions) and that they make a common provision for basic living needs. Thus, a multi-person household may be comprised of the members of a family and relatives. Statement of the Problem: While trying to earn their livelihood street vendors provide valuable service to the people and the contribution to the economy. It is very important to know why the Government and the Public treating them as encroachers or criminals? Even though

their role is laudable why it is not possible for the Government to give legal status to vendors by issuing licenses and providing working Hawking zones? Should not government include them in town and city master plans? As they are special component of the plans for urban development, why should not they be treated as an integral part of the urban distribution system? Against this backdrop, it is felt that it is important to understand their problems, status in the society and the desirable changes, comprehensive conceptions that lead to helping creation of organised street vending process. The study intends to examine SocioEconomic conditions of street vendors. Study Area: Being an individual researcher it would be over ambitious to cover the vast area due to time and cost considerations.

### **Shimoga District:**

Shimoga district has been deliberately selected for the study. There are two important large industries namely VISP (Visveshwaraiah Iron and Steel Plant) and MPM (Mysore Paper Mills) due to merger and downsizing and other factors the number of employees in these industries has decreased from 15,000 in 1990 to 5,000 in 2005. The workers who lost their jobs have become unemployed or became street vendors. In the district, Shimoga, Bhadravathi and Sagara are having maximum number of street vendors and their activities are undergoing a rational change. Under these changing circumstances no scientific study has been conducted on their problems. With the help of this study a Socio-Economic problems of street vendors in Shimoga district can be analysed. Shimoga District is situated in Western part of Kamataka State, which is surrounded by the Districts of Dharwar in North, Chikmagalur and Udupi in South, Davanagere in the east and Uttara Kannada to the West between 13° 56' North's and 75° 38' East latitude and longitude respectively. There are two important rivers flowing in the district. Namely, the River Tunga and the River Bhadra; Shimoga district is constituted of seven blocks namely, Shimoga, Hosanagara, Soraba, Thirthahalli, Shikaripura, Sagara and Bhadravathi. The district is known for its rich forest products. Shimoga District is regarded as the 46 Malnad region of the Kamataka and has diversity in several aspects. Agriculture is main occupation of the district, which is indirectly supporting growth of informal sector.

**Objectives of the Study:** Though the studies reviewed above are quite useful to evaluate the impact of urbanization, most of these studies were conducted only on macro level and advanced region, but micro level studies are rare. And most of the studies have given importance to spatial aspects of the urbanization. Though the above mentioned studies have been useful in highlighting the different issues relating to urbanization, they have not been able to probe deep into various aspects of urbanization and no study about the problems of street vendors marketing and retail vendors in Shimoga District has yet been made. So the researcher felt, there was a need for studies in depth about the problems of street informal sector in Shimoga District and appraise the intensity of the problems particularly with reference to street informal sector in Shimoga District. 1. To study

Economic conditions of street vendors in Shimoga District. 2. To examine the organisational aspects of street vendors in Shimoga District. 3. To identify the motivational factors and constraints of street vendors in Shimoga District. 4. To ascertain the problems faced by of street vendors in Shimoga District. 5. To study policies and regulations affecting the operation of street vendors, and how they respond to such policies.

**Hypotheses:** On the basis of the review of literature and objectives of the present study, the following hypothesis is proposed. 1. In process of Urbanization, Informal sector is playing a very important role in Shimoga District. 2. A large portion of their earning is wiped out in the forms of interest on borrowings. 3. There are Socio-Economic and administrative constrains in performing vending in the market. 4. Generating income by Street Vendors is not sufficient to maintain minimum standard life in Shimoga District. 5. The street vendors are mostly from the villages; semi-urban areas; illiterates, and they belong to religious minorities and backward castes. Methodology and Research Design: Urbanization is a process of development and expansion of industries, banking, marketing, trade, transport, education, infrastructure, medical and other various activities in the informal sector. It is needless to state that the process of urbanization is nothing but expansion and development of various economic activities in both formal and informal sectors in urban areas. In this process, it is accepted fact that the employment opportunities increase in urban areas. However, the increase in employment opportunities is higher in urban informal sector than formal sector. Urban informal sector consists of vegetable vendors, fruit vendors, flower vendors, rickshaw pullers, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and domestic servants, and tailors, workers in the household industries, construction workers, and casual labourers in factories, hawkers, garment street vendors and other unorganized workers. 48 In the present study, a humble attempt has been made by the research to throw Hght on the problems, prospects and socio-economic conditions of urban street vendors in Shimoga District. The growth, development, progress and problems of the urban developmental activities are beyond the purview of the present study. Selection of the Study Area: The Southern State of Kamataka is in many ways the archetypal Indian State. In natural regions, languages, faiths and culture, it exhibits almost as much variety as the sub-continent itself Its location is close to the nation's heartland and its boundaries extend to the coastal periphery. In developmental attainments too, the state is at the median level in major sectors, reflecting generally where the country as whole stands. This part offers a brief overview of the geography and history of the state and places it within the Indian context in respect of its levels of human development. Special attention has been paid to understanding regional developmental disparities, which are a major concern of the state today. The coastal area covering Dakshina Kannada and Uttar-Kannada districts is a narrow strip between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. The region is charecterstised by heavy rainfall - 2500mms to 3000 nuns, with the main occupations being fishing and the cultivation of rice, coconut and recant. The

coast is hemmed in on the east by the Western Ghats; the Ghat or Malnad region covers the districts of Chikmagalur, Hassan, Kodagu and Shimoga and the Uplands of Uttara Kannada district. 43% of the forest of the state falls within this area. Plantations of coffee pepper, cardamom and rubber are interspersed with dense forest here. Shimoga, one of the thirty districts of Kamataka State, is situated roughly in the mid-south western part of the State. It had an eventful history and has rich cultural traditions. It is bestowed with abundant natural resources. The western area of the district consists of a mountainous terrain, on the eastern side, there is a striking transition from the \*Malnad and \*\*Semi-Malnad to \*\*\*Maidan. The western part is replete with fascinating natural beauty, being clothed with dense tropical forests stimulated by heavy rainfall. The eastern area consists of an open country with some fine lakes and stony hills making this part also attractive to the eye. Like most of the districts in the State, Shimoga district also got its name fi-om its administrative headquarters town, Shimoga; various traditional derivations are current about the origin of the name of Shimoga. It is difficult to say which of them is correct or whether any of them is correct. At least, three of them pertain to God Shiva, Viz., "Shiva - Mukha" (the face of Shiva), 50 'Shivanamoogu' (the nose of Shiva) and 'Shivana - Mogge' (buds of flowers meant for Shiva). The place has several old shrines dedicated to Shiva. According to a legend, the place had the ashram of the famous sage Durvasa v^ho was noted for his sharpness of temper. He used to keep on the oven a pot boiling with sweet herbs. Once, some cowherds, who chanced upon it, tasted the beverage out of curiosity and called the place 'Sihi-moge' (sweet pot), which was later called as Shimoga. **Conclusion:**

The review of policies and programmes for promoting industrial growth suggests that the "tiny units" with fixed capital up to rupees 0.1 million and informal units with an investment of a few thousand or hundred rupees that generally do not get registered with any public agency, receive virtually no support. This corroborates the findings of the micro-level studies. Most of the benefits go to the modern capital intensive "small scale industries". The "dynamism" shown by the informal sector, therefore, is not because of the government support, but is in spite of the constraints and controls imposed by the public authorities. Its continuance and growth in many cases can be explained in terms of undercutting of wages by its workers in their struggle for survival. Significant measures have been proposed to modify the present organizational structure and the modus operandi of the public agencies with the objective of increasing their accessibility to informal entrepreneurs.

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